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Grass-Roots Initiatives and Bottom-Up Musealisation Mechanisms in Urban Space: The Case of Heraklion Crete

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Abstract: Heraklion is gradually transforming into the newest tourist destination in Crete, which is one of the most popular island destinations in Greece. The regional statutory and local tourist bodies aim to develop Heraklion as a destination per se, overcoming the "gateway to the rest of the island" identity that the city currently holds. At the same time, grass-roots initiatives are active in the city context, defending public space and urban cultural heritage, in idiosyncratic, bottom-up ways. This paper investigates the role undertaken by three such initiatives, currently active in Heraklion, to better comprehend their possible impact on the urban landscape and cultural heritage, within this gradually developing tourist landscape. The structure, aims and vision of the initiatives were documented through semi-structured interviews. Their actions, despite being diverse, are compared to the wider activity of similar initiatives in Greece, especially against neoliberal politics, culminating in defending public space, activating bottom-up *musealisation mechanisms* and participating in urban design in their own ways.

Keywords: cultural heritage; grass-roots initiatives; urban space; urban landscape; tourism; bottom-up musealisation mechanisms; Heraklion; Crete

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1. Introduction

During the last couple of years, the city of Heraklion has aimed to become one of the main destinations for tourists on the island of Crete, which is already one of the most popular destinations in Greece. In the view of the economic recession, main stakeholders such as the statutory bodies and people working in the tourist sector have collaborated in creating new tourist products and opportunities, aiming to increase the annual number of visitors and, consequently, the area's income. In this context, decisions are made concerning public space and cultural heritage, within the wider context of managing urban space. At the same time, the degradation identified in several areas that are outside the tourist vision for Heraklion but yet within the boundaries of the old city, have evoked a citizens' reaction, who have become self-organised to act in defence of public spaces and the local history.

In this paper, I discuss the creation of citizens' movements in relation to urban space and cultural heritage and how their activity may contribute to the development of idiosyncratic bottom-up *musealisation mechanisms* as a means of co-developing heritage. Within this context, three initiatives, active in Heraklion, Crete, are examined to identify their possible impact on urban development, within a diversified touristic environment. Due to the scarce information available for these initiatives,

I conducted interviews[1] with representatives of the initiatives to better comprehend their focus, the tools employed and their relationship to public space and urban cultural heritage. The analysis of the data collected presents clear differences among the case studies, despite the common aims they evangelize, such as the need for defending public space and for finding ways to "produce" heritage in ways different from the official processes. In general, their activity does not seem to be related to the touristic development that the city's statutory bodies promote, but focuses instead on the local inhabitants and their needs and rights within a constantly transforming public space.

In the beginning of this paper, I briefly introduce some of the latest actions undertaken to transform the city of Heraklion into the newest tourist destination on the island of Crete and how its cultural heritage is related to this process, using references to official statistic data [1–3]. The development of cultural heritage in Greece, and consequently in Crete, by the official statutory bodies is further discussed, within the context of musealisation and *musealisation mechanisms*, based on Ritter's [4] and Chourmouziadi's [5] theories, respectively. In comparison to this official process, a similar bottom-up process is acknowledged within the activity of citizen initiatives. Departing from Harvey's point of view on the right in the city [6], Iaione's comments on public space [7] and Leontidou's work on social movements [8], the main features of citizen groups defending public urban space, an inextricable part of which is cultural heritage, are identified. Within this context, indicative examples from Greece are briefly discussed, and the three selected movements active in Heraklion are presented and analysed in further detail in this paper for the first time.

2. Heraklion Becoming the New Tourist Destination on the Island of Crete

The island of Crete is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Greece, especially during the summer months [9]. Easter vacations mark the beginning of the tourist season, which normally ends sometime between the end of September and the end of October, depending on the area. Heraklion, the capital of the island, is almost in the center of its northern coast, facing the rest of Greece, and boasts an international airport as well as the largest port of Crete, forming, thus, the main gateway to the rest of the island. Daily visits to the local Archaeological Museum and the archaeological site of Knossos—both central touristic destinations in Greece [10]—attract visitors, either individuals or in groups, that stay in hotels outside Heraklion as well as organized groups that remain for a few hours in the city while cruising around the Mediterranean.

Tourism development in Crete follows the general trend of mass summer tourism in Greece, with tours organised exclusively in order to visit important archaeological sites [11] (p. 195). Despite objections, this practice has brought the total of the touristic resources (both cultural and natural) close to exhaustion. This has been aggravated by the loosely controlled development of touristic infrastructure, turning tourism, in several cases, into a hazardous degradation factor for the natural environment and a burden for the residential areas of the island, especially along the northern coast.

Nevertheless, during the last couple of years, the constantly rising numbers of visitors that travel to Crete through Heraklion have turned into an important incentive for the city, now set to become one of the new tourist destinations on the island. The numbers given by the Greek Tourism Confederation are indicative: 604,849 visitors arrived in Heraklion airport with international flights in August 2016, 627,677 in August 2017 and 649,196 in August 2018, respectively; marking a 6.8% increase in 3 years [1]. This constant increase of visitors causes significant alterations in the urban fabric, with the construction of new hotel buildings or the renovation of old and (until recently) abandoned hotels in the center of the city, turning them into boutique hotels. At the same time, the local municipality has supported the process by developing a new tourist brand name for the city in cooperation with the Diazoma Association, a private NGO established (according to its official webpage) for the protection and

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[1] The interviews were conducted within the framework of my MSc thesis in Cultural Informatics, with expertise in Museology, at the University of the Aegean.

promotion of the ancient theatres [12]. Furthermore, the municipality has materialized renewal projects (e.g., extended paving of central streets and planning for an Open Mall [13]) in selected areas of the old town, aiming to strengthen the touristic vision of the city and the local economy.

In this setting, a large part of the local economy in Heraklion is associated with the tertiary economical sector and mainly tourism, which is the only source of income for many, that has led many unemployed inhabitants to short-term contract jobs and, thus, temporarily reducing the high rates of unemployment on the island. According to the Greek Manpower Employment Organisation, the registered unemployed inhabitants that have found work in tourist industry in Crete during January 2018 were 20,817 out of 36,286 (the total number of registered unemployed citizens of the island at the time). During August 2018, the number was reduced to 571 out of 27,671, and increased to 11,711 out of 38,987, during December 2018 [2].

Finally, the local private and commercial sectors, in cooperation with the local authorities, aspire to extend the tourist season to the winter season (Chatzidakis refers to this touristic product as "the winter sun vacation" [14]) as indicated, for instance, by installing proper infrastructure (e.g., heating systems) in many accommodations; and/or to promote alternative types of tourism, such as conference tourism, health tourism, and education tourism.

3. Heraklion, Tourism and Cultural Heritage

This increase in the number of visitors is mirrored, additionally, in the people visiting the Archaeological Museum of Heraklion and the archaeological site of Knossos, the two main cultural destinations of the city, which feature the ancient past of the Heraklion Prefecture. These are managed by the Greek Ministry of Culture. More specifically, in August 2018, at the peak of the tourist season, 90,341 people visited the Archaeological Museum of Heraklion (an 18.6% increase compared to August 2017) and 160,299 people visited the archaeological site of Knossos (a 31.1% increase compared to August 2017). The two destinations have become the most visited places in the country, according to HELSTAT, after the Acropolis Museum and the archaeological site of the Acropolis respectively [3]. Both destinations are open to the public all year long, adjusting their timetable and total number of accessed areas according to their seasonal hiring. Apart from these two main cultural destinations, Heraklion boasts countless other historic monuments (at least 100 are listed by the Ministry of Environment and Energy [15]), reflecting its multicultural historical background.

The old city of Heraklion is enclosed in its venetian walls, the better-preserved fortification structure in the Mediterranean [16], which separates the old city from the modern urban space. The enclosed part of the city is a listed archaeological site. According to the Archaeological Law in Greece (Law 3028/2002), all the remnants dated before 1830 are directly under the protection and responsibility of the Greek Ministry of Culture, whereas those dated later than 1830 can be part of the official national cultural heritage under specific conditions. Venetian and Turkish fountains, historic churches and buildings of the 19th century are scattered in the city, entangled with a disproportionate number of modern structures, creating a peculiar historical palimpsest. Selected material remnants of the city's past are either enhanced by the local authorities, creating famous landmarks for the local inhabitants and the tourists (e.g., the Morozini Fountain), or left to decay, creating awkward spaces of deceptive discontinuity in the urban landscape (e.g., the various ancient architectural remnants excavated in private plots that have been left uncurated).

The material remnants of the past constitute cultural heritage. This heritage is one of the formative particles of a community's collective identity, and is the image created by a group of people for themselves and with which the members of this group identify themselves [17] (pp. 178–179). Its preservation for future generations seems to be self-evident. In my opinion, however, it is in fact a negotiated process to decide which parts of collective memory are worthy of being rescued and which will be driven to oblivion. In Greece, archaeologists, historians and architects—the experts—play a crucial role in the process. The detailed specifications of protection and monument listing declaration

included in the current law substantiate this central role of the specialists, as well as of the authorities, as far as the "production" of cultural heritage is concerned [18] (p. 111).

Based on the relevant legislation, the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change, the principal statutory bodies, can transform the past existing in current urban space into a protected subject, in order to preserve it as part of cultural memory; proceeding, thus, according to Ritter, to "musealisation". Ritter was the first to use the term in 1963, in order "to describe how past that were once tradition and part of organic *Lebenswelten* (life-worlds) come in modernity to be institutionalised" [4] (p. 138). Through this process, new reference points regarding current social relations and the city's structure are created, converting the object from one man's property to the property of the whole. This new property has the ability of gathering around it certain public, which comprises one of the main prerequisites in forming citizen collectives and the sense of belonging at a national level [4] (p. 166).

According to Chourmouziadi, apart from the above process followed by the official statutory bodies for the management of cultural heritage, different *musealisation mechanisms* can be traced to daily urban life, which are the function of other institutional bodies such as the local Municipalities [5] (p. 195). The placement, for instance, of sculptures at selected urban public spaces, whether spatially related to the specific place or not, can be one of these *musealisation mechanisms*, turning the spotlight on these spaces. These processes may not be as official as the ones related to the principal statutory bodies mentioned above, but they definitely enrich the cultural landscape of the city, either through pointing out existing remnants or through creating new features in the urban space from scratch.

This top-down selected and created cultural heritage is offered as tourist product by the Ministry of Tourism, the Municipalities and the tourist industry in general. Specially selected destinations are available for all target groups of visitors, travelling in organised groups or independently. The emphasis given to specific destinations, such as the Archaeological Museum of Heraklion, creates an entire economic network, with businesses organised around the movement of large numbers of tourists wishing to visit these places. In this process, the general need for preserving and protecting cultural heritage and urban space shifts to the need for making profit. According to Piccinato, "when historic cities and the tourist industry meet, it is the latter that sets the rules" [19], a statement that may be applied, in my opinion, to historic sites in general.

In the case of Greece, especially during the current period of economic recess, an important amount of limited funding, mainly of European origin (such as the National Strategic Reference Framework)—managed by the local Prefectures and not directly by the Greek Ministry of Culture—is used to enhance these sightseeing highlights, which attract large numbers of visitors and, thus, income; whereas other historical remnants which may be equally important in scientific terms are left to decay. Nevertheless, connecting tourism (being the main source of income in Greece) to culture, has been, as Zorba notes, the main policy followed for decades by the country [20] (p. 364).

However, the cultural remnants of a city can be related to memories that, even if they are not identified as of great value by the experts, may comprise part of the collective property of a community. These remnants are identified, thus, as indisputable witnesses of a generally accepted perception of a community's identity [21] (p. 59). According to Assmann, communities need the past in order to be self-identified, following a constant self-reflecting social process of belonging in a community, which leads to the community's collective identity [17] (pp. 178–179). The evocation of memory, both collective and individual, is materialised in the urban space through landmarks, either existing or constructed in one's subconscious, enhancing, thus, the recognition and the placement of an individual in a community [21] (p. 59). Cultural remnants from this category, usually neglected by the official statutory bodies, have been defended by the various groups of citizens active in the city context.

4. Citizens' Movements, Urban Landscape and Public Space

The urban space, an inseparable part of which are the remnants of cultural heritage, is continuously transformed by various financial and political factors, following a "top-down" process, with the

decision-making being exclusively assigned to the official statutory bodies; in the case of cultural heritage in Greece, to the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change, the Prefectures and the Municipalities. The same space is also affected by other social processes, through which citizens experience and appropriate space and time [22] (p. 16), either separately or collectively. With the terms "bottom-up" and "grass-roots initiatives", we discuss the collective workings of groups of citizens with common goals. The diversity of their features, the various goals they pose, their different life span and impact on the urban landscape complicates the typology of these initiatives. As a result, in the current bibliography, they are described with various terms varying from urban social movements to simple protest groups [8].

Several political crises and their rippling through urban life around the world, have formed a new landscape for the (re)action movements that vary from local reactions related to infrastructure works, policing and the commercialisation of the public space, to international movements against globalisation [23] (pp. 140, 148). Citizens' movements, initiatives and other kinds of groups reacting to the decisions made by neoliberal governments appear in several cities, either with radical character or an intention for cooperation.

Greece's entry into the Eurozone has also enabled the inflow of neoliberal political models into the country, which had an impact on the monetary and industrial system in the Balkans and reinforced the deep social differences [24] (p. 218). Other reasons for the rise of these movements in Greece appear more circumstantial, but might reflect a hidden agitation within the society. The fires in Attica, Peloponnese and Euboea, in 2007, destroyed a large part of their forests and even reached the archaeological site of Ancient Olympia. The inability of the State to protect the natural and cultural heritage of the areas brought numerous inhabitants in Athens to Syntagma square, where they demonstrated for several days. The fires of 2007 were, according to Lekakis, a terminus post quem for the rapid increase of the number of small groups of citizens that have appeared in urban space, willing to act within the boundaries of their neighbourhood, community or city [25] (p. 77).

The privatisation of public land and goods, including areas of natural beauty, the intense policing and the constant violation of the right to the city (meaning the right to access the urban resources and to transform the city according to the citizens' views [6] (p. 38)), created the framework within which the new urban movements were formed. These movements have aimed to defend the public space, the nature, the historical memory, the quality of the daily life and the self-management of space and time [24] (p. 218). After the 2008 murder of Alexandros Grigoropoulos in Exarcheia, Athens, new urban social movements appeared in the capital and other large cities of Greece, willing not only to protest for their right to the city, but also to create urban space through "bottom-up" processes [24] (p. 222). Internet and social media have become crucial tools for communicating and diffusing information in real time, enabling the instant activation of people, with texts sent to different directions, within a few seconds.

These should be considered as responses to similar social movements appearing in other countries of the European South due to the impacts of the economic downshift in Europe, the global neoliberal politics and the consequent shrinkage of the Welfare state. The effects of the crisis in urban development and austerity policies have led to social fragmentation, polarisation and instability, which in combination with the questioning of the traditional institutional forms, due to insufficient management and corruption, have led to the appearance of new social movements [23] (pp. 140, 144). In Greece, the economic crisis uncovered and supplemented already existing pathogenies, forcing citizens to create new voluntary groups in an effort to cover welfare needs, such as housing, nutrition, medical care and education [26] (pp. 181–182).

The formation of citizens' movements in the city constitutes a continuously evolving process, which changes, supplements and transforms depending on the prevailing economic, social and political circumstances. The appearance of movements against mass tourism in several Mediterranean cities due to the serious issues caused in the daily life of the locals (e.g., Barcelona [27]) during the last years, is a characteristic example of such a process. In these areas, people were forced to reclaim the public space and demand the improvement of living conditions that were affected by the uncontrolled number

of tourists visiting their cities. In Greece, the effects of touristic saturation are visible, for instance, in Chania, Crete, with the locals protesting against negative consequences in the urban space and daily life in favour of profit. For instance, initiatives such as "Houses without inhabitants–Inhabitants without houses in Chania" [28] have appeared, protesting against the shrinkage of the number of houses available to the locals, due to their mass rental through short-time rental platforms. The statistics produced by AirDNA that show Crete on the top of the 2018 list of the total of rented properties through Airbnb and HomeAway platforms in Greece, are indicative, with the region of Chania retaining the largest number of rented properties on the whole island [29].

5. Public Space and Citizens' Movements

One of the main aims of the social movements organised in urban areas is the defense and demand of public space. According to Harvey, a public space belongs to all citizens, either permanently or temporarily, and it may be accessed by anyone and managed by public administration on behalf of the citizens, setting a number of rules of use and behaviour [6] (p. 146). Nevertheless, quite often the inhabitants of a place misinterpret the character of public spaces and are convinced that they belong to the local authorities. They, thus, accelerate their degradation by remaining inactive and assigning the decision making exclusively to the public administration [7] (p. 111). Conversely, even if public spaces are under the protection and management of the State, the political activism of the citizens is often needed in order to make it public [6] (pp. 146–147). The inhabitants of a place may participate in the planning of public space, among other ways, with acts that initiate from collectives (bottom-up) and are conducted either after being approved by the local authorities or without their acknowledgment (e.g., community gardens and park adaptations) [30] (pp. 160–169), [7] (p. 113), proceeding, thus, in the act of "communing" [6] (pp. 146–147). In any case, a set of rules, either official or not [31], affects the behaviours and uses of a particular public space, excluding instantly, as Listerborn points out, particular groups of people and creating a space that may not be entirely public [32] (p. 382).

During the economic crisis, public space reflected the effects on economic, political and social levels [33] (pp. 127–128). On the one hand, for instance, free access allows people to gather, organise collectively actions and protest their demands. On the other hand, the lack of public funding prevents proper maintenance, and imposes fast-track privatisation programmes in the name of development and emergence from the crisis [8] (p. 1193). Since the beginning of the period of austerity, numerous grass-roots initiatives related to the defence of public space and the reformation of the urban landscape have appeared in many Greek cities as well as other European and American urban areas, reflecting, therefore, the sense of globalisation not only in governmental practices but also in forms of bottom-up reactions [8] (p. 1188).

The collectives involve people of all ages, educational levels and political backgrounds, proving that public space belongs to everyone. These people demand, as a self-evident consequence, their active participation in decision making concerning public space planning and use, following democratic processes. When the limitations of the use of public space are set by the citizens instead of the local authorities, the space is often turned into a common good [34] (p. 2). Syntagma square in Athens is such an example, where in 2011, following the Indignados anti-austerity movement in Spain, the citizens of Athens gathered in order to express their political opinions and defend their rights [6] (p. 147). Those who participated were self-organised in groups and created a daily routine of certain actions and activities [35] (p. 15), e.g., legal support, technical support, food gathering and cleaning works [35] (p. 129). The transformation of the public square into a common one proved to be temporary, since the State, as its legal manager, ordered its violent evacuation on the 30 July 2011 [35] (p. 227).

6. Citizens' Initiatives, Cultural Heritage and Bottom-Up *Musealisation Mechanisms* in Urban Space

Connecting urban regeneration to economical terms in the name of development and progress, often causes the inhabitants to actively protect and defend their region and to demand better living

conditions. One of their arguments is the history of the area of interest in combination with the right to the city, and their aim to become part of the transformation of the urban cultural life [36] (p. 84), the main point of interest of the present paper. According to Jones, Mozaffari and Jasper, the interpretation of the term "heritage" includes, apart from the use of the past, a social process, shifting the term into the context of time, people and place, and emphasising, thus, the evolving importance of the part that collectives and organised groups play in cultural creation [37] (p. 1). Cultural heritage turns into a field of political claim, empowering identity nested in a place [36] (p. 86).

Within this context, new "cultural rights" were identified and were included in Freiburg's Declaration (2007) [38], which is part of the wider category of human rights. They aim to secure the access to and enjoyment of cultural heritage under conditions of equality, human dignity and the absence of discrimination. According to Fouseki and Shehade, based on the case of the buildings in the Makrygianni plot in Athens that were defended by citizens and collectives in 2003, the definition of cultural rights often proves to be incomplete, since it is possible to produce conflict with other human rights, as in their case the right to property [39] (p. 146).

The heritage of a community or a place is temporary and fragile and its future depends on the capability of people to get organised and react [40] (p. 4). Under the term "cultural activism" are the citizens' efforts to save and protect cultural heritage under threat [39] (p. 139). Both material remnants of the past, as well as the constantly evolving cultural processes that are formed in a place among its people are included in the latter [37] (pp. 1, 2). Cultural heritage can be used to reform urban landscapes and attach additional values to groups of people that are related to it [4] (p. 18). The citizens that defend their cultural heritage pose specific demands, search for appropriate strategies to achieve their goals, aim to have their struggle recognised by others and attempt to involve more people in their cause—the way it is normally done in general with social movements [37] (p. 6).

The work of the NGO MONUMENTA in Athens [41] is an interesting example of cultural activism in Greece. It aims to protect the environment and the cultural heritage through interventions to the statutory bodies, through organising public discussions, lectures and workshops in order to raise awareness and through an extended project of documenting the architectural heritage of several Greek cities. More targeted were the efforts of other collectives and the residents of the Refugees' Buildings in Alexandras Avenue in Athens, who in 2000, during the preparations for the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens, were strongly opposed to the planned demolition of the buildings [34]. A similar example is the citizens' movement organised for the protection of the Heroon in Heraklion Crete, which was built with public money in the 1930s and is nowadays in danger of demolition by its owners [42].

In the same category of cultural activism belong the community-based digital archives, which relate to collective memory, as a form of social movement activism that engages with the past and promotes it [39] (p. 140). The group "Industrial Archaeology" on Facebook, for instance, maintains a blog with a database including pictures, drawings and descriptions of old, abandoned or demolished industrial buildings and complexes in Greece, in an effort to raise awareness and to preserve information related to abandoned professions and techniques [43]. Similarly, the citizens' movement for the Aitoloakarnania Prefecture, called "Act", invites all interested parties to contribute to their aim, by collecting information and documentation material concerning the production and commercial trade of tobacco in the area, the main activity of income in the past, in order to demand the creation of a relevant museum [44].

This recognition of remnants and places that relate to the past as of value and worthy of being preserved by a community and the pressure applied for its official recognition (or not), leads to the activation of unique bottom-up *musealisation mechanisms* or "heritagising actions" [40] (p. 3). The members of the grass-roots initiatives, undertaking informally the role of the official administration, select parts of the city with cultural value (as recognized according to criteria posed by themselves) and point the selected places out through their actions, quite often while demanding the State act in their protection. The selection depends on the city's mnemonic communities that are activated, which comprise part of the dominant memory. The latter may not always identify with the public memory, meaning the memory formed by public actions (e.g., ceremonies, monuments, etc.) and

organised by the State and vice versa [45] (pp. 37, 39). Through this collectively materialised process, the initiatives mobilise the citizens to participate in the creation and development of cultural heritage in various ways. Through this process, they "produce" their own (unofficial) cultural heritage and, thus, contribute to the overall development of the cultural heritage of the area selected.

A similar procedure, though independent of organised citizens' initiatives, is identified by Lekakis and Dragouni in the rural landscape of Naxos. The rural heritage of the island is constantly created in local consciousness, based on their various narratives and independently from the official monumentalisation processes. The writers refer to this phenomenon as "memoralisation" (μνημείωση) and compare it to the procedure identified prior to the official monumentalisation of Byzantine and post-Byzantine heritage, in the middle of the 19th century [46]. The recognition of such a process outside urban boundaries indicates that it is not exclusively related to cities, but describes the need of people to participate in recognizing and protecting their heritage, away from official processes and within their own common law.

7. Grass-Roots Initiatives' in Heraklion—Three Case Studies

After the outbreak of the economic crisis in Greece, an increase in the number of grass-roots initiatives related to urban space was documented, initially mainly in Athens and after 2010 in other regions of the country as well. One of their common features is their interest in protecting and preserving the local cultural heritage. Their actions extend from simple entertainment to cultural activism, an element that determines their duration and context, leading to the development of various kinds of bottom-up *musealisation mechanisms*.

During the last decade, three similar initiatives have been active in Heraklion, focusing on selected decadent areas of the old city: The urban festival "Atheati Poli" (the invisible city) [47], the Lakkos Project [48] and the activities of the Environmental Association of Aghia Triada [49]. The architecture of the old city, the stories surrounding the buildings, their use and the people that lived and worked in them, as well as their role in the creation of urban public space and modern daily life are part of these initiatives' interests and demands.

The selection of these particular initiatives was made after taking into consideration the following factors: (a) They focus on entire areas of the old city and aim to affect both their urban landscape and the daily life of their inhabitants, (b) their activities take place within the borders of the old city of Heraklion, a listed archaeological site, and thus directly set under the protection of the Greek Ministry of Culture, (c) their central location may help to spread their demands, and finally (d) my participation in some of their activities contributed to my need to better understand their actual relationship to cultural heritage and their impact on the urban landscape.

The activities of these three initiatives have not been officially documented before. The information included in their web-sites and Facebook accounts only briefly describe the reasons they were created in the first place, their aims and the actions materialised to achieve them. Therefore, a more detailed documentation was thought to be crucial for my research needs in order to better comprehend their structure, their aims and the possible formation of bottom-up *musealisation mechanisms*. For that purpose, semi-structured interviews with members of the organisation committees were conducted, based on a questionnaire that covered five basic axes: (a) The needs that led to the creation of the initiatives, (b) their actions, (c) the possible mobilisation of the public, (d) the emphasis given to the historical background of any area, and (e) the possible impact on the urban landscape.

The data collected was qualitatively processed with a focus on the above five axes, as well as the structural elements of the initiatives, as they emerged through the interviews: (a) the included parties, (b) the tools selected and used by each initiative in order to accomplish its goals, (c) the level of developing discussion about public space, and (d) the unanimous demand for developing the urban space. Due to the limited space available, the answers given in the interviews are presented in this paper while being analysed.

8. Presentation and Discussion of the Interviews' Data

The main cause that led to the formation of all three initiatives was the recognition of the degradation of certain areas in the old city of Heraklion and the potential of development they carried. In addition to that, the willingness and eagerness of the initial members of the groups to act with the aim of developing a dialogue concerning the public space, were crucial for their activation. The defense of public space, the architectural heritage, the history of every place and the problems and challenges faced in daily basis by the social groups residing in them were, and still remain, the main areas of concern for the initiatives. According to these characteristics, the groups under discussion fall within the framework of citizens' movements acting in urban space.

The involved parties for all three cases are the same, namely, the organisers, the statutory bodies and the public. In Aghia Triada, the former Turkish district of the city, an association that acts following a specific charter, including rules related to its function and its members' responsibilities, was established. In Lakkos, the area where brothels were gathered by law till the 1960s, a small group of people led by an artist who is a permanent inhabitant of the area, makes the decisions for action in cooperation with the project's followers. Finally, the urban festival "Atheati Poli" is run by a small organising committee of volunteers-architects. Initially, they choose the area for every upcoming festival, constantly changing locations. Then, they publish an open call addressed to all interested parties (inhabitants, institutions and collectivities) so as to plan the activities of the festival. Finally, during the materialisation of the chosen activities, the organising committee of the festival acts as a coordinator.

The statutory bodies involved, or to whom the actions of the initiatives are addressed, are mainly the local Municipality and the Ephorate of Antiquities, whose activities are usually limited to bureaucratical procedures for allowing entrance to otherwise closed public spaces, as well as organising cleaning works. During the last "Atheati Poli" festival organised in 2015, the local Ephorate of Antiquities reacted more actively to the festival's call by participating with thematic walks organised by its staff members. Finally, the activities and events organised by the initiatives were addressed to all interested inhabitants, who were welcome to participate either passively or actively and to participate correspondingly in the decision-making processes, depending on the structure of each initiative.

The structure of each initiative allows, furthermore, the use of different tools in order to accomplish their aims. For instance, art in public space retains a central part in the initiatives' tool-box. Public art is widely accepted to have an important impact in urban planning, especially during regeneration projects undertaken in specific areas [50] (p. 72). In spite of that, no special valuation tools have been identified to subjectively document its social impact and its effects on the landscape [51] (p. 19). Nevertheless, according to Policy Studies Institute, public art contributes to the uniqueness of a place, attracts new businesses, increases the economic value of the land, contributes to cultural tourism, creates job opportunities, amplifies the use of open spaces, suspends space degradation and reduces vandalism [51] (p. 7). The initiatives that operate in the districts of Aghia Triada and Lakkos mainly create murals of permanent character on the buildings' facades. Their aim is to achieve an aesthetic improvement in the areas and, thus, in the daily life of residents. Contrariwise, the strategy followed by the urban festival "Atheati Poli" dictates the removal of all works of art from the areas of interest and their reinstatement to their former conditions.

Apart from public art, the initiatives organise various events and activities, such as exhibitions, musical and theatrical performances, thematic guiding tours, educational programmes, and workshops. Their supreme aim is to communicate their goals by developing a dialogue among the participants and motivating them to become activists. All target groups are taken into consideration while planning the events, which are always offered without an entrance fee.

In order to advertise their goals and the events organised, the initiatives under study maintain web-sites, blogs and accounts on Facebook, since the Internet is a cheap tool and spreads information fast. At the same time, press releases and interviews at the local channels and radio stations introduce the initiatives to the public and inform the inhabitants of the upcoming events.

The institutional bureaucracy, finally, as a tool used to accomplish the groups' purposes, reflects the relationship that the organisers seek to develop with the official managing bodies in the city. The urban festival "Atheati Poli" and the Environmental Association of Aghia Triada wish to cooperate with the official managing bodies, following the established bureaucratical procedures both for simple cases such as the lifting of a restriction to public buildings, or more complicated scenarios such as putting pressure on the statutory bodies on specific matters. On the other hand, the Lakkos Project makes decisions more independently, emphasising communication with the local inhabitants, while materialising actions that, up until now, do not come in conflict with the institutions.

Regardless of the means they choose, all three initiatives wish to develop a dialogue concerning public urban space among the city's residents. Despite their intentions, all discussions made seem to be restricted at the personal level among the organisers and some of the inhabitants that attend the events. This paradox, according to my opinion, is due to the lack of clarity in the organisers' statement regarding their aims, as well as the fact that most of the attendees seem to come to the events mainly to be passively entertained, a common feature in urban festivals according to Lind [52] (p. 10). On the other hand, the discussions developed between "Atheati Poli" or the Environmental Association and the local Municipality seem to have better results, with some of the initiatives' proposals being integrated into its political agenda.

The urban built space, where all three initiatives' activities are taking place, represents the material remnants of its historical background in the present day [53] (p. 1). Depending on what we choose to remember and what to forget, we intend to preserve or demolish the respective remnants in the city. Depending on which remnants we finally decide to preserve, we form the memory of the city. According to Kirschenblatt-Gimblett, everything that is recognised as heritage is instantly modified, since after having acknowledged it as such, the stages of declaration, preservation and integration in the sphere of tourism will follow, through the actions of musealisation conducted by the official statutory bodies [4] (p. 18).

The bottom-up *musealisation mechanisms* of my case studies act in the same way up to a certain degree. They acknowledge the cultural value of a place, they point it out with the means available to them and they give the public access to the place through their activities. Thus, they increase public interest, even if it is only during the events, and encourage the local authorities to be active. The role of the historical documentation is assigned once again mainly to the experts. Local archaeologists are invited to organise exhibitions, lectures and guiding tours, and to decide on their own if the public will participate in these actively or, as usually, passively. How active the local collective or individual memory is depends entirely on the organisers' wishes.

More specifically, the Lakkos Project scarcely focuses on the local past, forming a new layer of cultural creation in the area and thus improving the urban landscape by increasing the number of inhabitants who pass through Lakkos daily or who visit the constantly evolving open-air mural exhibition. The "Atheati Poli" urban festival, on the other hand, suggests new places for artistic events and exhibitions in empty public buildings and highlights historical remnants of the city that remain metaphorically and literally invisible, while retaining an active communication strategy with the local Municipality and its agenda. Finally, the Environmental Association of Aghia Triada has organised a special group for documenting the oral testimonies of the elderly residents of the district, searched for financial assistance to be given to locals who have inherited listed buildings and are unable to protect them, and, most importantly, focused on the preservation of the historical landscape while putting pressure on statutory bodies to materialise the new city plan of the area.

A common demand of all three case studies presented in this paper is the renewal of the areas of interest and the improvement of the living conditions for the residents, an important percentage of whom are members of minority groups (Roma, refugees, migrants). The creation of proper services in the public space, the restoration and enhancement of the architectural heritage and the development and materialisation of social welfare programmes for vulnerable groups are only a few of the initiatives' demands. In contradiction to that is the fact that none of the initiatives seem to suggest any particular

ways that these could be implemented, and none have tried to encourage the corresponding social groups towards that direction.

The term "renewal" corresponds to a positive outcome for the social group that is to enjoy it. Various actions for upgrading the urban landscape and the locals' living conditions may be identified within an urban space. These actions may relate either to an entire area or selected parts of it and may be organised and materialised either by the official institutions, the private sector or various citizens' initiatives. For instance, "urban regeneration" [54] (pp. 9, 17, 18) is the result of the interaction between different factors, e.g., of social, economic or environmental origin, and the reaction to the opportunities and challenges produced by the degradation of an area at a particular moment. This reaction includes the complete vision and necessary action that may lead to solving urban issues, aiming to produce long lasting improvements in the economy, the society and the environment of the area of interest. This particular detail of duration comprises the main difference between the terms of "urban regeneration", "urban renewal", "urban redevelopment" and "urban revitilisation" or "urban rehabilitation", whose aims and ways of which they are to be accomplished, are not always clear.

On the other hand, under the term "gentrification" [55] (p. xv), the transformation of a working class or abandoned district into a middle class area, is described. The degradation of an area forces its initial residents to move to other districts of the city and attracts members of minority groups or of the working class, who, as proven in examples of gentrification projects implemented in various cities [55,56], are then forced to move, against their will, again after their upgrade due to an increase in living costs or because the owners of the houses return to their properties. According to Davidson and Lees, the main stages of the transformation to a middle class area are (a) the reinvestment of the capital, (b) the social upgrade with the arrival of wealthier citizens, (c) the changes on the urban landscape, and (d) the evacuation of low-income inhabitants, indirectly (e.g., through increasing rents) or directly (e.g., through power or water-cut) [55] (p. xvi). This procedure is used in order to erase serious social issues from an area, without actually solving them, thus turning gentrification into a class struggle.

Indicative of this danger is the text that I saw being put on selected walls of the Lakkos public space, claiming to have been written on 25 April 2019 by a couple of American artists who created murals for the Lakkos Project. The text, written in Greek so as to be comprehensible by the locals, warned about certain gentrification signs recognised in the area, raising the alarm for the social consequences created by the arrival of wealthier people in the district and the increase in the rents and prompting the inhabitants to organise and manage their neighborhood. That kind of urban development is also irrelevant to what the initiatives under study intend to achieve with their actions, which if not correctly managed, may be exploited by the gentrifying bodies in order to legitimize their presence in the area [56] (p. 19).

9. Conclusions

The practices followed during the last years by several neoliberal political parties in various countries around the world have provoked the reaction of citizens, which are expressed among other ways through the organisation of citizens' groups opposed to diverse daily issues, lately often related to mass tourism, in demand of their right to a better life. Collectives are formed to defend and demand public space, health services, the right to education, the protection of the environment, the right to housing, etc. The subjects under dispute are not always clear, producing discontinuities between the actions undertaken and the results they produce, and are affected by numerous factors that may not be entirely controlled by the initiatives.

This diversity creates research conflicts, since a typology based on the characteristics of the initiatives and the results of their efforts does not seem to be an easy task. The struggle is reflected in the current bibliography, where the various terminology and its awkward use by several researchers, have led to confusion related to the indistinguishable margins among the groups, their impact on the urban landscape and what that could mean for every initiative's success. The differences in their structure, coordination and results, in combination with their innumerous number, evoke questions

concerning their effectiveness, the possibility of imitating in the context of a widespread trend or even one's delusion and comfort, as far as one's participation in dealing with problems of public space is concerned. The influence that some initiatives have on others with similar activities can be identified, but, as Harvey notes, what seems to be suitable in one case becomes unsuitable for another [6] (p. 141).

In the present paper, I tried to show a different way of "creating" and "managing" cultural heritage in the urban space of Heraklion, a forthcoming tourist destination on Crete, one of the most popular destinations of Greece. The case studies presented in this paper belong to the above-mentioned wider action undertaken by citizens' initiatives defending the public space, an inextricable part of which is cultural heritage, within the context of a process that seems to expand from the Greek capital to the region.

The activity of the Heraklion examples is of great value, since, up until now, only a few initiatives defending public space and urban landscape have been organised in the city. Among their demands, the preservation and protection of cultural heritage is included. Through their action, the initiatives enrich the historical background of the city, along with the contribution of the experts, by moving beyond official history and developing their own bottom-up *musealisation mechanisms*. Highlighting moments of the recent cultural past places them on the timeline of the city, while, at the same time, the actions of the groups create new, but sometimes ephemeral, use and experience layers on the geographical and cultural urban background. Their activities point out the unknown or unpopular cultural heritage of the city, focusing mainly on the local residents instead of the tourists, and the preservation of the collective memory.

The participation of a large number of citizens in their activities proves the high interest shown in the various organised events, aiming to attract as many target groups as possible, although it is quite uncertain whether the participants realize the need for undertaking such actions. Despite the large numbers of people taking part in these activities, an absence of the minority groups the initiatives are willing to support is evident, a gap between their aims and their actions that might or might not be filled by their future activity. The events organised address the local inhabitants, but people living outside Heraklion or foreign visitors are not excluded. Tourists do not comprise a target group for the initiatives' activity, as proven by the complete absence of reference to them in their interviews, despite the planned changes in the old city's public spaces, in favour of both the locals and the tourists.

Lack of clear strategies and of proper methodological tools for documenting the actual impact of their choices on the urban landscape and the social groups involved are included in the main characteristics of the initiatives under study. The decisions made are based on the members of the committees, meaning that they could differ or even be withdrawn if the members of the committees changed. Nevertheless, a kind of impact of the collectives' activities may be traced on the old city's landscape, such as the open-air mural exhibition in Lakkos or the conversion of unused public buildings into art galleries during the "Atheati Poli" festival mentioned above.

While this paper was written, the committee of the "Atheati Poli" urban festival invited initiatives and independent inhabitants to participate in the forthcoming festival, to be held in September 2019, along the coastline of the old town [47]. This new call, in combination with the continuous posts made on Facebook by the Lakkos Project announcing the new mural creations in the area, as well as the calls made by the Aghia Triada Association to inform the residents about the forthcoming urban renewal plan, proves that their actions are still in progress. Under this aspect, they seem to need more time to achieve their aims and their long-range impact on the urban landscape—under the pressure of touristic evolvement—is yet to be seen.

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