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**THE BOUNDARIES OF  
HETEROTOPIA.  
EXAMINING THE PLAYGROUND'S  
“PUBLIC VALUE” IN  
CONTEMPORARY ATHENS.**

**A. PITSIKALI**

**PhD**

**2018**





**THE BOUNDARIES OF  
HETEROTOPIA. EXAMINING THE  
PLAYGROUND’S “PUBLIC VALUE”  
IN CONTEMPORARY ATHENS.**

**ALKISTIS PITSIKALI**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements of the  
University of Northumbria at Newcastle  
for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

Research undertaken in the Faculty of  
Engineering and Environment  
September 2018



# Abstract

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Literature depicts children of the Global North withdrawing from public space to occupy special enclaves. This thesis focuses on one of these spaces, namely the public playground. Specialised spaces not only segregate children from the public realm but also exclude the public realm from children's places. This study explores the potential of the playground as a place of interactions between different age groups examining its Public Value.

Drawing on an ethnographic study comprising observations and interviews carried out in three public playground sites in Athens, Greece (Dexameni, Ilioupolis, Vyronas) this study aims to understand the 'Public Value' of the playground. This is explored in the context of Athens by researching the playground's interactions with the public realm.

The theoretical framework of heterotopia, defining spaces of 'alternate ordering', is used to better understand the playground space. Existing literature approaches the playground as a heterotopia without exploring its reciprocal relation to its surroundings or its context. This study uses heterotopia as a tool to describe processes and potential, while connecting the spatial and the social.

The findings evidence the dual identity of the playground as both space of containment and discipline, and also a space of transgression and empowerment. The majority of existing literature reads the playground space as a play-accommodating, self-contained structure. This study unravels relations, interactions and connections with the playground's socio-spatial surroundings. Of particular significance is the finding that the playground's presence catalyses playful behaviour in adjacent public space for both children and adults, bearing a Public Value that is not dependent on its spatiality. Issues raised through this research contribute to the broader debate about how to support play and public interaction in both public space and the playground space. The study contributes to the fundamental understandings of the workings of the playground as a heterotopia, introducing the notions of the "Sequential Heterotopia" and "Heterotopic Affordances", while proposing the "play complex" as an approach to facilitating intergenerational play in the public realm. Finally, this study states the importance of familiarizing the public with the children as much as introducing children to the public.



# Table of Contents

---

Abstract.....	3
1. Introduction .....	17
1.1 Overview .....	17
1.2 Spatial Design, Childhood, Geography: A Personal Journey .....	17
1.3 Children in the City .....	18
1.4 Playground.....	20
1.5 Play .....	22
1.6 The Athenian Landscape.....	23
1.7 Heterotopia.....	25
1.8 Aims and Objectives.....	27
1.9 Thesis Overview.....	28
2. The Greek Context - Public Space, Children's Lives and the Playground's Public Value in Athens. ....	31
2.1 Overview .....	31
2.2 Athens.....	31
2.2.1 Demographics.....	31
2.2.2 Spontaneity.....	32
2.2.3 Current State of the City's Space .....	33
2.2.4 The Crisis – A New Every Day .....	34
2.3 Conceptual Framework .....	37
2.3.1 Public Space and Positionality .....	37
2.3.2 The Playground's Public Value .....	42
2.3.3 Conflict and Normalisation in Public Space .....	44
2.4 Children and the Public .....	45
2.4.1 Children's Segregation.....	45
2.4.2 Children's Geographies .....	46
2.4.3 Childhood in Greece .....	48

2.5 The Playground .....	50
2.5.1 Playgrounds – Spaces of Children’s Segregation.....	51
2.5.2 Athenian Playgrounds .....	56
2.6 Summary .....	59
3. Theoretical Framework – Heterotopia.....	61
3.1 Overview .....	61
3.2 Foucault’s Heterotopia.....	61
3.2.1 Introduction .....	61
3.2.2 The Characteristics of Foucault’s Heterotopia .....	62
3.2.2 Critique .....	66
3.3 Current Interpretations of Heterotopia.....	67
3.3.1 Examining the Literature – Studies and Scholars .....	67
3.3.2 Main Themes – Cross Cutting the Literature .....	72
3.4 Heterotopia, Space and Children.....	80
3.5 Liminality and Play.....	81
3.6 The Playground as a Heterotopia .....	83
3.6.1 Foucault’s Heterotopia and the Playground Space.....	83
3.6.2. My Approach.....	85
3.6.3 Reflection – Questions Emerge.....	89
3.7 Summary .....	90
4. Methodology.....	91
4.1 Overview .....	91
4.2 Epistemology.....	91
4.3 Methodology.....	92
4.3.1 Ethnography.....	92
4.3.2 Ethnographic Studies .....	94
4.4 Methods .....	96
4.4.1 Intentions .....	96
4.4.2 Data Construction .....	98

4.4.3 In The field.....	130
4.4.4 Ethics.....	141
4.4.5 Data Analysis.....	145
4.5 Summary.....	150
5. The Case Studies.....	151
5.1 Overview .....	151
5.2 Criteria .....	151
5.2.1 Why Athens .....	151
5.2.2 Case Selection Criteria .....	154
5.3 Description of the Cases .....	157
5.3.1 Case 1 – Dexameni (The Upper – Income Case Study).....	157
5.3.2 Case 2 – Vyronas (The Lower – Income Case Study).....	167
5.3.3 Case 3 – Ilioupolis (The Middle – Income Case Study) .....	176
5.4 General Trends and Patterns of Use – A Description of the Cases’ Everyday Context .....	186
5.4.1 Crisis .....	186
5.4.2 Patterns of Use .....	188
5.5 Summary.....	192
6. Heterotopia of Deviance.....	197
6.1 Overview .....	197
6.2 Classification of Space .....	197
6.2.1 Introduction: Normative Interactions with Space .....	197
6.2.2 Children in the Piazza: From Playfulness to Danger .....	203
6.2.3 Playground – The Children’s Space.....	206
6.3 Characteristics of the Heterotopia of Deviance: Protection and Control.....	208
6.3.1 Playground: A Safe Space .....	208
6.3.2 The Fence .....	209
6.3.3 Conflict and Injury .....	210
6.3.4 A Socialising Hub.....	211

6.3.5 The Ideal Playground.....	213
6.3.6 A School for Norms .....	215
6.4 The Heterotopia of Deviance Mechanisms .....	216
6.4.1 Introduction .....	216
6.4.2 Profiling.....	216
6.4.3 Supervision .....	219
6.4.4 Segregation .....	229
6.4.5 Normalisation Practices .....	232
6.4.6 Assistance .....	236
6.4.7 Self-regulation Practices .....	238
6.5 Beyond the Heterotopia Norms: After-hours .....	244
6.6 Summary .....	247
7. Heterotopia of Transgression .....	251
7.1 Overview .....	251
7.2 In, On and Beyond the Boundary.....	252
7.2.1 Introduction: Redefining the Children's Space.....	252
7.2.2 Inside the Fence .....	253
7.2.2 On the Fence .....	261
7.2.3 Beyond the Fence.....	279
7.3 Tug-of-War .....	293
7.3.1 Negotiating the Norms .....	293
7.3.2 Self-regulation.....	294
7.3.3 Assisting Transgression .....	295
7.3.4 Normalisation .....	299
7.4 Summary .....	300
8. Heterotopia of Resistance .....	307
8.1 Overview .....	307
8.2 The Spatiality of the Heterotopia of Resistance .....	308
8.2.1 Situating the Island: The Playground Catalyst .....	308



8.2.2 Fluid Boundaries.....	312
8.2.3 Proposing New Classifications.....	316
8.2.4 Inaccessible Spaces – Cradles of Resistance.....	323
8.3 Play Building Resistance.....	326
8.4 Appropriation.....	332
8.4.1 Making Community .....	332
8.4.2 Making Space .....	334
8.4.3 Claiming (One’s Right to) Space .....	337
8.6 Conflict.....	346
8.6.1 Conflicting Claims: Defining Publicness .....	346
8.6.2 Co-authored Self-regulation .....	353
8.6.3 The Example of Birthday Parties.....	355
8.7 Summary.....	358
9. Discussion.....	361
9.1 Overview .....	361
9.2 The Playground as a Heterotopia .....	361
9.2.1 The Three Heterotopias .....	361
9.2.2 The Sequential Heterotopia .....	362
9.2.3 Heterotopic Affordances .....	364
9.3 Heterotopia of Resistance and Play in the City.....	366
9.3.1 Play in the City.....	366
9.3.2 Reclaiming the ‘Child-Friendly’: Play as Everyone’s Right.....	367
9.3.3 Play Complex.....	369
9.4 Heterotopia of Resistance and the Right to the City .....	370
9.4.1 The Right to Architecture .....	370
9.4.2 Crisis and Resistance .....	372
9.4.3 The Piazzas as Public Spaces of Resistance.....	374
9.4.5 Co-authoring a New Everyday .....	378
9.4.6 Familiarising the Public with Children: Reclaiming the Intergenerational ...	379

9.5 Summary .....	382
10. Conclusion .....	383
10.1 Overview .....	383
10.2 Reviewing the Findings.....	383
10.2.1 The Playground as a Heterotopia of Deviance .....	384
10.2.2 The Playground as a Heterotopia of Transgression.....	385
10.2.3 The Playground as a Heterotopia of Resistance .....	387
10.3 Aims and Objectives.....	389
10.3.1 Objectives .....	389
10.3.2 The Playground's Public Value.....	391
10.3.3 Oppressive or Liberating? .....	394
10.4 Contribution to Knowledge.....	396
10.4.1 Key Finding .....	396
10.4.2 Play, Public space, Architecture and the Playground .....	397
10.4.3 Play, Making Architecture and Claiming One's Right to Space.....	398
10.4.4 Heterotopia, Public Space and the Playground .....	398
10.4.5 Public Space, Childhood and the Playground Space in Athens.....	399
10.5 Reflection .....	400
10.5.1 The Researcher Me .....	400
10.5.2 The Anxious Me .....	402
10.5.3 Me as Other .....	403
10.6 Limitations and Further Research.....	404
10.6.1 The Public Space Field .....	404
10.6.2 Sample.....	405
10.6.3 Unaccompanied Children .....	406
10.6.4 Reflections on Theoretical Framework .....	406
10.6.5 Method Flexibility .....	407
10.6.6 The One-Person Study .....	407
10.6.7 The Crisis.....	407

10.6.8 Ag. Panteleimonas .....	408
10.6.9 Comparative .....	408
10.7 Summary .....	409
11. Reference list .....	411
Appendix A .....	451
1. Consent Form .....	451
Consent Form – Greek .....	451
Consent Form – English Translation .....	453
2. Information Sheet .....	455
Information Sheet – Greek .....	455
Information Sheet – English Translation .....	457
3. Questionnaire .....	459
Questionnaire – Greek .....	459
Questionnaire – English Translation .....	461
Appendix B .....	464
1. Athens Map .....	464
2. Case Studies' Plans .....	465
3. Three Case Studies Statistics .....	468
Appendix C .....	470
1. Policies –The Playground .....	470



## **Acknowledgements**

I owe my deepest gratitude to my research supervisors Professor Rosie Parnell and Dr Lesley McIntyre for their valuable help and constructive critique not only on the academic but also on the personal level when times became tough.

My grateful thanks are also extended to Ms Lesley Roll for her support and guidance during my fieldwork.

I would also like to thank my gorgeous proof-readers: John-Erik Hansson, Alice Kate Mullen, Manolis-Nikos Kassotakis, and Eman Zied for their valuable time.

Finally, I wish to thank my parents and friends for their support and encouragement throughout my study. They made these three years really special and being grateful is the least I could do.



# Declaration

I declare that the work contained in this thesis has not been submitted for any other award and that it is all my own work. I also confirm that this work fully acknowledges opinions, ideas and contributions from the work of others.

Any ethical clearance for the research presented in this thesis has been approved. Approval was sought and granted by the University Ethics Committee on 29/02/2016 and 06/04/2017.

I declare that the Word Count of this Thesis is 93753 words

Name: Alkistis Pitsikali

Signature:

Date: 27/09/2018





# 1. Introduction

---

## 1.1 Overview

This chapter provides an overview of this study's scope. First I introduce myself. I set my personal background and interests in order to familiarise the reader with my critical position. Then, I briefly introduce the context of this study, identifying the major gaps in literature. Both are examined later in more detail (See Chapters 2 and 3). I provide an introductory rationale, answering the whys of the adopted approach: why Athens, why the playground space, why during the Crisis, why heterotopia and why Public Value? This brief summary helps in grasping the overall position of this research and the connections between these different areas of literature. I describe the position of children in relation to the city, the playground, crisis, heterotopia and play, setting the research aims and objectives and finally summarising the contents of each chapter of the thesis.

## 1.2 Spatial Design, Childhood, Geography: A Personal Journey

I come from an architectural background specialising in educational and children's environments. I consider architecture to be a powerful tool for reshaping the current state of the world. After I finished my undergraduate degree in Architecture, I continued my studies with a one year Masters in 'Designing Learning Environments'. During this year, I connected architecture with childhood, learning and play. My designer background influences my view, however, as an academic I draw upon a range of disciplinary lenses. I do not ascribe to any developmental conceptualisations of children, rather I approach them as people in their own terms drawing on age's relational construction (Edmiston, 2010, 2008; Holloway & Valentine 2000; Hopkins & Pain, 2007; James & Prout, 1994; Jenks, 1996; James & James, 2004; Jackson & Scott, 2000; Qvortrup, 1994; Williams & Nussbaum, 2001). During both my journey in academia and my personal studying, I was influenced by the fields of radical architectural theory and children's geographies. I have a keen interest in the social and psychological effects of the built environment on users. I do not perceive architecture to be a one-way process but rather a transactional, negotiation during which people shape their environment and are shaped by it. For me architecture is not a hollow, artistic product, rather it reveals relations and hierarchies in society.

Having grown up in Athens, this study was of personal interest to me. Places that structured my everyday have influenced me both as a designer and a person. Being sensitive to spatial elements and their effect on my behaviour and thoughts, I consider physical space integral to one's life, even personality. The spaces we grow up in define our current selves. Although not frequently, I used to play myself in one of the case studies when I was a child (See: 5.3.3), while my parents still live nearby. Returning back and placing my academic gaze into these same environments allowed me to better understand, and explore practices in relation to everyday environments. Many of the incidents I observed made this study a reflexive journey through time as I had already experienced them myself, while growing up. At the same time, although an outsider to the playground space, I was an insider of the Geek culture and Athenian public space.

The idea to conduct this study came as a succession of my master's dissertation in which I examined the playground as a public/civic space through the lens of children's play. In that dissertation I proposed that play bears the potential to transform the playground into a public place for intergenerational contact and interaction. With this thesis I build upon my argument, first intending to seek evidence related to this speculation and second to place the playground within its broader socio-spatial context. I do not examine the playground as a disconnected space, an enclave inside whose limits this argument is materialised, but as a spatiality placed within the city's public space.

### **1.3 Children in the City**

Space not only accommodates but also reflects and produces social, economic and political relations (Lefebvre, 1991; Rose, 1993; Soja, 1996) (See: 2.3.1). Olwig & Gulløv (2003) explain that restriction in movement and the division of space into go and not-go areas 'mirror hierarchies and symmetries in the relations between different parts of the society' (p.8). One of the groups affected is children. As Aitken (2001a) argues, children's exclusion from public space does not take the form of 'material segregation but is rather about enforced exclusions that comprise disembodiedness' (p.23).

Alienated from most manifestations of public life, children grow up in the margins of urban life, in spaces designed especially for them 'out of adult life' (Aaron, 1965, p.29). These spaces' publicness is often limited as the unexpected is controlled and public realm is barred. Public realm is often perceived as an extension of the adult private world (See: Matthews et al. 2003, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c; Sibley, 1995;

Valentine, 1996a). Control informs the current childhood experience, while Jones' (2000) 'disordered spaces' (p.32) – spaces where children can create their own orderings – seem to be largely absent from children's lives. For the different-than-the-adult child home is the place-to-be (Holloway & Valentine, 2000a, 2000b), 'nested in bonds of love and care' as Christensen & O'Brien put it (2003, p.3). Similarly, since according to Loukaitou-Sideris (2013) 'parental anxieties have led to strict regulation and control of traditional public spaces' (p.131), school is usually the centre of children's play lives.

The fences of childhood – signifiers of security – acquire interesting meanings as adults' values and views about childhood are reflected in urban space. Drawing on Stavrides' (2015) characterisation of urban space, children appear to live in an 'archipelago of normalized enclosures' (p.9). In the urban landscapes of power (Matthews et al. 2000a), power over children is not enforced only by people, i.e. a parent or other adult, but as Zeiher (2003) argues, by 'set arrangements at fixed locations with predetermined purposes and programmes and organisational structures' (p.67). Walls, fences, enclosures and specialization are the main elements that inform children's spatial experience. The places designed for children are 'institutionalized' (Rasmussen, 2004, p.156). Aitken (1998) uses the work of Lefebvre to argue that in a city people are considered 'subjects' only if they produce space, while Mitoulas (2005) argues that the built space is created by adults, for adults; adults being the subjects that are capable of manipulating, changing or sustaining this space. In this line of thought, Mitchell & Reis-Walsh (2002) wonder, if this is the case, what is the status of children in the current urban milieu?

Discussion about play in the city often concludes with the notion of "child-friendly". The notion of "child-friendly" is used to describe a range of entities, from cities to play-equipment (See: Cunningham & Jones, 1994; Gleeson & Sipe, 2006; Kylin & Bodelius, 2015; Ross, 2015; Cohen & Torres, 2015; van Vliet & Karsten, 2015). However, as van Vliet and Karsten (2015) argue: 'The Child-Friendly City (CFC) label means different things to different people, influenced by their professional interests' (p.1). Recent debates revolve around special infrastructure in the urban scape in order to engage children with the public realm, in design and in decisions about their lives (Percy-Smith, 2006; Alderson, 2000; Burke, 2005; Daniels & Hohnson, 2009; Ellis et al., 2015; Gallagher, 2004; Hart, 1992; Johnson, 2013a; Maxey, 1999; Rofe, 1999; Solomon, 2005; Smith, 1995; Wridt et al., 2015). However, child-friendly approaches tend to focus more on the inclusion of children in the adult public, rather than examining the publicness of children's spaces (McAllister, 2008; NIUA, 2016; NUA,

2017). This study examines the playground's – a child-friendly space by design – relationship to the public realm.

## 1.4 Playground

Literature depicts children of the Global North withdrawing from public space to occupy special enclaves (Matthews et al. 2000a; Rasmussen, 2004; Olwig and Gulløv, 2003): children's spaces (See: 2.4). This thesis focuses on one of these spaces, namely the public playground.

Playgrounds have acquired different forms and meanings throughout history. Utilitarian and child-centred from their very first appearance, they were bound with and created by the theories about children's development, childhood and play (Aitken, 2001; Solomon, 2005; Sutton-Smith, 1990). The playground space was initially created as a space for children's protection and segregation from the rest of society and the city (Gagen, 2000a, 2000b; Gill, 2007), while later approaches started perceiving it as the starting point for engaging children in civic life; a place of social interaction (Aaron, 1965; Daniels & Hohnson, 2009; Dattner, 1969; Doll & Brehm, 2010; Frost, 2012; Johnson, 2013a; Kinchin & O'Connor, 2012; Lady Allen of Hurtwood, 1964; Maxey, 1999; Rofe, 1999; Tzonis & Lefaivre, 1999). The body of research on the playground, however, has tended to approach it as a play-accommodating, self-contained structure without placing it in its general (socio-historical, cultural or spatial) context and without exploring its publicness and connections to adjacent spaces (Brown & Burger, 1984; Hayward et al., 1974; Herrington & Studtmann, 1998; Luken et al., 2011; Moore & Cosco, 2007; Susa & Benedict, 1994; Sutton-Smith, 1997). At the same time, most studies examine play and its relation to public space in general, without considering playground as a part of the latter (Freeman, 1995; Maxey, 1999; Tyler, 1987). Others explore children's relation with space but do not address play and the playground as facilitators of this relation (Elsley, 2004; Massey, 1998; Nayak, 2003; O'Brien, 2000; Olwig & Gulløv, 2003; Skelton et al., 1998; Skelton, 2000; Valentine, 2001). In contrast with these approaches, this study takes into account all three concepts of 1) play, 2) public space and 3) playground and explores their inter-connections. The term Public Value was coined for the purposes of this study in order to describe the playground's publicness. As a result, the term Public Value synthesizes the concepts of access and interaction (Knox & Pinch, 2006; Petrescu, 2007; UNESCO, 2017) referring to the extent to which the playground space is accessible to different age and social groups and not only to its users (See: 2.3.2).

The everyday and the mundane is of interest in this study. I draw on architectural theory about critical spatial practice. Critical spatial practices are radical and interdisciplinary (Rendell, 2012), situated and speculative (Doucet & Frichot, 2018), diverse, performative and embodied (Rendell, 2012). As 'architecture can be found in the actions and relational practices of everyday life' (Trogal & Petrescu, 2017), I also focus on 'everyday geographies' (Horton & Kraftl, 2014, p.181) and practices that inform people's everyday lives rather than on states of exception. I chose the local public playground taking advantage of the neighbourhood scale. Neighbourhood is approached here both as 'community' and as 'context' (Forrest & Kearns, 2001, p.2141). The neighbourhood scale is of interest as it can foster different dynamics and orderings from those created in wider contexts (Aitken, 2001; Blommaert et al., 2005; Forest, 2009, See also: Haeberle, 1988; Kerns & Parkinson, 2001; Karsten, 2003; Lofland, 1985), while reflecting larger-scale practices. Both conflict and normalization processes emerge at the scale of the neighbourhood.

Playgrounds usually function as 'local public spaces' (See: De Cauter & Dehaene, 2008a, p.99). Often regular users appropriate them more actively than visitors, affecting their Public Value and the interactions that take place there. At the same time, it is this characteristic that makes playgrounds important for children's everyday interaction with the public realm – some of them develop 'an intimate knowledge of their playground' (Karsten, 2003, p.459). Places of the everyday are particularly important to children, not only as places of socialisation, but also as sites of identity construction (Aitken, 2001; Vermeulen and Verweel 2009; Walseth, 2006a, 2006b). Playgrounds – spaces designated for play – do not refer to adults' play. As a general cultural characteristic of western societies, as Rojek (1985) argues, adult play is 'codified and regulated' (p.78). At the same time, Blackford (2004) notes that playgrounds can also be understood as spaces where 'parenting requirements are performed, contested and reified by community' (p.239). Although public, many scholars have commented on the 'failure' (Heseltine and Holborn, 1987, p.12) of the playground space to engage children with the public realm. Jacobs (1961) argued:

How nonsensical is the fantasy that playgrounds and parks are automatically O.K. places for children, and streets are automatically not O.K. places for children' (p.80).

The Opies (in Blackford, 2004, 230) argued that it is the adults that the confined, fenced-in space of the child's playground actually keeps safe. The playground's Public

Value, referring to the presence of the public realm in the playground<sup>1</sup>, is of interest in this study. Turning the above arguments on their heads, I suggest that the fact that playgrounds do not engage adults with *children's* culture could be seen as a further measure of their failure.

## 1.5 Play

Play, the activity the playground space is intended to accommodate, is considered an important aspect of this study. Many studies examine a variety of definitions given to play (Blanchard, 1986; Fine, 1987; Huizinga, 1949; Sutton-Smith, 2001) perceiving it as a means towards an end, often development (Dewey, 1915, 1916; 1987; Montessori, 1912; Piaget, 1962) and socialization (Cole-Hamilton & Gill, 2002; Gill, 2007) (See: Chapter 3). Existing literature about play, the child's work (Aaron 1965; Corbeil, 1999; Heseltine & Holborn, 1987; Piaget, 2007; Solomon, 2005), is preoccupied with the benefits of play (Dattner, 1969; Dewey, 1915, 1916; 1987; Heseltine & Holborn, 1987; Jarvis et al., 2014; Montessori, 1912; Potter, 1997; Tovey, 2007; Crust et al., 2014; Singh & Gupta, 2012; Vygotsky, 1933).

Play has been described as spontaneous, free, personally directed, intrinsically motivated behaviour (Weister & McCall, 1976 in Corbeil, 1999; Wood, 2009; Huizinga, 1949) and as a 'cultural event' with its own rituals (Sutton-Smith, 1990, p.6). However, the elusive nature of play poses difficulties in reaching consensus as to what it is. Researchers tend to combine different aspects of play in a state of "let's agree to disagree" conformity. Perceptions of play change according to dominant understandings of children and childhood, revealing society's norms in each era and area. Aries (1962) states that play was initially considered an intergenerational activity, an integral part of everyday life (See also: Corbeil, 1999; Huizinga, 1949; Turner, 1974). Dionysian perceptions of childhood (Holloway & Valentine, 2000a; Valentine, 1996a) approached children as 'inherently naughty' (Valentine, 1996a, p.2). These often subscribed to 'the relaxation theory' (Santer et al., 2007, p.4; Heseltine & Holborn, 1987), where play is seen as a means towards exhausting energy, allowing children to concentrate on more important activities (Dattner, 1969; Heseltine & Holborn, 1987; Sutton-Smith, 1997; Solomon, 2005; Cole-Hamilton & Gill, 2002). Later, the Romantic Movement approached play as one of children's natural instincts (Santer et al., 2007). This was drawing on the Apollonian perceptions of children (Jenks, 1996;

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<sup>1</sup> Rather than children's presence in the public realm

Valentine, 1996a) emerging around the mid-eighteenth century and formalised by Rousseau (Holloway & Valentine, 2000a). Rousseau (1993) stretched the importance of playing in nature as a valuable learning experience, arguing that play is children's work allowing them to exercise their skills. The developmental theories that emerged during the 20th century focused on the ways play helps children reach adulthood (Piaget, 1962). Many studies examine play as a means towards cognitive development, educational growth, development of skills, cognitive, emotional, and physical capacities (Potter, 1997; Heseltine & Holborn, 1987; Staempfli, 2009; Piaget, 1962; Montessori, 1912; Dewey, 1915, 1916; 1987; Glenn et al., 2012; Sutton-Smith, 1997), as a means towards socialization and social learning (Cole-Hamilton & Gill, 2002; Gill, 2007), or as a rehearsal for adult life (Santer, 2007; Aaron, 1965).

What is of interest to this study, however, is not the many manifestations and applications of play, but rather its possibility to empower the playing subject. Many scholars have commented on children's play as a space of empowerment (Kapasi & Gleave, 2009; Staempfli, 2009; Sutton-Smith, 1997). The space of play is a liminal (Dehaene & De Cauter, 2008a, p.96), 'ambivalent space' (Bhabha, 1994, p.37), a place of instability and possibility (Turner, 1982). I approach play through its liminal and as such emancipatory character. When in play one experiments with reality rather than merely accepting it; the player proposes new worlds and repositions herself in the existing social context:

The thing about playing is always the precariousness of the interplay of personal psychic reality and the experience of control of actual objects (Winnicott, 2009, p.64).

This interplay allows the player to turn existing reality into imaginary, fantasy worlds and then intervene in them setting under her control the rules and meanings of real life (Edmiston, 2008). It has been argued in the literature that play can support intergenerational relations, even reverse hierarchies (Edmiston, 2010, 2008; Gordon, 2009; Siyahhan, 2010; Zinsser, 1987). In this research play is perceived as being closely related to the playground's Public Value, potentially engaging or excluding people, while informing interactions.

## **1.6 The Athenian Landscape**

With this project I approach the public playground space as a civic space and explore its Public Value in the crisis landscape of Athens (See: 2.2). The reasons I

decided to place my study in the geo-cultural context of Athens were many. Firstly, Athens is a highly populated and densely built area accommodating half the population of Greece. The lack of leisure infrastructure and the scarcity of parks or other natural environments make the dispersed city playgrounds central places for families' everyday lives. Secondly, Athens is not a homogenous city, rather it comprises a variety of different socio-cultural backgrounds, making public space a hotbed of diversity and conflict. Thirdly, the socio-economic crisis that started in 2008 and continues until today<sup>2</sup> is lived as a new everyday (Athanasίου, 2014, p.73; Christopoulos, 2014, p.65) changing the symbolic values of the Athenian public realm (Dalakoglou, 2012b) (See: 2). As the side effects of the crisis are reflected in public space (Dalakoglou, 2012a; Vaiou, 2014), studies on the subject of the Athenian public space are currently thriving (Chatzidakis, 2014; Christopoulos, 2014; Dalakoglou, 2012a, 2012b, 2013a, 2013b; Kalandides & Vaiou, 2012; Kaika, 2012; Leontidou, 2012; Lynteris, 2011; Tsimouris, 2014; Vaiou, 2014; Xenakis, 2012).

The playground space, a local space through which society transmits cultural values, acquires great importance. Local places become the fields where "tension" between citizen groups take place (Dalakoglou, 2013b; Leontidou, 2012), emerging as public spaces of conflict and negotiation. As Vaiou (2014) argues:

Spaces of everyday life become test beds for coping/ resisting austerity and authoritarianism (p.83).

However, it is important to note that Greek studies on the subject of children and public space, both generally and more particularly in the crisis context, are extremely limited. Existing relevant literature does not approach the Greek crisis through the lens of the playground; while even the studies that use examples of incidents in Athenian playgrounds – namely Nauarinou and Ag. Panteleimonas – do so in order to approach the developments in the wider social context without focusing on the playground's orderings or Public Value in this context (Stavrides, 2014; De Angelis & Stavrides, 2010; Dalakoglou & Vradis, 2011). I approach the wider social transformation taking place using the playground as my viewpoint; an important but highly under-researched aspect of Greek public space. The focus on the playground space permits an examination of the identities and behaviours formed at the scale of the everyday, approached as socially constructed, relational and structured by material

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<sup>2</sup> The socio-financial crisis landscape forms the context of this study. As will become clear, it could not be linked directly to the data and this study's arguments. However as it forms the context of an ethnographic study it is further explored in Chapter 2.



spaces (Horton & Kraftl, 2014). This study intends to become a starting point to publicly discuss and research children's spaces and everyday lives in Greece.

## 1.7 Heterotopia

The critical framework of Heterotopia (See: Chapter 3), defining spaces of 'alternate ordering' (Hetherington, 1997, p.39), is used in this study in order to frame the potential of the playground in this crisis context and explore its relation with its surroundings. Heterotopia, a highly relational concept, acts as the link between the playground's character as a part of the public space and as a place of alternate orderings. Existing literature approaches the playground as a heterotopia without exploring its reciprocal relation to its surroundings or its context (Campo, 2013; Kern, 2008; Karsten, 2003; Richards, 2013; Vermeulen, 2011; Wesselman, 2013).

I "detect" two "kinds" of heterotopia in the playground space. Firstly, the playground space is a heterotopia of deviance (Foucault, 1998a) as it is created in order to segregate and protect children; usually thought of as underdeveloped and in need of protection. Secondly, the playground is a heterotopia based on the act of playing, which bears the possibility of transgression. The character of heterotopia in this study is not understood to result from the physical characteristics of the playground space, but rather from the relationship of those characteristics to its social subjects, its practices and the force it was created to contain: play. For the purposes of this introduction and in order to inform this study's key question I identify three core characteristics of heterotopia, of relevance to the playground space<sup>3</sup> (See also: Chapter 3).

First, deviant: the playground space is a heterotopia of deviance (Foucault, 1998a). Playgrounds can be understood as places created to house childhood – a state of human life that is usually thought of as one that deviates from the "normality" of adult life. Playgrounds are dispersed in the urban fabric, potentially engaging children with the public realm, yet at the same time segregating them from it.

Second, isolated yet penetrable: the playground as a heterotopia has a 'system of opening and closing that both isolates it and makes it penetrable' (Foucault, 1998a, p.183), transforming it into a kind of "enclave" – referring not only to the physical characteristics of space but also to the social interactions taking place there – constructed by the members of the heterotopia, consciously or unconsciously. It is

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<sup>3</sup> More extended analysis of the concept of heterotopia, its interpretations as well as my stance on the broader literature can be found in the Theoretical Framework chapter (49).

proposed that this constructed system mediates the playground's Public Value, while simultaneously interacting with the surrounding public realm. This research therefore explores a) the different ways a playground and the variety of social relations affecting its function are organized and b) the ways the playground communicates with the rest of the public space and its users.

Third, reflecting: heterotopias function in relation to all spaces that exist outside of them, acting as microcosms that reflect larger cultural patterns or social orders. As 'spaces that ritualize, reflect and shape ideologies of adulthood and childhood' (Blackford, 2004, p.237), playgrounds produce alternate orderings that both reflect and contest wider social norms.

Although studies on children in urban space are abundant (Aitken, 2001; Daniels & Hohnson, 2009; Elsley, 2004; Freeman 1995; Herrington, 1999; Holloway & Valentine, 2000a; Massey, 1998; Maxey, 1999; Olwig & Gulløv, 2003; O'Brien, 2000; Rofo, 1999; Smith, 1995; Solomon, 2005; Nayak, 2003; Skelton et al., 1998; Tyler, 1987; Valentine, 2001) studies of children's heterotopias are limited. Heterotopia is frequently used to characterize the state of childhood itself (Kaplan, unknown; Taylor, 2013), while other studies focus on the act of play (Burn & Richards, 2013; Dixon, 2004; Mitchell and Reid-Walsh, 2002; McNamee, 2000; Richards, 2013). Similarly, framing his work around heterotopia, Pechtelidis (2016) explores a 'youth collectivity' and its practices, while Gallan (2015) examines youth transitions in the urban night life space. Other studies explore a variety of play-spaces through their heterotopic characteristics such as an elevated park in Manhattan (Wesselman, 2013), the sports field (Vermeulen, 2011), the waterfront-playground in Brooklyn (Campo, 2013) or the theme park (Kern, 2008).

Existing literature approaches the playground as a heterotopia without exploring its opening mechanisms and Public Value or its reciprocal relation to its surroundings (Campo, 2013; Kern, 2008; Karsten, 2003; Richards, 2013; Vermeulen, 2011; Wesselman, 2013). Rather it examines playgrounds as spaces in themselves, without connecting them to their general context. Many studies consider the playground as a community space, a place of social interaction (Johnson, 2013a; Daniels & Hohnson, 2009; Solomon, 2005; Aitken, 2001; Maxey, 1999; Rofo, 1999; Lady Allen of Hurtwood, 1964) without exploring it as heterotopic space of both deviance and possibility. This work usually explores the playground's design qualities, or the different types of behaviour and play that it supports without interpreting the latter in any way (Brown & Burger, 1984; Hayward *et al.*, 1974; Herrington & Studtmann, 1998; Karsten, 2003; Luken *et al.*, 2011; Moore & Cosco, 2007; Susa & Benedict, 1994; Sutton-Smith, 1997). Even studies that are concerned with children's public life and participation space

(Maxey; 1999; Herrington, 1999; Rofe, 1999; Solomon, 2005; Daniels & Hohnson, 2009) do not examine the playground's interactions with the adult public realm. This study examines the playground as a space for socialisation limited to guardians and children. I intend to fill a gap in the literature about children's heterotopias and expand understanding of the different ways the playground as a heterotopia interacts with its surroundings; namely the adjacent public space and its users. At the same time, I examine the playground's Public Value as emerging from this interaction.

## 1.8 Aims and Objectives

The over-arching aim of this study is to understand the Public Value of the playground. This will be explored in the context of Athens where the socio-economic landscape has been affected by the ongoing Crisis. I approach this aim by researching the playground's interactions with the surrounding public realm. I examine the playground's Public Value by examining the playground's physical and socio-cultural 'opening and closing mechanisms' (De Cauter & Dehaene, 2008b, p.6), characteristic of heterotopia.

I therefore address this aim through the following objectives:

- to describe the expression of "access", "use" and "interaction" in the playground.
- to describe the porosity of the playground's social and physical boundaries.
- to examine the playground's socio-spatial connection and interaction with its adjacent public space.

The term "**Public Value**" here refers to the value the playground has as a public space; its publicness. It is here understood to relate to the concepts of access and interaction. As a result, the playground's publicness is defined by the extent to which the playground space is accessible to different age and social groups and not only to children of a specific age and their guardians (See: 2.3.2).

The term "**Playground**" refers to outdoor, purposely equipped, public spaces designed for children and having children's play in mind. The playgrounds examined were all free, local public spaces placed in public piazzas. School playgrounds were not included in the study due to their lack of adjacency to public space. All of the cases

(Dexameni, Ilioupolis, Vyronas) were fenced, clearly defined spaces comprising metallic play structures and sitting areas, while some were paved with soft material.

The term “**Crisis**” refers to economic austerity and its social implications and changes to everyday life in Athens, Greece, since 2008 as part of the wider global economic crisis.

## 1.9 Thesis Overview

This thesis extends over 10 chapters. Each chapter is introduced through an overview of its contents and concludes with a summary. In the beginning of the findings chapters (Ch.6, Ch.7, Ch.8) I include an ethnographic interlude, taken from my field and reflexive notes. Italicised passages refer to quotes derived from my fieldwork and are used to support the findings section and contribute to the transparency of data. All images, drawings and photographs are my own unless otherwise stated. Having already identified the gaps in the current literature in the following chapters I thoroughly explore the concept of Heterotopia structuring my theoretical framework, I set my approach on public space as well as providing a closer look at the Athenian context, introduced briefly in this introductory chapter. More specifically:

In the second chapter, I describe the context of this study more deeply. While I explore each individual case study later on (chapter 5), here I remain at the scale of the city. This examination of the context will allow me to introduce and explain the reasons for choosing this study's case studies in chapter 5. I examine Athens, both through its distinct spatial development through the years, its social dynamics and the ways that these affect the playground space. After having set the context, I introduce my conceptual framework. Drawing from my occupation as an architect, I elaborate on my stance towards public space, as well as the expressions of conflict and normalisation that take place there. The Western and Greek perceptions of children and their everyday relation to public life are explored. Finally, I examine the playground space, a space emerging from these perceptions, intending to protect children segregating them. The context of Athenian playgrounds is examined. This extends to not only describe their spatial characteristics, but also to approach them as local public spaces in Greek everyday life.

The third chapter explores the concept of heterotopia more deeply through a thorough literature review, in order to set the theoretical framework of this study. It traces the origins of the concept, examining both Foucault's definition of heterotopia

and the multiple interpretations that emerged from the current literature. I then explore the main themes as they emerged from the literature review and position my own approach in relation to these. Finally, I set a question informed by the theory of heterotopia and the themes that emerged.

In chapter four, Methodology, I introduce my epistemology, methodology and ethnographic methods. A summary of the ethnographic studies literature about both playground and heterotopia, structures a better understanding of the field. The study's data construction and data analysis methods are explored, alongside diagrams and other visual materials I used in my fieldwork. The chapter concludes with a sub-section of my experience in the field, the challenges I encountered and the ways these affected the conduct of this study.

Chapter Five focuses on the smaller scale of the case studies. Building on chapter 2, and Athens' distinct spatial development, I describe the reasons why I chose Athens as the city in which to study the playground's Public Value, as well as the criteria used to choose the playgrounds. In this chapter I focus on each distinct case, exploring its spatial and social characteristics and a brief history. Then I describe the socio-spatial characteristics of the three cases, as well as the general trends and patterns of use emerging from my experience in the field.

Chapters six, seven and eight present the findings: one chapter for each expression of the playground space as they emerged through my observations. These are: 6. Heterotopia of Deviance, 7. Heterotopia of Transgression and 8. Heterotopia of Resistance. In each sub-chapter I examine the socio-spatial expressions of the playground and the adjacent piazzas and their distinct heterotopic characteristics. I draw connections between the three, while at the same time I pinpoint the characteristics that construct them as different to each other.

Chapter nine discusses the findings in the context of relevant literature. I examine the findings in relation to understandings of heterotopia, play in the city and claiming one's right to the city.

In the final chapter I go through an overview of the findings, answering the research questions and reflecting back on the research process. I examine the study's contribution to knowledge in the fields of Heterotopia Studies, Architectural Theory, New Social Studies of Childhood and Public Space Theory. Then I reflect on myself as a researcher, as Alkistis and as "other" in the playground space. I also reflect back on the methods used and the usefulness of my theoretical framework and stance through this study. I conclude with a description of the thesis limitations and suggestions for further research.



## **2. The Greek Context - Public Space, Children's Lives and the Playground's Public Value in Athens.**

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### **2.1 Overview**

In this chapter, I set the context of the study. "Context" refers to both the spatial and social background I positioned this study within, as well as my own conceptual framework. I move from the city's space and children's lives to the playground space as a "children's space" in the city. Firstly, I introduce the spatial context of Athenian public space, exploring its evolution since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. This description clarifies the reasons why the Athenian landscape is characterised by density and lack of basic or leisure infrastructure. Moreover, I examine the current literature in order to explore the socio-cultural context of the socio-financial crisis and the ways it has changed the equilibria in the city's socio-spatial life. Secondly, I explain my conceptual framework of both architecture and public space, while setting my socio-spatial approach. Thirdly, I focus on the Greek cultural context of children's everyday lives. An examination of children's life and practices in both the Western and Greek public space, allows me to better understand perceptions about childhood that make the playground an important and indispensable part of children's everyday lives. The chapter explores the spaces in which children's everyday lives take place and the perceptions that regulate them. Finally, I move to the small scale of the playground and provide a brief description of the playground's evolution. I approach it as a segregated space intending to solve social problems and normalise bodies.

### **2.2 Athens**

#### **2.2.1 Demographics**

The year 2008 signified the beginning of a harsh austerity period for Greece, affecting not only the socio-financial but also the spatial aspects of everyday life. The three case studies of this research (Dexameni, Ilioupolis, Vyronas) are in Athens,

capital of Greece. Athens is a highly urbanized city, home to more than half of the country's population (Pavlou & Christopoulou, 2008). At the same time, accommodating a variety of socio-economic backgrounds, while struggling with its limited, and as a result valuable, public space, it has suffered the results of the socio-financial crisis more than any other city in Greece.

The urban landscape of Athens accommodates 3,740,051 inhabitants<sup>4</sup> (ELSTAT, 2011), covering an area of 3,375 km<sup>2</sup>. The city's population density is 8,150 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup> with some areas exceeding 40,000 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup> (Makrygianni & Tsavdaroglou, 2011, p.32). Athens may be the largest city in Greece, but it is the least popular Greek city according to resident preferences (Maniou, 2012). The lack of public spaces and basic infrastructure in combination with the high-density rates affects residents' everyday lives. At the same time, the city offers only 2.5 m<sup>2</sup> of green spaces per citizen; much lower than other European cities (Makrygianni & Tsavdaroglou, 2011). According to a pre-crisis 2006 EU study, 37% of Athenians were dissatisfied with the quality of their everyday life, as compared with an average rate of 9% dissatisfaction across all European cities surveyed (Maniou, 2012). In what follows I explain the reasons for this major lack of basic infrastructure.

### **2.2.2 Spontaneity**

Athens' urban expansion through the years was fragmentary, affected by flows of external and internal migration, refugee populations seeking shelter, industrialisation and lack of any intervention from the official state (Makrygianni & Tsavdaroglou, 2013, p. 87). It started in the early 20th century and continues until today. 'Spontaneity' is the word best characterising Athens' urban and social development (Dalakoglou, 2012a, p.536; Leontidou, 1990) through which a variety of urban formations and entangled land uses emerged (Economou, 1997). Today, slums, refugee settlements, industrial areas, social housing, private building sector constructions and garden cities interweave a colourful collage;

An urban complex that flows and grows out of its previous boundaries every few decades' (Dalakoglou et al., 2014, p.11).

The numbers are telling: by 1927 Athens' population increased by 138%, while the housing stock increased by only 30% (Karidis, 2006). The state's official

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<sup>4</sup> this number does not include a large number of immigrants and refugees that have not acquired official papers



mechanisms remained inactive, leaving the private sector to fill the housing gaps. Under these circumstances in 1929 the n. 3741/1929 law about ownership per floor (Karidis, 2006; Maloutas & Karadimitriou, 2001) encouraged the expansion of the block of flats that would dominate Athens' urban landscape after WWII (Nikolaidou, 1993) through the process of "Antiparoxi" (See: Makrygianni & Tsavdaroglou, 2011, p.34; Karidis, 2006). Antiparoxi offered the owner of a small piece of urban land, the chance to grant it for free to a private contractor who would build a block of flats and give the landowner back a number of apartments for free, while keeping the rest for his own profit.

Although at the beginning, the block of flats intended to house a homogenous middle-class population, 'vertical social differentiation' (Maloutas & Karadimitriou, 2001, 699), referring to vertical and not parallel interclass residential hierarchy, allowed a variety of people to mix in the same building (Karidis, 2006; Kandyli & Kavoulakos, 2011; Maloutas & Karadimitriou, 2001). It is important to note that this vertical social differentiation characterises mainly the city of Athens and did not take place to the same extent in other Greek cities with a more homogenous, middle-class oriented, population (Maloutas & Karadimitriou, 2001). This mixing of urban uses, even in one unit of the urban milieu, created a lively city that brought together different parts of the population, allowing a mixing of classes, economic strata, races and ideologies.

At the same time, any state intervention at a later time was very difficult as the urban space had already been formed by the uncontrolled development. The official state mechanisms were almost limited to paving the streets and adding infrastructure in the leftover spaces. It is evident that in terms of infrastructure, this practice was not able to provide what was necessary for each neighbourhood. This explains not only the lack of leisure and public spaces but also the narrow and sinuous streets that characterize the Athenian landscape. At the same time, however, this unusual approach to city development created a 'patchwork of intermingling land uses very different from the patterns resulting from zoning' (Economou, 1997, p.463) and as a result, a richness in the socio-cultural forces of the city spaces.

### **2.2.3 Current State of the City's Space**

Nowadays, Athens retains its mixed land use. However, the lack of public space in combination with the high-density rates affects residents' everyday life. Although there are still 'enclaves' that retain their homogeneity (Nikolaidou, 1993), (e.g. the Kolonaki area), Athens' demographic composition is continually changing. The city centre, depopulated during the years, due to suburbanisation and gentrification processes, became inhabited by new 'clandestine' (Makrygianni & Tsavdaroglou, 2011,

p.33, Pavlou & Christopoulou, 2008, p.7), residents acquiring a lively, multicultural character. Immigrant settlement boosted the local retail economy and filled the housing gaps created by suburbanisation (Maloutas, 2004; Kandylis et al., 2012). Athens' vertical social differentiation (Maloutas & Karadimitriou, 2001; Balampanidis & Polyzos, 2016) and mixed land-use has prevented any formation of no-go, areas dominated-by-a-single-group (Hatziprokopiou & Frangopoulos, 2016; Kandylis & Kavoulakos, 2011; Pavlou & Christopoulou, 2008).

Porosity, spontaneity, informal housing, small property ownership but also the employment linkage, have created a mixture of activities and the vertical differentiation of groups and classes rather than neighbourhood segregation (Leontidou, 2012, p.300).

Athens 'turning outside-in' (Arapoglou, 2006) accommodates populations in its centre that 'were once considered 'elsewhere' (p.30), while the public is the space where negotiations, conflict and normalisation take place.

#### **2.2.4 The Crisis – A New Every Day**

Since 2008, which marked the beginning of an economic crisis that continues today, the city of Athens has been undergoing a period of social transformation. Austerity, described as an 'ongoing humanitarian crisis' (Dalakoglou, 2012b), has generated a severe social crisis. Searching in the garbage bins for food has become a common phenomenon in the Athens of crisis (Athens' Oral History Groups, 2016a). As OPIK (2016) mention:

Although this does not constitute the norm, [searching in the bins for food] has been normalized within society; it has become acceptable and unnoticeable. This normalization underlines the heightened levels of structural violence within the Greek society<sup>5</sup> (p.n/a).

Poverty and insecurity have taken over the lives of many people (Figure 2-1). 'Neo-poor' people, meaning Greek former middle-class people<sup>6</sup>, have been created (Dalakoglou, 2012b; Kaika, 2012). The crisis context is of importance in this study emerging as a new every day (Athanasίου, 2014, p.73; Christopoulos, 2014, p.65;

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<sup>5</sup> Own translation

<sup>6</sup> In contrast to the largely migrant poor (the former poor)

Makrygianni, 2015, p.161), a 'Generalized State of Exception' (Dalakoglou, 2012b, p.35) comprising its own practices and power dynamics.

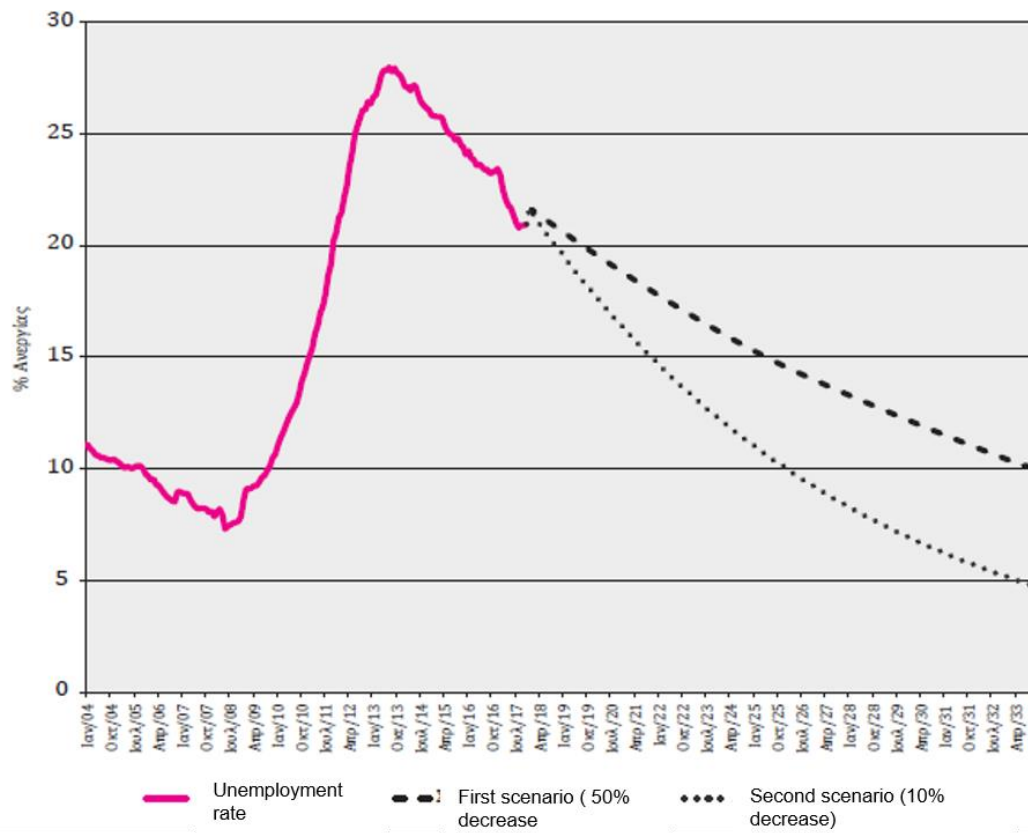


Figure 2-1: Unemployment rate and projections (Greece) [source: ΓΣΕΕ (2017)]

The crisis changed the equilibria in the cityscape. People find new ways to coexist, while at the same time conflict emerges from desperation and pressure. The city landscape has become a field where crisis politics take place (Koutrolikou, 2015) and where the consequences of the crisis become visible. State-owned property and public spaces are privatized or fenced-off (Dalakoglou, 2012a). At the same time, the necessity to think more practically and compensate people's needs at the scale of the everyday, urges citizens to concentrate on:

A different kind of spatio-temporal logic [...] focused less on ideological imperatives and more on here and now pragmatism (Chatzidakis, 2014, p.39).

Public space has become porous and open to multiple appropriations:

Porosity may therefore be considered an experience of habitation, which articulates urban life, while it also loosens the borders that are erected to preserve a strict spatial and temporal social order (Stavrides, 2006, p.175).

As 'people operate at various scales simultaneously' (Bunge, 1977, p.65 in: Aitken, 2001, p.23), the small scale of local public spaces, one of which is the playground, is where "tension" between citizen groups or attempts to claim space and deal with austerity's new reality, takes place (Dalakoglou, 2013b; Dalakoglou & Vradis, 2010; Kalandides & Vaiou, 2012; Leontidou, 2012). Space acquires an active part in this transformation:

Not only do everyday practices constitute the neighbourhood; spatial arrangements, in a similar way, influence the nature of these practices (Kalandides & Vaiou, 2012, p.262).

On the one hand, conflict instigates normalization practices in order to create a feeling of safety and control of the urban landscape. They regulate order, creating 'spaces of the other' ascribing to specific 'aesthetics of order' (Nevárez, 2006, p.155). Space acquires a prominent role in citizen's identity formation (Cenzatti, 2008). The coding of space regarding users and expected behaviours (Painter & Philo, 1995) has intensified in the crisis context. Targeting of specific groups, constructing them as "others", along with practices of space appropriation (Neo-Nazis, protesters etc.) forms the public space dynamics (See: Koutrolikou, 2015; Lafazani, 2015; Lynteris, 2011; Makrygianni, 2015; TPTG, 2011; Tsimouris, 2014). It is interesting to note that in a city where immigrants constitute 11.3% of the population<sup>77</sup> only 23% of the Greek population considers immigration to have positive connotations, while 48% feels that they will alter his national identity and 71% that immigrants are connected with an increase in crime rates (Pavlou & Christopoulou, 2008, p.7). As Cenzatti (2008) argues:

The 'process of normalization does not translate into the elimination of difference, but in its exaltation as deviance (p.77).

Multiple places to accommodate deviance or to be protected from it (like gated communities) are created transforming the cityscape into 'an archipelago of "normalized enclosures" (Stavrides, 2015, p.10). A case that shows the significance of the neighbourhood space is that of a playground in Ag. Panteleimonas, an area of Athens primarily populated by immigrants and working class people. During the last decade, Ag. Panteleimon has gained public attention as an area of conflict. The

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<sup>77</sup> <https://www.iom.int/countries/greece>

extreme-right organisation 'Golden Dawn' claims national purity in the area, while the media and the state systematically try to 'promote their anti-immigration agenda' (Kandylis & Kavoulakos, 2011, p.158; TPTG, 2011; Tsimouris, 2014). This playground was for many years (2009-2012) a site of conflict, as it was one of the few in the densely populated area and was kept closed by 'Golden Dawn' in order to bar immigrants' children from entering. A parent who tried to enter the playground space with his child was attacked, while when members of anti-fascist groups tried to reclaim the playground, they were confronted by the police (Dalakoglou & Vradis, 2011).

On the other hand, society, incorporating difference, creates new expressions of order and power in bottom-up processes. As Chatzidakis argues: 'the crisis represented a threat but also a welcomed opportunity for the cultivation of new ways of doing and thinking politics' (2014, p.39). New practices and attitudes emerged in order to compensate for people's needs and to claim their right to the city (See: Harvey, 2012; Lefebvre, 1991, 1984, 1977; Soja, 1980). People manipulate and appropriate the urban space, proposing new orderings of 'commoning' (Stavrides, 2014, p.546; De Angelis & Stavrides, 2010). Public space emerged both as a site of conflict and struggle and as a site in which the side effects of the crisis are reflected. Occupation of public vacant spaces or re-appropriation of existing infrastructures is often seen as a solution to the aforementioned scarcity of public spaces, leading to negotiations and conflict (See: Linardoy, 2013; Mantanika & Kouki, 2011; Makrygianni & Tsavdaroglou, 2011). As Stavrides argues, creating spaces that threaten the taxonomies of the 'city of enclaves' (2014) can potentially transform it into a 'city of thresholds' (2006). Protests, solidarity movements and other actions occupying space have become common occurrences in Athenian public space. Festivals, common cuisines, dances and other cultural events are organised and claim space in the city, while posters in various different languages become the expression of a multicultural urban space:

The city became not only the setting but also the means to collectively experiment with possible alternative forms of social organization (Stavrides, 2014, p.546).

## **2.3 Conceptual Framework**

### **2.3.1 Public Space and Positionality**

Currently, public life, not only in Greece but also in the Western world in general, is going through various transformations as society is renegotiating its relation with space and time. Public space is compromised as new practices, neoliberal

economies and ways of living emerge. Lees (1994) argues that it is not primarily the lack of physical public space that leads to the decline of the public realm, but its quality that has taken commercial connotations against its civic character. Literature depicts the identity of the modern citizen as compartmentalised into a set of different and often ephemeral roles (Tsoukala, 2006; Valentine, 2001), shared in space and time. Conditions such as the privatisation of public space, or virtual space compensating for the need for social interaction and communication (Gill, 2007; Stickells, 2008; Tsoukala, 2006) lead to degradation of public space and a retreat from the public realm.

The Glossary of Knox & Pinch's (2006) handbook of Urban Social Geography defines public space as:

A space that is owned by the state or local government and in theory is accessible to all citizens but which in reality may be policed to exclude some sections of society (p.329).

While UNESCO (2017) states:

A public space refers to an area or place that is open and accessible to all peoples, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, age or socio-economic level (p.n/a).

Literature on public space depicts it both as a space of possibility (Cenzatti, 2008; Franck & Stevens, 2006; Genocchio, 1995; Harvey, 1987, 2000a; Hetherington, 1997; Iveson, 1998; Rivlin, 2006; Stavrides, 2001, 2006, 2014; Stevens, 2006; Stickells, 2008) and restrictions (Atkinson & Blandy, 2005; Marcuse, 1995; Nevárez, 2006; Stavrides, 2015; Shane, 2005; Sibley, 1995; Soja, 1996). Richard Sennett (1977) in his book 'The Fall of Public Man' states that the first meaning of the word "public" was associated with the common good, while later in the 17<sup>th</sup> century the term was used in contrast with the private as the open, subjected to the gaze of society versus the hidden and personal. Current debates about public space revolve around concerns about the end of public space (Sorkin, 1992, Tsoukala, 2006), private space for public use (Matthews, et al., 2000b; Orillard, 2008), alternative practices in carved-out spaces such as reclaimed wastelands or other vacant spaces (Chase et al. 1999; Doron, 2008; Painter & Philo, 1995; Rivlin, 2006), flows (Stickells, 2008) or loose space (Franck & Stevens, 2006), while some make a distinction between common (action oriented) and public (state produced) spaces (Stavrides, 2015, 2014b; DeAngelis & Stavrides, 2010).

Franck & Stevens (2006) note that nowadays, public space is often associated with a sense of freedom:

In public we can escape the constraints which are typically connected with known social positions and roles (p.5).

A current focus on 'ludification of culture' (Raessens, 2006, p.53, 2012, See also: Flanagan, 2014; Zimmerman, 2014) has led to studies about playful cities (Alfrink, 2014; Borden, 2007; Donoff & Bridgman, 2017; Stevens, 2007) and gamification (Vanolo, 2018; Walz & Deterding, 2014). These studies often argue in favour of playfulness in public space as a means to revive public space and foster citizen participation (Alfrink, 2014; de Lange, 2015).

Drawing from my occupation as an architect, an occupation that as Giancarlo De Carlo (1969) states: 'no other connotation of a human craft has had such wide and ambiguous meanings' (p.4), I feel the need to clarify my architectural stance and ethos and the ways it informs my understanding of public space. I do not perceive architecture to be the finished, 'polished' building or space. Rather, I perceive architecture to be placed in the interactions and occupation created from everyday use, a process rather than an object (Borden, 2001, p.7). I conceptualise architecture:

First, as the temporal activity which takes place after the 'completion' of the building, and which fundamentally alters the meaning of architecture, displacing it away from the architect and builder towards the active user; second, as the reconceptualization of architectural production, such that different activities reproduce different architectures over time and space (Borden, et al. 2002, p.10).

Architecture moves away from aesthetics and is understood as experience and use. As such, it becomes an integral part of forming identities and expressing orderings, hierarchies and power in space; a 'cultural artefact' (Weisman, 2002, p.1) reflecting broader perceptions and tactics.

I agree with Giancarlo De Carlo (1969) that the world cannot do without architecture:

As long as a group of humans in physical space exists, the physical organisation of space will continue not only as a fundamental necessity of existence but also as the most direct and concrete means of communicating via materialised systems of self-representation (p.16).

I also draw on his argument about the dialectic relation between structural transformations and the superstructural activity of architecture. I consider architecture an important aspect in the debate about social change, not only for the production of space, but mainly its '(re)production' (Petrescu & Trogal, 2017, p.3) and appropriation (Stickells, 2011). It is not only the formation of alternate orderings but also the materialisation of these through space that proposes new ways of existing and doing things. Architecture is not a context we inhabit, but the space we live in and with, and by doing so interact, affect and are affected by. As such, I draw on Ingold's (2017) argument to approach social life as correspondence rather than articulation and assemblage of elements.

Moreover, my conceptual framework draws from critical geography and the socio-spatial dialectic (Knox & Pinch, 2006). I approach public space as a constantly contested space of multiple publics (See: Cenzatti, 2008; De Cauter & Dehaene, 2008a, 2008b; Franck & Stevens, 2006; Foucault, 1998a; Gibson & Watson, 1995; Hetherington, 1997; Iveson, 1998; Palladino & Miller, 2015a); publics that can co-exist in the same physical space. Space emerges as a space of representation (Lefebvre, 1991); it is not possible to explore a physical space without examining the social relations that take place there, or the opposite. I approach public space as an entity full of meanings, 'a complexity of interacting social relations' (Massey, 1998, p.127), in constant interaction with the social orderings and power structures (Aitken, 1998; Foucault, 1998a, 1998b; 1977; Lefebvre, 1991; Harvey, 2012). The social and the spatial are interconnected and co-existent; one produces the other. As a result, urban space cannot be approached as a neutral entity (See: Foucault, 1998; Lefebvre, 1984, 1991; Soja, 1985). Urban space is not only the product of society but also materializes the existing hierarchies and relations within it, revealing the existing social order at each time and space (See: Olwig & Gulløv, 2003; Lefebvre, 1991, 1997; Soja, 1989; Valentine, 1996; Rose, 1993). Public space has been used throughout history to control and structure social interactions (Horton & Kraftl, 2014, p.46). This interrelation, however, is not always visible, 'obscuring the social relations of power by which that space is produced' (Hetherington, 1997, p.22). Lefebvre's (1991) argument that transgression of existing power structures is possible only by making the abstract, invisible, often marginalised places, visible, is of special interest in this study concerning the playground space.

I draw on Lefebvre's (1991) work articulating the difference between 'representations of space' and 'spaces of representation'. In his book 'The production of space' he proposes an interlinked triad of spatialities, the 'three moments of social



space': Spatial practice (perceived space), representations of space (conceived space) and spaces of representation (lived space). Lefebvre highlighted his triadic approach to space as a system where the three parts work together and stressed its importance as opposed to dipoles that create oppositions and contrasts. I am particularly interested in the concept of representational space a 'space of "inhabitants" and "users"' (p.39), that 'overlays physical space, making symbolic use of its objects' (ibid, p.39).

Public space is here defined through its ability to accommodate different kinds of users and uses in the same space, in a constant process of negotiation. The publicness of a place therefore relates to the extent to which a space is an accessible and everyday space; an area of multiple publics where different age groups, sexualities, ethnicities, and political stances socialize, resolve conflicts, accept diversity, discover and reinvent the city; an 'open-ended' (Fernando, 2006, p.54) 'loose space' (Franck & Stevens, 2006, p.4) a 'place of encounter' (Jiménez-Domínguez, 2006, p.106). Public space ceases to provide only the background to actions and processes, rather:

The same physical location can take on different spatial meanings according to the social groups that occupy it, whether at different times or simultaneously (Cenzatti, 2008, p.83).

It is this constant reclaiming of space, creating 'fixed', or 'situational' territories (Goffman, 1971, p.29) of different claims, and the inclusion of marginalised groups that support its public character (Petrescu, 2007); or as Berman (1986) argues 'its strength' (p.484). Public emerges as a community space, an open-access place in common, a place of identity formation (Cenzatti, 2008) and consequently a political place; a 'communal living room' (Hertzberger, 2001, p.48). As Wigley (2002) argues:

A truly public space would defy categorization [...] its openness to heterogeneous social transactions would be such that it would have no clear form, no definable limits (p.284).

I ascribe to the argument that public life is based not only on the existence of traditional forms of space (parks, squares) but mainly on their rejuvenation through political and cultural activities (Wooley, 2004), practices of 'spatial tactics' (See: De Certeau, 1984, p.28) in the everyday. It is its users' actions rather than space itself that support publicness, as the users co-author the public realm through conflict and normalisation.

### 2.3.2 The Playground's Public Value

The Oxford English Dictionary defines value as: '[mass noun] the regard that something is held to deserve; the importance, worth, or usefulness of something'. Similarly the Cambridge Dictionary defines it not only as 'how useful or important something is' but also as 'the importance or worth of something for someone'. I build my argument around the word "for". The word "for" signifies that the value of something is not independent by its context, on the contrary it is defined by it. Different kinds of Value such as Play Value (Wolley & Lowe, 2018), Activity Value (Broekhuizen, 2014) and Social Value (Czalczyńska-Podolska, 2014) have been associated with the playground space. This research introduces the coined term Public Value directing attention towards the (potentially) public qualities of the space.

In the literature, the term Public Value is used more commonly to refer to the value an organisation gives back to society (Moore, 1995; Meynhardt, 2009); the value something has for the public (See for example Bate, 2011). Here, however, the term is re-appropriated to address and explore the interaction between the public realm and the playground space. It refers both to the potential value the playground has for the public realm and also the potential value the public realm has for the playground. The term Play Value (Wolley and Lowe, 2018) has been used in research revolving around the playground's physical characteristics (Bundy et al., 2011; Czalczyńska-Podolska, 2014; Engelen et al. 2013; Wang et al. 2018), often relating to Activity Value (Broekhuizen, 2014), which focuses on the health benefits of active play. Wolley and Lowe (2018) developed a tool combining Play Value, Physical Characteristics and Environmental Characteristics in order to measure and relate Play Value to space. Drawing on the definition of play as a 'freely chosen, personally directed, and intrinsically motivated behaviour that actively engages the child' (NPFA, 2000, p. 6) the authors define Play Value as the ability of playground design to accommodate different types of play: 'the environment that supports the most types of play would have a greater play value' (p.66), While 'social' development' (p.60) is included as one of the needs the play value intends to meet, this does not explicitly extend to include a variety of ages, or people beyond the boundary of the playground. Drawing from the same definition of play, Bowers and Gabbard (2000) correlate play value with design's age-prescription:

Play environments that are not age-appropriate not only have reduced play value but also tend to pose significant risks to the children who play in them (p.5).

In this research I move away from the design-focused research on the playground space and its Play Value; rather I approach it as a social space emerging from the tension created by its character as a part of the public space, intending to engage children with public life, but at the same time fenced and segregated. Public Value also bears connotations with the often-used term, 'social value' (Czalczyńska-Podolska, 2014, p.132). However, studies revolving around socialisation of children through the playground space mainly focus on interactions between people of the same age group; namely children and youth (Solomon, 2005; Wolley & Lowe, 2018). With this study I am interested in examining the interactions between a variety of age groups. Public Value shifts the focus from socialisation as a child's training and development of skills, to active interaction with a variety of people; it thereby frames the playground space as potentially having public space characteristics, but does not necessarily define it as such.

The term Public Value was therefore coined for this research in order to refer to the value the playground has as a public space; its publicness. The question of 'how public is the public playground?' guides this focus on Public Value. As such, drawing on the definitions discussed in the Public Space section (See: 2.3.1), it synthesizes the concepts of access and interaction (Knox & Pinch, 2006; Petrescu, 2007; UNESCO, 2017), each concept offering an indicator of publicness. It refers to the extent to which the playground space is accessible to different age and social groups, not only children and their guardians, allowing co-existence or interactions between strangers and between users (players namely children and adults accompanying children) and non-users (i.e. adults not accompanying children) of the space. The term is intended to bear civic engagement connotations and relates to arguments about claiming one's right to the city (Soja, 1980; Lefebvre, 1991, 1984, 1977; Harvey, 2012). The playground's Public Value is therefore understood to be affected by the wider social dynamics and spatial characteristics that structure public space itself. The indicators of Public Value used during fieldwork were access and interactions. I monitored not only the physical entrances of the playground spaces but also the behaviours of guardians towards the 'outsiders', thereby constructing a good understanding of both the physical and social opening and closing mechanisms of the heterotopias. Co-existence of different age and social groups was also part of the data drawn from observations. Who was considered an outsider was answered by the guardians and children during the interviews. Moreover, interactions formed a huge part of my field notes. I was interested to record interactions between strangers and between different age groups. These were playful or not and were taking place between users of the playground space (players) and other people (non-players). Interactions between players or between same age groups

were also interesting and were recorded, but referred to the Social Value of the space. Conflict and negotiations (See: 2.3.3), which made norms and perceptions in this space visible, were also indicators of Public Value.

It is important to note that the term is not independent of the other “Values” explored in the literature. As discussed above, Play Value and Activity Value affect the space’s design, while Social Value can potentially restrict interactions, thus limiting the playground’s Public Value. It is not in the scope of this research to examine further the interrelations of the different playground ‘Values’. Rather it will focus on the accessibility of the space and the interactions associated with it.

### **2.3.3 Conflict and Normalisation in Public Space**

The co-existence of multiple publics in the same physical space has many implications, supporting both contact and ‘conflict’. If public is defined through the social relations it accommodates, conflict emerges as an indispensable element of publicness. Massey argues:

Both individuals and social groups are constantly engaged in efforts to territorialize, to claim spaces, to include some and exclude others from particular areas (Massey, 1998, p.127).

Conflict, the product of different relations and claims in space, emerges as an important notion for this research. Dehaene & De Cauter (2008) argue that urban spaces’ ‘public character is constructed through the way in which this conflict is settled’ (p.99). Conflict emerges not as a negative element per se, but rather a group of practices bearing the potential to sustain an inclusive public realm. As Cenzatti (2008) argues, it is through:

Disagreement and conflict that different social groups avoid isolating themselves or being pushed into isolation (p.83).

At the same time, public space is the place where normalization processes manifest. As Foucault (2000) argues, since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when formal institutions of power emerged, an era of normalization was inaugurated; ‘there would no longer be inquiry, but supervision [surveillance] and examination’ (p.58-59) Normalisation mechanisms not only regulate behaviours, but often use space itself to impose their orderings (Stavrides, 2015). In this sense, the public space acquires panopticon characteristics where behaviours and expressions of identity are constantly performed

(Goffman, 1959) and tested. Stavrides (2015) frames these normalisation processes as:

Attempts to establish spatial relations that encourage social relations and forms of behaviour, which are meant to be repeatable, predictable and compatible with the taxonomy of the necessary social roles (p.9).

Space, and thus public space, emerges as a vital element for the “shaping” of the ideal citizen in the everyday. This study focuses on power that ‘is not only exercised by laws and the state but mainly ‘comes from below’ (Gordon, 2000, p.xxiv-xxv), informed by each subject’s personal perceptions (Frank & Stevens, 2006), emerging through everyday practices and behaviours but reflecting larger dynamics. Both conflict and normalisation processes reveal deeper social relations and orderings of public space and are an important part of this study.

## **2.4 Children and the Public**

### **2.4.1 Children’s Segregation**

The child’s everyday relationship to social and public space was historically a socio-cultural product (Rasmussen, 2004). The very establishment of the notion of childhood, the changes in the family structure (Corsaro, 2003) and the spatial transformations that the industrial revolution brought about led to the consolidation of children’s social and spatial segregation (Aitken, 2001; Germanos, 2001). Currently, children’s presence in public spaces is affected by two opposing perceptions of children: ‘Apollonian or ‘Dionysian’ (Holloway & Valentine, 2000a, p.2; Valentine, 1996); angels or devils.

On the one hand, well-rehearsed fears about children’s safety (Christensen, 2003; Gill, 2007; Jones et al. 2000; O’ Brien et al. 2000; Thomson and Philo, 2004; Valentine & McKendrick, 1997; Valentine, 1996a,1996b), increased traffic (Hillman & Adams, 1992; Tranter and Pawson, 2001) and the lack of free, urban play spaces affect children’s presence in the street, while feeding parents’ fears about the urban environment (Beets and Foley, 2008; Carver et al. 2008; Valentine and McKendrick, 1997).

At the same time, specialised spaces not only segregate children from the public realm but also exclude the public realm from their premises. Unaccompanied adults are not welcome in a “children’s space”, while children’s play-spaces emerge as alien spatialities in the adult public space (Matthews, 1995). Edmiston (2008) argues

that adults (without children) avoid children's places, both considering them both superfluous and 'childish' and because they want to avoid any power imposition. However, adults' fears render adult presence essential to securing their children's safety (Hillman et al. 1990; Hillman, 1993; Mackett et al. 2007; Tandy, 1999) with some scholars specifically attributing the 'strict regulation and control of traditional public spaces' (Loukaitou-Sideris, 2003, p.131) to parental anxieties.

On the other hand, fears concerning children's creative and uncontrolled nature – perceived as a threat to adult hegemony (Holloway & Valentine, 2000b) – often lead to conflicts and informal 'negotiations' of space (See: White, 1993). Against a backdrop of rigid, adult-defined public space (Matthews et al. 1999, 2000a, 2000b; Sibley, 1995; Valentine, 1999a) children appear as destabilising subjects, unbalancing the existing order.

Both these approaches structure an everyday that excludes children from the public space and public life framing them either as victims or offenders. At the same time, these polar concepts inform the literature underpinning the complex ways children's lives are structured.

## **2.4.2 Children's Geographies**

International research in children's geographies and children's presence in public space is thriving (Aitken, 2001; Christensen & O'Brien, 2003; Daniels & Hohnson, 2009; Elsley, 2004; Freeman 1995; Herrington, 1999; Massey, 1998; Maxey, 1999; Nayak, 2003; O'Brien, 2000; Rofo, 1999; Solomon, 2005; Smith, 1995; Tyler, 1987; Valentine, 2000a, 2001; Woolley, 2006). It was not until a few decades ago, however, that research started focusing on children's experiences and use of space, and most specifically the city space. These first studies focused on the fact that urban landscapes were predominantly adult landscapes (Bunge et al., 1971; Hart, 1984; Lynch, 1977; Matthews, 1992). Bunge (1971) was the first to approach children's position in urban space as an indicator of society's state, as the 'canaries in a coal mine' (Aitken, 2014 p.99). Later studies explore the power relations and social hierarchies entailed in age categorization and how these structure children's experience (Aitken, 2001; James, 2001; Jenks, 2005; Qvortrup, 2005; Holloway & Valentine, 2000a). Many studies examine the physical characteristics of the cityscape and their affordances<sup>8</sup> for use by children and young adults (Davison & Lawson, 2006;

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<sup>8</sup> Gibson (1979) first introduced the concept of affordances. He argues:  
*The affordances of the environment are what it offers the animal, what it provides or furnishes, either for good or ill. The verb to afford is found in the dictionary, the noun affordance is not. I have made it up. I mean by it something that refers to both the*

Gospodini & Galani, 2006), while others focus on the personal, cultural and social factors that inform a child's attachment to space (Aitken, 2001; Churchman, 2003; Derr, 2002; Elsley, 2004; Horton & Kraftl, 2005; Kylin & Bodelius, 2015; Loukaitou-Sideris, 2003; Matthews & Limb, 1999; Valentine, 1997). Some studies also attempt to translate these factors into policy-making (DCMS, 2004; DfES, 2004; UNICEF, 1995).

It is important to mention, however, that there have been attempts to revitalise public space through participatory procedures with children (Hart, 1992; Jones et al. 2005; Alderson, 2000) or through the creation of spaces of intergenerational encounters (Daniels & Hohnson, 2009; Herrington, 1999; Rofe, 1999; Solomon, 2005; Tzonis & Lefaivre, 1999). However, this is not the prevailing attitude and practice in the western world: rather these attempts emerge as paradigmatic alternatives.

Playing and leisure in public is one of the main topics within research about children's spaces. Researchers focus not only on the play behaviours that specific kinds of spaces support (Gagen, 2000a, 2000b; Holloway & Valentine, 2000a; McKendrick et al., 2000a; Smith & Baker, 2000) but also how the discrepancy between adult and child perceptions and uses of play spaces is articulated (Jacobs, 1961; James, 1990; Jones, 2000; Skelton, 2000; Thomson & Philo, 2004; Valentine, 1996a, 1996b; Ward, 1978). Public space emerges as over-specified, not giving children the chance to 'shape their own places' (Kylin & Bodelius, 2015, p.87). At the same time, studies on commercial or other private play spaces suggest that such spaces have replaced the free unobstructed play in the street (Cole-Hamilton & Gill, 2002; Cunningham & Jones, 1999; McKendrick et al., 1999; McKendrick et al., 2000a; McKendrick et al. 2000b). Rojek (1985) argues that 'home is the main site of leisure' (p.19) for both children and adults. In this context, other literature focuses on the scale of the everyday as a place for children's liberation and resistance (Aitken, 2001; Olwig & Gulløv, 2003; Stevens, 2006; Frank & Stevens, 2006; Edensor, 2006; Jones, 2000; Skelton et al., 1998; Valentine, 1996b; Matthews et al., 2000a, 2000b).

As the thriving international research reveals (Loebach & Gililand, 2010; Gülgönen & Corona, 2015; Handy et al., 2008; Ross, 2005; Lehman-Frisch & Vivet, 2011; Tandy, 1999; Min & Lee, 2006) although there is a diminishing value of neighbourhood space's in the everyday-life of people globally (Forrest, 2008), local spaces still have some strong connotations for children. Local public spaces, the

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*environment and the animal in a way that no existing term does. It implies the complementarity of the animal and the environment (p.127).*

As such, an affordance does not relate solely to spatial characteristics, rather it is 'equally a fact of the environment and a fact of behaviour' (Ibid, p.129). In this context, Rivlin (2006) associated affordances with possibilities.

intermediate built spaces between the city and one's home, spaces of children's everyday, shape their social and cultural identities (Aitken, 2001; Holloway & Valentine, 2000a; Matthews, 2003; Olwig & Gulløv, 2003; Rissotto & Tonucci, 2002) and their everyday, social lives (Cole-Hamilton & Gill, 2002; Min & Lee, 2006; Mitoulas, 2005; Ross, 2005). When structuring one's perception of self and everyday knowledge (Rissotto & Tonucci, 2002) 'location matters' (Forrest & Kearns, 2001, p.2131). Neighbourhoods are not only the first context a child finds herself in, developing an 'emplaced' knowledge comprising both the social and the spatial context (Christensen, 2003) but also the space for 'the development of specialized and differentiated relationships' (Chatterjee, 2005, p.19). The locality of one's neighbourhood acts as a familiar context (See: Christensen, 2003; Germanos, 2000; Matthews, 2003) for the control of encounters, reducing 'the complexities of living in a world of strangers' (Karsten, 2003), while supporting familiarity and contact with the known (Lofland, 1985). In an interesting study by Castonguay and Jutras (2008), children chose the same places both as the most liked and the most disliked in the neighbourhood. The researchers explained this paradox as being the result of the attachment to spaces that 'form the basis of our experience' (p.107). Familiar, small spaces act as the starting point from where children explore the public realm.

### **2.4.3 Childhood in Greece**

While the conceptualisation of the child as a being different from adults took place in Europe around the 16th century (Holloway & Valentine, 2000a; Aries, 1962; Olwig & Gulløv, 2003), it was not until the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century that this shift occurred in Greece (Kaisari, 2005, p.61). Current perceptions about children place them in the centre of Greek family life. The fact that nowadays the majority of Greek houses include a separate room for the child (Kaisari, 2005) indicates that the child is accepted as an individual with his/her own personality and space (Aitken, 2001).

Until the 1960's, children's play in Athens was taking place mostly in informal play spaces and in open public space comprising parks, streets, squares, open fields etc. (Oral History Groups, 2016b). Since then, the extended urbanisation, transformations of the socio-spatial character of the neighbourhood, concerns about children's safety and the emergence of a new closed type of family resulted in the alienation of children from Athenian public space. At the same time, the proliferation of commercial play-spaces in the years before the crisis reveal a society over-concerned with safety and control (Goumopoulou, 2007; Maniou, 2012). Increased concerns about safety have hindered both the free movement of the child in public space and his/her actions in the child-intended spaces. Parents feel the need to accompany young



children everywhere (Tzouvadakis, 1986), and they are the ones who drive children from home to school, friends' houses or the playground even when the distance is short enough for the child to walk on her/his own. O' Brien's (2000) and other similar studies (Christensen, 2003; Hillman, 1993, Hillman et al., 1990; Jones, 2000; Mackett et al., 2007; Rissotto & Tonucci, 2002; Tandy, 1999; Valentine, 1997) explore this decrease in children's independent mobility in and use of the public space in the Western countries. As long ago as 1986, Tzouvadakis' study of the home-school journey in Athens, found that although 63 percent of parents replied that their children were aware of the city's dangers, 72% perceived them as incapable of travelling around on their own.

The more private spaces of home or friends' houses are the basic hubs of children's play in Athens<sup>9</sup>, while children playing in the neighbourhood outside one's home are usually accompanied by parents<sup>10</sup>. Usually schoolyards accommodate after-hours ball games of older children as sport fields or other provisions in Athens are limited. However, playing children are viewed as potential threats to both themselves (fear of injury) and the school (fear of damaged property). Athenian parks are limited and often isolated, while sports facilities accommodate structured activities and refer to a limited number of users. The results of two studies in Athens are revealing. In the first one, by Kaisari (2005), the space most frequently identified by 7-11 years olds in surveys as accommodating their play was their own or their friends' house. The researcher notes that although her observations may have recorded that the playground is used more often than the children reported – the purpose of the research was to distinguish which spaces children themselves associate with their play – the results placed playgrounds in the sixth place. At the same time, Maniou's study (2012) on children 12-15 years old, revealed a greater association of children with the public space. 57.7% of the children reported going out in their free time, while 19.4% stayed at home and 12.9% visited friends. Similarly, in Mitoulas' study (2005) the children when asked which facilities they would prefer near their schools chose places that facilitate play and socializing, such as the sports field, park or piazza. Galani's (2011) study in Thessaloniki found that a large percentage of children still plays in the street (p.233), a positive finding about children's presence in public life. It is clear, that children's presence in public space depends on their age, but research also shows that

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<sup>9</sup> The claims made in this paragraph esteems from both my experience as a resident of Athens and as a child growing up there.

<sup>10</sup> At the same time, the data from the Center for Research and Prevention of Injuries (CEREPRI) reveal that any correlation between the private space of the house and safety is false (<http://www.keppa.gr/>).

there is an analogous relationship between the size of the city children reside in and the amount of prohibitions imposed on their everyday life (Tsoukala, 2006).

Following global trends, Mitoulas (2005) argues that what is defined as 'neighborhood' for children in Athens does not exist anymore. However older research has argued the importance of neighborhood in children's everyday lives. Mousourou's 1985 study found that 66.6% of children played in their neighborhood's facilities. More recent studies confirmed this (Kaisari, 2005; Kotaridi et al., 2007). Kaisari (2005) argues that for children, the neighborhood space is equated with play-space, while it is experienced as emotional space. Similarly, a study by the Greek National Center for Social Research (Kotaridi et al., 2007) notes that children are very content with their neighborhood: 80% for children aged 6-12, 73% for those aged 12-15 and 63% for the 15-18 years old. It is interesting to note the decrease in attachment as the child grows older.

Since the 1930s, people with official state-related occupations have discussed the design of more radical spaces for children's use in Athens (See: Vlantou, et al., 1988; Karagianni & Karioti, 2003; Ministry of labour and social security, 2011). It is unfortunate that these suggestions were not implemented, but remained in the dimension of academic discourse. However, in 1931 the municipality of Athens built a saltwater pool in Kolonaki's Dexameni piazza [one of the case studies – See 5.3.1 Case 1 – Dexameni (The Upper – Income Case Study)] (Tratsa, 2015), encouraging play in the public space. Moreover, it is interesting to note that the Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change's General Urban Plan of 1985 set as standard that 0.75 m<sup>2</sup> per resident should be given to playgrounds, 0.75 m<sup>2</sup> per resident to sport facilities and 1.50 m<sup>2</sup> per resident to piazzas and parks. However, the lack of free spaces in Athens' landscape did not support the implementation of such plans.

## 2.5 The Playground

'If a playground is unfenced, it is like a vacant lot to a child. It has no individuality, and is scarcely a thing by itself. In all of our conduct, we are subject to the constant suggestion of our surroundings. We would not use quite the same language, perhaps, in the church that we would in the hotel, in the school that we would in the barn. On the vacant lot we can do as we please; any kind of language or conduct is appropriate. When we have a fenced playground it becomes an institution, and our language and conduct must correspond with our conception of it ... If it is fenced it becomes a place by itself, a unity, a real institution. Its spirit is retained and concentrated as by an outer epidermis, and it is easier to cultivate all the loyalties and friendships that play should develop' (Curtis, 1915, p. 29-30 in Gagen, 2000a).

...‘It is a public stage of a screenplay written by 19th-century domestic ideology’ (Blackford, 2004, p.239)

### **2.5.1 Playgrounds – Spaces of Children’s Segregation**

#### **Segregated but Visible**

As designated play-areas, playgrounds emerge as “safe” spaces referring to children dispersed in the public realm. Segregation and supervision emerge as the two main attributes of “proper” play spaces (Olwig and Gulløv, 2003, 101; Aitken, 2001) potentially limiting their Public Value; the fence being the basic physical structure that makes both possible. The playgrounds’ physicality is often equated with childhood to such an extent that Olwig and Gulløv (2003) argue that children existing and acting outside the predefined “children’s-places” (meaning “outside the fence”) are perceived by adults as being outside childhood and potentially dangerous.

In what follows, I examine the playground space as a space for children’s protection through physical segregation and explore how the playground fence has supported its child-centred character through the years.

Even from their very first appearance playgrounds intended to segregate children physically – however not visually – from the dangerous “adult” public space (Gagen, 2000a, 2000b; Aitken, 2001; Solomon, 2005). Playgrounds were perceived as the means to “solve” various problems and ‘humanise’ derelict spaces (Solomon, 2005, p.95). The progressive educational reform of the early 1900s (Solomon, 2005), the need to protect children from the ‘ills of industrialisation’ (Gagen, 2000b, p.216; Gagen, 2000a; Doll & Brehm, 2010; Kinchin & O’Connor, 2012), the changes in the socioeconomic structure of the 18th and 19th century society (Germanos, 2001) affected the playground space. In the same way that public education, established as obligatory at that time (Heseltine & Holborn, 1987), intended to discipline the mind, the playgrounds were seen as the basic means to discipline the child’s body and form future citizens (Aitken, 2001). At the same time, the rising interest in the field of child psychology and the emerging developmental theories affected both the playground’s spatiality and function. Froebel’s ‘natural’ child (1898), Dewey’s educational approaches (1915, 1916) and Piaget’s (1962, 1952) psychological developmental theory stressed the need to create special places in order to maximise children’s development. At the same time, the notion of children as natural beings emerging from ‘animality’ (Santer et al., 2007, p.4, Aitken, 2001, p.41) led to ways of controlling their natural instincts, transforming playgrounds into ‘corrective environments’ (Aitken, 2001, p.125; Gagen, 2000a, p.599).

The first playgrounds in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century were organised around the principle of supervision (Gill, 2007; Aitken, 2001). They engaged children in an organised and supervised programme of activities specifically designed to promote discipline, physical exercise and well-being. Gender segregation streamlined these activities. Gagen (2000a) and Murnaghan (2013) explore how the first playgrounds shaped children's identities and gender in USA and Canada respectively. Gagen examines how the child's body became a site:

Through which gender identities could be both monitored and produced, compelling reformers to locate playgrounds in public, visible settings (p.599).

Visibility had a double effect. On the one hand, control in a Foucauldian sense transformed the playground into an effective panopticon (Gagen, 2000a); supervising children and their activities. On the other hand, it was thought 'necessary to display children in public because they were recognised as means of a larger social transformation' (Aitken, 2001, p.125). It is interesting to note that, while in the case of boys, the public gaze was thought as desirable for the reasons stated above, in the case of girls, it was viewed as threatening. 'A series of spatial restrictions' (Gagen, 2000a, p.509) implemented through the fence's design were put in place, protecting young girls from the curious adult gaze. Their reform was displayed to the public through frequent performances and events opening the playground to the public.

Similarly, in Murnaghan's study (2013), the identity of the foreigner, of the "other", was made visible through performing 'structured activities which reinforced gendered and colonial identities' (p.143). Visibility was used in order to integrate the "others" and structure their identity as citizens. The practice of using space and visibility in order to structure identities was not limited to the playground space. Loxham (2013) examines the ways a public park was designed and used during the nineteenth century in Preston in order to discipline the slum inhabitants.

A similar example from the Greek context lies in the overt actions of the Greek ministry of interior affairs towards establishing playgrounds for the intention of integrating of Greek Roma during the period 2001-2008 (Karagianni & Karioti, 2003) and 2011-2020 (Ministry of labour and social security, 2011). Providing playground's, along with other facilities, for the integration of marginalised groups reveals not only the importance of the playground space for children's everyday lives but also how this may be used by the State for the intentional transfer of (the official State's) cultural values.

Prior to 1900, the first playgrounds comprised a plain fenced area of asphalt or concrete ['prison period' (Allen, 1968 in Boyatzis, 1987, p.101)] and were used in order

to literally segregate children from the adult space, not addressing the playground as part of the public space, while the very first playground equipment were added (O'Shea, 2013). Since then, the public playgrounds have taken many forms, often seen as places to empower children and enable social interaction, approaching children as equal participants in their communities (Daniels & Hohnson, 2009; Kinchin & O'Connor, 2012; Solomon, 2005). Child-friendly, educational, sculptural – even abolishing their fence – (Aaron, 1965; Dattner, 1969; Hart, 1993; Tzonis & Lefaivre, 1999), intergenerational (Frost, 2012; Rofe, 1999; Daniels & Hohnson, 2009; Herrington, 1999) adventure (Lady Allen of Hurtwood, 1964, 1953) or commercial (Cole-Hamilton & Gill, 2002; McKendrick et al., 1999, 2000a, 2000b), the playground space has gone through a variety of transformations reflecting society's leading perceptions about childhood and play in each era. For example, the standardized playgrounds of the 1970's, abiding by a whole series of safety guidelines (Frost, 2012), emerged in an era when the fear culture 'embracing the deficit model' (Gill, 2007, p.38) of children was booming. This form of playgrounds is the norm still today in the Western world. However, throughout their evolution playgrounds remained child-centred spaces, with limited or non-existent public value, segregated from the adult public realm facilitating only children's play. The most recent indoor commercial 'McDonald's playground model' (Solomon, 2005, p.84), includes a set of net ladders, rope swings and usually pools of small balls. With its predetermined paths and pipes, it indicates only one acceptable use and supports few interpretations and limited cooperation between the players. As Sutton-Smith (1997) notes, play in most societies has been a collective activity, however, in modern societies, which require 'massive amounts of individualized symbolic skill from their members' (p.155) individual play is facilitated. Play becomes the means to prepare the child for a future where the notion of "collective" is disappearing, while the playground builds the social identity of the future citizen.

It becomes evident that the playground's design intentions revolve around safety, children's health and socialisation with peers rather than interaction with the broader community. This study will address this aspect of the playground space moving away from the design intentions and closer to the subjects' interactions.

### Playground's Fence: A Timeless Feature

Interestingly, the fence has been an enduring feature of the playground, scarcely evolving over time. The majority of playground spaces are fenced in order to make the distinction between children's and adult's spaces clear. The fence's form may change – for example in the modern commercialised playgrounds it has intensified to

the point of becoming a protection net all over the structure (Solomon, 2005) – but its core function has remained the same. In effect, the first notion of a playground space was a big cage that would literally segregate children from adults. Even in the more radical and child-centred approaches of the playground space, such as sculptured (Aaron, 1965; Dattner, 1969; Kinchin & O'Connor, 2012; Solomon, 2005) and adventure playgrounds (Gill, 2007; Dattner, 1969; Boyatzis, 1987; Lady Allen of Hurtwood, 1964, 1953), the fence was a prerequisite for their operation acting as the boundary between children's and adult's space, defining the play-space itself. In the adventure playgrounds, where adult presence is usually considered disruptive (Lady Allen of Hurtwood, 1964, 1953), the fence sustains the playground's child-centred character, protecting play and cherishing children's deviance instead of approaching them as being in the 'wrong' stage. An interesting report from the Washington Post describes that the lack of funding for a fence in a playground in New Hampshire Avenue had delayed its opening (The Washington Post, Aug 22, 1965) revealing that a playground without a solid fence was not perceived as an appropriate play area. At the same time, a study by Singh & Gupta (2011) suggests that any supervised area is perceived as a safe area for children's play.

It is worth noting, however, that architects have 'experimented' with the boundaries the playground fence generates, not conforming to the inside-outside dipole, producing progressive examples of play-spaces that challenge the general perceptions and propose new ways of play and being in the public space. To give an example, Van Eyck, using the same paving material as that used in the adjacent space, allowed the playground to 'meld with its surroundings' (Solomon, 2005, p.18) (Figure 2-2). In some cases, the lack of fence was compensated by placing the sitting areas around the play area creating a 'human wall' (Frost, 2012, p.18) protecting children from running towards the traffic and supporting supervision. Similarly, playgrounds in Seabrook Rise Play (2006) and Wick Green (2010), designed by MUF (Figure 2-3 and Figure 2-4), transform the fence into a play feature, accommodating sea-saws and benches, blurring the boundaries between the inside and the outside.



Figure 2-2: Egelantiersstraat playground by Van Eyck, 1956  
(Source: Tzonis & Lefaivre, 1999, p.33)



Figure 2-3: Wick Green Playground by MUF architects, 2010  
(Source: MUF website <http://muf.co.uk/>)





Figure 2-4: Seabrooke Rise Play by MUF architects, 2006  
(Source: MUF website <http://muf.co.uk/>)

## 2.5.2 Athenian Playgrounds

### Play Spaces in the Athenian Public Space

In Greece, the lack of building regulations, resulting in great density and lack of infrastructure or leftover spaces, has not allowed the implementation of any coherent, city scale plan to include children in public space. The main spaces intended for children's play in Athens' public space are playgrounds and sports fields. Although children's marginal place in the Athenian urban space comes in contrast with their central place in the Greek family, the over-controlling of children's presence in public (Kaisari, 2005; Maniou, 2012; Mitoulas, 2005) reflects society's preoccupation with children's safety and wellbeing. 'Metaphors for cultural meanings' (Blackford, 2004, p.237), Athenian playgrounds are the best places to trace the forces structuring children's everyday lives. Playgrounds in Greece are placed in central areas and squares or in local neighbourhoods in close proximity to one's home and under the safety that 'the eyes of a high numerical ratio of adults' (Jacobs, 1961, p.77) offer. Their central location contributes to their everyday liveliness, welcoming children before or after school. Playgrounds are used not only as play-spaces but also as meeting points, places of public interaction, not only for children but also for guardians. The warm climate encourages outdoor play, leading the vast majority of these spaces to be open-air and used all year long. A study by the National Centre for Social Research (Kotaridi et al., 2007) found that 23.4% of the children 6-12 years old visited the playground less



than three times per year, while 49.9% had visited more than three times per year and 26.6% had not visited the playground at all. These percentages were 39.3%, 37.2% and 23.1% for children aged 12-15 and 58.3%, 24.4% and 17.3% for those aged 15-18 years old revealing a decline in visits as children grow older. An older study by Mousourou (1985) found that 1 in 3 children 0-5 years old played in the playground space, while 1 in 5 preferred to play in the street. The same study, noted that for older children the percentages were 30.67% in the playground, 20.6% in the public space, 19.73% in the park, 17.91% in the home's backyard and 7.84% on the home's balcony.

The official definition of the playground space in Greece mentions that:

Playground is considered the delimited outdoor municipalities' space intended for children's entertainment without staff supervision<sup>11</sup> (Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2014a, p.25338).

According to the law of 2009 'the playground must be surrounded by adequate fencing, natural or artificial, functional and able to provide security by preventing children's injuries. Moreover, 'the fence should not visually isolate the playground from its surroundings'<sup>12</sup> (Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2009a, p. 11809-11810). The similarities to the need for segregation and visibility of the first playground spaces described by Gagen (2000a) are evident. The official policy refers to the fence as a physical barrier for the safety of children from the dangers of the public realm, mainly injury or accident, without, however, perceiving it as a barrier to the visual and audio communication between the inside and the outside. At the same time, visibility is perceived as a way to ensure safety in the playground, as it enables supervision and hinders isolation. The playground fence, often colourful in order to signify a children's space, acts as indicator of the enclaves of childhood in the public realm.

The majority of playgrounds in Athens abides by the 'standardized playground' model (Solomon, 2005; Doll & Brehm, 2010) – easy to build, not needing frequent maintenance and designed according to the safety standards (Dattner, 1969). The fear culture (Gill, 2007, p.38) has established in Greece, similarly with the rest of the world, strict playground safety regulations, fuelled by, but at the same time increasing, parental safety concerns. The fear of physical injury has paved the playground with soft materials, such as tarmac, while the equipment complies with a variety of standards and standardisations. Simplified designs, comprising metallic pole-and-beam play

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<sup>11</sup> Own translation

<sup>12</sup> Own translation

equipment scattered in the playground space with no connections between it, and bench-areas supervising the play-structures, are the two characteristics of a typical Greek playground. Intergenerational play is not foreseen by the space's design.

### The Crisis and the Playground Space

In the context of the socio-financial crisis, the playground's Public Value is continually negotiated. Empty parking lots are transformed into playgrounds, while occupied buildings accommodate children's play, workshops, theatrical performances etc. welcome both locals and refugees. At the same time, the state-provided playground spaces emerge as everyday spaces where both "normalization" and struggle takes place and one of the few that children, as a social group, are allowed to appropriate. According to Dalakoglou and Vradis (2011), the practices at 'these small urban sites can only be seen as deriving from and at the same time reflecting wider social dynamics' (p.78). Respectively, spaces of the everyday could be seen as cradles that foster wider scale practices. Moreover, as Christopoulos (2014) states:

The comprehension of the idioms of the crisis and its city can only be attained through a discussion around visibility; around the visibility of the power relations that rearrange meanings, the visibility of the vulnerable embodied subjects and the tangible visibility of their resistance (p.65).

In this line of thought, the playground space, placed in central public space areas, encouraging visibility by its own design, emerges as an everyday space with enhanced possibility of enforcing or negotiating normalisation practices (See literature on Ag. Panteleimonas playground: Stavrides, 2014; De Angelis & Stavrides, 2010; Dalakoglou & Vradis, 2011).

The crisis, limiting people's financial ability, has contributed to the revitalisation of the public playgrounds as an increased number of guardians choose the playground space for their children's leisure<sup>13</sup>. For the first time in years, guardians of a variety of socio-economic backgrounds meet together in the playground space. For some people it might be the first time that they have to co-exist with their neighbours of different class or race<sup>14</sup> (See: Appendix C

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<sup>13</sup> Drawn from my own experience as a resident of Athens as well as conversations I had with friends and relatives with young children.

<sup>14</sup> As above

1. Policies –The ). New socio-spatial dynamics emerge in the public space. Keeping in mind what Karsten argues: ‘the public in the playground may or may not be a mirror of the residential child population’ (2003, p.458). I argue that the very examination of which parts of the population use and appropriate the playground, informing its Public Value, allow an exploration of broader hierarchies, as well as of the ways in which these affect children’s lives. Similarly to Catalan city playgrounds explored by Ferré et al. (2006), in Athens, the ‘scarcity of alternatives most certainly contributes to the relatively high occupation rates of spaces that are not especially attractive in terms of quality standards’ (p.176). At the same time, the state funds for the maintenance of these spaces are limited (ΓΣΕΕ, 2017; Kogkas, 2017’ Ministry of internal affairs, 2014b), while existing playgrounds cannot meet the demands of the children’s population at a time when they are needed the most (See Figure 2-5 and Figure 2-6).

## 2.6 Summary

For the purpose of this study, space is not understood as an inanimate physical background but as an active component, a third subject along with the participants and the researcher, structuring behaviours and perceptions and being structured by them in return. Different spatial manifestations and scales set the context as explored in this chapter. I moved from the scale of the city and its public space, to that of the neighbourhood and the playground space to construct a multi-scalar description of this study’s context. Space and more specifically public space, is approached as participating and affecting people’s interactions with the public realm. In this chapter I explored space, practices and perceptions, while making connections between the Athenian reality and the academic literature. Athens’ uncontrolled expansion resulted in a lack of space and basic infrastructure making the local playgrounds valuable to families’ everyday life not only as play but also as public spaces. At the same time, the socio-economic crisis emerged both as spatial and social practices, creating a contested public space challenging the existing hierarchies. Finally, I explored how perceptions of childhood segregate children spatially, informing the playgrounds’ function and limiting their Public Value. Fears about children’s safety segregate them in special, safe spaces limiting their interaction with the public realm. The Athenian playground, placed amidst contradicting perceptions of children and childhood and positioned in the crisis public space, emerged as a space loaded with meanings and possibility.

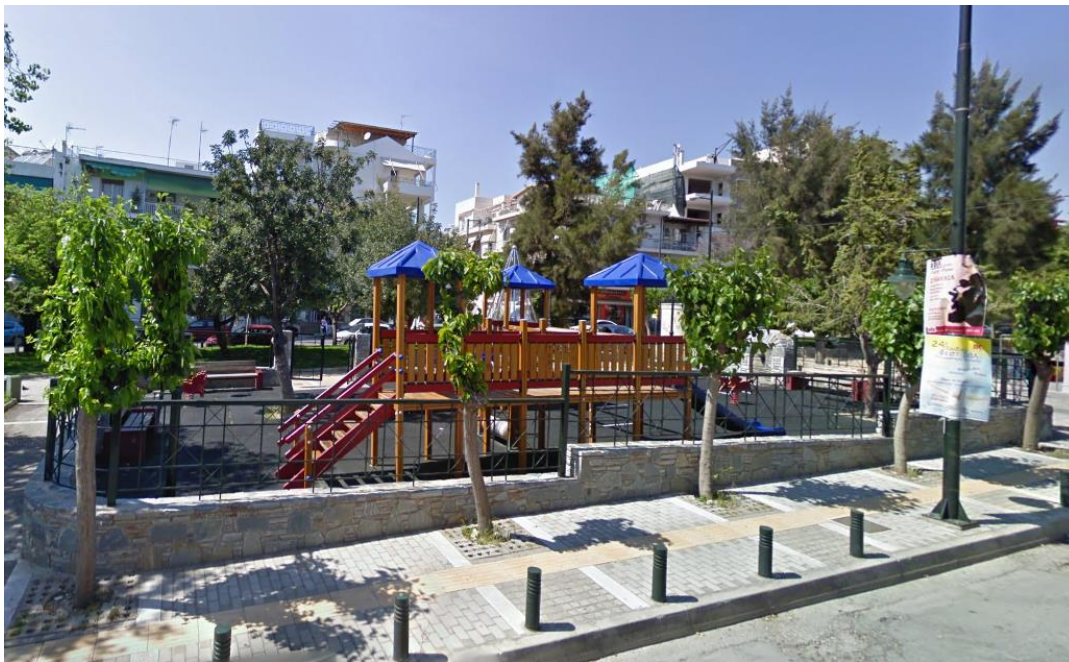


Figure 2-5: Vyronas playground at 2009 (source: Google maps)



Figure 2-6: Vyronas playground at 2016

# 3. Theoretical Framework – Heterotopia

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## 3.1 Overview

In this chapter I set my theoretical framework and examine the literature around the concept of Heterotopia. The term Heterotopia has received many interpretations through the years and has been used to explain different and often contradictory situations. In what follows I review the literature around this concept. After briefly introducing Foucault's definition of Heterotopia and the critiques/criticism it has received, I move on to explore the different interpretations of the concept that have been produced since then. On the basis of this literature review, I explore the main themes and characteristics of Heterotopia, highlighting the different and often contradictory approaches. In order to situate heterotopia in this study I briefly examine the literature on children's geographies through the lens of the concept. Finally, I approach the playground as a heterotopic space. First I align its characteristics with Foucault's definition of heterotopia. Then I present my own approach, drawing on the literature, its interpretations and the main themes discussed.

## 3.2 Foucault's Heterotopia

### 3.2.1 Introduction

Heterotopia is a word of Greek origin, produced from the two words "ἕτερος" (heteros) and "τόπος" (topos) meaning "other" and "place" respectively. Initially it emerged as a medical term referring to a dislocation, tumour or extra tissue developing out of place (Hetherington, 1997), but not dangerous for the patient's health (Johnson, 2016). It was just a benign anomaly, an alien part disrupting the "normality" or homogeneity of the human body.

The term "heterotopia" was transferred to the social sciences and human geography by Michel Foucault in 1966 (Foucault, 1998a). Since then, scholars have produced many interpretations. In the preface of his book "The Order of Things" (1970, original title: *Les Mots et les Choses*) Foucault problematized the "disorder" and the "heteroclit" (p. xvii). The concepts of Utopia, at once an "ou-topos" (placeless) and a "eu-topos" (ideal, good place), and Heterotopia, the place of the "other" the "ἕτερο", were used in Foucault's narrative to raise questions about society, power and order.

Later in the same year, invited to a radio show by France Culture (Johnson, 2016, p.4), Foucault used children's play and play-spaces, real or imaginary (Cenzatti, 2008), in order to introduce his intention to study 'a range of different spaces' that 'change or contest the space we live in' (p.4). This was the first time the term Heterotopia was used to describe physical and not strictly biological or textual spaces. In March 1967, Foucault used the notion of Heterotopia to refer to physical space in a lecture in the Cercle d'études architecturales [Circle of Architectural Studies] in Paris (Johnson, 2016). This was not published in French until 1984 in the architectural journal 'Architecture, Mouvement, Continuité' in an article entitled 'Des espaces autres' 'Of Other spaces' (Johnson, 2016; Soja, 1989). In this chapter I take a close look at 'Of Other Spaces' in order to structure a clear understanding of Foucault's notion of Heterotopia before exploring its various interpretations more deeply.

### 3.2.2 The Characteristics of Foucault's Heterotopia

'But what interests me among all these emplacements are certain ones that have the curious property of being connected to all the other emplacements, but in such a way that they suspend, neutralize, or reverse the set of relations that are designated, reflected, or represented [riflechis] by them' (Foucault, 1998a, p.178).

In the first paragraph of 'Of Other Spaces', Foucault presented the 20th century as the age of space. It was the 'era of the simultaneous, of juxtaposition' (Foucault, 1998a, p.175). He identified two kinds of emplacements: Utopias and Heterotopias. Utopias, are imaginary places that depict an ideal society either as perfected or as the direct reversal of the existing one (Ibid, p.178). Heterotopias, in contrast, are real places woven into society acting as 'realized utopias' (Ibid, p.178). They are 'at the same time, represented, contested, and reversed, sorts of places that are outside all places, although they are actually localizable' (p.178). Foucault defined 'Heterotopias' by attributing six characteristics to them and providing an abundance of examples (

Table 1).

First, Heterotopias manifest themselves in all cultures but in different forms and variations, so that one cannot claim that a specific form of heterotopia is 'absolutely universal' (Ibid, p.179). Foucault uses two kinds of heterotopias to illustrate his point: heterotopias of crisis and heterotopias of deviance. Heterotopias of "crisis", he argued, could be found in "primitive" societies. They intended to segregate people without a clear social identity, individuals at "liminal" stages of their lives (e.g. adolescents, see

also: Van Gennep, 1960). These usually included rituals that guided individuals through this stage and then reintroduced them back to existing society and “order”, giving them a new ‘stable social position’ (Cenzatti, 2008, p.76). According to Johnson (2016) these rites were nothing other than those described in Van Gennep’s anthropological work, which included the stages of separation, transition and incorporation (Van Gennep, 1960, p.166).

In modern societies, however, and despite some remaining traces of heterotopias of crisis, the latter have been replaced by heterotopias of “deviation”:

In which individuals are put whose behaviour is deviant with respect to the mean or the required norm (Foucault, 1998a, p.180).

The examples he gives include, for example, rest homes, mental health institutions and prisons. Subjects considered as different, disordered or deviant are assigned to heterotopias of deviance in order to protect both them and society. These deviant individuals are not going through a liminal stage, do not follow rituals in order to be reintroduced in society and brought back to order. Their condition has a more “permanent” character than those going through pre-modern heterotopias of crisis. Heterotopias of “deviance” are therefore for ‘individuals and social groups who do not fit into the modern social order’ (Cenzatti, 2008, p.76).

Secondly, heterotopias may have a function that shifts over time:

Each heterotopia has a precise and specific operation within the society, and the same heterotopia can have one operation or another, depending on the synchrony of the culture in which it is found (Foucault, 1998a, p.180).

Foucault gives the example of the cemetery, exploring its displacement from the church yard to describe how the same place, serving the same purpose, was perceived and used differently in each era. He examines how it moved from the city centre to the city’s edges, as societal beliefs about burial, resurrection and hygiene changed through time.

The third characteristic of Heterotopias is that they are capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces or sites that are incompatible. Cinemas and theatres are heterotopias that allow a whole succession of places to become realised on stage, places otherwise irrelevant to each other. Emplaced utopia, heterotopia is able to localise imaginary worlds, juxtaposing meanings and symbolisms.

The fourth principle is that heterotopias are linked to a break with time, a “heterochronia”. Foucault (1998a) argues that ‘the heterotopia begins to function fully



when men are in a kind of absolute break with their traditional time' (p.182). One can distinguish between two different types of heterochronia. The first type accumulates time, like museums or libraries: they organize a kind of 'perpetual and indefinite accumulation of time in a place that will not move' (Ibid p.182). The second type are the temporal heterotopias with a transitory character. Those 'are not eternitary but absolutely chronic' (Ibid p.182), and include, for example, fairs, festivals or even holiday villages. These take place at specific periods of time, disrupting the individual's everyday-life and establishing a new transient order that stops when the event stops or when the subject departs from the space.

Fifth, 'Heterotopias always presuppose a system of opening and closing that isolates them and makes them penetrable at the same time' (Ibid p.183). Access to a heterotopia is not a straightforward process; one is subjected to some form of regulation or even ritual/purification activities. Other times, even when the heterotopia seems publicly accessible, there may be regulating practices. In other cases, 'by the very fact of entering, one is excluded' (Ibid p.183). Foucault mentions houses in South America, to which a traveller's room is attached, where one could spend the night without having any contact with the rest of the house. Using this example, he makes the point that, although access in this case seems open, in reality the outsider is excluded from a particular space.

The sixth characteristic of heterotopias is that they function in relation to all spaces that exist outside of them. Although they mark a culturally definable space that is unlike any other, they act as microcosms reflecting larger cultural patterns or social orders. Foucault distinguishes between two types of heterotopia: heterotopias of illusion and heterotopias of compensation. On the one hand, the heterotopia of illusion 'denounces all real place' (Ibid p.184) creating utopian, illusory spaces (like the brothel)., while a heterotopia of deviance functions following a rigid code and classifications of subjects and places, the heterotopia of illusion 'enables actors to move beyond such structures' (Shane, 2005, p.260). On the other hand, the heterotopia of compensation creates its own perfect order exposing its difference to the real "disorganised" world (Foucault gives the example of the Jesuit colonies in South America).

It is evident that, in 'Of Other Spaces', Foucault's heterotopias are transformed from textual to clearly spatial entities, "distinct sites" with flexible but defined borders (Genocchio, 1995; Hetherington, 1997, Johnson, 2013b). They are spaces used as 'safety valves' (Johnson, 2013b, p.13) intending to constrain the different in order to avoid instability in the societal order. The examples he gives describe mainly spatial characteristics, such as access or location, or buildings (cemeteries, libraries, cinemas,



prisons etc.). As Johnson (2006) argues, the language Foucault uses to describe these entities reveals further their spatial character. Foucault uses the word 'emplacement' (p.77) when referring to heterotopias. It is this 'culturally-specific' emplacement that distinguishes heterotopia from the utopic formations which by contrast remain in the space of the imaginary (Soja, 1995, p.15; Hook & Vrdoljak, 2001, p.69).

Table 1: The characteristics of Heterotopia (Source: Johnson, 2016)

Principles	Examples mentioned by Foucault
1. arise in all cultures but in diverse forms	pre-modern 'crisis' places (eg for adolescents, menstruating women, old people), <i>voyage des nocces</i> (honeymoon trip), nineteenth century boarding and military schools  places of 'deviation' (eg rest homes, psychiatric hospitals, prisons, old people's homes)
2. mutate and have specific operations at different points in history	cemeteries
3. juxtapose in a single space several incompatible spatial elements	cinemas, theatres, gardens, Persian carpets
4. encapsulate temporal discontinuity or accumulation	cemeteries, fairs, 'primitive' vacation villages, museums, libraries
5. presuppose an ambivalent system of rituals related to opening/closing and entry/ exit	barracks, prisons, Muslim baths, Scandinavian saunas. motel rooms used for illicit sex.
6. function in relation to the remaining space, for example, as illusion or compensation	brothels, Puritan communities, Jesuit colonies

### 3.2.2 Critique

Foucault did not explore heterotopias further during his lifetime. The fact that although aware of the publication of 'Of Other Spaces', he did not review the lecture transcript (Gallan, 2015; Soja, 1996) has raised a lot of criticism and discussion. Hook and Vrdoljak (2002) argue that Foucault did not invest the necessary time in the development of the concept, leaving it a 'work in progress' (p.206). Soja (1996) has similarly found Foucault's discussion 'frustratingly incomplete' (p.162). More recently, DeCauter and Dehaene (2008a) have described it as 'more a rumour than [...] a codified concept' (p.4). They argue that the 'text ends in limbo' (p.28).

The double approach to heterotopias, as textual and physical is often at the centre of debate. Foucault is criticized for inconsistency and for 'vagueness' (Wicomb, 2015, p.49) because he uses the same term in different ways in two distinctly different texts (See: Foucault, 1970; 1998a). However, while the concept seems incompatible with the rest of Foucault's writings, critics agree that it does not contradict any of his most prevalent writings (Gallan, 2015). Genocchio (1993) argues that the two approaches 'bear a strange consistency' (p.34) although Foucault never articulated the connection between the two (Hook & Vrdoljak, 2002, p.206); a minor contribution to the theoretical debate about spatial difference (Genocchio, 1995; Bonazzi, 2002), an 'inadequate' (Saldanha, 2008, p.2081), 'inconsistent' (Soja, 1996, p.162), or even 'banal' concept (Harvey, 2000b, p.538).

Another aspect of heterotopias that is often criticised is the totality that seems to emerge from Foucault's attempt to present heterotopias as completely different and distinct from their surroundings. Saldanha (2008) focuses on the totality and homogeneity that this approach to heterotopias posits to the public and social space, while Genocchio (1995) claims that Foucault establishes a clear-cut operational difference between these disordered spaces and the established social order. At the same time, the latter notes that it is this discontinued status that permits them to question the totality of the dominant systems.

One major question is: which places can be defined as heterotopic (Saldanha, 2008; Genocchio, 1995; Hook & Vrdoljak, 2001; Harvey, 2000b)? The definition seems too loose, raising a multi-layered debate that reflects the need for a more solid definition. As Dehaene & De Cauter (2008) interestingly note: 'when putting on heterotopian spectacles, everything tends to take on heterotopian traits' (p.6). In this sense, the superfluous reduction of the concept merely to its spatial characteristics and its use to describe an abundance of incompatible spaces has raised an ongoing critical discussion (Dehaene & De Cauter, 2008; Genocchio, 1995; Harvey, 2000b, Palladino and Miller, 2015a). At the same time, Heterotopias emerge as ambiguous

emplacements that can both perpetuate the existing social order and create heterogeneity in both culture and space. The danger, of misjudging spaces of oppression and perpetuation of the existing status quo, because of the looseness of the concept, and approaching them as spaces of resistance by just focusing on their “otherness” is still present (Hook & Vrdoljak, 2001). Scholars problematize the subjects of heterotopias. Approaching heterotopias from a feminist perspective, McLeod (1996) argues that they ‘have much in common with feminist theories, especially in their rejection of a universal subject’ (p.185). However, she finds Foucault’s approach limited as his ‘emphasis on rupture, seems to exclude the traditional arenas of women and children, two of the groups that most rightly deserve the label “other” (Ibid, p.185). Following the same line of thought, Heynen (2008) questions the function of heterotopia as they simultaneously sustain and transgress the status quo:

If the bourgeois male visitor to the brothel has a liberating experience in which he can temporarily step out of his daily existence and momentarily see his own subjectivity as an illusory construction, should one assume that the prostitute who serves him shares a similar epiphany? (p.320).

Moreover, Foucault’s correlation of Heterotopia with Utopia (and consequently liberation or resistance) is often criticized. Johnson (2006), notes that although the concept of heterotopia is presented by Foucault as the space of realised Utopia, his approach does not reveal any inherent possibility of resistance and does not promote any ‘inevitable relationship with spaces of hope’ (p.84). Harvey (2000b) comments that Foucault’s approach to Heterotopia reduces itself merely to a concept of escape. Others, however, focusing on the close connection that Foucault attributes to space and power, claim that ‘Foucault, skilfully making use of the typical rhetoric of fairy tales, alludes to the potential that places already have’ (Pala, 2015, p.15; Palladino & Miller, 2015b). The ambiguity of the concept of heterotopia does not always make it clear whether it refers to liberation from or sustainment of the dominant order. Rather, in some paradigms it appears as a situation referring to the individual’s experience without allowing an easy, clear categorisation as liberating or oppressive.

### **3.3 Current Interpretations of Heterotopia**

#### **3.3.1 Examining the Literature – Studies and Scholars**

Despite the criticism described above, the concept of heterotopia has proven to be very rich with a variety of interpretations emerging in the social sciences. In current

discourse, heterotopias are approached as social practices/processes, thus extending Foucault's limited definition revolving around physical space. Many scholars (Hetherington, 1997; Dehaene & De Cauter, 2008; Ritter & Knaller – Vlay, 1998; Shane, 2005) have revisited the notion of heterotopia, often attributing a clear social character to it based on its relational, deviant status and categorizing it based on whether it sustains or refutes the existing social order. The current debate about heterotopias revolves around the notions of marginality, transgression, otherness, access and temporality. In what follows, I summarize the main approaches towards heterotopic spaces and then focus on a variety of studies that use the concept of Heterotopia to examine either spaces or practices.

Heterotopias have influenced the social sciences' 'spatial turn' (Johnson, 2013b, p.2). Although Foucault initially approached heterotopic spaces as 'restricted systems liable to permissions, exclusions and concealment' (Sohn, 2008, p.317), later approaches explore heterotopias as systems characterised by 'radical openness' (Heynen, 2008, p.317). It is this attribute that can potentially transform them into places of political empowerment and social disorder. Postmodern interpretations are more concerned with the social manifestations and transgressive qualities of heterotopias. Scholars in that tradition perceive heterotopias as 'socially constructed counter-sites embodying a form of 'resistance' (Genocchio, 1995, p.36), as sites of political empowerment and participation for marginalised groups through their active presence in and manipulation of space.

The first papers referring to Foucault's heterotopias used the concept in order to expand on Foucault's discourse about discontinuity without exploring specific spaces nor focusing on specific heterotopic characteristics. Teyssot (1977) in his essay 'Heterotopias and the History of Spaces' was the first to focus on heterotopia's spatial and temporal discontinuities (Defert, 1997). He examined discontinuity in history, science and geography and critiqued Foucault's failure to 'individuate the actual techniques of realisation' of heterotopia (Teyssot, 1977, p.304). Although approaching heterotopic sites as 'counter sites' (Ibid, p. 300) he placed them in a rigid taxonomy, similar to Foucault's (1970) first definition of heterotopia in 'The Order of Things' as a sum of heteroclitics things. Teyssot used an 18<sup>th</sup> century hospital studied by J.C. Perrotin in order to emphasise heterotopia as the accumulation of incompatible elements exploring spaces that bring together a variety of subjects, not normally found together.

Soja (1995) follows a social approach placing heterotopias in the realm of the post-modern city. For him, Heterotopias are socially created spatialities, the 'habitus of social practice' (p.18). Focusing on socially produced cityscapes, he argues that urban

space is a contested space of politics formed by the reproduction of dominating forms and at the same time by 'potentially revolutionary transformation in situ' (Ibid, p.29). For Soja, heterotopia as a space of difference is not an anarchistic emplacement but one that constitutes the very social order. Analysing his concept of 'third space' (1996, p.145), Soja uses Foucault's term of 'heterotopology' (1996, p.159) as an analytical tool, a method of approaching urban space. He combines Lefebvre's representational space (1991) with Foucault's heterotopias, while highlighting the difference of the heterotopic spaces, focusing on their otherness as disruptive and unfitting the dominant conceptualizations of space. He argues that "they are not just 'other spaces'" (Soja, 1996, p.163) to be added in to the geographical imagination, they are also 'other than' the established ways of thinking spatially. As he claims, 'they are meant to detonate, to deconstruct, not to be comfortably poured back into old containers' (Soja, 1996, p.163).

Genocchio (1995) takes the concept even further, trying to separate heterotopia from real, physical sites. Conscious of the over-use of the term in contemporary literature, he raises the point that any defined site could be seen as "other" or "different" from its surrounding space. For him, the overuse of the concept of heterotopia deprives it of the power residing in its looseness, which may even render it useless in the long run: 'the question becomes: what cannot be designated a heterotopia?' (p.39). Criticising the literature, he argues that the majority of approaches to heterotopia 'provide little critical engagement with Foucault's texts, simply calling up the heterotopia as some theoretical *dieu ex machina*' (Genocchio, 1993, p.34). He rather focuses his attention not on the "relationality" of these spaces but on how the connections between them are formed and take place. He suggests that the concept of Heterotopia would be more useful if it were used as a way to approach space, an analytical tool, an idea about space, rather than a physical space (Genocchio, 1995, p.43):

Similarly, in 'Badlands of Modernity', Hetherington (1997) refuses to approach heterotopia merely through its original meaning as a spatial entity. At the same time, he examines heterotopias as parts of the urban space of modernity, giving historical examples such as the Palais Royal. He approaches the term in an open-ended way, abandoning Foucault's original principles. Hetherington focuses on heterotopia's social characteristics such as resistance and transgression, marginality and centrality, process and order. He thus proposes his own principle:

Heterotopia are not about resistance or order but can be about both because both involve the establishment of alternative modes of ordering (p.51).

For Hetherington, then, heterotopias are about the process of social ordering; a continuous debate between social forces. He points out that it is their distinct orderings that construct them as 'other spaces' (p.viii) and approaches them as ongoing processes rather than defined structures.

Following the same line, Defert (1997) approaches heterotopia as 'spatio-temporal units' (p.275). In his essay, 'Foucault, space and the architects', he reflects on the reception of Foucault's concept of heterotopia by architectural discourse. For Defert heterotopia is not just an 'architectural articulation of the world's incongruities' (Ibid, p.280) but engages with the 'capacity of space to refer back to itself [...] in the density of a formal and symbolic play of contestation and reverberation' (Ibid, p.280).

Shane (2005) returns to heterotopias as emplacements. He adopts a functionalist approach, arguing that they could be used intentionally by planners in order to maintain urban balance. He subscribes to Foucault's institutionalized approach of specific places for the "normalization" of the subjects' body and mind and the 'enforcement of new codes' (p.15). For Shane, heterotopias have no single, specific form but are 'wildly diverse and constantly in flux' (Ibid, p.231); spaces distinct from their surroundings that 'help maintain the city's stability as a self-organizing system' (Ibid, p.231) by confining exceptions, in ways that are no longer dangerous for the 'urban system' (Ibid, p.244). He focuses on the heterotopia as a means towards change, a change, however, initiated by the existing status quo.

In Dehaene & De Cauter's (2008) collection of essays 'Heterotopia and the City: Public Space in a Post-civil Society' the contributions revolve around heterotopia in urban public space. They argue that the notion of heterotopia can be used as a third concept to overcome difficulties in the discourse about public space:

This requiem for the city, the lament of public space, placed the public-private dichotomy at centre stage, but has at the same time worn out its analytical force (p.3).

Dehaene & De Cauter explore urban space using heterotopia to overcome dichotomies like ordinary/extraordinary, private/public, place/non-place, and heterotopia/camp. Moving further away from Foucault's approach to heterotopias as emplacements created and used by the law, they perceive heterotopias as 'extraterritorial to the law' (Ibid, p.5) and take side on the liberating versus perpetuating the status quo debate. The notion of "resistance" runs throughout the book:

In the post-civil society' the heterotopia resurfaces as a strategy to reclaim places of otherness on the inside of an economized 'public life (2008a, p.4).

The essays revolve around the social interpretations of Foucault's concept, while providing a variety of examples and engaging with notions such as transgression, institutionalisation, illusion and segregation.

Palladino and Miller (2015a), the editors of the most recent collection of essays on heterotopia, place the concept in a wider socio-political context, a globalised space, shaped by neoliberal practices. They introduce the questions of limits, territory and migration in the discourse on heterotopia stating that 'the cosmopolitan, hyper-connected citizen du monde and the refugee are perhaps the paradigmatic figures of our time' (p.3). They explore heterotopia's connections to hegemony, expressed either through sites or practices, approaching them as emplacements of power which are not, however, defined by a specific physical space:

In this context, heterotopology becomes a valuable tool for both disclosing the homogenizing spatial effects of capital and making sense of "other" spaces outside a hegemonic topography and a topography of hegemony (Ibid, p.6).

Drawing on examples from the volume's essays, they argue that in the globalised context, heterotopias are not only about opposition and resistance to the homogenising regime but could also be produced by globalisation practices themselves (e.g. the tourist resort). Heterotopias are:

Spatial configurations, tracing flows of power, patterns of resistance, suspensions of normative order and, indeed, the re-emergence of normative order (Ibid, p.5).

More recent approaches draw on heterotopia's social characteristics and practices, while using the concept as a tool to approach a variety of spaces and practices that could at times even be contradictory to each other. Heynen (2008) argues that a feeling of un-decidability seems to run through all the different interpretations of heterotopia. However, it is this un-decidability that makes this concept open to interpretations and enriches the discussion in the social sciences. Used as an analytical tool describing both social relations and spaces, heterotopia frames a variety of studies on physical or symbolic spaces. In what follows I attempt to give the reader a comprehensive view of this variety.

On the one hand, a variety of studies approach heterotopia as a spatial entity, with distinct physical boundaries such as the Citadel LA mentioned by Soja (1995), the Palais Royal, the masonic lodges and early factories examined by Hetherington (1997), public libraries (Lees 1997; Cooke, 2006), wind farms (Collignon, 2015), the shopping mall (Kern 2008; Muzzio & Muzzio-Rentas 2008), newly built urban centres (Orillard; 2008), theatres (Ioannidou, 2011; Bryant-Bertail, 2000) the mirrors (Manning, 2008), gardens (Nakaue, 2010) spaces of illusion such as the Tele Citta or Disney World (Shane, 2008) consumer places and multiplex in post-Communist cities (Gasior – Niemiec, 2002), artificial islands in Dubai (Petti, 2008), nude beaches (Andriotis, 2010), floating asylums (Morgan, 2015), internet cafes (Liu, 2009), sanatoriums and clinics (Bolaki 2015), neighbourhoods that accommodate alternative practices (Chatzidakis et al., 2012).

On the other hand, approached even more widely, the notion of heterotopia has been used in order to examine diverse cases from the development of cryptozoology (Miller, 2015), the organizational entrepreneurship in the workplace (Hjorth, 2005), to childhood and the role of prints in Calcutta (Eaton, 2003). It has also been used in the fields of education (Sumara & Davis, 2002, McNamee, 2000), literature (Bryant-Bertail, 2000; Meerzon, 2007) and science fiction studies (Somay, 1984; Gordon, 2003). Some studies explore placeless heterotopias, such as Facebook, (Rymarczuk & Derksen, 2014), pornographic sites (Jacobs, 2004) or film (Chung, 2012) identifying with neither a central nor a marginal status, while others focus on imaginary places. For example, Bonazzi (2002) compares Brunelleschi's panel and to Foucault's mirror (1998a).

Even within single collective volumes about heterotopias, one can trace very different approaches, and completely contradictory applications of the term (See: Dehaene & DeCauter, 2008; Palladino and Miller, 2015a). In the introduction to their collection about heterotopia, Palladino and Miller (2015a) state:

The collection does not aim towards consensus or a standardized understanding of Foucault's essay, cultivating instead heterogeneous perspectives, styles and philosophical orientations that are unified by an engagement with heterotopias in the context of that most unwieldy and hotly contested of historical processes, globalization (p.5).

### **3.3.2 Main Themes – Cross Cutting the Literature**

The debate about heterotopias is complex and extended. Concepts such as marginality, transgression, resistance, porosity and normalization emerge and run through the literature discussed above and are used by scholars in attempts to



analyse, describe and reduce heterotopia's ambiguity. In the following section I provide a brief summary of these concepts and their contradictions. My intent is not only to structure a complete view of the debate but also to provide a clear understanding of the richness and ambiguity of the notion of heterotopia.

### Marginal-Central

One of the widely discussed and frequently emerging themes in the relevant literature is that of heterotopia's positionality in the space of everyday life. Heterotopias as sites of difference are often equated with clearly marginal, segregated spaces and subjects. It could be argued that issuing from more spatial/architectural/geographical perspectives these approaches follow Foucault's line of thought and stem from his various examples of heterotopic spaces, especially the heterotopias of deviance (See: McLeod, 1996). Their otherness segregates them and gives them their marginal status, while they, as 'disturbing places' (Johnson, 2006, p.84), contest the order and taxonomy of the "normal" space. Studies explore marginal spaces and their practices, such as homelessness (Mendel, 2011), marginal identities such as the new age travellers (Hetherington, 1996) immigrants in London (Wicomb, 2015) or youth and its spaces of transition (Gallan, 2015). Doron (2008) approaches the city's dead-zones as places of transgression and compares their characteristics with those of heterotopias.

Other approaches, drawing from heterotopia's relational status, build a more social perspective. They usually approach heterotopias as central blurred spaces, spaces of 'hidden appearance' (Dehaene & De Cauter, 2008, p.91) in the public domain, while remain distinct. Sohn (2008) argues that heterotopias do not abide by any taxonomy since they are completely different from all known categories of space (p.49). In a similar vein, Hetherington (1997) argues that they can be central and marginal at the same time (p.46). For him, heterotopic space is a continually debated process about the ordering of things and not about the prevailing existing order. He identifies heterotopias as the 'unbounded and blurred space between rather than the easily identified space at the edge' (p.4) thus defying categorization and placement within any clear taxonomy. In contrast, Genocchio (1995) argues that the very act of naming a heterotopic emplacement as such results in placing it into the known categorization of space, depriving it that way of its distinct, blurred character. At the same time, McLeod (1996), in her critique of Foucault, stresses the need to approach the "other" not as that which is excluded from everyday life, but that which is contained in it and still constitutes an "other" (p.189).

## Otherness

Foucault suggests that, in our contemporary society, heterotopias enclose some form of deviance. They circumscribe subjects or behaviours inconsistent with the prevailing social norm. The name he chooses: – meaning “other-spaces” – highlights the otherness of these spaces. Spaces of alternate ordering, places of Otherness, sites constituted in relation to other sites by their difference:

Heterotopia organize a bit of the social world in a way different to that which surrounds them (Soja, 1995, p.15).

These ‘alternate modes of social orderings’ (Hetherington, 1997, p.12; 1996, p.38) become visible through the practices and events that take place. Heterotopias are in a constant process of redefining themselves and their surroundings by producing alternate orderings that question the existing socio-spatial order. Through this process, the heterotopic space emerges as an ‘example of an alternative way of doing things’ (Hetherington, 1997, p.viii). As Sohn (2008) points out, it is in the ‘challenging of the established order of things that heterotopia acquires its full potential’ (p.44).

At the same time, heterotopia has shifting meanings depending on whether the subject is located inside or outside its ‘power effects’ (Hetherington, 1997, p.51). Its nature may not emerge as disordered for the subjects of heterotopia but rather as part of their everyday. One should be positioned on the outside, neither affected by nor participating in heterotopia’s processes to grasp its orderings in relation to the adjacent space and context. Only then, a heterotopias’ connections and practices become evident. As Cenzatti argues (2008) ‘what constitutes irreconcilability is constantly contested and changing’ (p.79), making heterotopias balance between invisibility and recognition.

However, heterotopia’s otherness emerges through its communication with other sites rather than each individual site’s otherness. Foucault’s sixth principle refers to the relational status of heterotopias: heterotopias relate to other sites by both representing and inverting them. As Soja argues: heterotopias are ‘socially constructed but they simultaneously recreate and reveal the meaning of social being’ (Soja, 1995, p.14). Sohn (2008) notes that heterotopias exist because of their opposition to ‘normalcy and correct orders’ (p.44). However, it is this very opposition that defines the normal and the prevailing order. Chatzidakis et al. (2012) note that heterotopias juxtapose social orderings that may be incompatible but not conflicting, they ‘co-exist without seeking resolution’ (p.498). On the other hand, Hetherington (1997) argues that it is the ‘similitude’ and not the juxtaposition of elements and signs that are not usually

found together 'which produces, in an almost magical, uncertain space, monstrous combinations that unsettle the flow of discourse' (p.43). In both approaches, heterotopia transcends clear dichotomies such as private-public or local-global and constitutes a third term where these dipoles do not apply (Heynen, 2008, p.312; Dehaene & De Cauter, 2008, p.91). That way, the totality of space is abolished and a 'multiplicity of publics' (Cenzatti, 2008, p.83) emerges. Heterotopias arise from cracks between dominant spaces of representation.

### Resistance/Transgression

Although Foucault's approach to heterotopias did not engage directly with the notion of resistance, their "otherness" emerged as a fertile ground for further interpretations that revolve around both the notions of transgression (Dodge, 2005; Doron, 2008; McLeod, 1996) and resistance (Allweil & Kallus, 2008; Genocchio, 1995; Hook & Vrdoljak, 2001; Lees, 1997; Soja 1996). Some scholars use one or the other term (transgression or resistance) without explaining the reasons for choosing one or the other, while others use both terms (Johnson, 2006; Hetherington, 1997) to describe the possibility of heterotopias. In this research, the term transgression is used to refer to an act that revolves around a specific reference point and tries to transgress or move it further. The term resistance goes further and refers to a collective practice of proposing new orderings, creating new realities, and abolishing the reference point that makes transgression possible.

Hetherington (1997) argues that it is the alternate orderings of heterotopias and their ability to 'form their own relations of power' (p.24) that structure their character as spaces of resistance. The possibility of resistance emerges through heterotopias' difference, and most specifically their "otherness" when compared with their surroundings. Genocchio (1995) argued that it is heterotopias' 'purported status as a form of spatially discontinuous ground' (p.37) that gives them the ability to debate the totality and coherence of urban space and as such resist it. In contrast, for Lee (1997), it is heterotopias' semi-hidden character that allows them to 'counteract with the cracks of power/hegemony/authority' (p.323). Other studies focus on the lived, physical space that accommodates heterotopias as an important factor to argue in favour of resistance or transgression. Watson and Gibson (1995) argue that, for Foucault, space is fundamental for any exercise of power. In the fragmented space of the post-modern urban space, DeCauter & Dehaene (2008) perceive heterotopia as 'a strategy to reclaim places of otherness on the inside of an economized 'public life' (p.4). Dodge (2015), making a distinction between 'self-imposed' (p.321) transgressional heterotopias and 'spaces of resistance' (Ibid, p.321), argues that 'resistance

necessarily entails accounting for the importance of both the space and the transgressional behaviour that constitutes it' (Ibid, p.331). By contrast, Allweil and Kallus (2008), introduce the 'public-space heterotopias' characterised by their alternate orderings and social relations, while they 'reside within the domain of the open-to-all public space and hold no permanent physical borders' (p.193). Exploring communities of gay culture in Tel Aviv they emphasise the bottom-up processes that create heterotopias' orderings. Pechtelidis, (2016) explores a youth community as a heterotopia that empowers university students, while Zaimakis (2015) examines how graffiti creates counter-sites, spaces of resistance in the context of socio-economic crisis in Greece. Tamboukou (2004) subscribes to the approach of heterotopias as places of transgression, examining the writing of women educators as 'real emplacements within which unruly subjects coming from the margins can accommodate themselves' (p.202).

These scholars argue that 'there is no power without potential refusal or revolt' (p.324) and therefore agree with Foucault's (2000) own approach to power and freedom, while exploring the various ways heterotopias debate the existing social orderings. Foucault's 'microphysics' of power focus on the individual behaviour and 'circuits of power relationships' (Gordon, 2000, p.xxv) that run through the social. Foucault explores how power is not only imposed from above but also exercised from below, supporting and perpetuating the wider structures of domination. Since power, for Foucault, is not independent from the set of social orderings upon which it is exercised, the heterotopic site emerges as the ground where 'local, unbalanced, tense, heterogeneous and unstable' (Johnson, 2006, p.86) power is negotiated, implemented and transgressed: a site of resistance.

The critique on the ambiguity of Foucault's approach, discussed previously, comes forward once again this time forming a broader debate about heterotopia's transgressive character. Johnson (2006) argues that 'these different spaces, which contest forms of anticipatory utopianism, hold no promise or space of liberation' (p.87), however, they offer an everyday-life space of struggle and possibility. In this respect some heterotopias could be used by the dominant structure in order to perpetuate its order, while others could act as spaces of resistance. Hook and Vrdoljak (2001) point out that 'to misread what is and what is not heterotopic, is to confuse the potential of resistance with the perpetuation of the status quo' (p.77). A telling example is given by Venkatesan (2009). He analysed how dominant elites use Indian craftsmen in order to create a Utopian vision of traditional craft. In this case, although the traditional Indian craft is used from the elites as a form of resistance to the industrialised production of goods, the craftsmen, as the subjects of heterotopia, are not in a process of

transgression or resistance. They are just following the norms established by a more powerful elite. Other studies explore hegemonic practices in relation to heterotopic sites: the construction of identities in contrast to the hegemonic cultures (Annist, 2013), Olympic games developments that express a hegemonic vision for the city (Bristow, 2015), systems of missionary intervention in Kwango (De Meulder, 1998) or the apartheid system established in Jakarta (Cowherd, 2008).

However, focusing only on the possibility of transgression and approaching heterotopias merely as sites of resistance would be naïve. Heterotopias offer a way to think about resistance, providing a set of relations rather than clear-cut domination-liberation, resisting-sustaining power dipole. Heterotopias extend beyond these dipole utilising the notion of process and abolishing any fixed structures. As Foucault (2000) claims:

Between a relationship of power and a strategy of struggle there is a reciprocal appeal, a perpetual linking and a perpetual reversal (p.347).

Although these relations are not independent from the existing, dominant norms and orderings, they perpetually negotiate and resist dominant structures and mechanisms. Transgression emerges from heterotopias' alternate orderings as a continuous process negotiating the existing norms and transforming heterotopias into spaces of possibility:

Transgression, then, is not related to the limit as black to white, the prohibited to the lawful, the outside to the inside, or as the open area of a building to its enclosed spaces. Rather their relationship takes the form of lighting in the night which [...] lights up the night from the inside, from top to bottom, and yet owes to the dark the stark clarity of its manifestation (Foucault, 1998b, p. 74).

Heterotopias are not spaces of revolution, conflicting with the dominant power. Rather, they are spaces where resistance becomes feasible. Places where social actors draw from the dominant order and transform it temporarily into a form they can manipulate and rule, resisting the mechanisms of social structure.

### Temporal

A 'special chroneity' (Hook & Vrdoljak, 2002, p.209) runs through the concept of heterotopia as it emerges as a 'slice of time' (Soja, 1996, p.160), a 'temporal passage' (Stavrides, 2006, p.176). As we saw, 'Heterochronia' (Foucault, 1998, p.182) either

refers to the accumulation of time in one space or the transitory character of heterotopia. The former has to do with the characteristics and function of a specific space, while the latter regards the actions and social relations creating a heterotopic entity for as long as they are taking place there. At the same time, heterotopias have the ability to alter time, breaking its continuity and generating 'altered senses or perceptions of time' (Hook & Vrdoljak, 2001, p.69).

Heterotopias functioning as spaces of representation, acquire different symbolisms and meanings according to the social groups to which they refer and the actions that take place there. These meanings exist only for as long as the action creating them is exercised. Hetherington, drawing on Lefebvre's (1991) view of a representational space that 'overlays physical space, making symbolic use of its objects'(p.39) argues that 'such spaces, therefore, are not sites as such, but temporal situations, events' (Hetherington, 1997, p.22). When the social conditions creating the heterotopia end, the heterotopia disappears (Cenzatti, 2008). Dehaene & De Cauter (2008b), introduced a new term considering heterotopias more as a 'time-space' (p.92); a space of continuous process and dialectical relations. They approach heterotopias as 'alternative', 'altered' and 'alternating' (Ibid, p.93) spaces, pointing out that these occur from the switching between two different time-spaces. Similarly, Cenzatti (2008) pointed out the ephemerality of heterotopias. For Cenzatti, space is not in itself heterotopic, rather it provides the site where moments of heterotopia take place:

Heterotopias, as spaces of representation, are produced by the presence of a set of specific social relations and their space. As soon as the social relation and the appropriation of physical space end, both space of representation and heterotopia disappear (p.81).

Gallan (2012) examines urban night spaces utilising the temporal framework as 'both accumulating and fleeting time' (p.560), while in Allweil and Kallus' study (2008), as soon as the 'circle of drummers' (p.194) dissolves, Independence Park loses its heterotopic character. Other studies on heterotopia focus on temporal heterotopias that may have a defined spatial print but could also function without one. Such studies explore, for example, performances in the urban space (Laanemets, 2002), festivals (Dovey & Olivieri, 2015), Gypsy travellers (Palladino, 2015) or even the experience of illness (Bolaki, 2015).

### Access/ Porosity

Foucault (1998) in his fifth principle attributed to heterotopias an opening and closing mechanism. This system functions to either create a form of community and 'a delineation of otherness' (Dehaene & De Cauter, 2008, p.6) by excluding any outsiders or opening this enclave to the public. Their porous and contested perimeter is the basic mechanism that allows heterotopias to function in relation to their surroundings, defining and being defined by them, contesting the notions of "otherness" and "normal" and 'existing both as reality and potentiality (Stavrides, 2006, p.178).

Heterotopia's opening and closing system does not only refer to a physical space but also to the social practices that take place there. Porosity can be defined as a 'rich network of practices' (Stavrides, 2006, p.175) affecting access, its regulations as well as power manifestations in each variation of heterotopia. As heterotopias are 'necessarily collective or shared spaces' (Dehaene & De Cauter, 2008, p.6), the concepts of accessibility and power emerge. For Foucault (2000), 'power relations are rooted in the whole network of the social' (p.345). Therefore, they run through and inform the heterotopias opening/closing social practices. He mentions that access to a heterotopia is not straightforward, but is often accompanied by regulations, processes, even purification rituals (Ibid, p.183). Soja (1995) notes that for Foucault space is where abstract discourses of power are consolidated and take the form of relations between subjects. He argues that:

Implicit in this heterotopia regulation of opening and closing are the workings of power, of what Foucault would later describe as 'disciplinary technologies' that operate through the social control of space, time and otherness to produce a certain kind of 'normalization (Soja, 1996, p.161).

Access may be more strictly regulated. It may require following specific procedures, as for example when entering a prison, while in other cases, participants may be asked to perform different "rituals" according to their condition, or even their mood (i.e. a festival). Bartling (2008) examines an age-restrictive retirement community, a heterotopia created specifically for the exclusion of the younger members of society. In this case, age acts as the main mechanism regulating access. Mendel (2011) explores the ritual transition to homelessness through a variety of procedures that start with registration and end with the homeless person receiving benefits. Allweil and Kallus (2008) describe a music ritual that aims to bring potential partners together. Hook and Vrdoljak explore exclusion as the number one socio-political function of a security park (2001) and a gated community (2002).

Do these opening and closing mechanisms transform heterotopia into an enclave? Or rather, do they act, as Stavrides (2006) argued, as a threshold through which 'heterotopias diffuse a virus of change' (p.178)? For Foucault (1998) the existence of a limit presupposes its transgression:

Transgression carries the limit right to the limit of its being; transgression forces the limit to face the fact of its imminent disappearance, to find itself in what it excludes (perhaps, to be more exact, to recognize itself for the first time), to experience its positive truth in its downward fall (p.73).

It is these opening and closing mechanisms of heterotopia that contain both the limit and its transgression, as they not only exclude but also interact with a heterotopia's surroundings at the same time.

### **3.4 Heterotopia, Space and Children**

Children are one of the various groups of citizens that are excluded from the adult – oriented and adult-designed civic space, growing up in the margins of urban life, in a variety of "heterotopias of deviance". Public space is not only produced by but also refers to adults: it is 'experienced as a 'normally' adult space' (Valentine, 1996b, p.206). In the "normality" of public space, children emerge as the disordered and vulnerable "other" that threatens the adult order. Children, seen as beings different from adults, are kept away from the adult public space, while special places to protect and accommodate their complexity have emerged (Aitken, 2001; Germanos, 2001). Foucault examined such institutionalized spaces and argued that in the modern society, the aim of these is not only to exclude the individuals from society but also to attract and train them:

The school does not exclude individuals, even in confining them: it fastens them to an apparatus of knowledge transmission [...] even if the effects of these institutions are the individual's exclusion, their primary aim is to insert individuals into an apparatus of normalization of people (Foucault, 2000, p.79).

In the over-protected public space, the concept of heterotopia's 'hidden appearance' (Dehaene & De Cauter, 2008b, p.91) re-emerges in the ways children and youth carve out spaces from the adult world to form their own heterotopic spaces and exist in public space.



Valentine (1996b) examines how children's exclusion is considered "normal" (p.205) and how this "normality" gets disrupted when children claim their right to the city. Other studies approach this condition as a battle in an arena where young people need to conquer areas cut out from adult spaces (Jones, 2000; Matthew et al., 2000a, 2000b), which are nevertheless 'in constant threat of being reclaimed' (Nayak, 2003, p.310) by the adults. Jones (2000), Beazley (2000) and Matthews et al. (2000a, 2000b) explore such spaces without engaging with the concept of heterotopia as such. Jones (2000), arguing that 'boundaries are critical in the structuring of children's lives' (p.41), explores children's transgression of boundaries set by adults. In his study, children manipulate and reconstruct "Otherable" adult places disordering the ordered adult space creating liminal worlds; what we could call heterotopias. Similarly, Matthew et al. (2000a), employing the concepts of 'thirdspace' (Soja, 1996, p.26) and 'paradoxical space' (Rose, 1995, p.137), explore the urban streets as 'interstitial' (Bhabha, 1994, p.212) in-between spaces, both outside and inside adult society. Beazley (2000) explores how homeless street children create their own societies – subcultures of the dominant Indonesian society. In other words, how children in the margins create their own heterotopias, disturbing the social order. The concept of heterotopia is a useful tool in approaching such conditions where clear dipoles fail to provide 'viable frameworks for analysis' (Heyen, 2000, p.312) as it can describe what Stavrides (2006) describes as 'a collective experience of otherness, not as a stigmatizing spatial seclusion but rather as the practice of diffusing new forms of urban collective life' (p.175).

### **3.5 Liminality and Play**

Foucault, although not examining heterotopias of play, described the spaces created, while children play as heterotopic (Foucault 2004). They are spaces carved out from the existing reality, creating new realities, while borrowing elements from what already exists (Johnson, 2006)., while the studies on children's heterotopias are limited, there are a few studies approaching play and games as heterotopic. Richards' study (2013) explored pretend play as a heterotopia emerging in real places. Other scholars explore video games and their digital space as heterotopic entities (Burn & Richards, 2013; Dixon, 2004; Mitchell and Reid-Walsh, 2002; McNamee, 2000). Moreover, DeCauter & Dehaene (2008a) refer to heterotopia as 'the space of play' (p.87). Stevens (2006), using the concept of 'thresholds' (p.81), which I correlate with that of heterotopia, argues that people play 'thresholds' as this may be the:

First and last chance to act upon the freedoms and inspirations which urban public space provides, where they have the opportunity to 'be themselves' (p.81).

The notion of the 'liminoid' is often correlated to play (Turner, 1974, p.53). Similarly, Frank and Stevens's (2006) 'loose spaces' (p.16) promote 'loose and playful responses' (p.10), while Lefebvre (1991) approaches the city as 'the moment of play and of the unpredictable' (p.129). What these spaces of play have in common is the ability of play to create alternate orderings and propose new conceptualizations.

As I have already explored (See section 1.5 Play) this study is not preoccupied with the various manifestations and benefits of play. Play is not approached as a means towards reaching developmental targets. This study focuses on play's ability to not only reproduce but also produce meaning, creating various temporary (Stevens, 2006, p.74) spaces of representation (Lefebvre, 1991). Space created by play 'reflects and contests simultaneously' the existing reality (Johnson, 2016, p.4), as play involves a re-appropriation of spaces and a change in their usual use (Glenn et al., 2012). Play has often been approached as a liminal, transitional phenomenon that helps us understand the relations with the "other" and with reality (Winnicott, 2009). In-between transitional spaces that shape one's identity (Bhabha, 1994; Matthews et al., 2000a, Matthews 2003) are for 'play and reconfiguration, belonging neither to the subject nor to some existent reality' (Aitken, 2000, p.121). Thomassen (2014) notes that liminal phenomena create the conditions for 'creativity and innovation, peaking in transfiguring moments of sublimity' (p.1) or more simply put: play. Turner's (1974) liminoid spaces are for play, places of instability and possibility (1982): 'In liminality people lay with the elements of the familiar and defamiliarize them' (1974, p.60). Creating liminal spaces, play gives the player the power to construct a perfect world (Solomon, 2005) 'attributed with pretended meaning and [...] new functions' (Thyssen, 1993, p.590). Play can be understood as supporting individual empowerment. Larsen (2015) argues that when in play the physical reality is undermined, absent, transgressed and fluid. As play manipulates space, physically or symbolically, turning space into place, (Germanos, 2001) a new world takes form 'that lives alongside the first one and carries on its own kind of life' (Sutton-Smith, 1997, p.158). This constitutes an enacted Utopia, a heterotopia. Children's play can 'bend reality to the limited symbolic system [...] where adult logical reality has no force' (Johnsen & Christie, 1986, p.50) and therefore has the potential to transform everyday life by changing power relations and abolishing control.

## 3.6 The Playground as a Heterotopia

### 3.6.1 Foucault's Heterotopia and the Playground Space

Foucault's case-studies and various points of spatial reference were mostly concerned with the fundamental places of top-down authority and control in society. These included, among other spaces, the school, prison, hospital, courthouse, the asylum. In the course of the transition from Foucault's own paradigm to more social approaches through reinterpretations of his work, it became clear that it was necessary to examine spaces, institutions and practices that were until then considered less fundamental in this line of thought. In other words, it became clear that heterotopia-related research should focus equally on the institutions and spaces through which ideas and practices are produced, diffused and established in a day-to-day basis. Contemporary playgrounds are such spaces par excellence. Created by, but not "controlled" by, the state.

Foucault himself did not refer to playgrounds in his studies on heterotopia. He did, however, refer to children's play and the spaces play creates. In the radio broadcast, he claimed:

These counter-spaces, these localized utopias, children know them perfectly well. Of course, it is the end of the garden, of course it is the attic, or even better the Indian tent set up in the middle of the attic, or else, it is – on a Thursday afternoon – the large bed of the parents (Foucault 2004, p.40; quoted in Dehaene & De Cauter, 2008a, p.95).

In the lecture or the text 'Of other spaces', however, he neither refers back to play nor mentions other forms of play-spaces, while he employs others examples to illustrate his principles.

In what follows I examine the playground space according to what Foucault considered to be the characteristics of heterotopias. I then explain my approach and the correlation between the playground space and the concept of heterotopia. Playgrounds, approached as heterotopic spaces, exemplify Foucault's six principles.

First, play spaces appear in all cultures, taking different forms and engaging various practices. Play activity can be traced deep into the past of human societies (Thomassen, 2014; Aries, 1962; Santer et al., 2007, Huizinga, 1949). Playgrounds, institutionalised from their very first appearance and seen as a way to discipline the child's body through 'correcting environments' (Aitken, 2001, p.125), emerged in order to accommodate the deviance of children, controlling their natural instincts. As Aaron (1965) argues, the very first public playground, established in 1870 in the New York

central park, 'was the very first statement that children needed a special place' (p.24), a heterotopia of deviance.

Secondly, the playground space acquired a variety of meanings and functions through history, affected by the perceptions of children and childhood, while at the same time revealing society's norms in each era and area (Thomassen, 2014; Aries, 1962; Santer et al., 2007, Huizinga, 1949; Solomon, 2005; Aitken, 2000).

Third, playgrounds are spaces that juxtapose several different forms of spaces. Play, placed in-between internal and external reality (Winnicott, 2009), creates innumerable manifestations of real and fantastical worlds, taking advantage of the existing spatial affordances of the prescribed physical space. This space is part of the "real" world, but at the same time becomes an "other" space' (Hjorth, 2005, p.392).

Fourth, playgrounds are in a state of absolute break with time. This abides with both definitions of Foucault's heterochronias. First, play is the force that disrupts time, creating a discontinuity in the normal flow of time. Playing children move through time. They bend the timeline by going to the past or travelling to the future. The playground also emerges as a physical space where several temporal instances co-exist as a "pirate" plays alongside a "cave-dweller". Actual time does not matter. Moreover, playground emerges as an ephemeral heterotopia, when play stops, the space loses its heterotopic character:

As soon as the social relation and the appropriation of physical space end, both space of representation and heterotopia disappear (Cenzatti, 2008, p.81).

Fifth, Playgrounds presuppose a system of opening and closing. This is usually physically defined, consisting of the playground's fence, door, paving materials or other spatial characteristics; but it also relates to the social interaction of the playground's users. The norms of how one is expected to use the playground and under what circumstances are highly contextual, defined by the culture in which the playground is placed. These norms determine who is considered "other", not only regarding people but also places and behaviours. It becomes evident that the playground's opening and closing mechanisms are more complex than its physical fence and are the ones determining its interaction with its surroundings.

Finally, playgrounds function in relation to their surroundings, accommodating play that 'produces a different space that at the same time mirrors what is around them' (Johnson, 2016, p.4). They emerge as "other spaces" in relation to the adult public realm, both physically – clearly defined, including strange play equipment – and socially – accommodating the "different" state of childhood. At the same time, however,

the playing child borrows elements from his/her everyday reality and blends them, producing new orderings and worlds (Winnicott, 2009). The orderings produced in the playground both reflect and contest the wider social norms in a highly relational interaction.

### **3.6.2. My Approach**

The concept of heterotopia is used in this study not only to approach the “otherness” of the playground space but also its potential, expressed and realized through the act of playing. Playgrounds, transformed by the elusive nature of play, emerge as liminal spaces of hidden appearance (Dehaene & De Cauter, 2008, p.91). I employ the concept of Heterotopia as an analytical tool ‘rather than a clear-cut spatial delineation’ (Gallan, 2015, p.560) or a means of spatial classification. Heterotopia, used as a tool describing processes and potential, makes the connection between the spatial and the social feasible. At the same time, it facilitates focusing on notions such as access, transgression, social networks and social control, informing the understanding of playground’s Public Value, while moving through different scales of everyday and social life. As Bonazzi (2002) notes, employing heterotopia in order to approach social space:

Has nothing to do with a ‘reassuring analysis of spatial relations through the customary forms of description, recording, circulation, denomination, classification, and codification’ but is more about a ‘disquieting revelation, which implies an immediate realization of conflict and criticism (p.43).

While Foucault was more interested in institutionalized heterotopias intended (in their majority) to preserve the existing status quo, my approach reflects McLeod’s (1996) stance. I explore how heterotopias form everyday life; or as I would like to call them, “everyday heterotopias”. These are interwoven in the urban fabric, form an integral part of people’s everyday experience and as such are capable of empowering their subjects. Against Genocchio’s (1995) criticism of the over-use of the term and his argument that by naming a heterotopic space as such one deprives it of its heterotopic characteristics, I contend that his claim transfers heterotopia from the scale of the everyday into an abstract theoretical sphere with little practical spin-off. Approaching the playground as an “everyday heterotopia”, allows me to examine both its social practices and its spatial characteristics and to reclaim its rightful place in the urban public space.

Perceiving public space more as a process, 'the act of making things public' (Kern, 2008, p.114) or a 'complexity of interacting social relations' (Massey, 1998, p.127) rather than a fixed space, I am interested in the ways participants construct the social world they inhabit. I follow heterotopia's "social turn", perceiving them as social entities of collective social experience (Dehaene & De Cauter, 2008, p.6), where people are "creating" reality together, rather than as segregated physical spaces. Instead of claiming that heterotopias are "absolutely" different from the rest of space, I approach heterotopia as processes of continuous negotiation between social actors and between social actors and space rather than as a fixed taxonomy of order.

At the same time, I am particularly interested in the connection between the social and the spatial. Although my stance is similar to that of Allweil & Kallus (2008), Cenzatti (2008), Hetherington (1997) and Genocchio (1995) who perceive heterotopia 'more as an idea about space' (Genocchio, 1995, p.43), a result of multiple social relations and representations, I believe that one cannot and should not omit space and its effects in the public realm. The different representative identities (Lefebvre, 1991) that space can acquire are limited by its physical characteristics and its ability to support different interpretations. Although in my approach heterotopia is always emplaced, it is not reduced to a sum of spatial characteristics. I am not interested in the space created to be heterotopic (often deviant)<sup>15</sup>, but more in the ways heterotopic practices emplace themselves. I am interested in the ways heterotopia (re)produces space (Trojal & Petrescu, 2017), conversing with the material but not identifying with it. As Gallan (2015) argues, when exploring a heterotopic space, one should understand the 'processes through which the space becomes imagined and experienced as different from 'other spaces' (p.567). Thus, I explore both the social and spatial contexts that influence the playground's function, approaching the playground space through the social relations it accommodates, as an 'actually lived and socially created spatiality, concrete and abstract at the same time' (Soja, 1989, p.18)<sup>16</sup>.

I ascribe to Hetherington's (1997) five principles:

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<sup>15</sup> Although I cannot disregard the playground's character as a heterotopia of deviance, created by the official state mechanism in order to protect and confine the deviant others. This is a quite straightforward position that subscribes to Foucault's definition and is used to describe and analyse an institutionalised space. However, my view on the broader social debate about what should be called heterotopic is informed by the constant conversing of people and space, emplacing rather than being placed.

<sup>16</sup> At this point I want to make clear that when I use the term 'playground' I refer to the playground's fenced spatiality and the social relations and orderings that this accommodates. All the other practices and interactions that further extend the playground's limits are examined of their own accord and relate, as it will be explored, to the notion of heterotopia.

1. No space can be described as fixed as a heterotopia;
  2. Heterotopia always have multiple and shifting meanings for agents depending on where they are located within its power effects;
  3. Heterotopia are always defined relationally to other sites or within a spatialization process, and never exist in and of themselves;
  4. Heterotopia, if they are taken as relational, must have something distinct about them, something that makes them an obligatory point of passage
  5. Heterotopia are not about resistance or order but can be about both because both involve the establishment of alternative modes of ordering.
- (p.51-52).

Furthermore, my approach to the playground as a heterotopic space draws upon the main themes emerging in the literature, as I show above. I engage more with the recent interpretations of the term, while extending and enriching Foucault's list of principles.

The playground emerges as a children's space; providing "special equipment" for supervised "safe" and "valuable" play. It functions as an institutionalized heterotopia, with limited Public Value, one that seeks to contain as well as attract children in order to "normalise" them. A heterotopia of deviance (Foucault, 1998a) created in order to segregate and protect childhood – a state of the human life that is usually thought of as one that deviates from the "normality" of adult life – the playground space suggests a societal conceptualisation of children as underdeveloped and vulnerable (Aitken, 2001). One could categorise playgrounds along with other institutions such as the school, the prison, or the hospitals that:

Have the object of binding the individual to a process of production, training [formation], or correction of the producers (Foucault, 2000, p.79).

In other words, the normalization of future citizens. The playground as a **heterotopia of deviance** (Foucault, 1998) emerges as a space with strict rules, driven by society's anxieties occurring from the perceptions of what it is to be a child, and how one should play (See: Gagen, 2000a, 2000b; Holloway & Valentine, 2000a; Valentine, 1996a; Aitken, 2001; Solomon, 2005; Rasmussen, 2004; Loukaitou-Sideris, 2003; Gulgonen & Corona, 2015). In our supervising society (Foucault, 2000), playgrounds function as 'specially designated spaces where [the forces of change] can be filtered and contained' (Allweil and Kallus, 2008, 191); places where the vulnerable and the unruly child can be segregated for both his/her protection and that of society.

Playgrounds 'not only organize **differences** but also organize things differently' (Vermeulen, 2011, p.248). As concept connected to difference, heterotopia helps us

approach the playground as a “different” place – not just as an extension of the public space – and research it as one with distinct orderings and interactions. The playground, as Richards (2013) argues, is not only: ‘mundane and real and institutionally defined but also a place of fantasy and possible transgression’ (p.288). Thus, it emerges as a space of ‘enacted utopias’ (Foucault, 1998a, p.178), a heterotopia.

Playgrounds bear the possibility of **transgression** for the often “marginalised” group, children. The playground, although part of the public space, is rarely explored as a space of transgression. Functioning alongside the state-produced public space the playground heterotopia is a space with the potential to counteract the dominant order. Play, which according to Dehaene & De Cauter (2008) is ‘the medium of heterotopia’ (p.96) creates a ‘profoundly ambiguous terrain marking both the moment of man’s imprisonment within the norms of culture and the threshold of liberation or, more likely, temporary transgression’ (Ibid, p.96).

Moreover, heterotopia frames the playground as a **collective social experience** (Dehaene & De Cauter, 2008, p.6), not just as the sum of the individual users’ actions. As a consequence, the character of heterotopia in this study is not understood to result only from the physical characteristics of the playground space, but from the relationship of those characteristics to its social subjects, its practices and the force it was created to contain: play.

The playground heterotopia, functions in intimate relation to its surroundings, having ‘**a system of opening and closing that both isolates and makes it penetrable**’ (Foucault, 1998a, p.183), transforming it into a kind of ‘enclave’ (Heynen, 2008, p.311). This not only refers to the physical characteristics of space but also to the social interactions taking place there, as they are constructed, consciously or unconsciously, by the members of the heterotopia. People’s actions and interactions define opening and closing mechanisms and regulate access accordingly. Segregating but at the same time engaging children with the public realm, a spatial configuration created to contain “the other” is itself blurred although physically defined. This characteristic is expected to directly affect the playground’s Public Value.

Finally, heterotopias function **in relation** to all spaces that exist outside of them, acting as microcosms that reflect larger cultural patterns or social orders. As ‘spaces that ritualize, reflect and shape ideologies of adulthood and childhood’ (Blackford, 2004, 237), playgrounds produce alternate orderings that both reflect and contest wider social norms.



### 3.6.3 Reflection – Questions Emerge

The critical framework of Heterotopia firstly introduced by Michel Foucault in 1967 (Foucault, 1998a) is used in this study to frame both the deviance and the potential of the playground and approach the orderings taking place in the playground space as continuous processes and not as definite, pre-defined structures., while Foucault introduced the concept and listed specific characteristics associated with it, later literature approached it in a more open way, in many cases moving away from Foucault's initial definition. Since then, the term "heterotopia" has been used to approach a vast variety of spaces and practices, even abstract concepts.

While existing literature tends to approach heterotopia either as a social condition (Chung, 2012; Jacobs, 2004; Miller, 2015; Rymarczuk & Derksen, 2014) or as an emplacement of difference (Bryant-Bertail, 2000; Cooke, 2006; Collignon, 2015; Ioannidou, 2011; Lees 1997; Nakaue, 2010; Orillard, 2008; Soja, 1995), with this study I intend to bridge the two by examining the ways one informs the other. I will focus in the interrelation of space and society and the ways these affect the heterotopia, while the majority of the existing theory approaches heterotopia as pre-defined structures, independent of any interaction with their adjacent spaces (Bolaki, 2015; Kern, 2008; Liu, 2009; Muzzio & Muzzio-Rentas, 2008; Shane, 2008) I am interested in deploying the heterotopias' interaction with its adjacent spaces. At the same time, while, as I have explored above, many studies highlight the character of heterotopia as a process (Dehaene & De Cauter, 2008; Hetherington, 1997) there is a gap in the literature regarding actively examining this very process and the stages that it may go through. With this study I intend to approach heterotopia as a process and explore its variations and expressions in the playground space.

Drawing on the social turn of the term and focusing on the main debate about the liberating – oppressive nature of heterotopias, it becomes evident that the term is used in both situations, however, not simultaneously. Some scholars use the term Heterotopia in order to refer to oppressive spaces, while others use it as synonym for liberating practices. Moreover, there are those claiming that it can both lay the concept in the eye of the beholder, focusing on specific subjects and their heterotopic experiences. The questions arising are:

Can a heterotopic space support both the oppression and liberation of the same subject?

Can the playground heterotopia be conceptualised as a space of both oppression and liberation for children?

### 3.7 Summary

This chapter set the theoretical framework of this study. Foucault's concept of Heterotopia was employed in order to facilitate the examination of processes and orderings that take place in the playground. I explored not only the first definition by Foucault, spatially bonded and ascribing to six characteristics but also the critique of it, in order to acquire a comprehensive understanding of the elusiveness of this term. I examined the heterotopia theory's social turn and cut across it in order to examine the main themes and the different interpretations that have emerged. I positioned my framework in this literature, approaching heterotopia as a social entity – – a collective process of reproducing space creating alternate orderings – – and introduced the concept of the everyday heterotopias. I approached this space through its difference and relational status and defined it as a heterotopia of deviance, regulated by strict rules. Through a reflection of the main themes of marginality, otherness, temporality, access, and more specifically transgression and resistance, a question emerged. This questions the playground's oppressive character and intends to explore if the same heterotopia can act as a liberating and oppressive entity for the same subject.

# 4. Methodology

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## 4.1 Overview

In this chapter I describe my methodology, while explaining the reasons for my approach. I move from the general to the specific, from introducing this study's epistemology to discussing problems in the field. First I describe this study's ontology and then I introduce the methodological approach of Ethnography. A literature review on ethnographic methods provides a clear understanding of ethnography's use in research of both playgrounds and heterotopia. Then I describe the methods and tools I employed, my fieldwork rationale as well as my ethos and ethics when in the field. I describe the specific challenges and problems I encountered and my approach to research predicaments and the unexpected. Finally, as part of reflecting on my experience I describe specific problems I encountered and the adaptations I had to make to the methods.

## 4.2 Epistemology

I do not ascribe to the notion of a stable, "objective" reality. My research is situated within an interpretivist paradigm (Angrosino, 2007; Atkinson et al., 2001; Bradford & Cullen, 2012; Blommaert & Jie, 2010; Byrne & Ragin, 2009; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Flyvbjerg, 2001; LeCompte & Schensul, 2010; Limb & Dwyer, 2001; Robson, 2002). I draw on the notion of the 'intersubjective nature of social life' (England, 1994, p.243). The researcher describes the various forces, meanings and interpretations that emerge in each social setting by working through different scales and taking into account the culture and context of each case. I recognise heterotopias as bearing continually changing social dynamics creating various 'lived moments' situated in a specific place. I consider meanings and knowledge to always be situated (Rose, 1997; LeCompte & Schensul, 2010; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) making the research a partial, situated, socially constructed and ever – changing (Rose, 1997) process. In this sense, I see the research process as a way to challenge the top – down approach of traditional academic research, by renegotiating the researcher – participant power relations and by placing 'non-dominant, neglected knowledges at the heart of the research agenda' (Smith, 2001, p.25).

Drawing on Cenzatti's (2008) notion of 'an ever-changing multiplicity of publics' (p.83) (See also: De Cauter & Dehaene, 2008a, 2008b; Franck & Stevens, 2006;

Foucault, 1998a; Cenzatti, 2008; Gibson & Watson, 1995; Hetherington, 1997; Palladino & Miller, 2015) this research adopts a poststructuralist theoretical perspective. I approach knowledge as 'thoroughly relational' (Gallacher & Gallagher, 2008, p.511), a mutual process between the researcher and the researched, and not as an atomised understanding. Any process of collecting data creates relationships between the researcher and the participants (Bond, 2005). As a result, the data collected are not objective or independent from of these relationships (Ball, 1990).

However, I am also aware of the critique towards postmodern approaches according to which they 'have written out 'the social' (Willis & Trondman, 2000. p.10) which in turn decisively writes out the political. In my conceptual framework, the realities that are emerging in the social field are not independent from the broader political, economic and cultural context in which they take place.

## **4.3 Methodology**

### **4.3.1 Ethnography**

#### **Ethnography as a "Process"**

By perceiving public space more as a process rather than as a fixed space, I am interested in analysing the ways in which participants construct the social world that they inhabit and how they 'create reality' together rather than describing established orderings. I employed ethnography in order to approach the complexity of the playground space, engage with the cultural everyday practices and focus on the participants' behaviours, interactions, and meanings. Ethnography, perceived as 'a means by which questions of space and social meaning and social conflict could be explored' (Limb & Dwyer, 2001, p.4) engaged directly with the notion of Public Value I intend to explore. Ethnography allowed me to approach the playground as a socio-spatial entity, a space that acquires different representative identities in relation to its spatial characteristics. At the same time, ethnography, a context-sensitive methodology, taking into account 'cultural politics' (Willis & Trondman, 2000, p.10) allowed me to limit the intrusiveness of the research process in a public children's space. Ethnography allowed me to take into account the power relations that emerged and informed not only the data but also the data collection process.

#### **Heterotopia as a "Process" and Ethnography**

I approach playgrounds as socially constructed counter-sites. Soja's (1995) approach of heterotopias as entities that are: 'socially constructed but they

simultaneously recreate and reveal the meaning of social being' (p.14) becomes relevant. I intended to explore the playground space holistically, to document the processes of social ordering and generation of meanings, to analyse the 'structures of signification' (Geertz, 1973, p.9) that inform people's behaviour and to further explore the practices and ways of being that the participants considered self-evident. Ethnography, allowed me to focus on heterotopia as process, examining the ways the playground was experienced as "other" and its connections to what was considered as "normal" public space. Approaching heterotopia as a process, did not allow me to set the research dynamics beforehand. Rather, I had to employ a flexible methodology in order to engage with the unexpected in the field, to discern the social orderings and take advantage of the ever-changing roles of both the researcher and the participants. Ethnography, being a dialogic process itself (Aitken & Herman, 2009; Christensen, 2004; James, 2001; LeCompte & Schensul, 2010; Owton & Allen-Collinson, 2012) bears the capability to:

Strategically locate itself at critical points of intersection of scales and units of analysis and directly examine the negotiation of interconnected social actors across multiple scales (Gille & O' Riain, 2009, p.299).

### My Approach

I engaged in an intensive, short-term ethnography employing 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973, p.3; Carspecken, 1996; Woods 1994 in LeCompte & Schensul, 2010) and reflective practices (Punch, 2012). My aim was to immerse myself in the research process, to discover what was really taking place in the field before trying to interpret it, refraining from 'turning process into product too early' (Fabian, 2001, p.45). I employed the concept of 'logic in use' (Green et al., 2012, p. 310) in order to engage with the moments of surprise that took place in the field and to resolve any possible issues. Moreover, following Flyvbjerg's (2001) guidelines for contacting 'phronetic research' (p.134) I took into consideration issues of power, context, culture, practice, agency and structure.

I subscribe to the abduction theory (Green et al., 2012; Magnani, 2005), which informs a recursive logic (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010, p.27; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) that transforms the research to a non-linear (Agar, 1996) circular process informing itself. Abductive logic was used in order to guide 'identification of pieces of cultural knowledge' (Green et al., 2012, p.311) to seek the 'best explanation' (Magnani, 2005, n/a; LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). At the same time, recursive analysis took place during both collection and analysis of data. The data generated theoretical issues

(Blommaert & Jie, 2010) but at the same time I used the available bibliography to interpret various incidents in the field. This process was continually re-informing the whole research structure as it did not apply only to the research questions but also to the methods used (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), and to my presence in the field. The notion that knowledge is produced in a dialogical way (Fabian, 2001) guided my research. Drawing both on the literature on playgrounds on an international level and in the limited Greek studies about children and families in the Athenian public space, I tried to connect the different social scales informing the Athenian playground's socio-spatial body conducting a 'theoretically informed' (Willis & Trondman, 2000. p.6) ethnographic study.

### **4.3.2 Ethnographic Studies**

#### **Ethnography and the Playground**

Ethnography emerged as a methodology for studying the “other” in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century (Angrosino, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). At the time the “other” was either the colonised, studied by the British social anthropology, or the indigenous populations, studied by the American cultural anthropology. Playgrounds, ‘settings where there is a particular type of public culture operating’ (Mitchell & Walsh, 2002, p.118) are often approached as “other” spaces, bearing their own social relations, orderings and meanings. At the same time, western literature supports a culture of “othering” children in their use of public space (Hopkins & Pain, 2007; Aitken, 2001, Holloway & Valentine, 2000a; Olwig & Gulløv, 2003; Germanos, 2001; Valentine, 1996; White, 1993). Ethnographic methods are relatively common in research about children and the playground space.

Although many studies employ an ethnographic approach, there are many differences in the methods used by these studies. The majority of ethnographic studies in a playground setting employs observations and interviews, both formal and informal (Karsten, 2003; Blackford, 2004; Drew et al., 1987). In one of the first studies about children's behaviour in the playground, Hayward et al. (1974) compared the Traditional, Contemporary, and Adventure Playground Types through intensive observation. Some immersed completely into the playground setting in order to examine closely children's play and cultures, often debating the physical and social differences between adults and children (Corsaro, 2003; Opie, 1994; Thorne, 1993; Mandel, 1988).

Other ethnographic studies extended further from the playground boundary to examine children's play in other settings. Woolley & Johns (2001) approached the ‘city as a playground’ (p.211) and examined the skateboarder's culture and places through

focus-group interviews, while McKendrick et al. (2000a, 2000b) examined the commercial playground, conducted surveys and interviews not only in the playgrounds but also with the parents from the nearby schools along with observations of the space. In a previous study (1999) they used questionnaires, surveys, observations and video recordings. In a Greek study, Kaisari (2005) employed observations and children's drawings in order to research children's play in Athenian public space.

Some studies mix ethnographic observation with more structured methods such as questionnaires and behavioural mapping (See: Burger & Brown, 1984; Armitage, 1999; Refshauge et al., 2013; Thomson & Philo, 2004; Nasar & Holloman, 2013). Others, give observations themselves a quantitative character (i.e. Nasar & Holloman, 2013; Gospodini & Galani, 2006; Peerkins & Antonuk, 1999) counting the exact number of participants, their gender, age etc. or trying to structure them using a quantitative logic. An example can be found in Susa & Benedict's (1994) study employing random observations for durations of 10 minutes.

### Ethnography and Heterotopia

Ethnography, is often employed in the research of heterotopia. Studies approaching play and playground as heterotopias employ an ethnographic approach in order to immerse in the field and grasp the variety of social orderings emerging there. Vermeulen (2011), conducting research on public playgrounds in the Netherlands, ascribing to the framework of heterotopia, employed participative observations and informal interviews. Similarly, Richards (2013) used a participative approach asking children to record their own play. Gallan (2013) employed ethnography to research heterotopic youth transitions, while Low (2008), approaching a gated community as a heterotopia, used participant observation and discourse analysis to deepen understanding into the residents' conceptual constructs. Studies on Athenian heterotopias also employed an ethnographic methodology. Chatzidakis et al. (2012) spent sixteen weeks in the field observing, interviewing and participating in local events, while Zaimakis (2015) carried out an ethnographic research in order to study the evolution of political graffiti in the context of the Greek socio-economic crisis. In other ethnographic studies, whole cities have been explored as heterotopic (Annist, 2013; Shoshana, 2014).

## 4.4 Methods

### 4.4.1 Intentions

#### A Holistic Approach

My intention was to approach the field holistically, make the world visible in different ways (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p.3) and explore both the social practices that take place there and the meanings people ascribe to them. Agreeing with Emerson (1981) that observations and interviews involve ‘different kinds of research relations’ (p.325) I employed both participant observations and informal “interviews”. My approach draws from the ethnomethodological theory (Flyvbjerg, 2001; Warming, 2011; Willis & Trondman, 2000; Emerson, 1981) concerned more with “actors’ practices and practical concerns than with their perspectives and cognitive categories” (Emerson, 1981, p.358). For ethnomethodologists, the participant’s actions in the field are thought to carry and create their own meaning no matter how trivial they may seem (Flyvbjerg, 2001; Warming, 2011). Stares, glances and silences were considered of great importance in this research. In this line of thought a study by Murtagh (2001) employed observations of people’s non-verbal actions in trains in order to explore the orderings behind social interaction, while Komulainen (2007) argues that in her study in nursery practice she encountered a ‘child’s voice’ to be expressed both as ‘verbal and non-verbal communication’ (p.15) making observation of the child’s practices an essential part of the research. Similarly, Warming (2011) used ethno methodologist field methods in order to explore infant’s perspectives. I argue that observations informed the ethno-methodological part of this research, while informal interviews, talks and engagement with the participants informed the ethnographic one.

#### Case Studies

The strategy used to conduct this ethnographic research was that of case studies. My field comprised a public piazza including a fenced public playground<sup>17</sup>. The cases were not extreme or deviant, rather they were paradigmatic cases (Flyvbjerg, 2001, p.79), representing the average neighbourhood play-space in Athens. They were chosen in order to describe a common phenomenon – that of people’s actions in the Athenian playgrounds and piazzas – taking into account, however, the socio-economic identity differentiations between different districts in the city (See 5.2.2). A variation between lower, middle and upper-income districts as well as variations between each playground’s spatial characteristics, made them ‘comparable’ (LeCompte & Schensul,

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<sup>17</sup> Further details about each case study will be provided in the next chapter: The Case Studies, p.125.



2010, p.133) to each other. This allowed me to structure the ‘thick narrative’ (Flyvbjerg, 2001, p.78; Carspecken, 1996; Woods 1994 in LeCompte & Schensul, 2010) required in ethnographic research. My intention was to enrich the data through the diversity of users and physical characteristics of the playground space, while studying the typical population. This enabled me to examine a range of responses and behaviours as well as interactions with the physical space.

### Terms Used in this Study

**Toddlers** refers to people between the ages of 0 to 4 years old.

**Children** refers to people between the ages of 5 to 12 years old.

**Teenagers** refers to people between 13 to 19 years old.

**Young adults** refers to people between the ages of 20 to 25 years old.

**Older people** refers to people not accompanying children above the age of 65.

Age in this research is not related and does not imply any correlation with the person’s physical and cognitive abilities. The above groups were formed according to the Greek educational system age categorisation<sup>18</sup>. People’s ages were estimated during observations. I asked for the participants’ age in every interview. My research methods were ‘user friendly’ (Aitken & Herman, 2009, p.20). I approached children as individuals, as ‘fellow human beings’ (Christensen, 2004, p. 165) and I moved back and forth on Punch’s continuum (2002) in order to address and engage with each individual’s competencies and needs

**“Guardian”** is used here referring to any adult accompanying children in the space, either parent, friend, other relative or nanny.

**“Play”** refers to any playful behaviour, intrinsically motivated, not abiding to any rules apart from those set by the players themselves. It can be solitary or in groups.

**“Game”** refers to games of football or other sports that had predefined rules<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>18</sup> 0-4 Nursery school, 5-12 Primary school, 13-15 Secondary school, 16-19 High school

<sup>19</sup> I often observed playful behaviours not ascribing to either definitions. These were expressed either as adaptations to pre-existing game rules or as self-conscious expressions of play. In the second expression, the players were conscious of their behaviours and other people’s gazes and didn’t let themselves free to play, rather engaged in playful behaviours.

**“Norms”** are used in this research through their quality as unwritten rules that regulate people’s behaviors: ‘socially accepted rules or standards of behavior’ (Marsh et al., 2009, p.752). These are structured by culture and society but also each subject’s personal beliefs (Lapinski & Rimal, 2005; Hechter et al., 2001) and ensure balance and order:

Common standards within a social group regarding socially acceptable or appropriate behavior in particular social situations, the breach of which has social consequences. The strength of these norms varies from loose expectations to unwritten rules (Chandler & Munday, 2011).

As such, the norms described here vary from norms regulating the function of a specific space, for example the piazza or the playground, to norms that are shared between specific groups and not affected by the space they are in each time.

### **Preparation**

Before I commenced my exploratory study, I contacted each municipality’s leisure office and acquired permission to conduct my research. It is interesting that all three people that I spoke with sounded quite startled by my questions. They considered the playground a public space and as such they stated that I did not need specific permission. In the very first visits I took photos, researched each case’s history and context, and identified its socio-economic characteristics through the Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT, 2011). I acquired each piazza’s plan from each municipality’s constructions department and I updated them to match the field’s reality. I created a folder referring to the physical characteristic of each case. This folder included photographs, plans and sketches. None of these media depicted or represented any participant or actions rather they were used for better understanding the social and physical context of the cases (See: Appendix B)

## **4.4.2 Data Construction**

### **Observations**

#### **Scanning the Field**

The observation stage included unstructured observations in order to ‘capture the context’ (Punch, 2001, p.173). Through observations I explored behaviours and attitudes that the field participants took for granted and ‘might not consider mentioning in an interview’ (Ibid.). Observations focused both on the ‘proxemics’ (spatial relations) and ‘kinesics’ (participants’ body language) (Angrosino, 2007, p.39) capturing what

participants actually do rather than what they say they do (Valentine, 2001). This allowed me to explore the context, often overlooked by the participants, affecting behaviours and practices. An ethno-methodological approach (Flyvbjerg, 2001; Warming, 2011; Willis & Trondman, 2000; Emerson, 1981) towards participants' practices and appropriation of space informed this stage. Stares, glances and silences as well as 'patterns of behaviour' (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010) were considered of great importance. Through my observations, I focused more on practices in the field using discourse and theory in a complementary way in order to decipher the participants' actions. I intended to construct the 'bigger picture' by acquiring a better understanding of both the social relations and the use of space. Observations generated themes and identified areas of interest (both physical and social) that I explored more through the interviews.

I took advantage of my cases' public character observing for some time before introducing myself to the participants. The observations sample group was the population in the field each time [cluster sample (Choak, 2012)]. My sample consisted of both children and adults in both the piazza and the playground and its size and composition varied from day to day. In order to be flexible and not foresee crucial data I avoided structured observations. I took the role of observer as participant where 'the researcher is known and recognized, but relates to the 'subjects' of study solely as a researcher' (Angrosino, 2007, p.54). My observations were informed by what was taking place in the field at each time; I focused on the incidents that I perceived to be closer to my research's aim. I made sure that my physical position in the field was making me visible at all times. When needed I introduced myself, explained my research and engaged in small talk. This was intended to make people aware of my presence and intentions and dissipate any suspicions. Following Punch's advice of using emotions as 'effective means of developing both resilience and coping strategies in the field' (Punch, 2012, p.87) I set a period of 90 min as the average time I spent in the field, since after this time I started feeling uncomfortable and self-conscious.

### Field-notes

As ethnography is all about describing the field (Emerson, 1981; Angrosino, 2007; Willis & Trondman, 2000), the researcher's field-notes acquire great importance. I structured each day's notes keeping track of the time I started the observation and approximately every 30 min after that, the date, if it was a school or holiday period or not, the case study, the weather conditions and anything unusual or changes in the field as well as my emotional and physical state (See: Table 2 and Figure 4-1).

7/5/2017 DK. Sunday 18.50 - 20.40  
10.15 shops open

The weather is warm but a little windy.  
I came to Dexamen just because I haven't been  
there again Sunday evening. The buyers are on a mess  
this time. There is one (every 30' if you are lucky).  
I am truly bored... I preferred a coffee with  
friends this time. On the other hand, I slept well yesterday  
(or at least without breaks) so I feel more  
refreshed than yesterday.

21/5/2017 VK. Sunday  
18.00 - 18.45

The weather is cool; it is expected to rain  
this evening. I am quite bored. Also today  
it is the day of a big home-day in Greece and  
many people visit friends and relatives.  
I am sitting in the circular bench.  
No one is around.

Figure 4-1: Field-notes' abstract – context information

Table 2: Example of everyday-context information

<b>Case study</b>	Dexameni
<b>Date</b>	13/04/2016
<b>Time</b>	13.30-15.00
<b>Weather conditions</b>	'Sunny and breezy, it gets quite chilly in the shade. It rained in the morning and some benches are still wet'
<b>Unexpected</b>	'some empty beer bottles are scattered around in the playground sitting area'
<b>Emotional state</b>	'Quite anxious but nothing serious. Happy that there aren't many people today'
<b>Physical state</b>	'I feel sleepy. Couldn't sleep well last night. My mind is quite slow'

Field-notes, were taken when I was in the field, describing what was taking place. When this was not possible, due to e.g. informal discussions with the participants, I filled in an extended account of what I observed when I returned home. I tried to be as descriptive as possible in order to 'minimize explicit theorizing and interpretation' (Emerson, 1981, p.353). I took notes, sitting, standing, running alongside guardians who were chasing their children, even sitting across the street waiting for the bus. I included as much detail about activities, interactions, behaviours, physical characteristics, peoples' characteristics such as age, appearance or visible emotions as possible. I tried to revolve all my observations and field-notes around my research objectives, but as it is documented, this was not always feasible (Tucker, 2012). Instead of turning my field-notes into a rushed, partial description of what was happening in the whole field at each time I provided a descriptive account of specific incidents, focusing on different scales in the field, from single persons' actions to groups or spatial areas. I focused on keeping track of time: 'the most neglected dimension in ethnographic research' (Ball, 1990, p.163). Moreover, my field-notes included extensive descriptions of spatial attributes and quick sketches when needed in order to bring space into the ethnographic narrative (Figure 4-2).

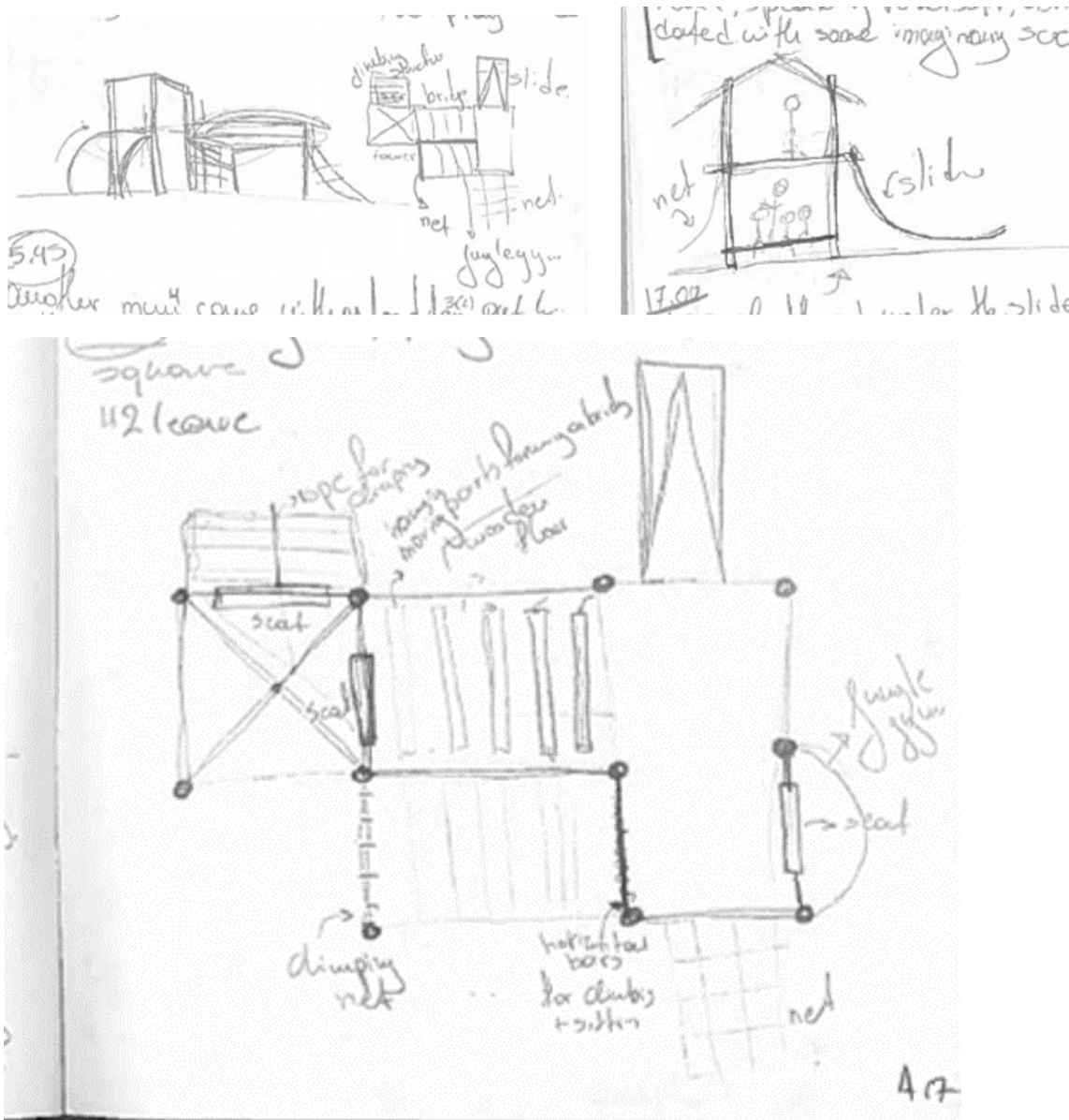


Figure 4-2: Field-notes' abstract – sketches

I was interested not only in the social state of the field and the interactions between people but also in placing these interactions on physical space. I used a variety of visual techniques, emerging from my occupation as an architect, in order to explore the spatial characteristics of each space.

## Diagrams

### Descriptive Diagrams

I used each piazza's plans to create a visual folder of emplaced behaviours and practices in relation with my field-notes. These descriptive diagrams could be read alongside the field-notes, informing but not guiding my analysis. They acted as

complementary to the rich themes emerging from the field-notes and "interviews" and helped me explore the influence of the physical characteristics. They allowed me to capture the bigger picture of people's movements and interactions between different areas, keeping in track with the whole field's dynamics.<sup>20</sup>

After each day's fieldwork<sup>21</sup>, I pinpointed my observations in the physical space by creating diagrams of incidents and flows on A4 hardcopies of the field plan.

The first ones depicted the spatial footprint of the incidents I described in my notes. They were mainly small-scale incidents with interesting spatialities (See: Figure 4-4).

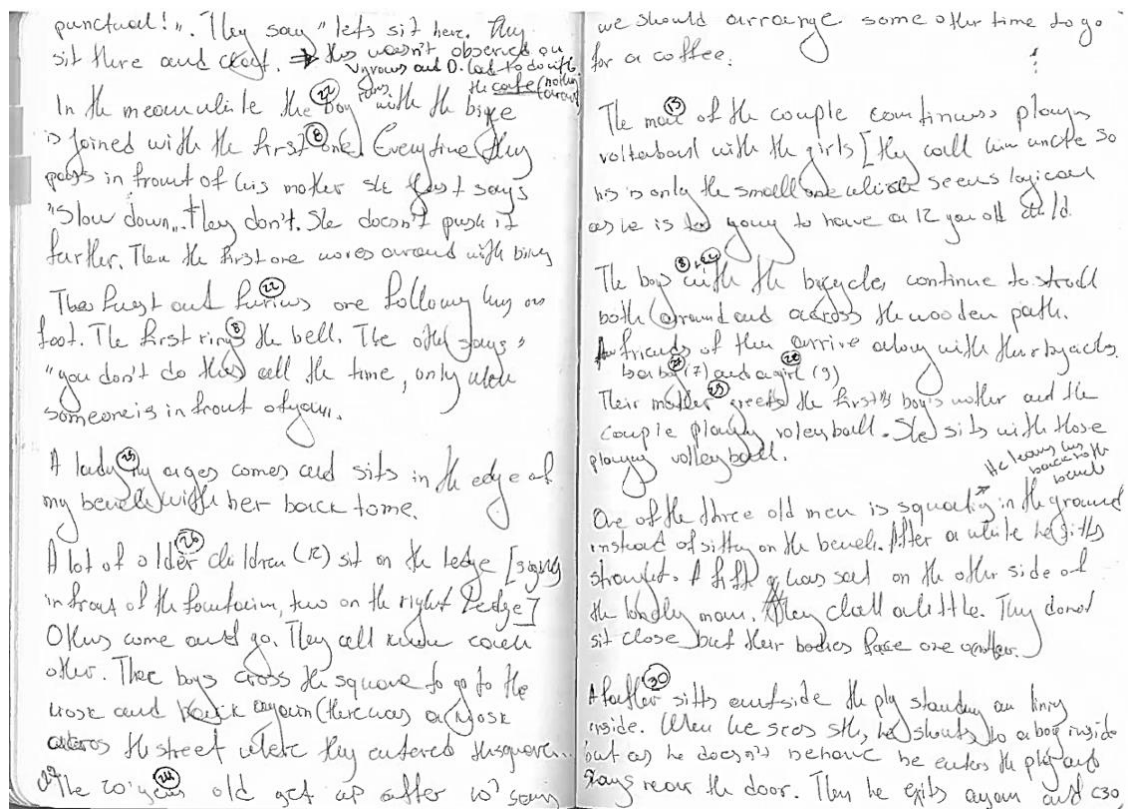


Figure 4-3: Field-notes' abstract

<sup>20</sup> A dimension easily foreseen by the field-notes.

<sup>21</sup> It was extremely difficult to work with both the diagrams and the field-notes while in the field

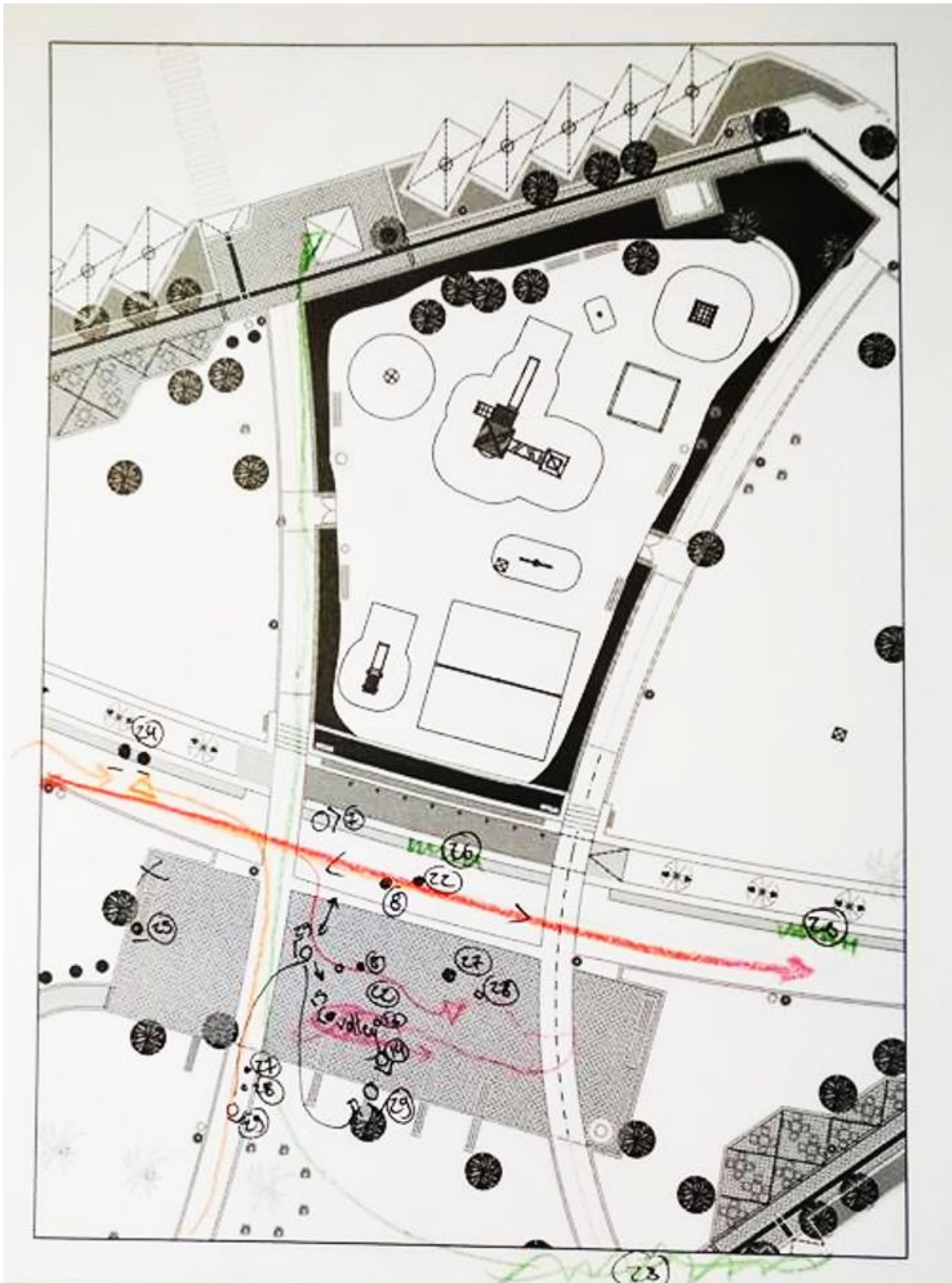


Figure 4-4: Example of descriptive diagram

The flow diagrams referred to a larger scale plan of the field depicting people's movements and flows between different areas. For example, Figure 4-5 depicts the children's playing ball movements and interactions through space, while Figure 4-6 the different games that were taking place simultaneously and how these progressed.



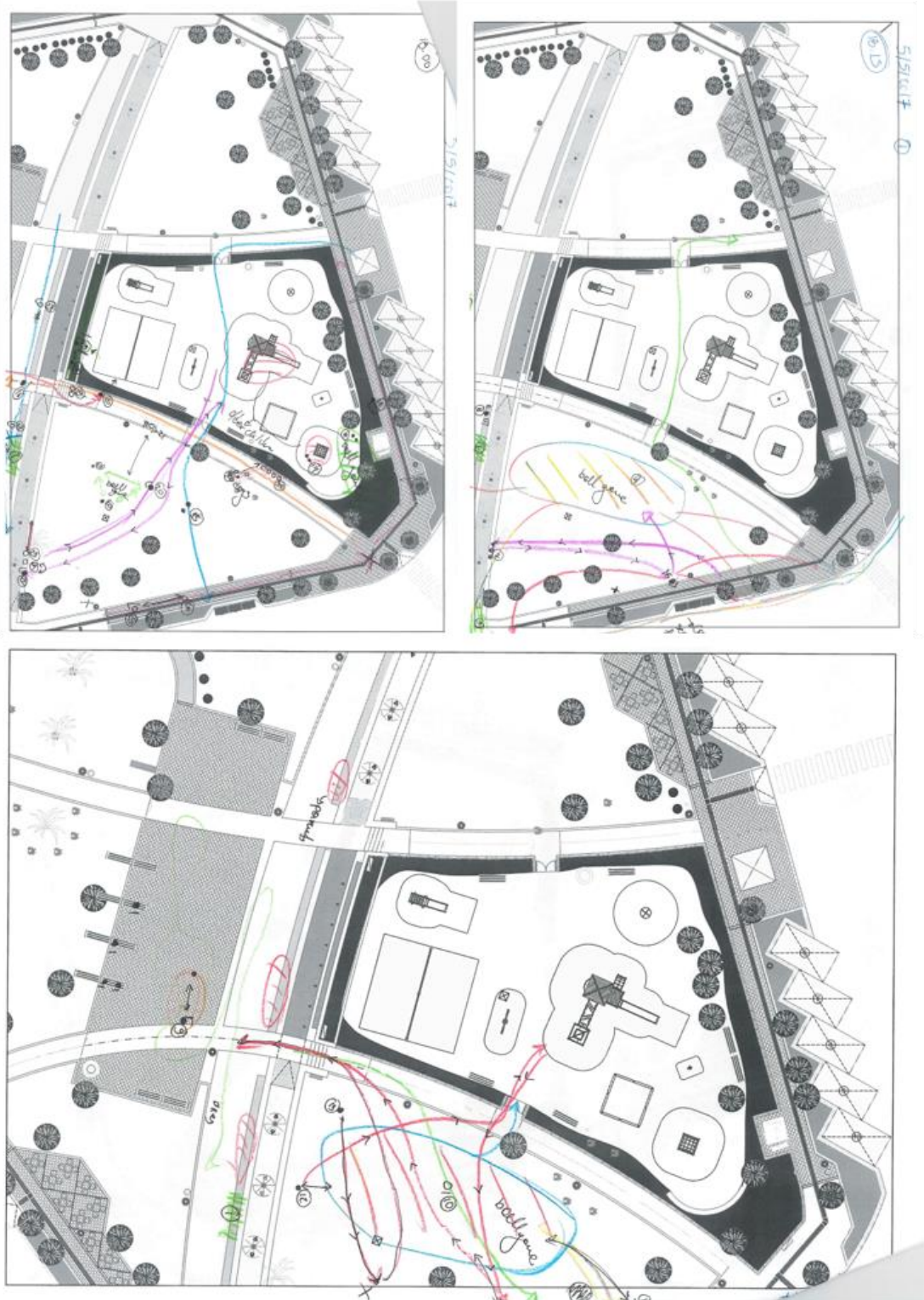


Figure 4-5: Example of descriptive diagram depicting people's movements





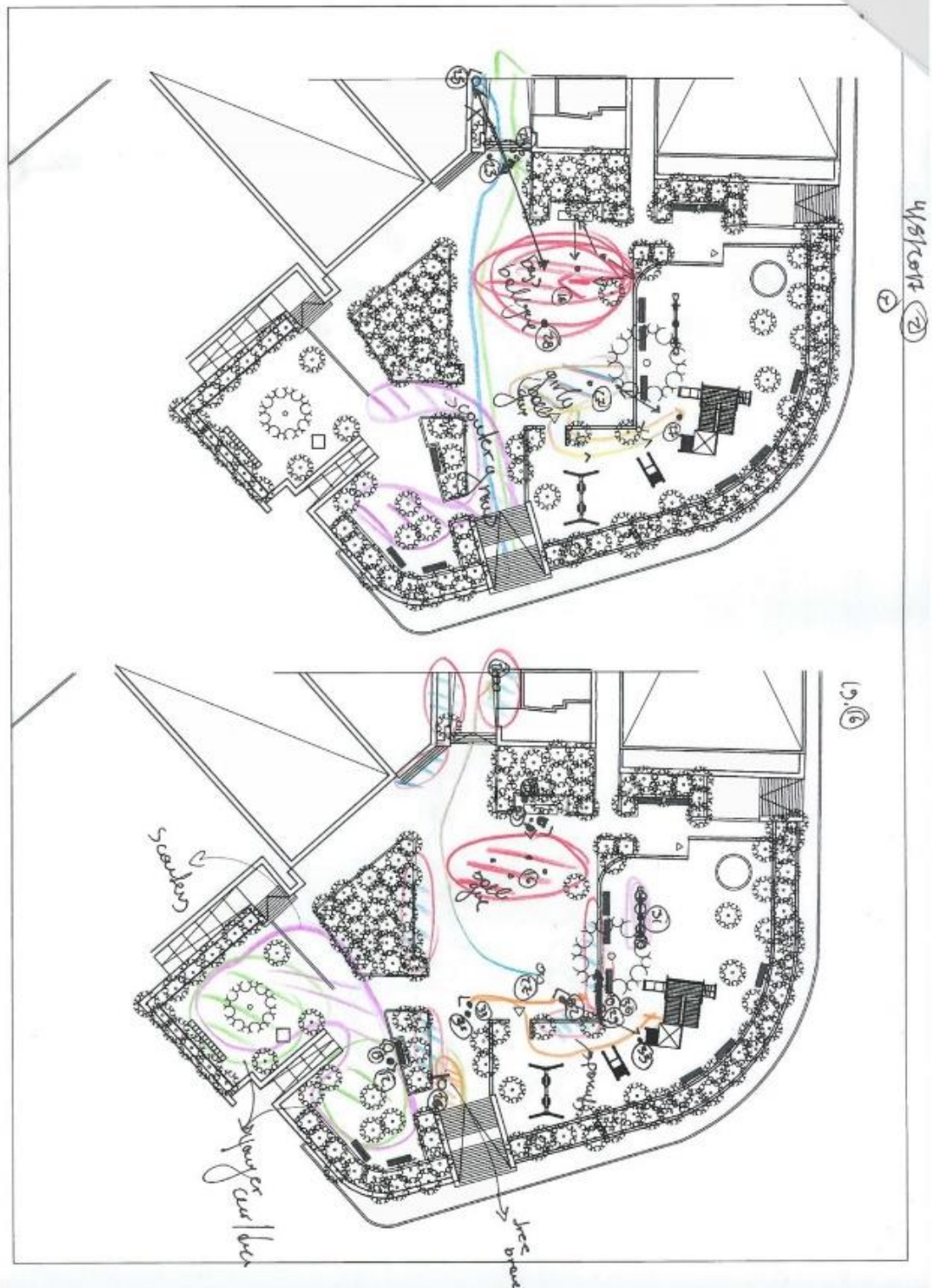


Figure 4-6: Example of descriptive diagram depicting flows of games

All the diagrams produced subscribed to a coding system that I had developed (Figure 4-7). The bubbles indicated areas of actions, usually play, that moved in space (ball games), while the single arrows depicted movement and the double arrows

interactions. In the cases where there was a need for more areas of action to be depicted, different colours were used for different activities and groups. Participants were coded according to their sex, their status as child or adult and their capacity as guardians or other adults. A number was given to each observed participant and it was used for identification in both notes and diagrams (Figure 4-8).

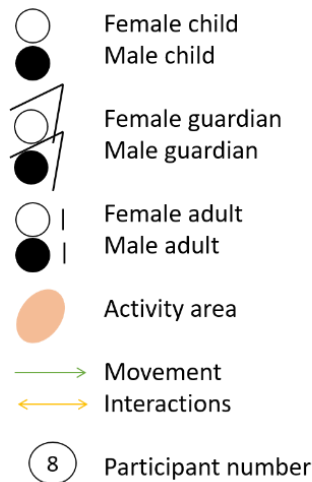
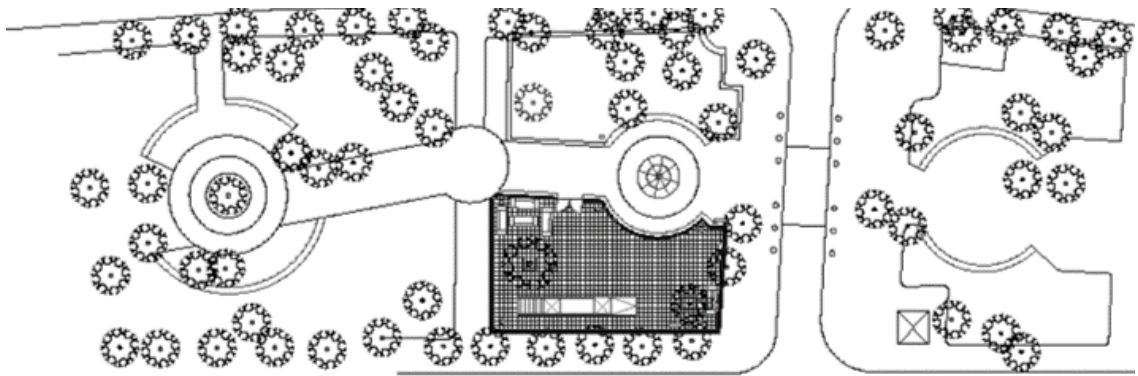


Figure 4-7: Descriptive diagrams' coding system

1,3,4 in the sitting area  
 2 slides with his belly  
 1 shouts at him "M. no". 2 clings back  
 the slide and descends the stairs  
 1 clings the stairs and tries to feed him on  
 the tower. he is on his knees crying. ④  
 5+6<sup>(3)</sup> enter the playground. Try the door - it is locked  
 opens it, enters and closes it again. ⑤  
 2 is on the bridge crying, 1 is as well as they  
 block 6's access to the tower. 1+2 descend the  
 stairs  
 6 clings the stairs, runs on the bridge and slides.  
 5 follows his itinerary around the structure. ④  
 3+4 continue sitting on the benches.  
 1+2 sit in the sitting area and chat with 3+4

Figure 4-8: Field-notes' abstract – numbers are used for identifying the participants

Often, the diagrams required multiple versions of the field's plan to capture the whole incident or the complete flow through time. For this reason, I printed different scales of the plan according to the quantity and quality of information that needed to be depicted. I used four different types of printed plans. Type A included the whole piazza and the playground space (Figure 4-9). This was used mainly for the incident's diagrams (Figure 4-10).



*Figure 4-9: Descriptive diagram type A*



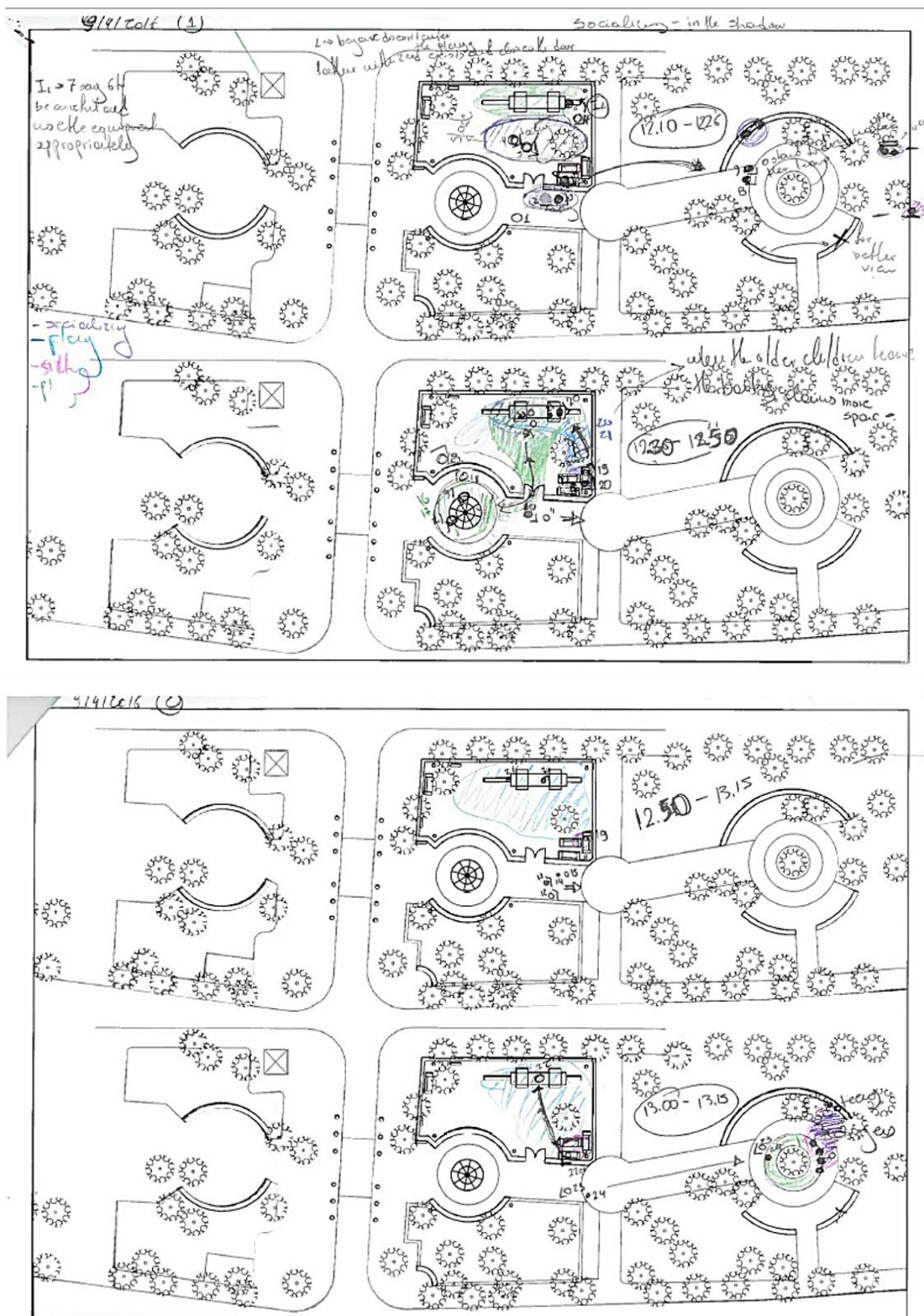


Figure 4-10: Descriptive diagram type A – depicting Incidents

When needed the plans could be used to depict single flows and interactions between areas (Figure 4-11).

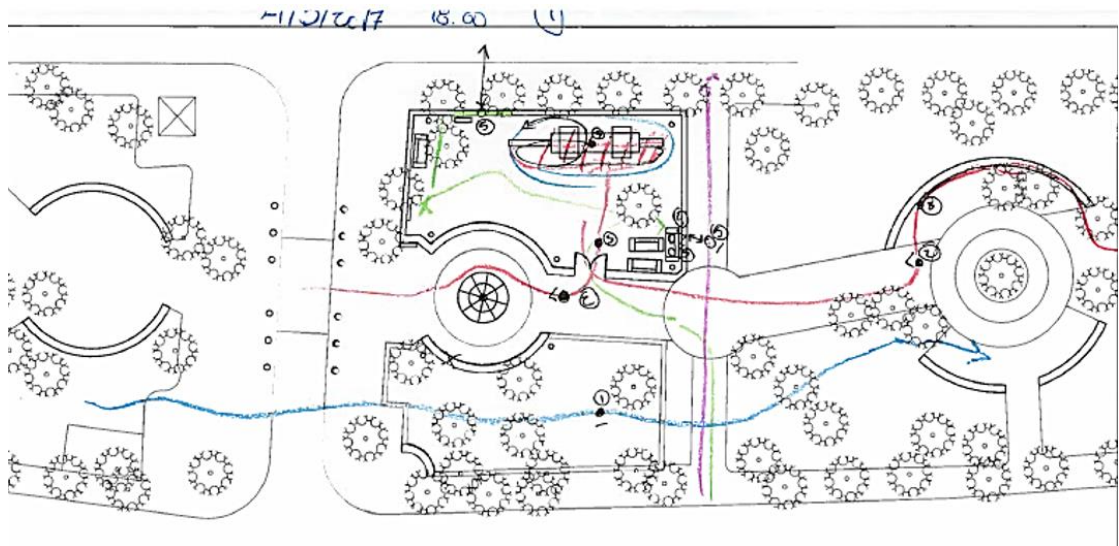


Figure 4-11: Descriptive diagram type A – flows

Type B depicted the whole piazza but at a smaller scale in order to fit two to four plans per A4 sheet (Figure 4-12). This allowed me to depict flows and changes in the different areas through time (Figure 4-13).

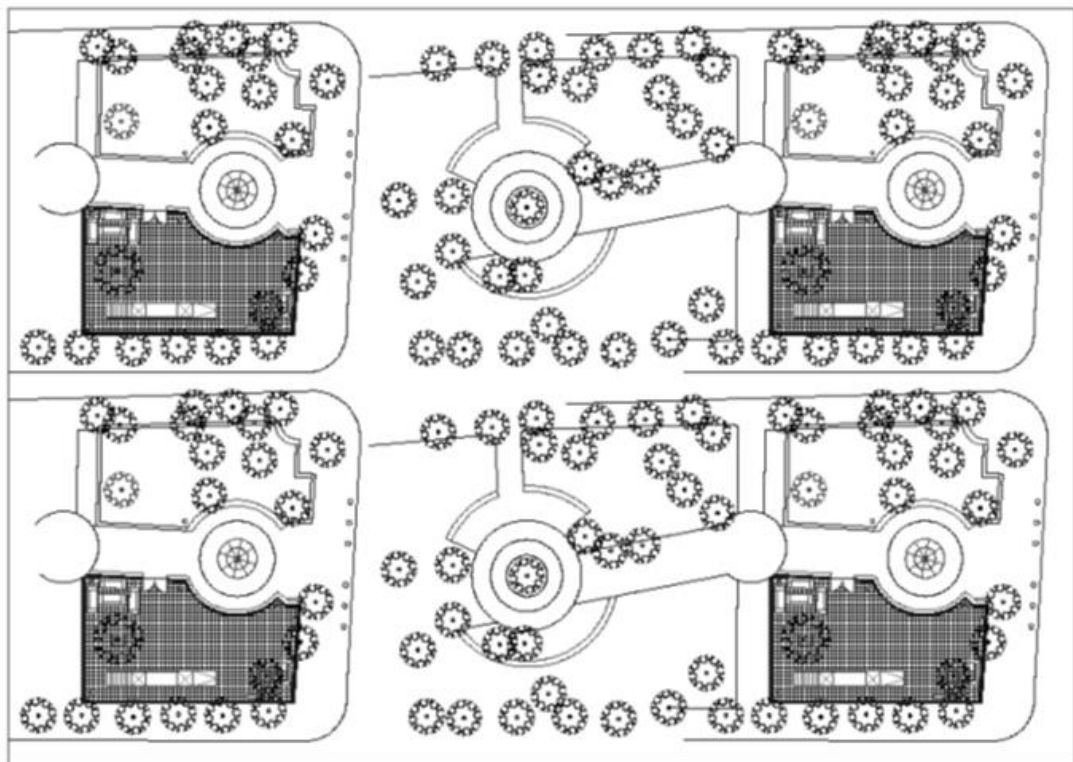


Figure 4-12: Descriptive diagram type B



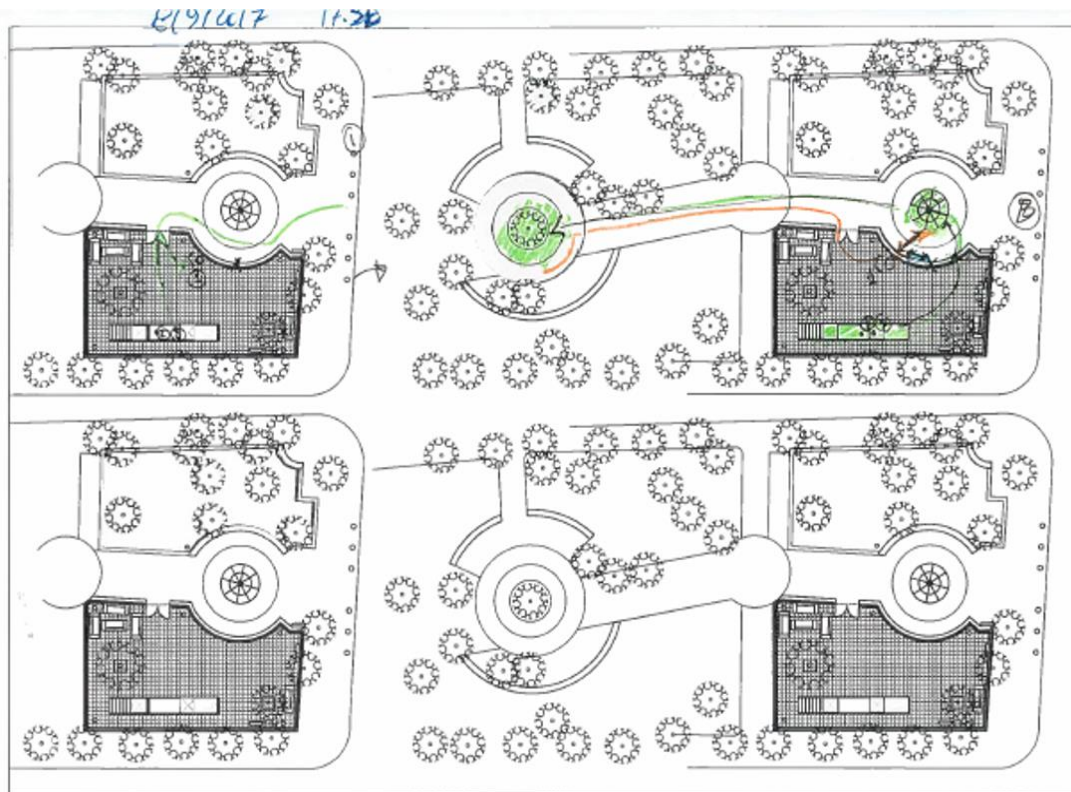


Figure 4-13: Descriptive diagram type B – flows

Type C focused on the playground space and its immediate surroundings (Figure 4-14). This was used to describe incidents that took place in and around the playground and needed space to include all the actors and their interactions (Figure 4-15).

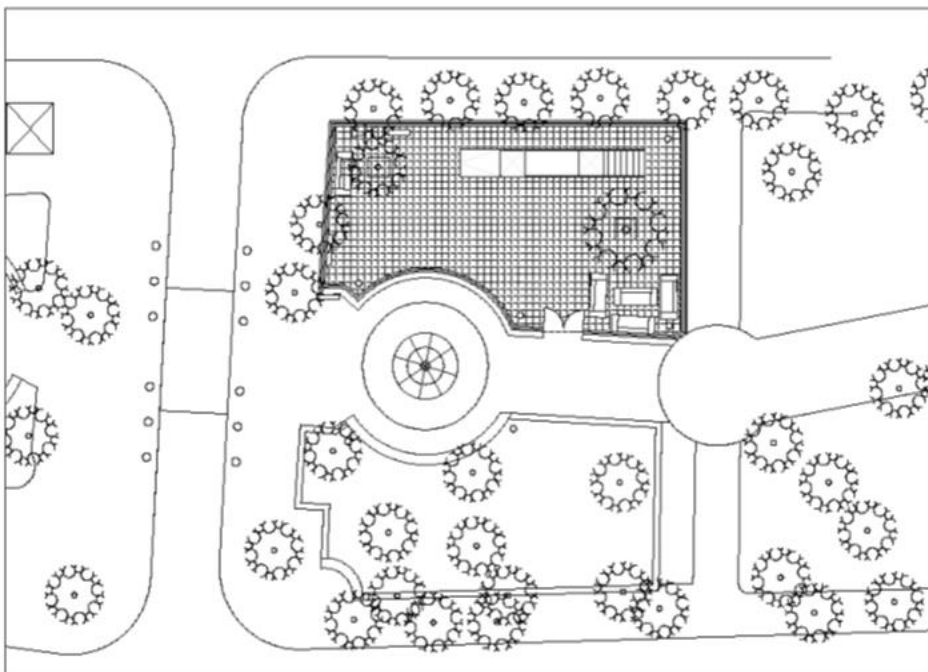


Figure 4-14: Descriptive diagram type C



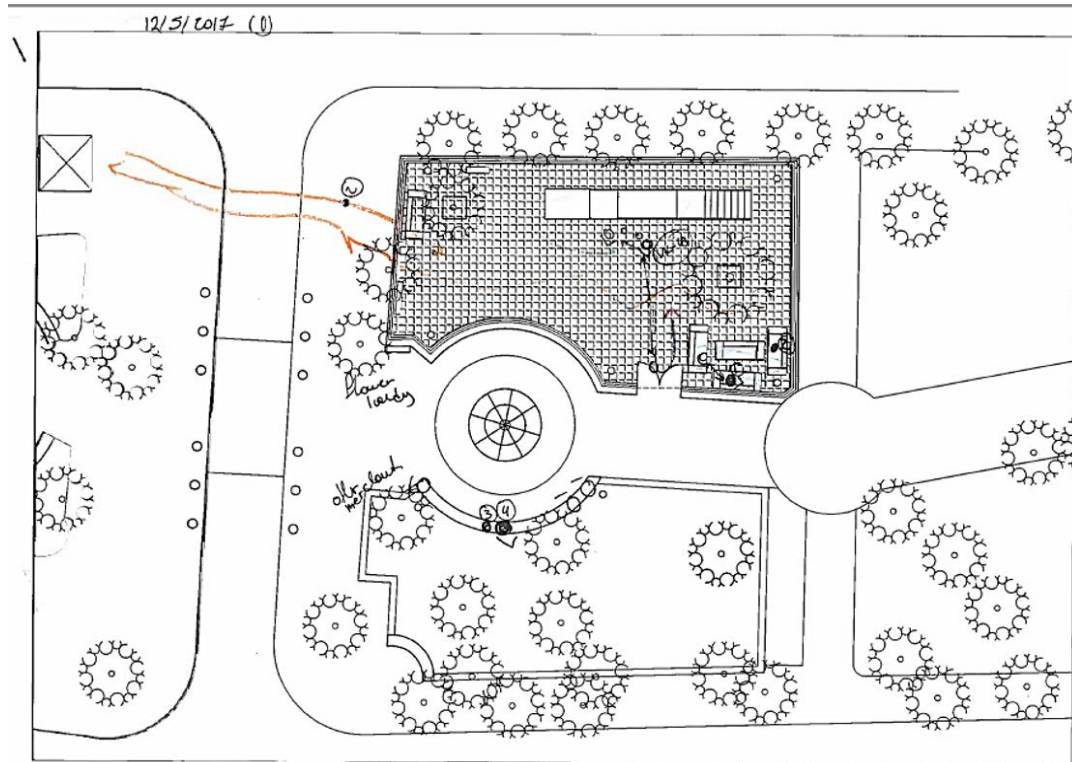


Figure 4-15: Descriptive diagram type C – interactions in the playground space

Finally, type D focused on the playground space but fitting two to four plans per A4 sheet in order to describe changes and transformations in activities through time (Figure 4-16 and Figure 4-17).

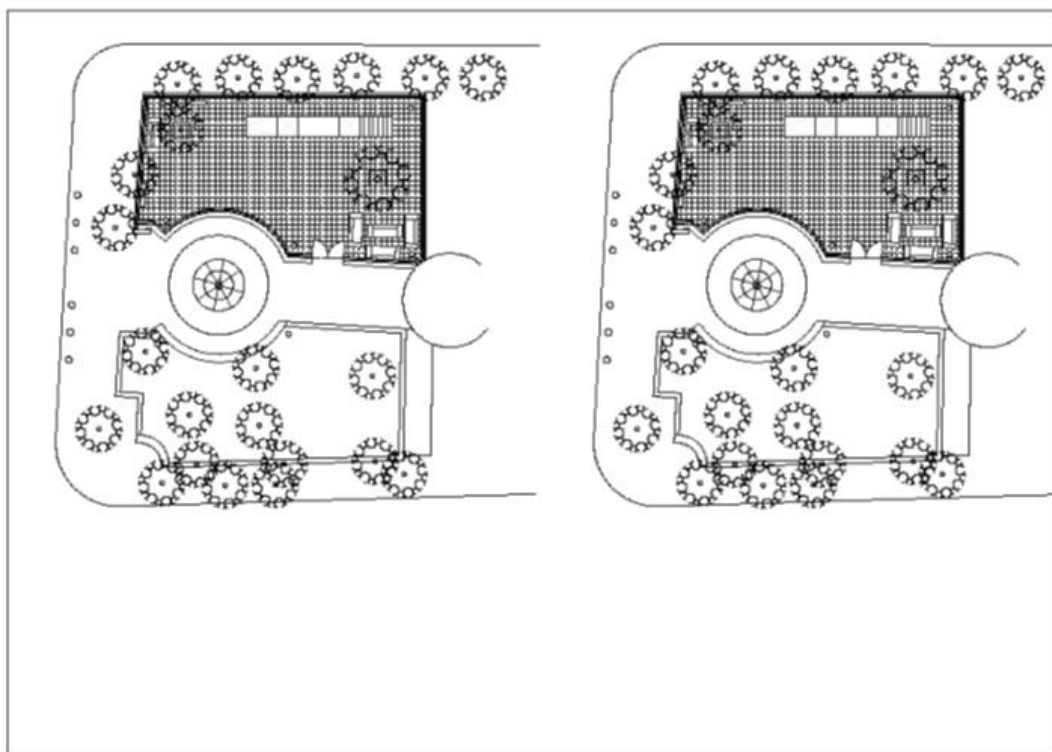


Figure 4-16: Descriptive diagram type D

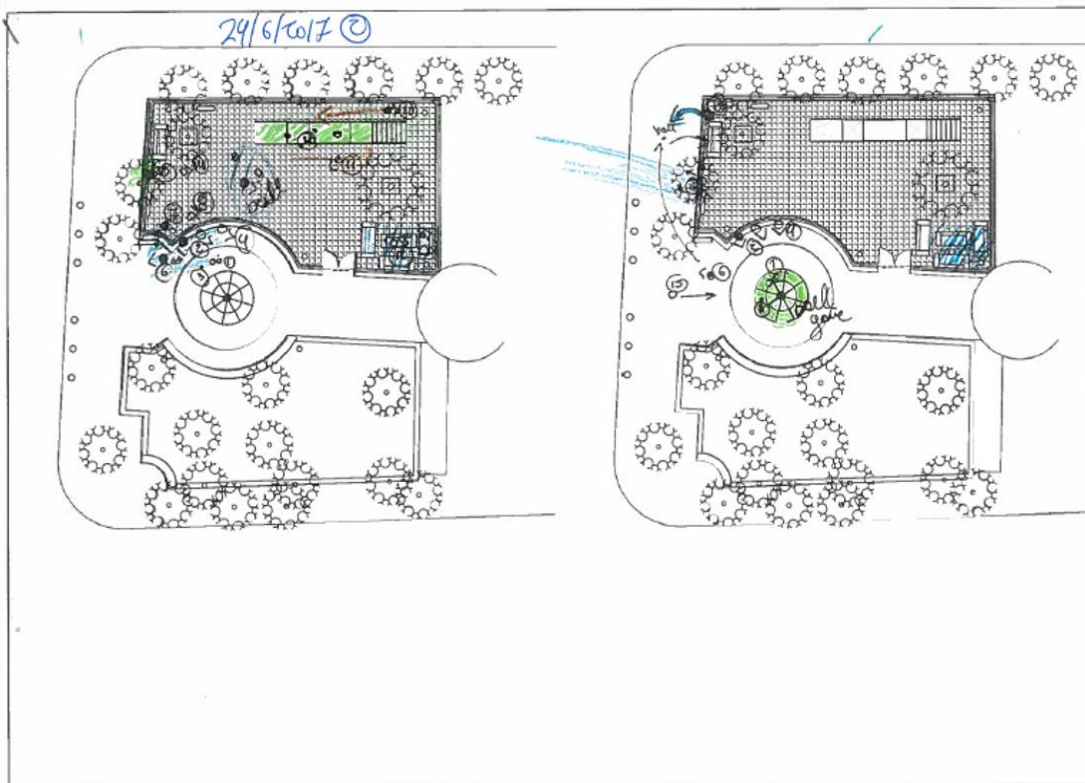


Figure 4-17: Descriptive diagrams type D – participants' changing positions

On each plan I wrote the date and time of the observation it referred to, while a numeric value indicated the sequence of each day's sheets (Figure 4-18).

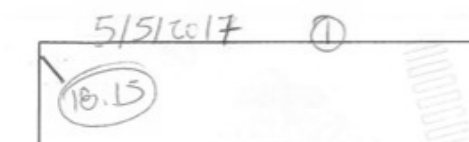
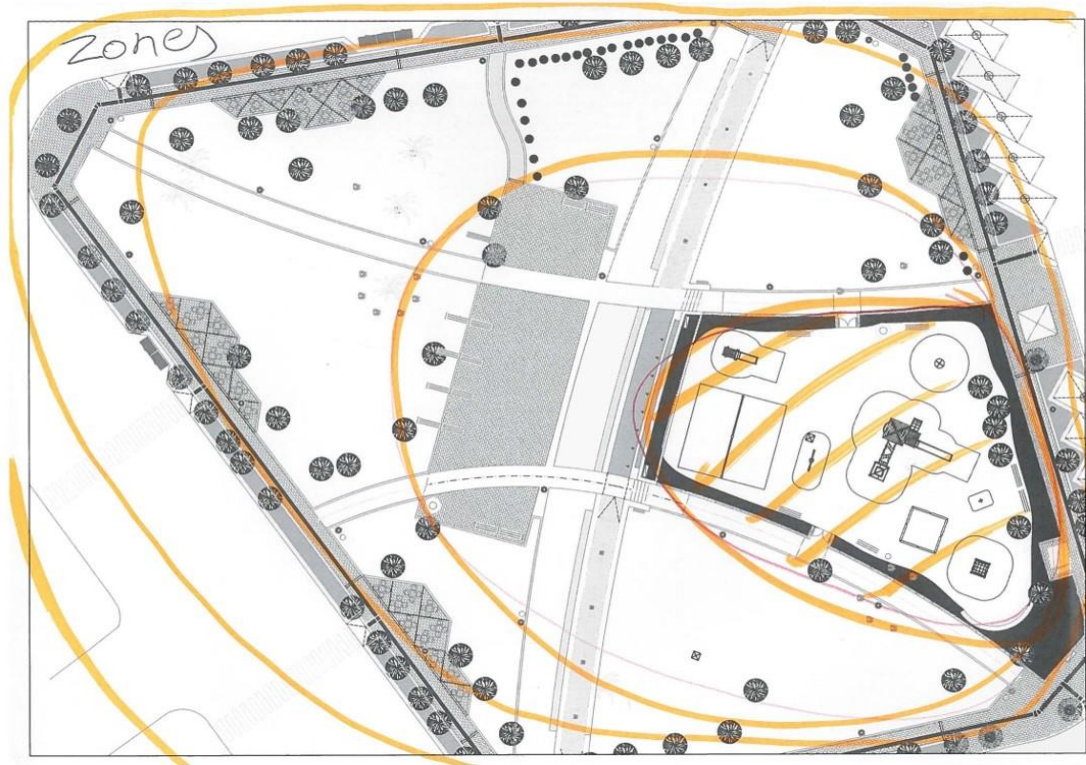


Figure 4-18: Descriptive diagram – Date, sequence number and time

## Analytical Diagrams

In the first stages of analysis, coinciding with the later fieldwork periods, I started putting together the descriptive diagrams and created drafts of analytical diagrams. These focused on specific themes that emerged during fieldwork (Figure 4-19), my theoretical framework (Figure 4-20) or described the emplacement of specific practices (Figure 4-21).



*Figure 4-19: Analytical Diagram – The different zones of safety in the field*



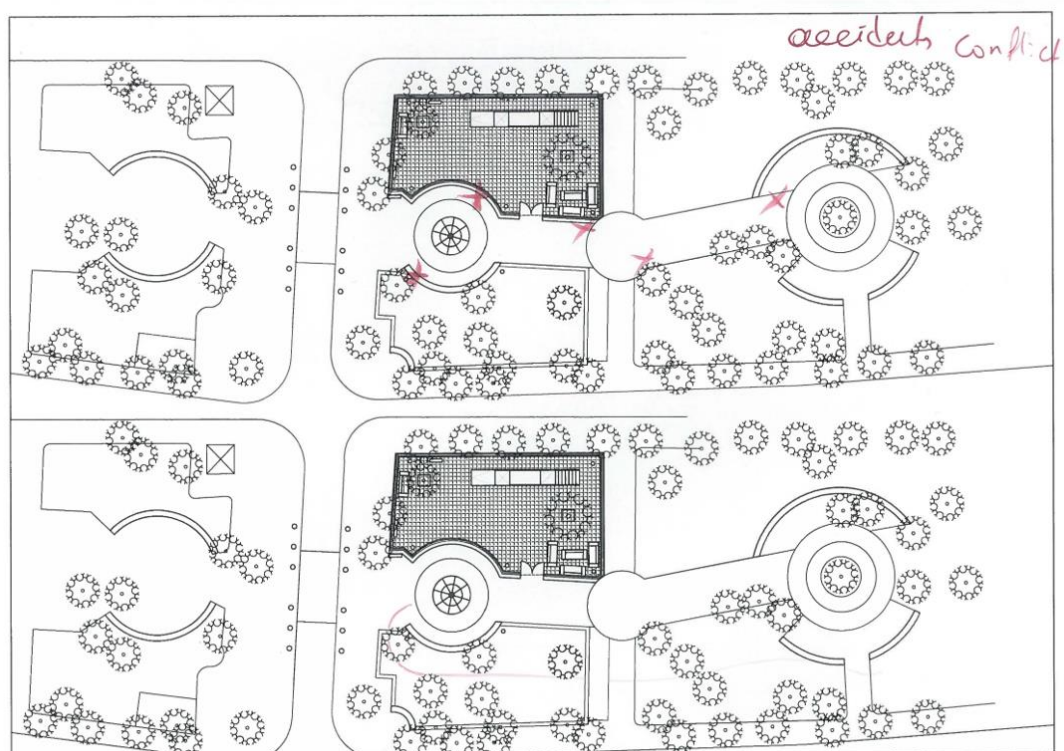
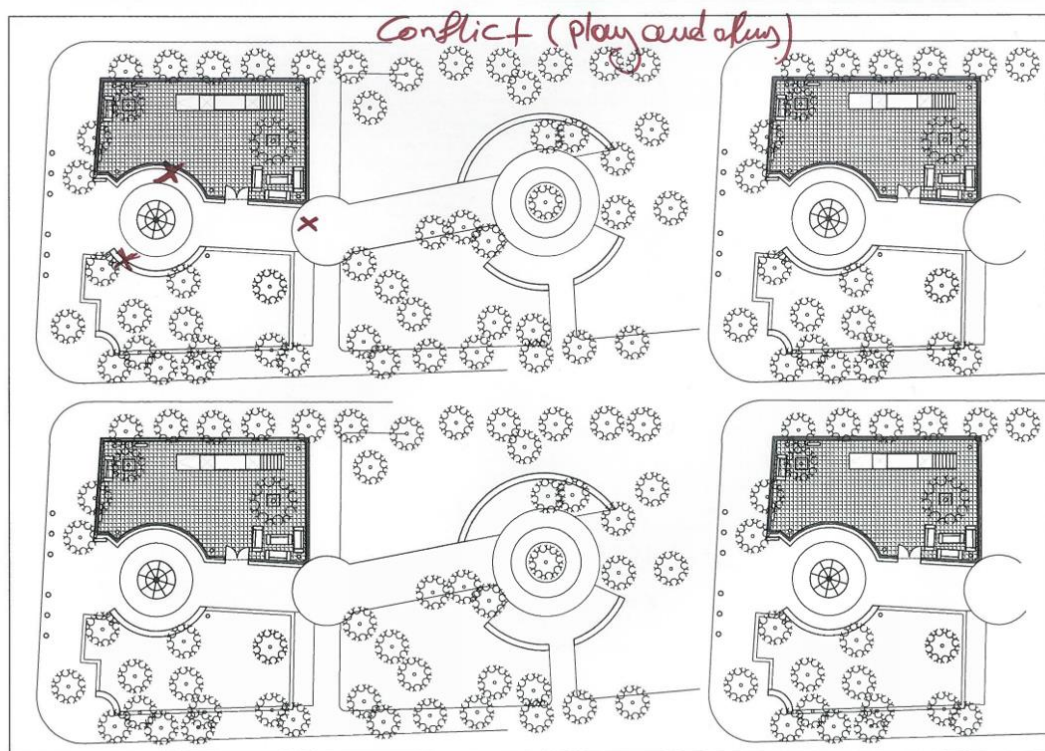


Figure 4-20: Analytical Diagram – Spatiality of conflict incidents

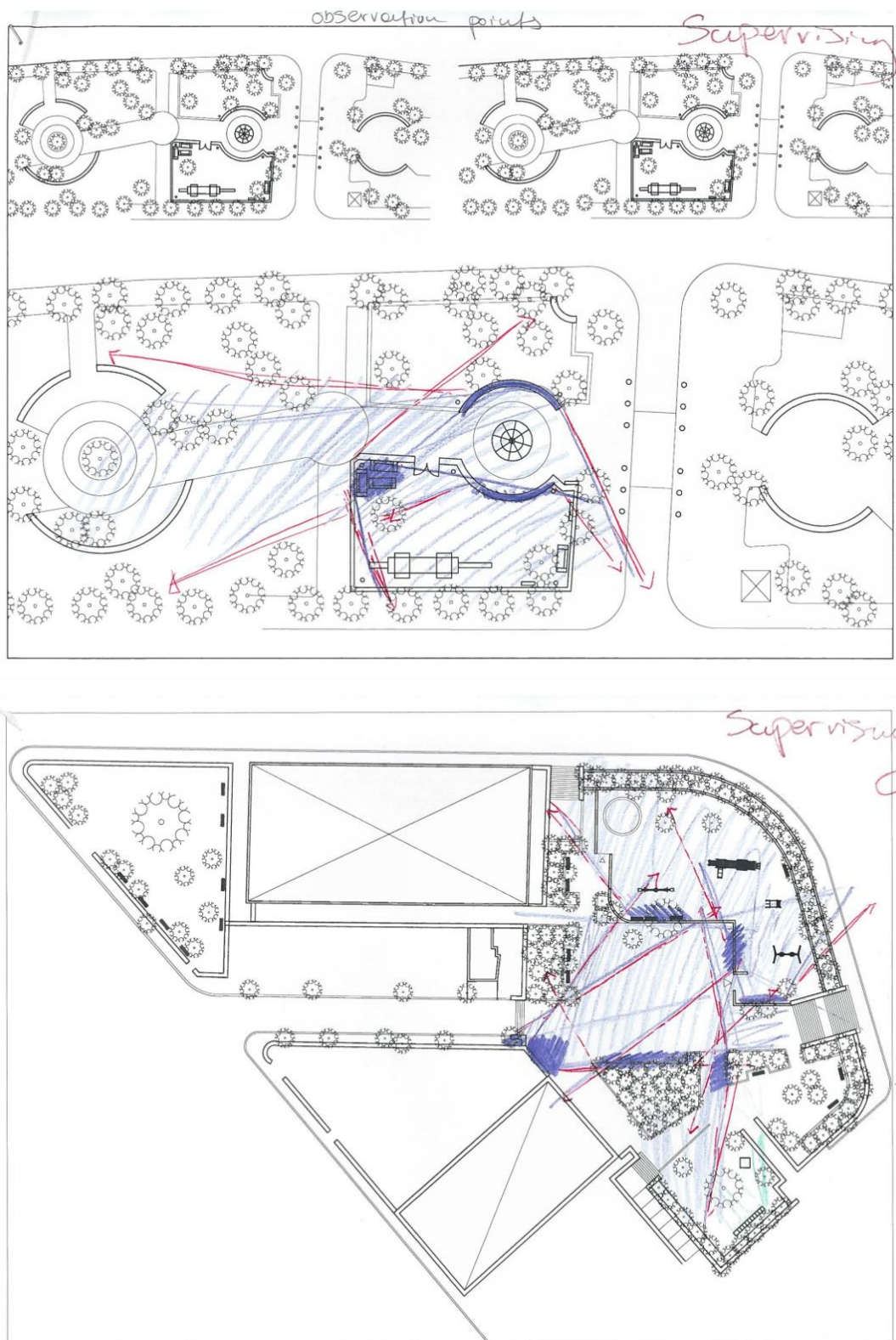


Figure 4-21: Analytical Diagram – Places that allowed supervision



Moreover, I examined them in connection to each other in order to draw lines between different patterns observed (Figure 4-22).

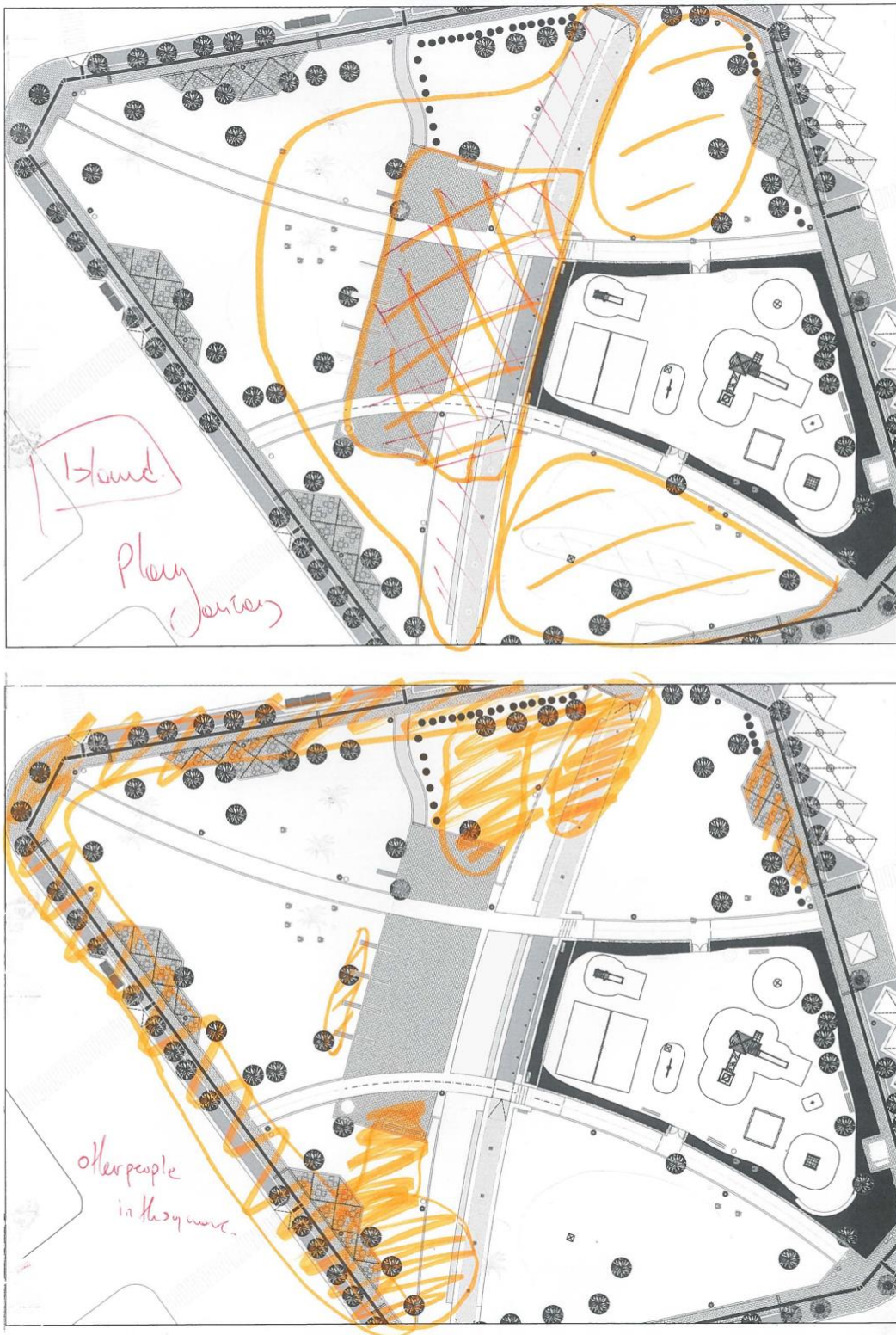


Figure 4-22: Analytical Diagram – Drawing connections between children's play and adults' positions

Each analytical diagram referred to a theme, with a single colour indicating areas of activities and interactions. This initial analysis informed my fieldwork, as I returned to the field to test, confirm and saturate my data across all case studies. Both kinds the descriptive and analytical diagrams acted as tools, supporting fieldwork and better understanding rather than providing an objective visual representation of the field at each moment.

### “Interviews”

I used informal discussions to explore specific themes emerging through the observations. These allowed me to expand on specific subjects’ behaviours and perceptions and unravel the established social relations that affected people’s actions not visible through observation. Informal interviews are used in ethnography to such an extent that often people equate ethnography with interviews. Commenting on this Blommaert & Jie (2010) argue:

Let it be clear right from the start: there is nothing intrinsically ethnographic about an interview, and doing interviews does not make your research ethnographic (p.42).

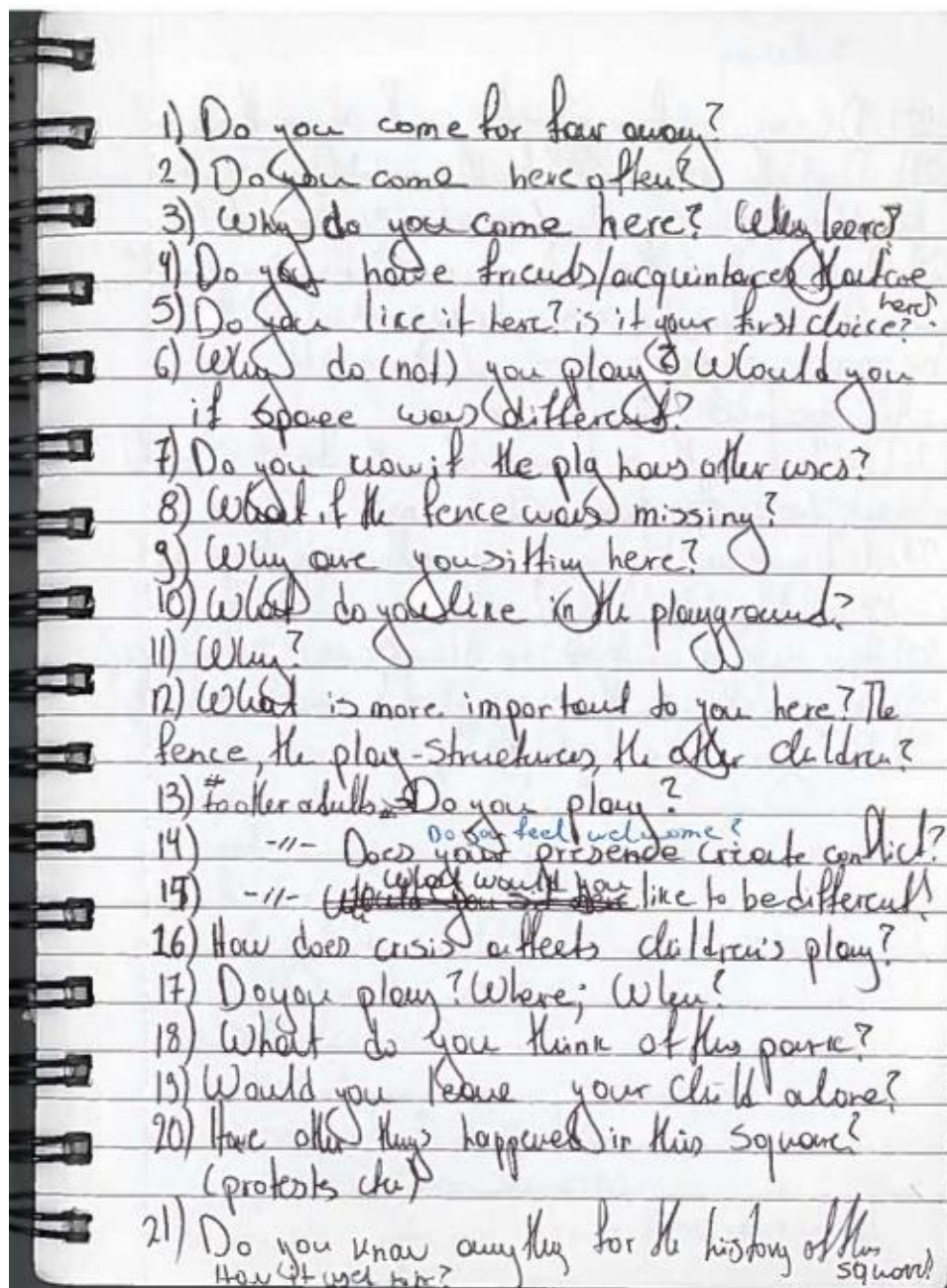
The Ethnographic interview is loaded with meanings emerging not only from the uttered words but also context and the interviewer’s and interviewee’s body language; it is ‘inextricably and unavoidably historically, politically, and contextually bound’ (Fontana & Frey, 2005, p.695). As such I approached it more as an “ordered conversation” that, however, ‘responds to precisely the same kinds of opportunities and constraints as ‘ordinary’ conversation’ (Blommaert & Jie, 2010, p.44), these been being dialogical and in need of rapport. I approached the participants and interacted with them with an informal, friendly attitude. I use the term “interviews” in order to refer to this in-between character of interviewing interaction, not completely structured but at the same time not fluid either. The “interviews” were structured to the minimum degree possible; they were voluntary, spontaneously started and flexible to:

Allow respondents to negotiate with researchers in terms of what topics and types of information are significant and what the respondent can contribute to the research (Aitken & Herman, 2009, p.34).

In the beginning, I used the three broad themes of Access, Use, and Interaction as a guide to what I wanted to explore. These emerged directly from my research

objectives. At this stage I did not have any specific interview questions prepared<sup>22</sup>.

After the very first days of fieldwork the need emerged to clarify my themes in order to keep the conversation going. I made a list of 31 questions exploring the aforementioned themes (Figure 4-23). I used them more as topics to keep the conversation running rather than as specific questions to be asked.



<sup>22</sup> In section 4.5 I describe how the participants' interaction with the research methods affected the formulation of the questions and the conduct of our interactions transforming them from the free-flowing conversations that I initially intended to what I am now referring to as "interviews".



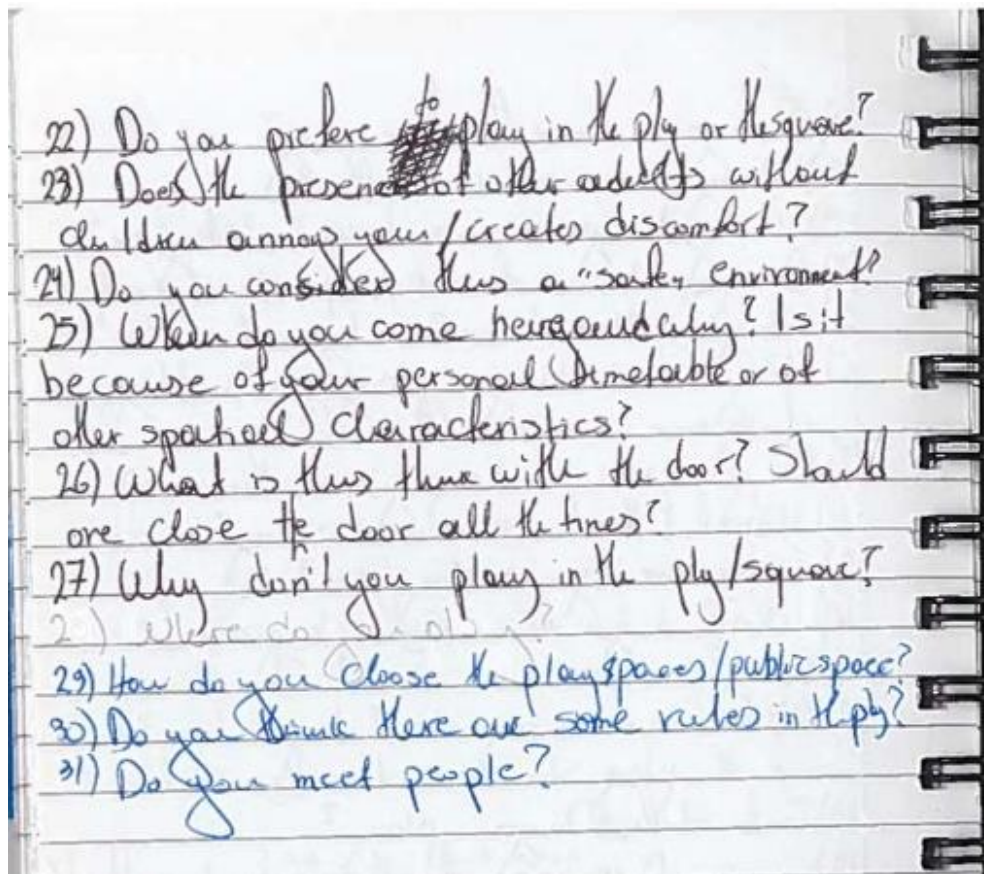


Figure 4-23: First draft of interview questions

As my fieldwork proceeded, and the need to ask people more specific, structured questions in order to engage them emerged (See below 4.5), I re-examined my conceptual and theoretical framework in order to update the themes. At the same time, the interactions I already had with the participants and my observations generated more themes that were then translated into further questions. Six specific themes were employed: General information, Play, Other people, Crisis, Boundaries, Playground Rules, and Space. These themes were informed both by my conceptual framework of the 'multiple publics' and my theoretical framework of heterotopia.

I intended to distinguish the different manifestations of the field and explore notions such as conflict, normalisation, porosity and transgression. Under these themes, approximately 50 questions and follow up questions were categorised (Figure 4-24). These questions were not posed to all participants: some were for children, others for older people etc., while many of them were follow-ups to one main question intending to clarify or further probe the participant's answer (Table 3).

For example, this was a sequence of questions intended to explore guardians' play in the playground:

Table 3: Example of sequential questions

<b>Do you play in the playground?</b>	Why not? / Where? When? What?
<b>Would you like to play?</b>	
<b>[Would you play] if the space was otherwise?</b>	How would you like it to be?

I did not ask every question to each participant. In many cases I could feel participants' uneasiness or hurry so I asked the most relevant and important questions at each time. I had created a hierarchy between the questions of each theme. Often, I asked less important questions to clarify something that had been said or because the participant at that time was more interested in specific topics. When participants felt particularly chatty, I would not use my questions sheet at all and I would just engage with the natural flow of the conversation.

Questions were also added in the process as participants raised context-related themes. For example, guardians often referred to other playgrounds in order to explain something or compare with the case we were in. To take advantage of the data offered I started asking the participants 'Why don't you visit a different playground?' or 'why don't you prefer...playground?' – The name of the compared playground changed in each case). I translated themes emerging from the observations into new questions, while using them for the observations.

— 1) Έρχεστε από μακριά εδώ?

- Μένετε στην ευρύτερη γειτονιά?

Μένετε στην ευρύτερη γειτονιά? → ΠΑΡΕΤΕ ΜΟΥ ΜΙΑ ΣΕΛΙΔΑ

- 2) Έρχεστε συχνά εδώ?  
Κάθε πότε έρχεστε?

- 3) Γιατί έρχεστε σε αυτή τη παιδική χαρά? Είναι η πρώτη σας επιλογή ή έρχεστε για πρακτικούς λόγους?

Τί σας αρέσει εδώ? [ασφάλεια, κοινωνικοποίηση]

- 4) Ποια είναι η γνώμη σας γι' αυτήν την πλατεία? *Αγία Παιδική χαρά?*  
4) Γιατί δεν πάτε σε άλλη παιδική χαρά?

4. Γιατί δεν πάτε σε άλλη παιδική χαρά?

- 5 Πώς διαλέγετε το πού θα παίξουν τα παιδιά?  
Πού αλλού παίζουν εκτός από εδώ?

- 6 Πόση ώρα κάθεστε συνήθως;  
Γιατί/ πότε φεύγετε?

- 7 Γνωρίζετε τον κόσμο εδώ? (γείτονες, φίλους)

- Γνωρίζετε καινούριο κόσμο εδώ? Κάνετε νέους φίλους?

9) → Red and purple otopost  
→ Play

- Παίζετε καθόλου? Γιατί όχι? / Πού? Πότε? Τι? - 26

Θα θέλατε να παίξετε?

- 11 [Θα παίζατε] αν ήταν αλλιώς ο χώρος? Πώς θα θέλατε να ήταν?

Τι πιστεύετε για το χώρο και τα παιχνίδια?

- 13 Υπάρχουν ευκαιρίες για τους ενήλικες να παίξουν στην Αθήνα?

- 14 Παίζετε με τα παιδιά? Πού? Γιατί?

- 37 Πού σου αρέσει / θα σου άρεσε να παίζεις? Γιατί?

Με ποιόν παίζεις? Με ποιόν θα ήθελες να παίζεις?

Τι παίζεις?

33.  $\epsilon\rho\chi\alpha\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\iota\omega\varsigma \tau\omega\iota\tau\alpha \tau\omega\iota\tau\alpha$

- 15 Τι κάνετε όσο παίζουν τα παιδιά?

Τα βοηθάτε? Επιδραείτε καθόλου?

- 16 Που κάθεστε συνήθως? Γιατί?

- 17 → για τη προτίμηση να λάβετε επί, αφού θα συντάξει έναν ασφαλιστικό  
(Οι ασφαλιστές να γίνει ασφαλιστές ασφαλιστή. Γιατί, αφού θα συντάξει  
το ασφαλιστικό κεφάλαιο)

Others

- 13 → Έρχεται κόσμος χωρίς παιδιά μέσα στη παιδική χαρά?

Γιατί πιστεύετε ότι προτιμάνε αυτόν τον χώρο? Τι κάνουν συνήθως?

Ποια είναι η γνώμη σας γι' αυτό?

Παράδειγμα:  $\vec{u} = \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 2 \\ 3 \end{pmatrix}$ ,  $\vec{v} = \begin{pmatrix} 4 \\ 5 \\ 6 \end{pmatrix}$

- α Νιώθετε ευπρόσδεκτοι στο χώρο αυτό? Οι γονείς πώς σας αντιμετωπίζουν?

- 1) Γιατί προτιμάτε αυτόν τον χώρο? Γιατί όχι την πλατεία?

- 19d पूर्ण रेखा

- 19c ανδρα υπηρχε η παιδικη χαρα εω?

Παίζετε?

#### Boundaries

20 → Μέχρι πού αφήνετε τα παιδιά σας να πάνε σε αυτόν το χώρο? Γιατί?

21 Πώς επηρεάζει ο χώρος αυτήν την απόφαση?

21 Θα αφήνατε το παιδί σας να έρθει μόνο του?

22 → Τι πιστεύετε για το φράκτη της παιδικής χαράς? Είναι απαραίτητος? Θα μπορούσε να λείπει?

23 Ποια είναι η γνώμη σας για την ασφάλεια της παιδικής χαράς?

#### Crisis

Σχετικά με την κρίση...

24 → Πιστεύετε ότι επηρεάζει τον κόσμο που έχει παιδιά?

-πώς διαλέγει τους χώρους που θα παίξουν

-κάθε πότε θα τα πάει να παίξουν

-πόσο μένουν στην πλατεία

Ήσασταν εδώ όταν έκλεισε πριν κάτι χρόνια? Που παίζανε τα παιδιά τότε?

25 Έχετε δει αλλαγές στον κόσμο, στη παιδική χαρά, στη γειτονιά ή στην πλατεία πριν και μετά την κρίση?

#### Rules

26 Τι κάνουν οι γονείς συνήθως εδώ?

→ Έχετε δει κανένα γονιό να παίζει στα παιχνίδια? Είναι συχνό αυτό?

→ Υπάρχουν κάποιοι κανόνες σε αυτόν το χώρο? Στην πλατεία?

27 → Ποιος πιστεύεται επιτρέπεται να χρησιμοποιεί την παιδική χαρά? Γιατί?

28 Πρέπει κανείς να κλείνει την πόρτα όταν μπαίνει? Γιατί? Αν δεν το κάνει?

Τα παιδιά παίζουν διαφορετικά στην παιδική χαρά απ' ότι στη πλατεία? Στο σπίτι?

#### Space

Ποια είναι η γνώμη σας για τις παιδικές χαρές?

29 → Πώς σας φαίνεται που η παιδική χαρά είναι πάνω στην πλατεία? [καλό. Κακό?]

30 Πού σου αρέσει περισσότερο, στην παιδική χαρά ή στην πλατεία? Γιατί?

31 Πιστεύεις ότι είναι η ιδανική παιδική χαρά για εσάς? Δώστε λεπτομέρειες

→ (απάντηση)

... (απάντηση) ...

Figure 4-24: The questionnaire used during fieldwork [for English translation see Appendix]

I approached the participants introducing myself, explaining my research and asking if I could chat with them about their experiences in the playground and the piazza. I informed the participants of the research aims and practices, and handed them an information sheet. Finally, I asked them to sign a written consent form if they had agreed to be audio-recorded (See: 4.4.4).

For these “interviews” I made use of what Ball calls ‘theoretical sampling’ (Ball, 1990, p.165) technique, choosing an informed sample according to the data that have been collected so far. I approached participants that I thought could provide insights based on their use of space, their behaviours and interactions with other users or the lack of them, and in some cases just their availability (convenience sample). This sample usually consisted of adults and children using both the piazza and the playground area. I took into account criteria such as age and gender. However, these were not the ones that guided the selection of participants.

### Interrelation of the Two Methods

Observations and related discussions took place either on the same day or on different days of the same week. When I was conducting “interviews” I did not have the time to observe and write down what was taking place in the field as my full attention was with the participant. If something relevant to my objectives, happened at that time – like the time a ball hit me in the head as children were trying to hit passers-by with it – I made a note in my notebook in order to write it down in more detail when I returned home. In some cases, I found that I was feeling too self-conscious to conduct observations after “interviewing” the participants. Although I had explicitly explained my ethnographic methodology, I could sense the participants’ un-easiness. These feelings were expressed through phrases like ‘why are you still here? Did not you have enough interviews already? I will explain my approach to ongoing consent as opposed to written consent and my understanding of the field and the Greek culture further in sections 4.4.3 and 4.4.4.

Although my approach did not share the rationale of mixed methods, the interrelation of observations and “interviews”, often used together in ethnographic research (Limb & Dwyer, 2001), helped me expand my understanding of the field and pursue clearer and deeper insights. I employed ‘units of analysis’ (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010, p.137) structured around broader concepts and themes that emerged and were explored during the fieldwork. ‘Initiation’ through the observations, during which ‘the use of a first method sparks new hypotheses or research questions that can be pursued using a different method’ (Aitken & Herman, 2009, p.6), generated patterns and questions not previously taken into account by the research structure

Figure 4-25). My intention was to initially approach the field through observations in order to both familiarise myself and to allow themes and questions – that might not have initially been identified through the conceptual framework – to emerge. These were further explored through my engagement with the participants; I asked questions and tried to explore specific practices further. The functions of ‘complementarity’ and ‘contradictions’ (Aitken & Herman, 2009, p.6) were then employed in order to explore the findings from both methods and compare them to create a clearer picture. When in the field, I treated these analytical units with flexibility, in order not to miss any spontaneous data or to avoid overlooking findings that could help me gain a better understanding.



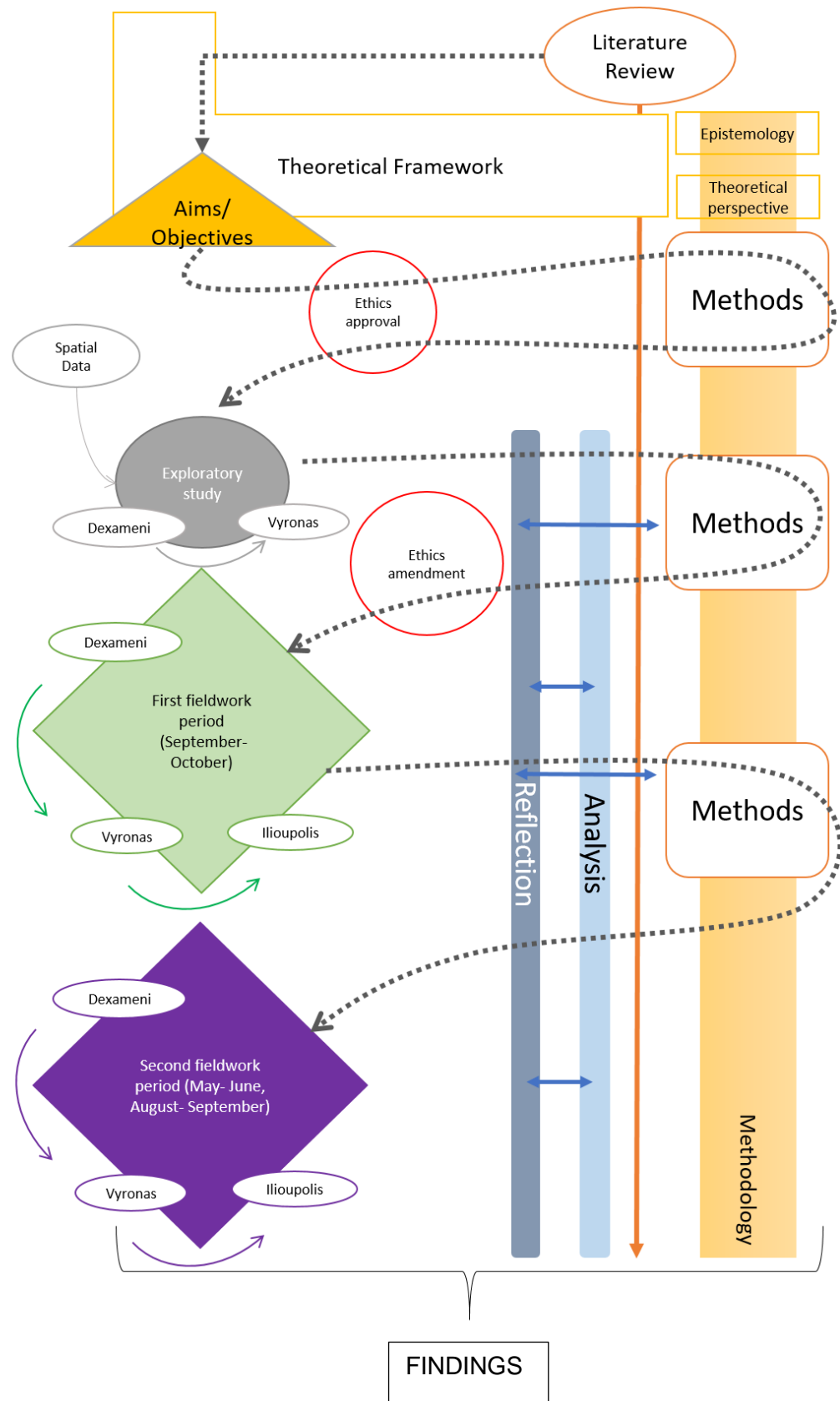


Figure 4-25: Fieldwork diagram

## Fieldwork Times

Playgrounds in Greece reach their full capacity during the spring-summer months – mainly due to the weather being warm and dry. The ethnography was carried out from May to October to maximise the potential frequency and density of observed use. I carried out 61 Interviews and around 180 observation hours for a total of six months over two consecutive years (September-October 2016 and May-June, August-September 2017). These periods of fieldwork were chosen taking into consideration the children's school year [September – early June], public holidays (Christmas, Easter, summer and bank holidays) the weather conditions<sup>23</sup>, and the available resources. Data collection also included both working days and weekends. The materials collection (photographs, diagrams etc.) took place during the 2015 Christmas period when the playgrounds were empty. My one month exploratory study, including observations in two out of the three case studies and some informal talks with guardians, took place in April 2016.

Observations took place also at different times throughout the day, namely in the morning, afternoon and evening. No observations took place at night (not after 9 o'clock) for health and safety reasons (Figure 4-26). I tried to work in parallel on all three case studies in order to take advantage of the reflection process taking place during and after fieldwork. At the same time, this approach allowed me to explore the themes emerging from each case in connection to the others. I visited each playground on a daily basis for a period of two or three days and then proceeded to the next case study in order to leave adequate time for reflexion.

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<sup>23</sup> Weather warm enough to play outside after the end of March and until November, however too hot during July and August



Ioupoli														
	Weekdays							Weekends						
	Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday		Saturday		Sunday	
Morning	1/5/2017 15/5/17		12/9/2017		24/5/2017		27/4/2017				6/5/2017		30/4/2017	
Afternoon					20/9/2017				28/4/2017 19/5/2017					
Evening	8/5/2017 18/9/2017		2/5/2017		10/5/2017		27/4/2017 14/09/2017		5/5/2017		29/4/2017		14/5/2017	

	No school period													
	Weekdays							Weekends						
	Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday		Saturday		Sunday	
Morning			13/6/2017								17/6/2017			
Afternoon					14/6/2017				7/7/2017					
Evening	19/6/2017		27/6/2017				29/6/2017						25/6/2017	

Doxameni														
	Weekdays							Weekends						
	Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday		Saturday		Sunday	
Morning	12/6/2017		19/9/2017				11/5/2017				16/9/2017		25/9/2016	
Afternoon	17/4/2016 26/9/2016				13/4/2016				15/9/2017				10/4/2016	
Evening	19/9/2016		16/5/2015				4/5/2017		23/9/2016		24/9/2016		7/5/2017	

	No school period													
	Weekdays							Weekends						
	Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday		Saturday		Sunday	
Morning			20/6/2017											
Afternoon	25/4/2016						15/6/2017						10/9/2017	
Evening	11/9/2017				27/4/2016				9/9/2016		23/4/2016			

Vyronas														
	Weekdays							Weekends						
	Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday		Saturday		Sunday	
Morning			23/5/2017				21/4/2016		12/5/2017		9/4/2016		10/4/2016	
Afternoon	11/4/2016												2/10/2016	
Evening	15/5/2017		20/9/2016 16/5/2017		14/9/2016		15/9/2016		15/4/2016 16/9/2016		17/9/2016		21/5/2017 17/9/2017	

	No school period													
	Weekdays							Weekends						
	Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday		Saturday		Sunday	
Morning	12/9/2016				14/6/2017		22/6/2017				9/9/2017		10/9/2016	
Afternoon														
Evening	25/4/2016		13/9/2016						8/9/2017		24/6/2017			

Figure 4-26: Observations dates and times

#### 4.4.3 In The field

##### Challenges

##### The 'Plunge into the Unknown'

Ethnographic research, being 'real world research' (Robson, 2002), is inextricably accompanied by a series of challenges for the researcher: getting entangled in a fieldwork situation where everything looks interesting (Tucker, 2012) misunderstanding the events, meanings or participants (Fabian, 2001), researcher's exhaustion (See: Ball, 1990; Punch, 2012; Hubbard et al., 2001; Widdowfield, 2000; Moser, 2008; Wilkins, 1993; Blackman, 2007; England, 1994; Bondi, 2005), having to deal with the unexpected (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010) and maintain inter-personal relations (Emerson, 1981; England, 1994, p.247; Christensen, 2004; Fabian, 2001). Fieldwork is a demanding process, a 'plunge into the unknown' (Ball, 1990, 157). The researcher cannot control what is taking place, while at the same time, the researcher's presence adds to the field's complexity (See: Blackford's study, 2004; Blommaert & Jie, 2010) affecting it like ripples from a pebble thrown in a lake. No matter how softly one throws the pebble, the water's surface is going to change.

##### Access and Entry

Access and entry were constantly negotiated during my fieldwork. Ball (1990), distinguishes between 'entry' that can be granted and 'access' (p.159) that needs to be gained, while James (2001) adds to this dipole the notion of consent: entry does not imply consent for the research. During fieldwork, I had to 'satisfy very different kinds of expectations and be a very different kind of person to get by' (Ball, 1990, p.163).

Although I had acquired official entry from the municipality's leisure and sports department, I had to renegotiate access in the playground space again and again as the days passed and the participants changed. Negotiating access in this study was like living in Groundhog Day: nothing I could do provided an easier access in the future as my sample was unstable, comprising public space users. Participants enquired about my continuous presence often expecting me to leave after a couple of days. Participants' expectations about what research is, how and for how long it should take place, informed our interactions. As in the case of Hood et al. (1996), questions about the "usefulness" of my research revealed the guardians' need to justify my presence in the space. Building rapport by gaining the research participants' trust (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010), 'convincing children that one is not there to trash their interests', while 'convincing the gatekeepers in the research study that one is not out to pollute or

corrupt children' (Mitchell & Walsh, 2002, p.26) was an ongoing task during my presence in the field. However, approaching the fieldwork practices as inseparable from the broader social structure under research, gaining access formed a significant part of the data.

Gatekeepers did not facilitate this research as I expected. Using friend-guardians as key informants and gatekeepers<sup>24</sup> worked for as long as they were present, providing me with easier access and a snowball sampling (Choak, 2012). However, often friends of my key informants were not willing to engage with the research over the following days. Moreover, although my theoretical framework approached children as equal participants, my experience aligns with Mitchell and Walsh's (2002) argument:

In practice we see that there are several constraints in terms of the relationship of adults to children (p.25).

Guardians tended to exclude children from the research: on the one hand in order to protect them from the process and the researcher (Valentine, 1999b); on the other hand because they did not consider children's input credible. At the same time, other adults restrained from participating themselves as they considered children to be the experts. Susa & Benedict (1994) had the parents introduce the researcher to the child in order to eliminate any anxiety the child may feel. My experience in the field confirmed that in the context of Athenian playgrounds this was the only way a researcher could approach the children. Often children themselves identified their guardians as gatekeepers (Punch, 2001) and waited for their approval before talking to me. Other times, even though I had been provided entry by the guardian I had not gained access concerning the child's willingness to interact with me.

### Positionality

Access to the playground was closely related to perceptions about the positionality of the researcher. Positionality, referring to: 'the power position in which a person or group is situated socially' (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010, p.37) is an important aspect of ethnographic fieldwork (Jarzabkowski et al., 2015; Widdowfield, 2000). In the same way as the participants, the researcher lives, acts and constructs his/her meanings as part of a specific context (Flyvbjerg, 2001). My positionality was relational

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<sup>24</sup> More specifically, I used three key informants. A friend in Dexameni, and two relatives in Ilioupoli. All of them introduced me to their friends in the field. This, however, didn't lead to further contacts.

to each participant's positionality. Komulainen (2007) and Ball (1990) argue that there is not only one fixed role the researcher has to subscribe to but she should adapt to the 'socially dynamic' (Ball, 1990, p.164) character of the fieldwork, while each role influences the data generated and collected. Mohammad's (2001) experience of being perceived as a Muslim woman, while identifying herself as a British citizen with Pakistani origins illustrates that positionality has often to do with how participants perceive the researcher and what attributes they ascribe to her. During my fieldwork, the participants often did not perceive me as a postgraduate researcher leading her own research, but as a student "made" to conduct a research by the university. This often resulted in the participants prompting me to write down imaginary data in order to "go home earlier" but also made them more sympathetic and more willing to help me. Similarly, while in Vyronas playground people were often looking up at me, commenting that they "do not know the answers" in Dexameni they perceived me more as a nuisance, a student that wastes their time. Often I replied to participants' 'flattery' (Mitchell & Walsh, 2002, p.30) about my interest in them by denying being a know-it-all academic.

The fact that my research took place in or near a children's space, created extra difficulties in negotiating my positionality. Although being a non-intimidating young, petite, female that grew up in Athens, speaks Greek and is aware of the culture and practices – an insider to Greek culture – was helpful in this context, the fact that I did not accompany a child to the playground ascribed me the position of the "other", the "outsider" or the "extra" in this space (See also: Christensen, 2004). At the same time, I used my own positionality and playfulness in order to "test" the field in a non-intrusive way. I as other, a 'kind of stranger' (Katz, 1994, p.68, Agar, 1980), was able to explore the power relations emerging, while negotiating social representations – powerful researcher versus vulnerable participants, powerful adult versus vulnerable children, powerful insiders versus powerless outsider). Under this reasoning, the research process emerged as a source of data itself, as it revealed the social norms and perceptions of where every actor's place is and what my behaviour as a young adult without a child in the playground space should be.

## Solutions

### The Jazz Technique

'Every mistake is an opportunity in jazz' Stefon Harris

In order to face the multiple challenges of ethnographic research described above I employed what I call 'the jazz technique'. This term draws from approaches of 'open research' able to engage with the unpredictability of field-research as argued by Gallacher & Gallagher (2008, p.509). As a student ethnographer, I tried to find ways to deal with the unexpected without losing the focus of my research questions. At the same time, curious as I am, I frequently found myself in the position of finding everything interesting (Tucker, 2012), not only in the field but also through my analysis, or the writing of my literature review. In order to deal with this, I did not reduce my research into a sum of 'ingenious techniques, planned in advance and carefully applied' (Gallacher & Gallagher, 2008, p.513) but instead, I structured my aims and objectives solidly, like the rhythm in a jazz piece. Through a strictly defined framework including the playground, its heterotopic characteristics and interactions with the adjacent space, I tried to keep my focus on what I needed to explore. This framework acted like a core informing my questions, analysis, and eventually my gaze in the field. I let my fieldwork and its incidents revolve as music improvisations around this solidly defined rhythm (Figure 4-27). I embraced the unexpected and the spontaneous, cherished the non-intended data, and employed a great extent of flexibility in my methods. That way, the challenges and different problems that occurred did not hinder my research, but rather acted as data themselves and provided a deeper insight into the field. I was able to put emphasis on the research as a process rather than a product.

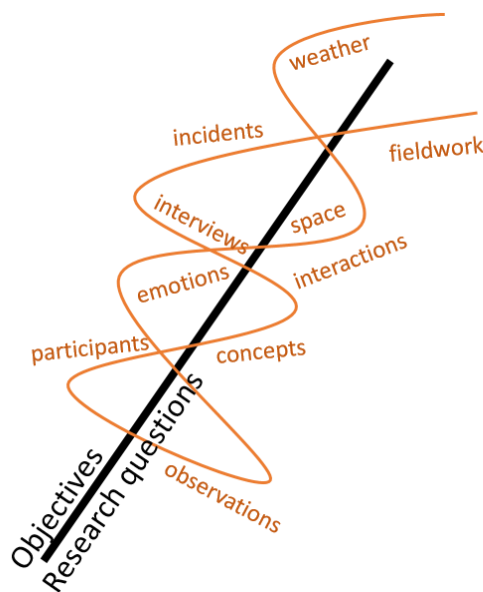


Figure 4-27: The jazz technique

## Trustworthiness

Taking into account the previously mentioned challenges, the notions of validity and reliability for my research should be explored. Reliability, 'a measure of the degree to which any given observation is consistent with a general pattern and not the result of random chance' (Angrosino, 2007, p.58) is closely connected with the notion of objectivity. Although there are some studies trying to apply ethnography at a global scale (Jarzabkowski et al., 2015; Katz, 1994) the concept of reliability is not applicable in case study ethnography (Angrosino, 2007; Atkinson et al., 2001; Ball, 1990; Blommaert & Jie, 2010; Byrne & Ragin, 2009; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; LeCompte & Schensul, 2010; Robson, 2002). Ball (1990) argues that in ethnographic research the answer to the question 'If someone else did the fieldwork, would the ethnography have turned out differently?' (p.167) should always be yes.

In response to the problem of reliability, I address the concept of trustworthiness (Olesen, 2005, p.251). In this research, I was more preoccupied with validity: the extent to which the data accurately reflect the phenomenon under study (Brewer, 2000; Choak, 2012; Angrosino, 2007). Validity is not measured according to an 'absolute truth' as reality is 'always conditional' (Angrosino, 2007, p.36) and the researcher cannot control the internal or external variables (Nurani, 2008). In order to address this issue, I employed common practices such as 'member validation' (Emerson, 1981, p.362) and repeated observation of patterns. My intention was to have the majority of my data saturated before my fieldwork period stopped. This happened much sooner than I expected, although some new themes continued to emerge. At the same time, the methods selected, including the ways these were carried out, such as the diagrams, notes and "interviews", can be easily replicated and tested. I claim trustworthiness by explicitly describing every stage of this study. 'Detailing the procedure' (Emerson, 1981, p.362) including as much detail my thesis word count allows me, intended to ensure transparency not only in methods but also in my actions and decisions. I follow Ball's (1990) position on the pseudo-objectivity of writing in third person, and write in the first person, acknowledging my position as a data-collecting-tool.

## Reflexivity

I employed the practice of reflexivity in order to deal with the problems emerging stemming not only from my positionality and emotions but also from the unexpected, dialogical and social character of the field. Turning research into a 'reflexive practice' (Aitken & Herman, 2009, p.8), sensitive to the problems and the

reasons for any decisions taken, not only brought the social character of ethnography into the foreground (Bondi, 2005; Levey, 2009; Smith, 2001) but also supported the 'process of situating knowledge' (Widdowfield, 2000, p.202). Reflexivity is well documented as a way to deal with a variety of problems in ethnographic research: from alleviating the effect the researcher may have on the field (Blackman, 2007; Punch, 2001) to helping the researcher make the right decisions (Ball, 1990) and deal with issues of 'power and representation' (Levey, 2009, p.323) or misunderstanding (Fabian, 2001). My reflexive practice emerged at three different scales.

First, reflection in the field (Figure 4-28). I did not keep a separate reflexive journal, rather I integrated my reflexive voice in the field-notes. I structured a narrative in my notebook that included not only the field but also myself, the narrator-observer, and my thoughts. In many cases I recorded my line of thoughts before making a decision, including all the back and forth until I reached a final decision.

Moreover, reflecting on my behaviour, practices and emotions (See: Ball, 1990; Blackman, 2007; Bondi, 2005; England, 1994; Hubbard et al., 2001; Kleinman and Copp, 1993; Moser, 2008; Punch, 2012; Widdowfield, 2000; Wilkins, 1993) allowed me to make decisions that supported my objectives. The ethno-methodological approach placed me (the researcher), part of the social world and as such 'socially constructed' (Levey, 2009, p.323), under scrutiny (Flyvbjerg, 2001) engaging in a reflexive description of all manifestations of social order (Emerson, 1981). Wilkins (1993) reflects on her anxiety emotions as offering her a valuable insight into the field:

I became highly sensitised to the emotional undercurrents of the exchanges I observed; spotting distancing techniques, intended and unintended manipulation, engagement and disengagement, love, affection, support and anxiety, to name but a few. I doubt that I would spot them so well in a more confident mood (p.97).

Speaking to parents = many ready-made questions  
help gather data  
↳ show that I am actually doing sth

→ Do not assume, or ~~say anything~~ what they told me. (one of the maids looked at me ~~surprised~~ when I mentioned that her son seemed to enjoy playing with the other boy, which was ~~and~~ the reason they entered the play as she had told me.)

↑

Figure 4-28: Reflections written in the field after interaction with participants



Second, reflection between fieldwork days (Figure 4-29). I reflected after fieldwork when I returned home and was going through the day's incidents. Pages of reflection in the methods, interactions and myself can be found in between fieldwork days in my notes. Although the majority of decisions were taken either in the field – if they were referring to the field – or in-between the fieldwork periods, when I was back in Newcastle – for bigger decisions affecting my methods – there were times where I identified unhelpful behaviours of mine and decided to change them the next day in a test-and-proceed tactic. For example, in the first days of fieldwork I was constantly troubled about the best way to introduce myself. After a day when I was introducing myself as '*an architect doing a PhD, researching the playground space..*' and reflected on people's responses I decided that it was best to introduce myself as: '*Hello, I am Alkistis. I am a PhD student conducting a research about playgrounds. I would appreciate it if you could share your experiences with me*'.

Thirdly, reflection after each fieldwork period, when I had returned to Newcastle (Figure 4-31). This reflection was informed by very first approaches of analysing the data. I reflected on the methods, the data that these elicited, the participants' engagement and other problems that I encountered. This type of reflection affected the conduct, the structure of my study and the methods it employed. In what follows I describe the basic changes that occurred through this process.

Getting in the play and speaking to people like I do: "Hello, I am Alvin...". Leads every discussion towards an interview style conversation. The parents expect me to ask certain questions. The questions I have are not "complete", ~~as~~ ~~there~~ ~~are~~ their primary purpose is to support a more pluralistic and engaging discussion. Parents on the play just wait for me to ask the next question. They don't want to get recorded as they believe this is too formal  $\Rightarrow$  they are right. But at the same time I can't initiate a spontaneous discussion that would help me collect all the information I want ~~and~~ especially without a child. So.. I am again on ground zero. I can't engage with my ethnographic approach.

Until now I have done exactly what I didn't want to do (also qualitative <sup>dis</sup>).

- I wanted to do ethnography to deeper into things.

Can't do that as an outsider

- One can't interview people in the pty.  $\Rightarrow$  I knew that. But this is to what I have come into. And of course it doesn't work.

- But without questions they would bother making general discussions. Then I tried with questions didn't work out as well.

- Some people would continue their conversation while I was taking notes ("and how was the wedding?") but would reassure me that I cannot bother them and I could leave whatever I want. Others are very stiff, answer using short sentences and make me feel very conspicuous.

The second stage will be limited.  $\Rightarrow$  interviews do not allow to deepen. Not only because of the limiting nature of the questions (which is a fact) but also because of how people react to this.

There is a chance I could initiate conversation if I stood there observing and letting them know that I am observing.  $\Rightarrow$  But

Figure 4-29: Reflections written between fieldwork days

## Exploratory Study

I conducted my exploratory study in spring 2016. In this first exploration of the field I approached fieldwork as two successive observational stages of different scales. The first stage of observations included semi-participant observations in order to explore the playground case studies, while the second stage of observations intended to examine specific subjects' behaviours and perceptions. However, as is often the case, things did not go as planned. I consider important to mention various adaptations that I had to make to my methodology after this exploratory study.

Firstly, according to my ethics application:

'During this [observation] stage the researcher will take advantage of every opportunity to introduce herself, answer questions and make people aware of her presence and intentions. Spontaneous, informal discussions will take place parallel to the observation both with the playground's users and other people from the surrounding area'.

In the field:

*However, during this "first" stage the observations took a more covert character as people were not engaging with my research. No one was paying attention to me, while they were too sceptical to chat. This did not allow me to chat and form spontaneous relations. The public space-playground field was too vast to introduce myself and make all participants aware of my presence.*

Secondly, the second stage of my methodology in the ethics application mentioned:

'When adequate time has passed in order for the researcher to form relations with specific users or group of users [...] The researcher will work closer with specific participants by observing, following them in the playground space and engaging in – some cases recorded – informal talks with them'.

In the field:

*Unfortunately, working in a public space field did not allow lasting relationships to form and the second observations stage's informal talks took the character of "interviews" as this was the only accepted form by the participants. Moreover, the participants were reluctant to fully engage in a research process that placed them under closer scrutiny, as the second stage of more close observations intended to do. I could not find participants to closely observe and follow around.*

In order to deal with these challenges I tried to keep my methodology as flexible as possible and in line with the specific conditions in the field each time. As a result, the final methods of this research were transformed from two successive observational stages focusing on different scales of the field under study to two interrelated stages employing different methods: an observations and an “interviews” one. These did not have clear boundaries, but rather mixed informing each other and engaging more participants.

Participants’ reluctance to engage in the research process affected the implementation of other methods. During my exploratory study, my supervisors proposed a workshop in the playground space in order to both overcome the problem of engaging participants and to make myself visible and available in a clear way. They proposed a hand’s-on workshop that would revolve around children in order to collect data concerning children’s experiences through drawings, collages and other means. I argued against such an approach for two main reasons. Firstly, conscious of my effect in the field, I believed that the workshop would completely destabilise the balance without offering me the data that I was seeking. Secondly, my knowledge of the Greek culture, my judgment of the situation and my experience in the field indicated that a workshop, although potentially successful for the more engaged participants, would leave the rest uninterested, if not oppositional.

#### **4.4.4 Ethics**

‘Research practice, as an activity carried out through direct or indirect engagement between individuals with identifiable rights, should be accountable to the same moral discourse according to which other social interactions are evaluated’ (Aitken & Herman, 2009, p.8)

#### **Risks**

Researching the playground space, a children’s space, made this study ethically-sensitive, affecting not only the methods chosen but also their implementation. The first exploratory study I conducted followed the guidelines of my approved ethics application. However, as this approach posed difficulties, often discouraging the participants from participating, changes had to be made and an ethics amendment was granted. Although, as Aitken and Herman (2009), point out ‘it is often difficult to stipulate for an IRB precisely what will occur during ethnographic research’ (p.11), all precautions were taken to protect both the participants and the researcher. Miles and Huberman’s (1994) four principles of ethical research (Utilitarian, Deontological, Relational, and Ecological) were employed. The methodology used was an un-

obtrusive one, taking place in a public space, a space accessible to everyone. As a result, the risks of this study were not severe either for the researcher or the participants. However, due to the nature of the child-centred playground, I expected that some participants (usually guardians) would be sceptical about my presence. In order to deal with this, I was as discreet as possible, not obstructing what was taking place in the field. At the same time I made sure to introduce myself and provide information about my research at all times.

## Consent

Ongoing consent was the core ethical principle driving this research. Quoting Emerson (1981):

Field work relations are emergent, based on reciprocity and relatively equal power, continuous, and usually long-term. Such features contrast with the short-term, essentially contractual encounter presupposed by informed consent procedures, an encounter between strangers possessing grossly disparate amounts of power and knowledge (p.353).

Emerson (1981) proposes what he calls 'alternative consent' (p.373) and what I am referring to here as ongoing consent. I did not assume that the written consent asked by the ethics committee would suffice until the completion of the data collection process. I asked each participant, either adult or child, for verbal consent before initiating any interaction. I did not perceive consent as something that could be granted for someone else, for example from guardians for children's participation. I was very vigilant to distinguish the slight differences between 'consent' and 'assent' (permission) (Valentine, 1999b, p143) in order to make sure that the consent was an ongoing state and not a specific time when the participant signed a form. All participants were free to withdraw their consent at any stage of the research (some did) even after the interaction had taken place by emailing me and stating the unique code of the information sheet given to them. I tried to be case sensitive and conscious to identify any issues of writing or spoken difficulties and to deal with them effectively, especially in the case of informed consent.

In what follows I focus on consent, describing the ways it was negotiated affecting both the methods and the participants' engagement. After the exploratory study I had to revise my ethics application and restructure my approach in order to negotiate hierarchies and my positionality in the field. I focus on consent through two kinds of incidents, firstly the unstructured discussions and secondly the written consent

form. Both these instances revealed rooted perceptions about the research process and public space anxieties.

'It is important to recognise how these motivations are transformed into expectations and how expectations become embedded in interview contexts' (Aitken, 2001, p.74).

Ethics application:

'Informal discussions will be used by the researcher to expand understanding into specific themes. The researcher will have a guideline in mind in order to collect the necessary information; the participants will be equally able to dictate what these discussions will include, when and how long they will take place'.

In the field:

*After the first month of fieldwork emerged the need to have with me a printed paper with specific questions since almost everyone was asking me 'what do you want to learn; where is your questionnaire'.*

Guardians' expectations of what a research is and how it should be conducted forced "interviews" in the place of informal talks. It quickly became obvious that guardians expected a "formal" procedure that would ascribe more power to the researcher and justify my presence in the field. For this reason, after the exploratory study, I started handing out information sheets to anyone interacting with me. Each information sheet had a unique code printed on it in order to be able to distinguish without identifying, each participant. Similar expectations revolved around the ways the discussions took place. A hardcopy of questions allowed me to deal with the participant's reluctance to engage "informally". When I was using my paper of questions people agreed to participate. I made sure that the paper was visible to the participants as this was what legitimized the research process for them. However, no matter how open-ended I tried to keep the questions, in some cases, the conversation was still led by me. This sometimes created limitations on how I engaged with people, as the rich informal interviewing, 'conversational in the sense that it takes place between people who have grown to be friends' (Angrosino, 2007, p.43), was reduced to a mere answering of questions, no matter how hard I tried to open up the conversation.

Although in the beginning I thought that any formal forms, or piece of paper, would intimidate the participants unbalancing the hierarchies and relations in the field it

turned out that these had the opposite effects. The forms acted as “proof” that “serious” research was taking place stabilising my position in the field and giving me a legitimate purpose<sup>25</sup>. I tried to alleviate any feelings of ‘being researched’ by making both the information sheet and the written consent form user-friendly, designing them as booklets and adding colours and pictures (See: Appendix A). It is interesting to note here that this kind of hard-proof ascribed to the participants’ perceptions of scientific research as a quantitative process that needed structure and discipline. They did not seem to be able to classify my research in this category when I was asking them to ‘chat about their experiences in the playground’. Rather they expected specific questions or questionnaires from me, perceiving me as the one that had to lead this interaction. At the same time, anything that made our interactions more formal than that – e.g. such as wearing my university id or asking for written consent – made the participants reluctant again and they often withdrew. I constantly had to negotiate hierarchies finding the balance between formal and informal processes.

However, one should also not forget the space this research was taking place in. Guardians were vigilant to guard their kids and often ran around following them, or conversed with me, while playing. In this fluid environment, the introduction of interview questions made my engagement with the participants feasible, but not as rich as an informal chat. At the same time, this “formality” allowed me to gain the participants’ trust. Often, the question-guided “interviews” acted as an introduction to my research, inaugurating relationships with the participants that continued the following days.

#### Ethics application:

‘All questions will be answered verbally and a written informed consent form in the Greek language will be signed by the guardians after everyone is sure that all issues have been addressed and the participants feel eager to participate (both children and adults). All participants interacting with the researcher need to sign this consent form’

#### In the field:

*The consent form was viewed with suspicion and people were often commenting on feeling uncomfortable signing a paper handed in to them by a stranger.*

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<sup>25</sup> Many scholars have argued in favour of the use of such forms in research with children: ‘getting children to sign a consent form can also be a useful way of giving them a sense of control, individuality, autonomy and privacy (Weithorn and Scherer, 1994, in Valentine, 1999b, p.144)']



Often, although the participants were willing to chat with me, they were discouraged when I asked them to sign the consent form. They wanted to participate but did not want to engage formally. The phrase *'I wouldn't like to sign [the consent form] but I give you my consent, you could sign for me if you like'*, was uttered more often than expected and constituted an important part of the data. After a month of fieldwork, I reapplied for an ethics amendment requesting approval for acquiring verbal instead of written consent from the participants. After this was approved, written consent was asked only from the participants that were audio-recorded. During the observations, I did not use any form. During "interviews" all information was given verbally and verbal consent was asked from both guardians and children. I acquired verbal consent before every interaction I had with the participants, and made sure the participants were consenting during the whole interaction.

It is evident that fieldwork was not a linear process. Rather it was constantly informed by the encountered challenges, the reflexive practices and other forms of stimuli and feedback.

### Anonymity

I ensured anonymity by using code names during both the recording and transcription of interviews and code numbers during the observations, making subjects unidentifiable. The unique code printed in each information sheet did not allow any identification of the participant receiving it but allowed me to withdraw their data if requested. Moreover, I only gathered the data that were necessary for this research. No visual recordings of participants were used, while I audio-recorded only the participants that had signed the consent form.

### **4.4.5 Data Analysis**

Recursive analysis (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010) and coding were employed throughout the research process. This process engaged not only with the data but also with the process of generating and collecting the data, informing the research methods and the ways these were applied. I worked at different scales, using different means simultaneously, while being 'actor-centred and context-sensitive' (Vermeulen, 2011, p.237). Approaching analysis as a 'contextual exercise' (Ball, 1990, p.164) I identified the structures and meanings affecting the everyday practices. Moreover, I handled the data using both a descriptive and a theoretical process of analysis (Angrosino, 2007) following the guidelines for qualitative thematic analysis (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010).

It is hard to explicitly state when my analysis process began. Rather I think it was there from the beginning (Figure 4-30). As LeCompte & Schensul (2010) argue:

Though it might seem to be surrounded in a kind of mysterious haze, patterns actually emerge because the researcher is engaged in a systematic cognitive process involving comparing, contrasting, looking for linkages, similarities, and differences, and finding sequences, co-occurrences, and absences (p.161)

In the context of ethnography, a methodology characterised by plurality and change, analysis becomes an 'interpretive act' (Saldaña, 2009, p.4)

Coding emerged as a 'cyclical act' (Saldaña, 2009, p.8) and not as a straight forward technique. I employed coding to organise and make sense of the data exploring their relations and understanding their different expressions in the three case studies. My theoretical and conceptual framework guided and informed the codes by allowing me to identify early on some basic themes. These related to, informed and were informed by my interview questions, my observational gaze and experiences in the field. Even participating in a conference presenting my exploratory study's data initiated a process of analysis that informed my later fieldwork. My analysis was informed but not restrained by these 'conceptual 'bins' (LeCompte, 2013, p.82) deriving from my theoretical framework, rather it engaged with them allowing new codes to emerge. The interview questions themselves were used during fieldwork to further explore emerging themes and patterns observed.

I started with an overview of my field-notes and my interviews and then proceeded to meticulously analyse each one of the three data collection methods I had employed: interviews, field-notes and descriptive diagrams. The data were broken down, coded and then combined into bigger chunks (LeCompte, 2013, p.80). At first I focused on the interviews and field-notes, engaging with the codes emerging without, however, including the spatial data. Data and codes concerning space were emerging creating patterns, but they were not anchored to the actual physical space and its characteristics. Patterns, were analysed through 'negative evidence' (Angrosino, 2007, p.69), comparison and contrast between the three case studies.

and ~~get~~ severely injured, from there. She  
 tries to hold him and pulls him to  
 the square. He screams his lungs out every  
 time she touches him. The girl lifts the  
 library dumps quickly down and goes to  
 the nanny, pulls her hand from the boy and  
 yells at her "you are the most spoiled nany  
 EVER!". The nany tells her "he will fall",  
 and continues running behind the boy, the

and all the play is packed with soil.  
 B plays in the square football with the  
 younger children.

Father<sup>17</sup> with the child<sup>18(7)</sup> pass by. 18 wants to climb  
 the structure, he grabs the structure but 17  
 pulls him away saying "not again".  
 19 (20) \*

Figure 4-30: Analysis after my exploratory study. The three colours refer to: play in the public-yellow, normalisation-black, other people – grey, alternate orderings – blue, conflict – pink.

At the same time, this research stemmed from an architectural background. A "spatial" analysis of the notes and the creation of analytical diagrams according to the codes already emerging created 'spatial patterns' that led to clear insights and a better understanding of the relations and practices in the field (Figure 4-21). After the first thorough analysis of the field-notes, I created spatial diagrams of the already existing codes (Figure 4-19). New patterns emerged from a new space-focused rereading of the field-notes. These, along with the field-notes patterns and the field-diagrams analysis were merged into broader themes that took into account both the social and the spatial characteristics of the case studies. The themes were then 'successively modified until no new changes emerge[d]' (LeCompte, 2013, p.82). I went through my field-notes several times, reflecting on my experiences and events trying to extrude patterns and ground my observations in the physicality of each space in order to limit bias and produce a consistent analysis (Choak, 2012) (Figure 4-31).

Embracing the unexpected was a major part of my research. During the final stages of interpretation and theory-building, however, I held a stricter stance towards the plurality of the data. My conceptual framework acted as a lens that informed my gaze during this stage. The data were strictly chosen according to my theoretical framework and research questions identifying interlinked themes in order to be able to see the big picture without, however, losing focus. Moreover, referring back to theory<sup>26</sup> when interpreting the data, I tried to achieve clarity and deeper understanding.

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<sup>26</sup> International as the studies about playgrounds and the public space conducted in Greece are limited



## 4.5 Summary

In this chapter I illustrated how my methods were formed. This was not a straight – forward process, rather it constantly changed, informing my study and data. Due to the nature of this research – researching the “other” in the playground space – and my status as “other” in the playground space, my fieldwork experience formed part of the data. My interactions with the participants revealed norms that could not be easily observed. The various problems I encountered affected my methods but not my methodology, while they were treated as part of the data collected. Having a clear reasoning regarding my methodology and research questions allowed me to be flexible in my methods. I approached fieldwork with an open mind, alert but engaging with the unexpected. Reflection in different forms, from personal to practical and theoretical proved a valuable tool for keeping control and solving problems.

# 5. The Case Studies

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## 5.1 Overview

This chapter consists of three parts. In the first, I explain the reasons I placed my research in Athens and the criteria for choosing this study's case studies. In the second, I focus on each case, describing their socio-spatial characteristics. Finally, I examine the cases' patterns of use, and everyday life, drawing on my fieldwork experience. This could be argued to be a part of the findings, however, I do not extend this description to observations and incidents. Rather, this description intends to set the background in which the findings will be placed later on.

## 5.2 Criteria

### 5.2.1 Why Athens

Three case studies were selected in Athens, capital of Greece. I chose Athens, not only because of my positionality, being an insider of the Greek culture but also because Athens has research interest in itself as a case study. Accommodating half the population of Greece, Athens is characterised by diversity, referring both to people and places compared to other, more homogenous Greek cities. At the same time, the density of the city, the limited area of public space and the lack of alternatives nearby (See: 2.2) have motivated the citizens to appropriate the public space consciously and actively, ascribing the existing public spaces with a high importance in the city's everyday life. Finally, in Athens, with the uncontrolled size and the 'complexity of living in a world of strangers' (Karsten, 2003), parents are concerned with safety, making playgrounds a focus for children's activity and their use by other groups questionable. It was thought that this condition would affect people's interactions making underlying perceptions and behaviours more evident. Each playground case study was approached both as a place with its own practices and as part of a wider socio-cultural context (Mitchell & Walsh, 2002).

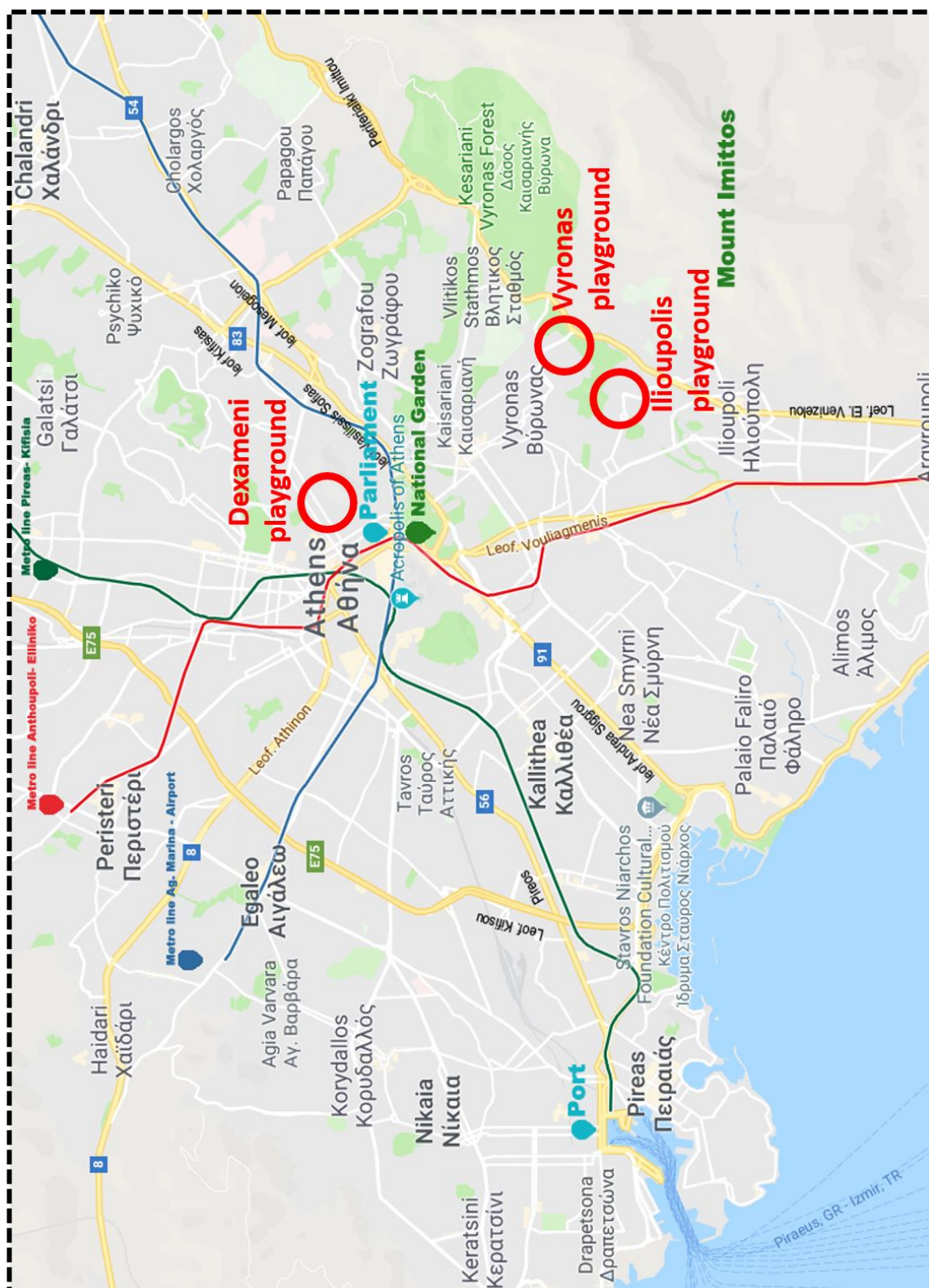


Figure 5-1: Map of Athens and position of the three case studies. (Background source: Google Earth)



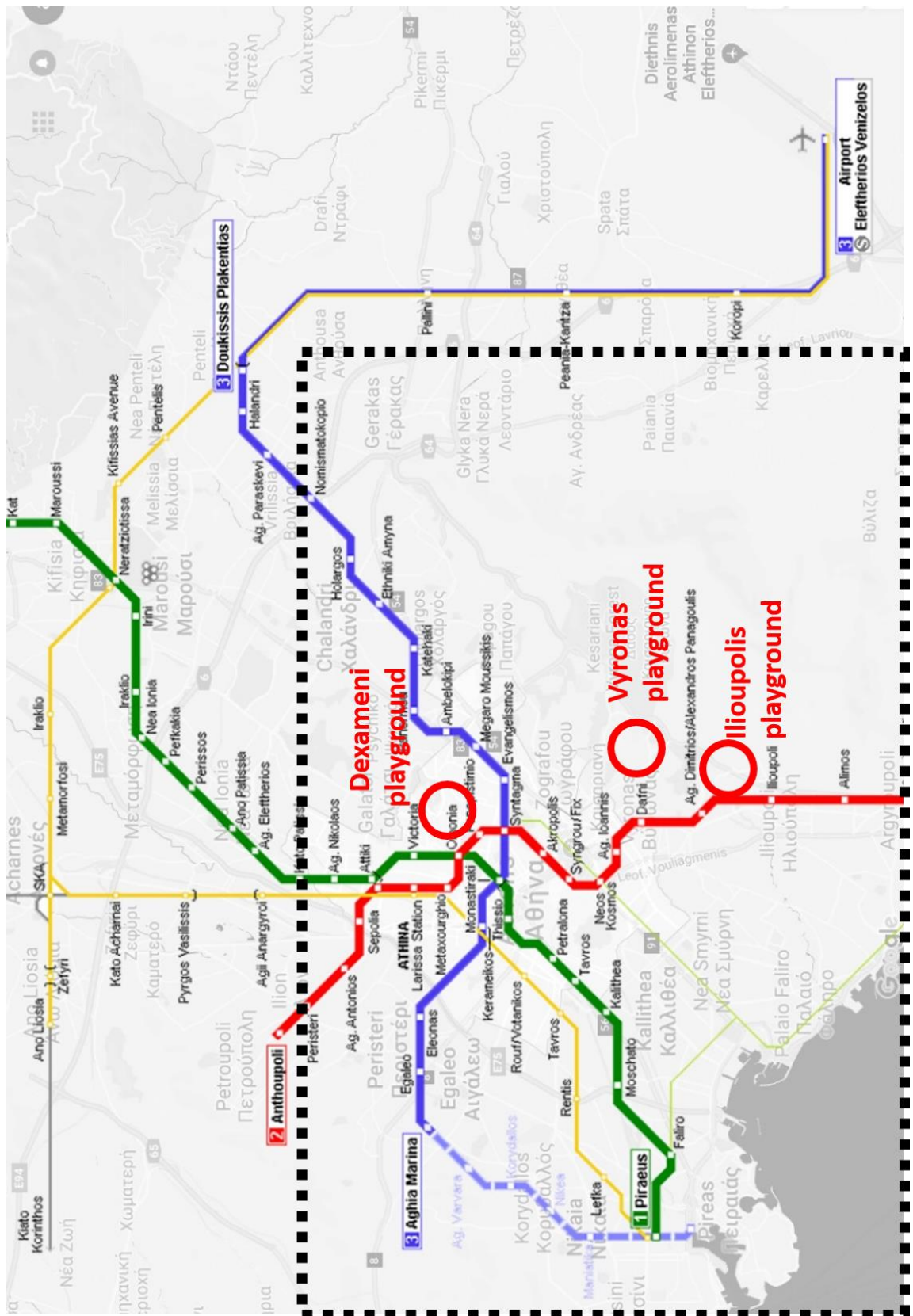


Figure 5-2: Athens metro map. The position of the three case studies is noted in the red circles (Source: [www.ametro.gr](http://www.ametro.gr)).

### 5.2.2 Case Selection Criteria

The selected cases were not extreme, rather they were chosen to describe a common phenomenon: that of people's actions in the Athenian playground and adjacent piazzas. I ascribe to Flyvbjerg's (2001) argument about 'the power of the good example' (p.77):

From both an understanding-oriented and an action-oriented perspective, it is often more important to clarify the deeper causes behind a given problem and its consequences than to describe the symptoms of the problem and how frequently they occur. Random samples emphasizing representativeness will seldom be able to produce this kind of insight; it is more appropriate to select a few cases chosen for their validity (p.78).

The selected cases were paradigmatic cases, representing typical neighbourhood play-space in Athens in terms of key material and spatial characteristics (See below). The cases were located in different districts in the city, each with a different socio-economic identity, characterised as lower, middle and upper-income. The spatial, material and socio-economic variations across the three cases were intended to enrich the data and support the 'thick narrative' required in ethnographic research (Flyvbjerg, 2001, p.78; Carspecken, 1996; Woods 1994 in LeCompte & Schensul, 2010), while still remaining within the realm of the typical Athenian neighbourhood play-space.

It is important to note that in austerity Athens, one cannot make any clear-cut categorizations of municipalities according to their socio-economic status. This is because of both the effect of the 'vertical social differentiation' (Maloutas & Karadimitriou, 2001, 699) described previously (See: 2.2.2) and the fact that economic austerity has minimised the previously extended middle-class altering the socio-economic structure of society (See: 2.2.4). The lower-, middle – and upper-class identities of the three areas are therefore associated with the everyday and historically-based perceptions of the districts, rather than a definitive economic, demographic or job-based categorisation (See also Appendix B).

All case studies comprised a public access piazza and a playground and were chosen in contrast to piazzas that did not include a playground or playgrounds that were not surrounded by public space. This abided by the 'standardized playground' model (Solomon, 2005; Doll & Brehm, 2010). They included an outdoor, public, fenced, clearly defined space. They were purposefully built with children in mind and placed within a public piazza. All of them comprised metallic play structures and sitting areas

and two of them were paved with soft material. The size, shape and affordances of the playgrounds and the piazzas, the fences' physical characteristics as well as the piazzas' surroundings and access differ from case to case, paving the way for interesting comparisons (Table 4, Table 5, Table 6 and Table 7).

Table 4: Piazzas' characteristics

LOCATION	LAYOUT	ACCESS	INFRASTRUCTURE	ADJACENT USES
Dexameni	Island-shaped, detached from its surroundings.  Divided in three main areas.	No contact with the street, segregated area.  Staircases  Ramps	4 benches (segregated in the two smaller areas of the piazza).  Fenced flowerbeds  A statue  A library  Cafes' tables segregated from the piazza.  'Empty space'	Café  Open air cinema  Water tank
Vyronas	Elongated shape (path) among two medium traffic streets.  Shape facilitates flow.  Resting areas.	Easy access, crossing the street	1 Circular, cement bench outside the playground.  Rest areas, promenades, water features, green areas.  Small kiosks	Cafes  Shops  Kiosk  Bus stand  Main roads
Ilioupolis	Island-shaped, surrounded by medium to high traffic street.  Divided into two levels: the upper includes the playground and two green areas, while the lower the main piazza space and the rest green areas.	Difficult access, crossing the street	7 benches  Long ledge-sitting area A fountain (not in use)  Green areas  Paths (different materials) Restaurants' tables occupying areas of the piazza  'Empty space'	Cafes  Shops  Kiosk  Bus stand  Main roads

Table 5: Case studies' Identities

LOCATION	SOCIO-ECONOMIC IDENTITY	URBAN DEVELOPMENT	PIAZZA AREA	PLAYGROUND AREA
Dexameni	Higher income	Part of the affluent city centre	2689m2	700m2
Vyronas	Lower/working income	Refugees' settlements	2282m2	200m2
Ilioupolis	Middle income	Garden-city	4083m2	540m2

Table 6: The playgrounds' characteristics

LOCATION	PLAY – STRUCTURES	PAVING MATERIAL	INFRASTRUCTURE
Dexameni	1 Bridge-monkey ropes-slide structure 1 Baby slide 2 Baby swings 1 See-saw 1 Circular ropes' structure	Soil and gravel	6 Benches placed peripherally by the fence Trees Lamps Bin
Vyronas	1 Bridge-slide structure	Soft material	4 Benches randomly placed Tree Lamps Bin Water fountain
Ilioupolis	1 Bridge-monkey ropes-slide structure 1 Roundabout 1 See-saw 2 Baby swings 2 Swings 1 Baby slide 1 Spring swing 1 Rope structure	Soil Soft paving material around the structures	4 Benches placed peripherally by the fence and next to the doors Lamps Bin

Table 7: Bounday characteristics

LOCATION	FENCE	DOORS
Dexameni	High, metallic and porous consisting of vertical bars.  Part of it was entangled with bushes.	2 (one in use)  No lock
Vyronas	Metallic, short and porous with a wide cement ledge.  Part of it was facing the street.	1  lock
Ilioupolis	Short, made of wood and dense planking.	2 (both in use)  No lock

## 5.3 Description of the Cases

### 5.3.1 Case 1 – Dexameni (The Upper – Income Case Study)

Dexameni is part of Kolonaki, a district of central Athens. Kolonaki was, and is still although to a lesser extent, considered a quite affluent part of Athens' city centre, accommodating mainly middle and upper income residents (Kaisari, 2005; Arapoglou & Maloutas, 2011). Before the financial crisis the average income of its residents was 40% higher than the national per capita income (Kaisari, 2005). The mix of land use and the abundance of shops and attractions catering for relatively affluent citizens (cafes, jewellery stores and galleries) are still this area's trademarks today (Figure 5-3, Figure 5-4, Figure 5-5).

Nowadays Kolonaki's population is 75.056, of whom 54.668 are Greek and 20.388 other nationalities, while the population density is 11.06 people/ 0.1 ha (ELSTAT, 2011). The area is full of shops and cafes, a great number of which, however, has closed due to the current crisis. At the same time, economic recession induced a decrease in the price of rents in the area, resulting in some more "common" shops such as bakeries and grocery stores reappear giving the neighbourhood a welcoming and lively character (Figure 5-6).

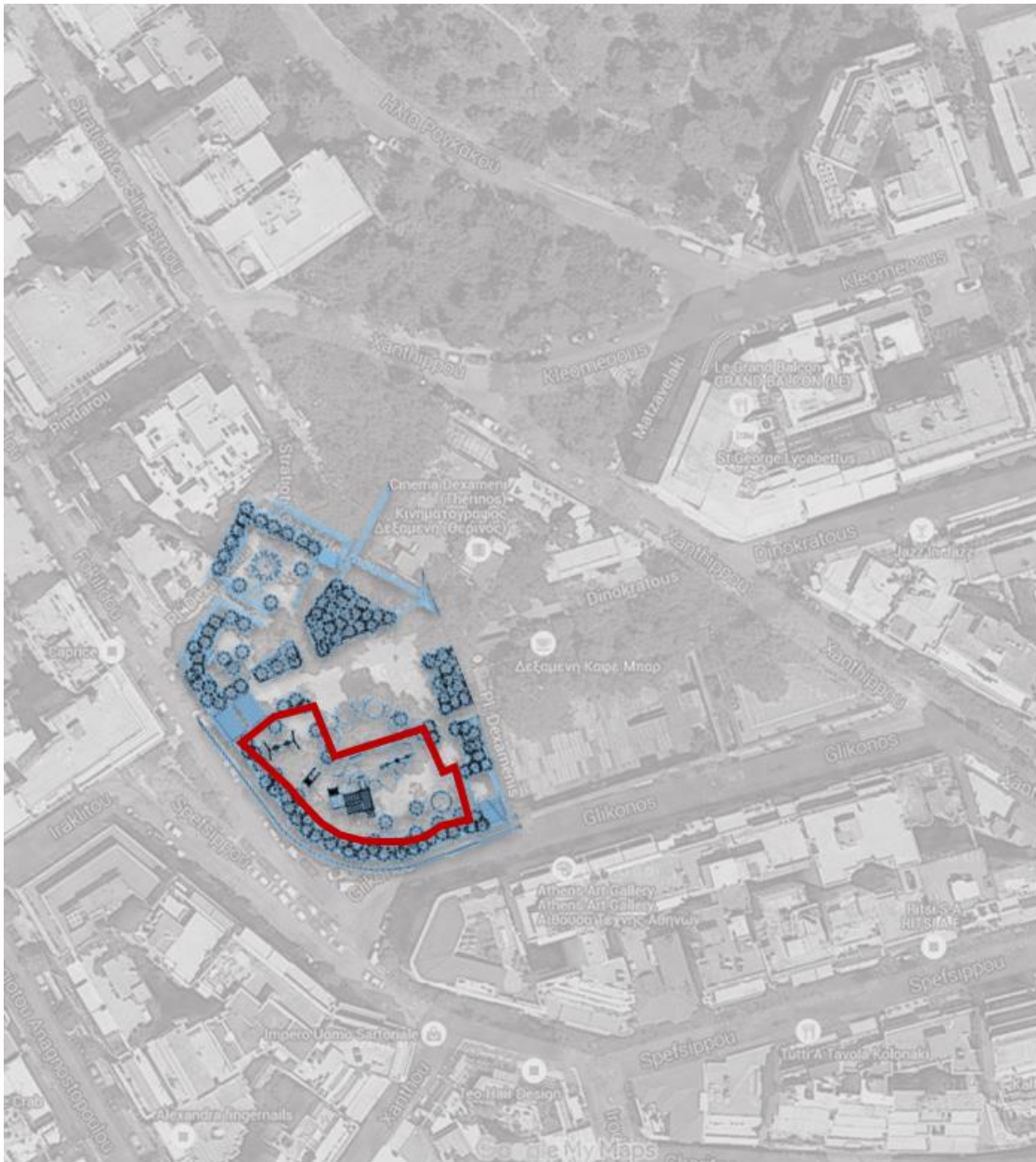


Figure 5-3: Dexameni piazza (blue) and playground (red)





Figure 5-4: Dexameni piazza (source: Google maps)

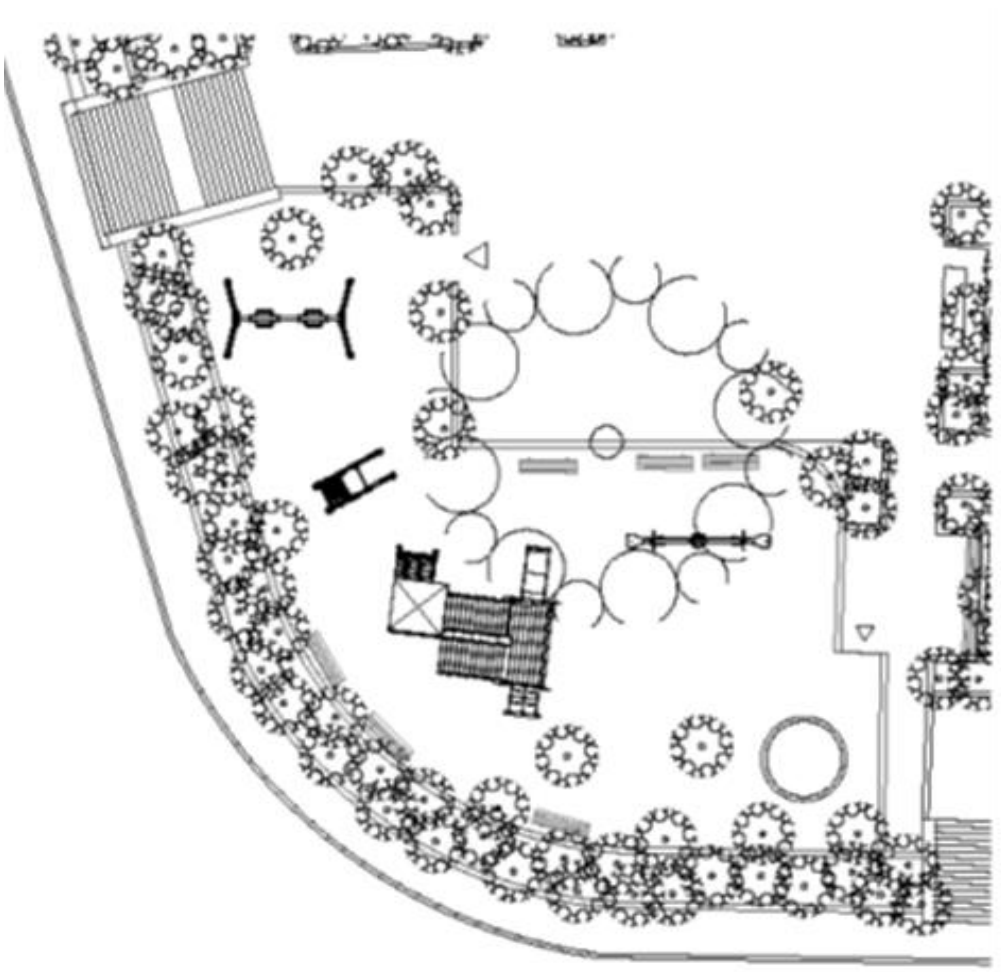


Figure 5-5: Dexameni playground – plan

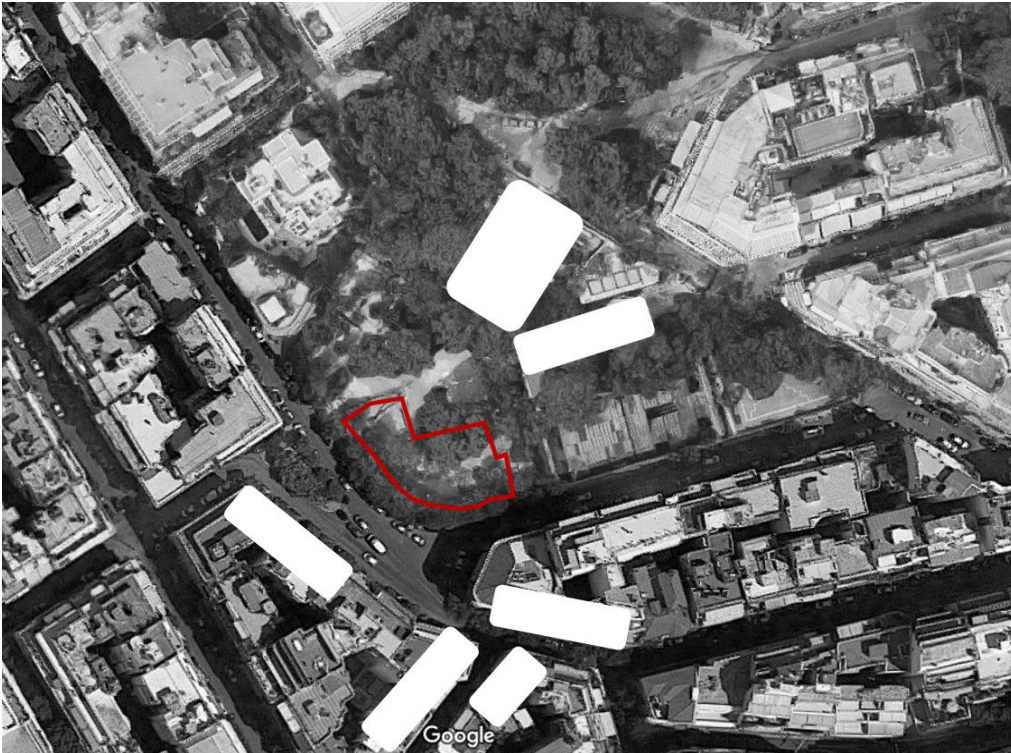


Figure 5-6: Dexameni piazza – surrounding commercial/ leisure uses

Dexameni was a quite lively piazza, a “kindergarten, bar, nursing home”, as Papadiamantis, one of the greatest authors of Greek literature, had characterised it. Its central position, famous café and open air cinema made it a destination for people living further away. With no connection to the street, access was possible from its upper part at the same level as the street and through a variety of staircases and ramps in its lower part (Figure 5-7)

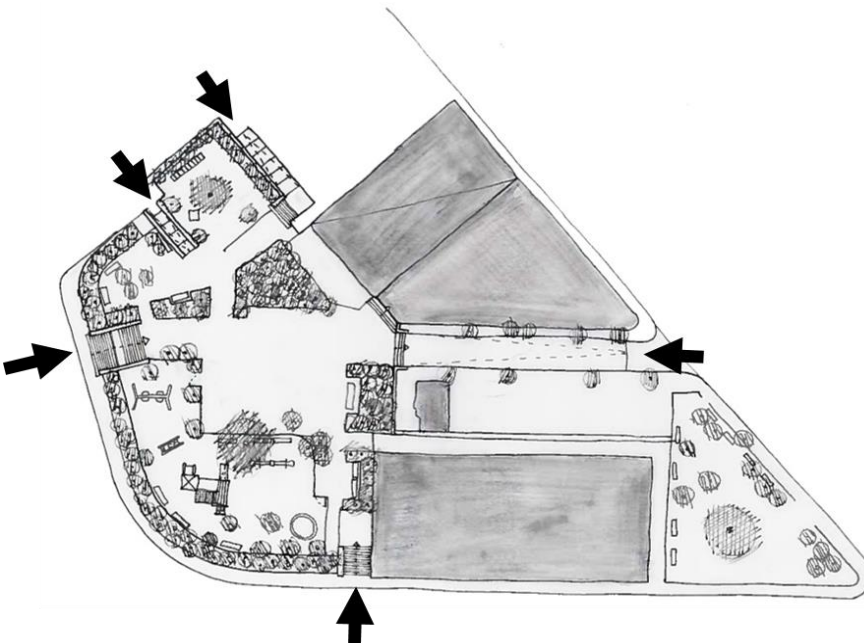


Figure 5-7: Dexameni piazza – access



This made it safer from car traffic, in comparison to the other two case studies but also segregated it from the surrounding commercial uses limiting the number of visitors. The piazza itself was flat and paved. Fenced flowerbeds and greenery divided the piazza into three main areas: the empty area in front of the playground and the two quiet areas including benches and a small swapping-library (Figure 5-8, Figure 5-9). The piazza itself did not contain any benches in the main empty area.



Figure 5-8: Dexameni piazza – areas

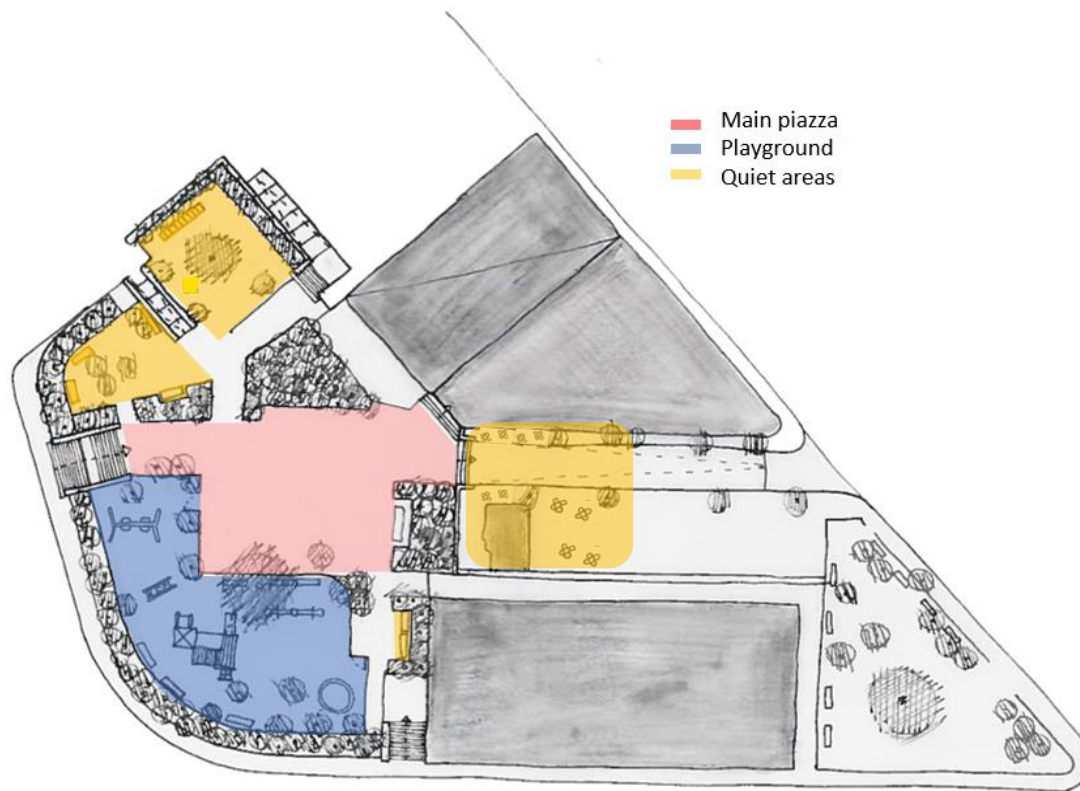


Figure 5-9: Dexameni piazza – Playground and quiet areas

Dexameni was a rather lively piazza, especially during the summer, as the cinema and the café attracted a variety of users. The café was acting as a quiet zone in the piazza, a sitting-socialising area compensating for the lack of benches, while attracting visitors:

*'I like the area, the café. It is nice. Here the café attracts even people without children. On other playgrounds with cafes, you will not find people without children. During the weekends people from other areas would bring their children here to play' (mother, Dexameni).*

The fact that there were not other playgrounds in a fair walking distance (Figure 5-10) made the playground a prominent place of the areas' play life.



*Figure 5-10: Dexameni piazza – Nearby play spaces*



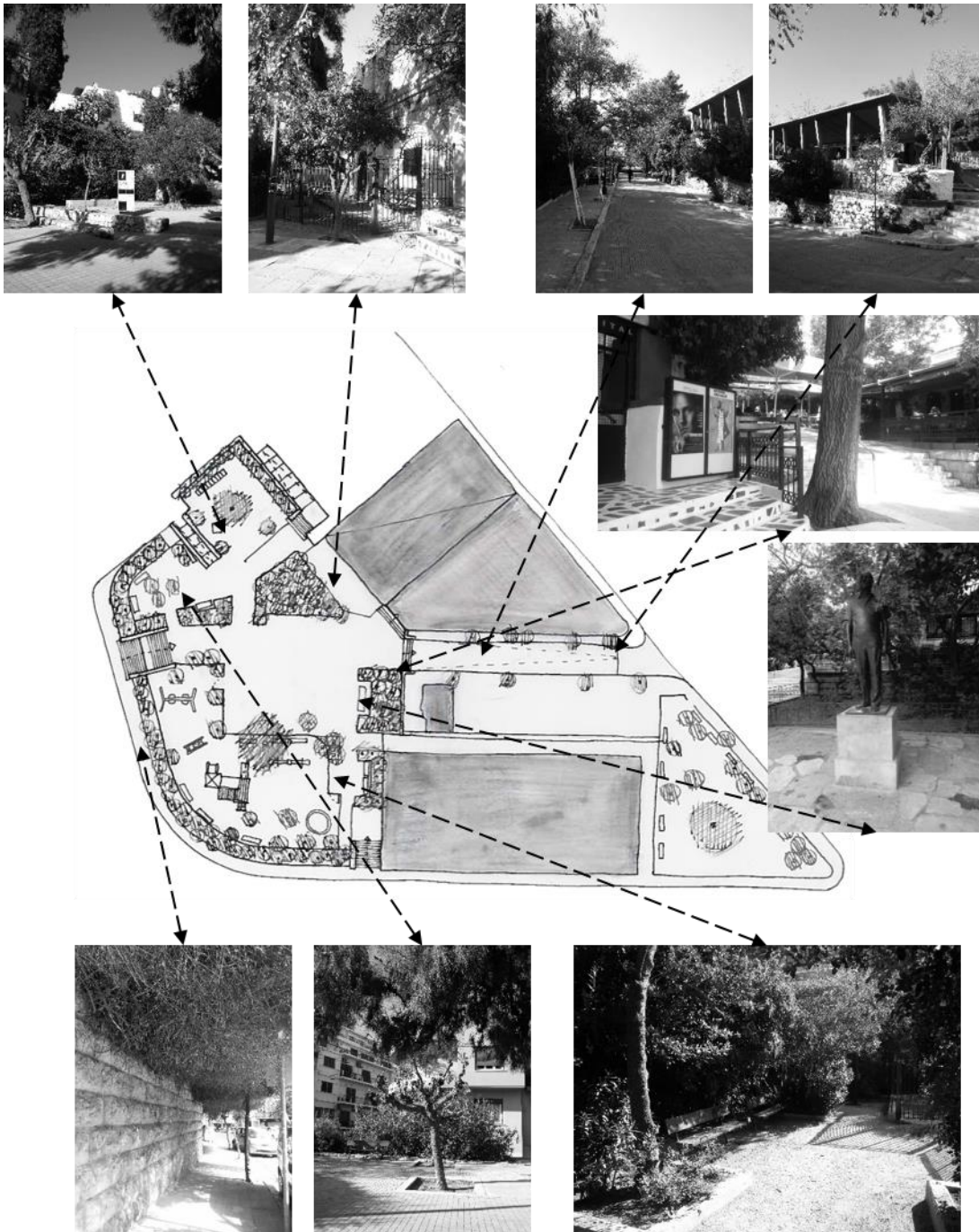


Figure 5-11: Dexameni piazza – views

The playground consisted of a variety of play-structures<sup>27</sup> in a, generally, good condition and was paved with soil and gravel (Figure 5-12, Figure 5-13, Figure 5-14). Its fence was high, metallic and porous consisting of vertical bars, while containing two doors – one of which was permanently closed (Figure 5-15). Trees, lamps and bins were also dispersed in the space. The side of the playground facing the outer part of the square was full of bushes and plants blocking both the noise and the views towards the road. Some dispersed benches, placed under the trees' canopy, constituted the guardians' sitting areas.

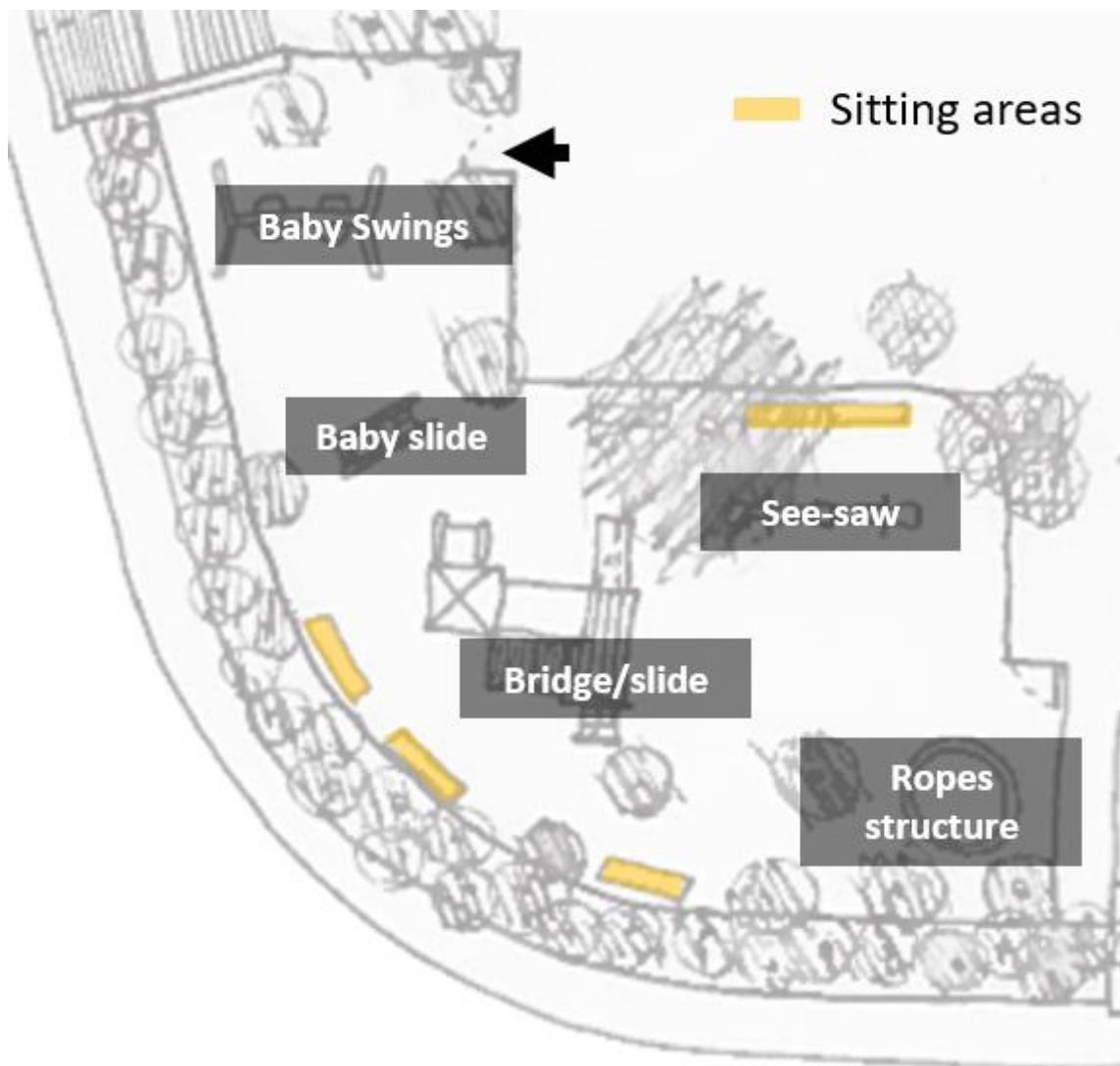


Figure 5-12: Dexameni playground – equipment

<sup>27</sup> Baby swings, a baby slide, a complex bridge-slide-monkey bars structure, a ropes structure and a see-saw.



*Figure 5-13: View of Dexameni playground from the piazza*



*Figure 5-14: Dexameni playground*



*Figure 5-15: Dexameni playground's fence*

The main users observed in Dexameni case were children and their guardians, these including parents, grandparents and nannies. Other people using the piazza were teenagers, old people and people walking dogs. This was the only case I observed nannies, tourists or people from other neighbourhoods. People visiting the coffee shop and the cinema were observed as well. However, the number of people staying in the piazza was limited as the sitting areas were just a few, segregated and often occupied by children. The majority of people stayed in the coffee shop (See: Table 8).

### **5.3.2 Case 2 – Vyronas (The Lower – Income Case Study)**

The Municipality of Vyronas is part of north-eastern Athens. Vyronas was one of the settlements planned and built after the Asia Minor disaster, on the slopes of Mount Hymettus in order to house some of the Greek refugees that arrived from Asia Minor in 1922 (Kardamitsi-Adami, 2015; Karidis, 2006; Xaralampidis, 2011). According to Kardamitsi-Adami (2015) its plan was based on the notions of social housing and coherent expansion of the city. A central design was employed, which included infrastructure such as an elementary school, kindergarten and a central indoor market.

Nowadays Vyronas is an area with great density near the city centre accommodating mostly lower – and middle-income residents. Vyrona's population is 62.308 in total, of whom 55.814 are registered Greek citizens and 5.494 from other countries, while the area's population density is 6,69 people per 0,1 ha (ELSTAT, 2011). One of its main problems is the lack of public and green spaces. However, it is placed near Mount Imittos and has direct and easy access to the mountain's green



areas. This alleviates the disadvantages created by the high density and the lack of green areas and leisure infrastructure within the cityscape. During the summer months Vyronas turns to a destination place for people from other areas as its two open-air theatres accommodate plays and other events.



*Figure 5-16: Vyronas piazza*  
(Source Google maps)





Figure 5-17: Vyronas piazza and playground (red)

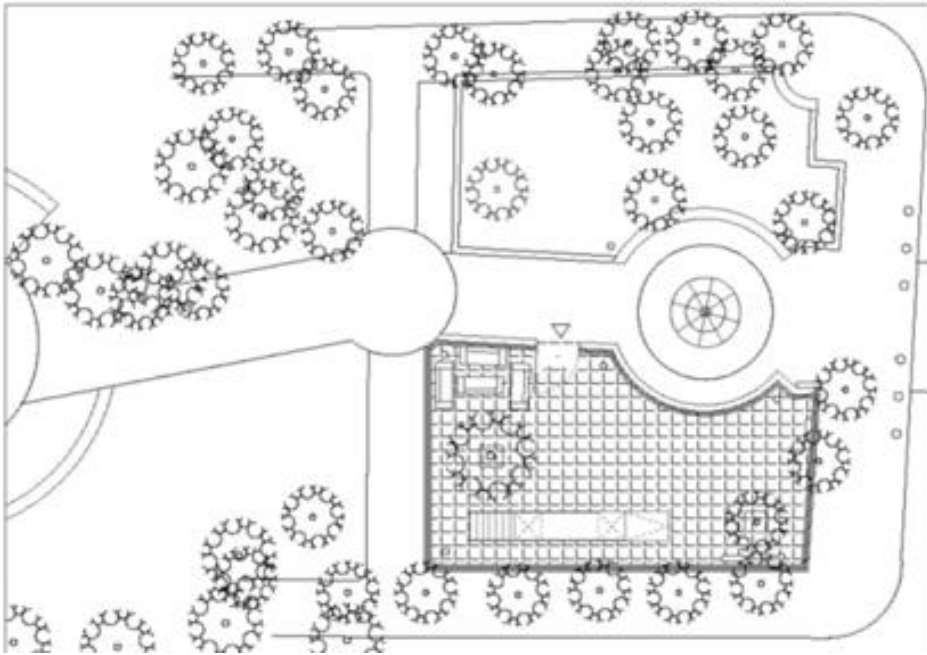


Figure 5-18: Vyronas playground – plan

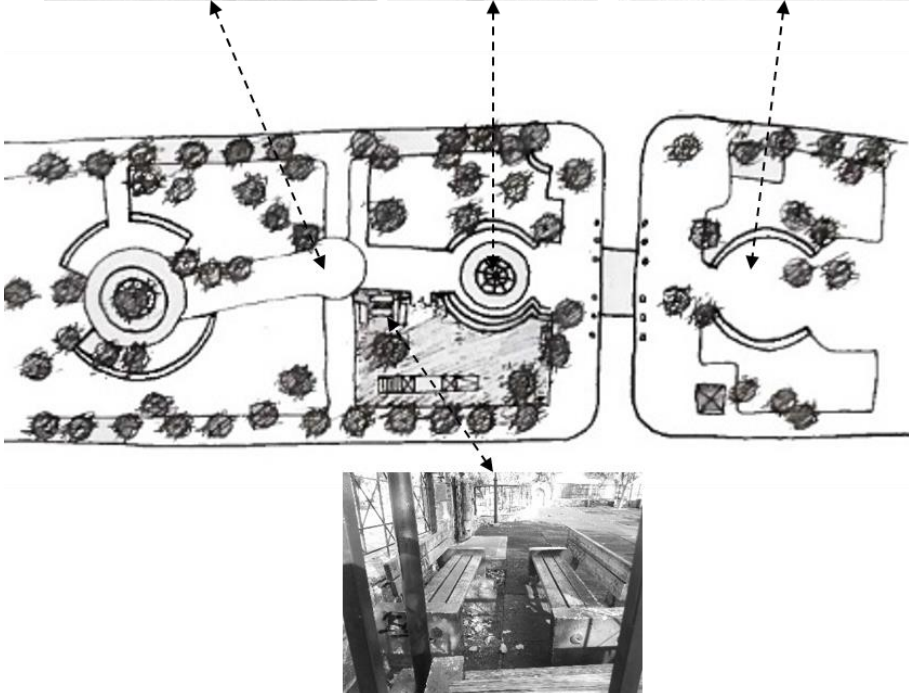


Figure 5-19: Vyronas piazza – views

The Karaoli and Dimitriou Park, where my case study was located, was completely reconstructed as part of the 'Third Community Support Framework' (measure 2.3 of ROP Attica) in 2006. Already in 1984's and 1986's General urban plan, there was the proposal to place on the Karaoli and Dimitriou Street islet a variety of infrastructure (Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change, 1985). Nowadays, the park is 'a unique multiplex where guardians, children, adolescents, the elderly and people with disabilities can move around safely' (Byron's municipality web page). The piazza's elongated shape and flat pavement attracted a variety of people strolling up and down (Figure 5-17, Figure 5-16, Figure 5-18, Figure 5-19). Rest areas, promenades, water features, greenery, and small kiosks created a path with resting points and different areas for socialising and resting (Figure 5-20, Figure 5-21, Figure 5-22).



*Figure 5-20: Vyronas' piazza – path and resting areas*



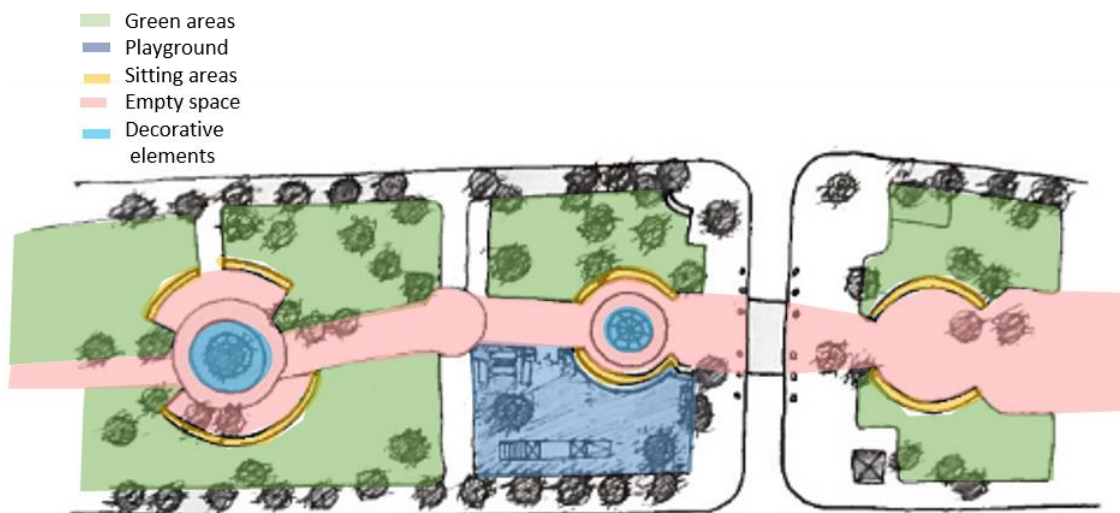


Figure 5-21: Vyronas piazza – areas

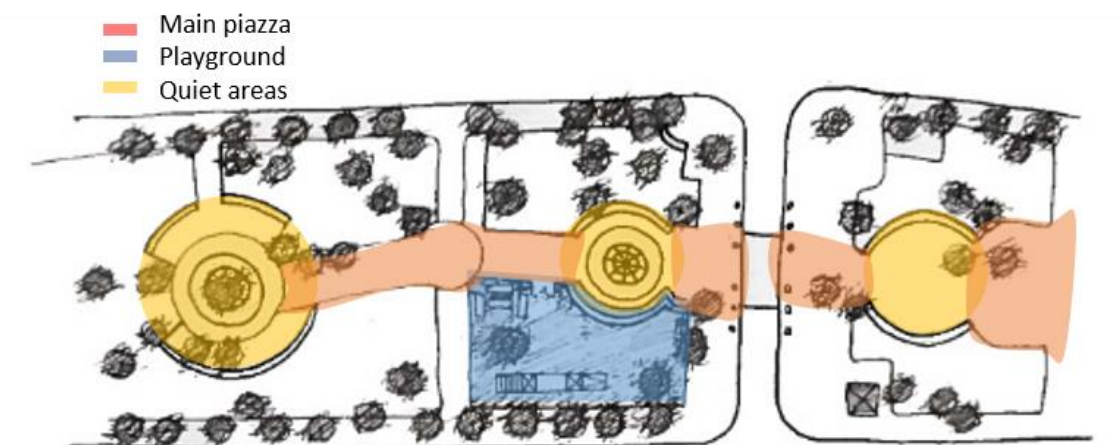


Figure 5-22: Vyronas piazza – playground and quiet areas

In Vyronas, shops, and other uses made the surrounding area lively without, however, interacting with the playground users (Figure 5-23).



*Figure 5-23: Vyronas piazza – surrounding commercial/ leisure uses*

Guardians did not consider the kiosk and cafes as ancillary spaces. As the majority of families lived nearby, they visited their houses for any immediate needs, while other users, most often only passing by, did not need any special facilities. However, people were observed with beverages meeting friends in the piazza's sitting areas or resting, bags all around, as they returned from the shops. Concerning surrounding uses, it is interesting to note that although there was a bigger, newly built playground nearby, many people still chose the small one under study (Figure 5-24). This was because it was closer to their homes, while other guardians, living further away used it for a quick play-stop<sup>28</sup>.



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<sup>28</sup> Rather than a play destination.

*Figure 5-24: Vyronas – Nearby play spaces*

The playground, fully paved with soft material, included only one play-structure, a slide with a bridge, and randomly placed benches for guardians (Figure 5-26, Figure 5-26). For the three years this research was taking place these were not moved.



*Figure 5-25: Vyronas playground*



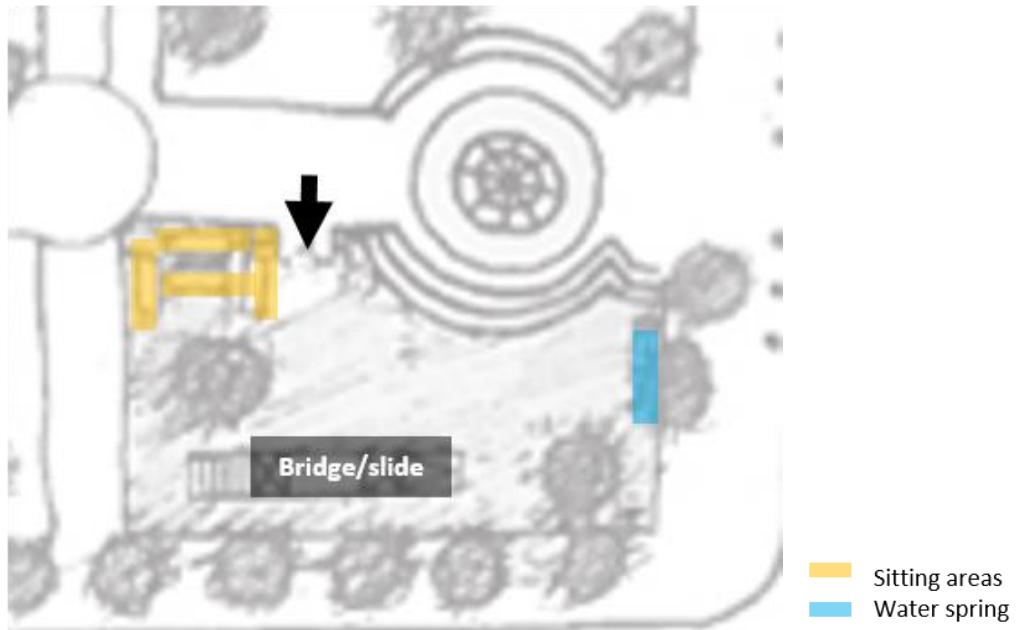


Figure 5-26: Vyronas playground – equipment

The fence was metallic, short and porous with a wide cement ledge that allowed sitting and playing (Figure 5-27). The playground had only one door that locked with a bolt placed in its upper part. Other infrastructure in the space was a water fountain, trees, bins and lamps. The playground faced the street on one side, while its door was placed on the other facing the sitting area outside.



Figure 5-27: Vyronas playground – fence

The main groups observed in Vyronas case were children and guardians (See: Table 8). Guardians in this case included parents, grandparents or other relatives as well as older siblings; something that was not the case in the other cases. Other people in the piazza were mainly passers-by, older people sitting in and people walking dogs. An interesting finding in relation to Albanian and Greek regulars became apparent through observations. Albanians sat and socialized outside the playground, while Greek guardians stayed inside, in the sitting area. Although they knew each other they chose to sit in different areas and did not generally interact with (Figure 5-28).

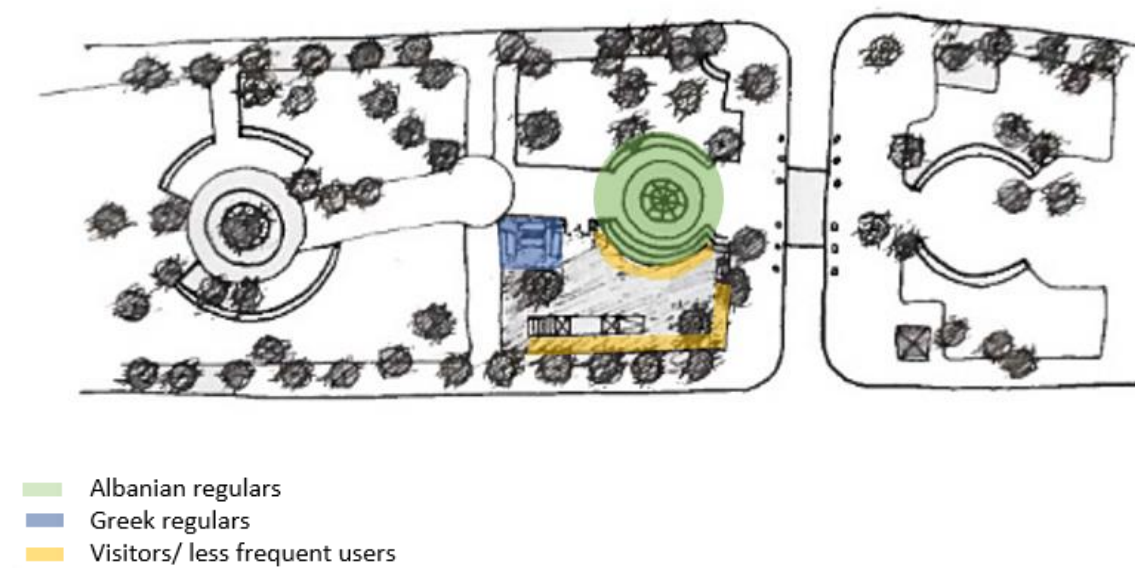


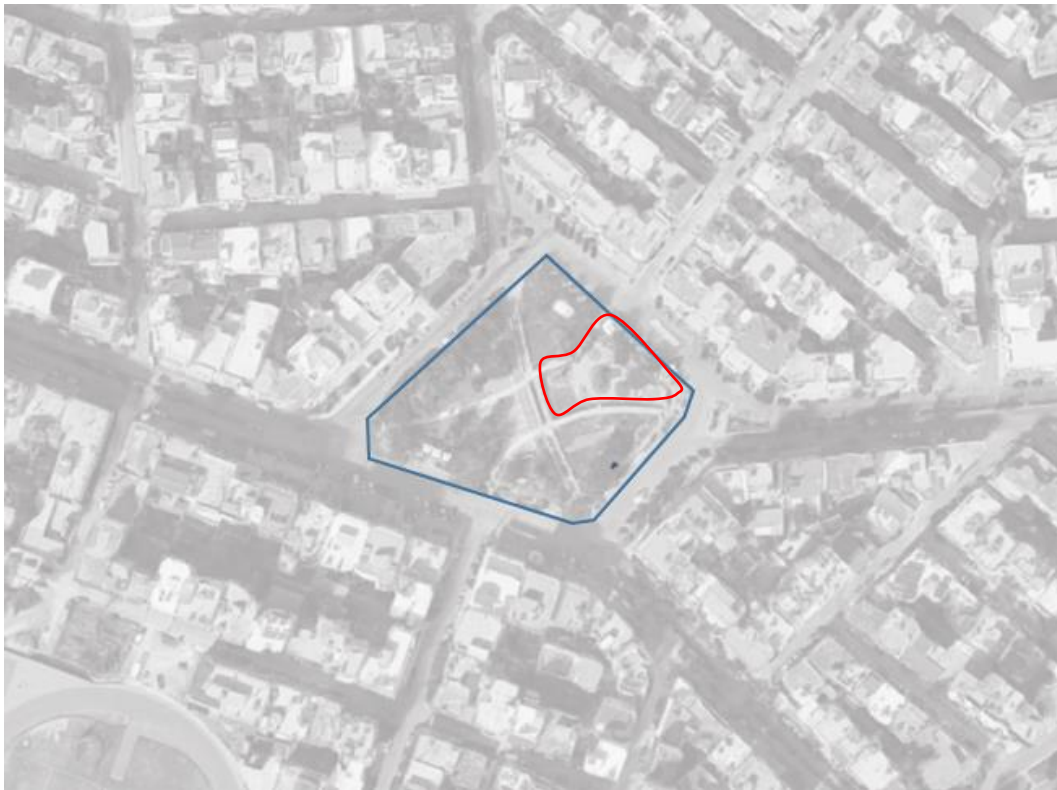
Figure 5-28: The Vyronas playground community

### 5.3.3 Case 3 – Ilioupolis (The Middle – Income Case Study)

Ilioupolis is one example of the privately-built settlements, 'garden cities', in the Athenian public space (Filipidis, 1984; Karidis, 2006; Totsikas, 2005). Although the initial 1925 plan was to retain the garden cities' characteristics and infrastructure, the 1928 plan did not take into consideration any infrastructure except from a primary school and a church. This lack of basic infrastructure was the main reason why the area did not acquire the character of an upper – income suburb. Today, Ilioupolis consists of less dense, greener areas alongside dense, arbitrarily built areas that lack common infrastructure. The playground was located in the area of Ag. Marina, a 1931 extension of the initial plan (Totsikas, 2005, p.56) developed to be today Ilioupolis' most degraded and dense area.



Today Ilioupolis has an upper – middle income identity, accommodating 78.153 residents, in an area of 12.72 km<sup>2</sup> (ELSTAT, 2011) with great population density [6.200 residents/km<sup>2</sup> (ELSTAT, 2011)] and a lack of basic infrastructure. Its proximity to the mountain, although offering an alternative to the lack of parks and green spaces, generates very steep areas in some cases even inaccessible on foot. Ag. Marina is one of these areas. Although the playground was placed on a flat spot, it was considered that the lack of free parking spaces and the uphill terrain nearby affected children's mobility and possibly use of the playground.



*Figure 5-29: Ilioupolis piazza (Blue) and playground (blue)*

The piazza was reconstructed in 2012 changing the piazza's and playground's layout completely. It comprised two levels: one including the playground space and two green areas and the other the main piazza's sitting area, empty space and remaining green areas, also featuring a fountain, no longer in use, and a long ledge that acted as a second sitting area (Figure 5-30, Figure 5-31, Figure 5-32, Figure 5-33, Figure 5-34). Different paths were indicated with different materials enriching the piazza's design.

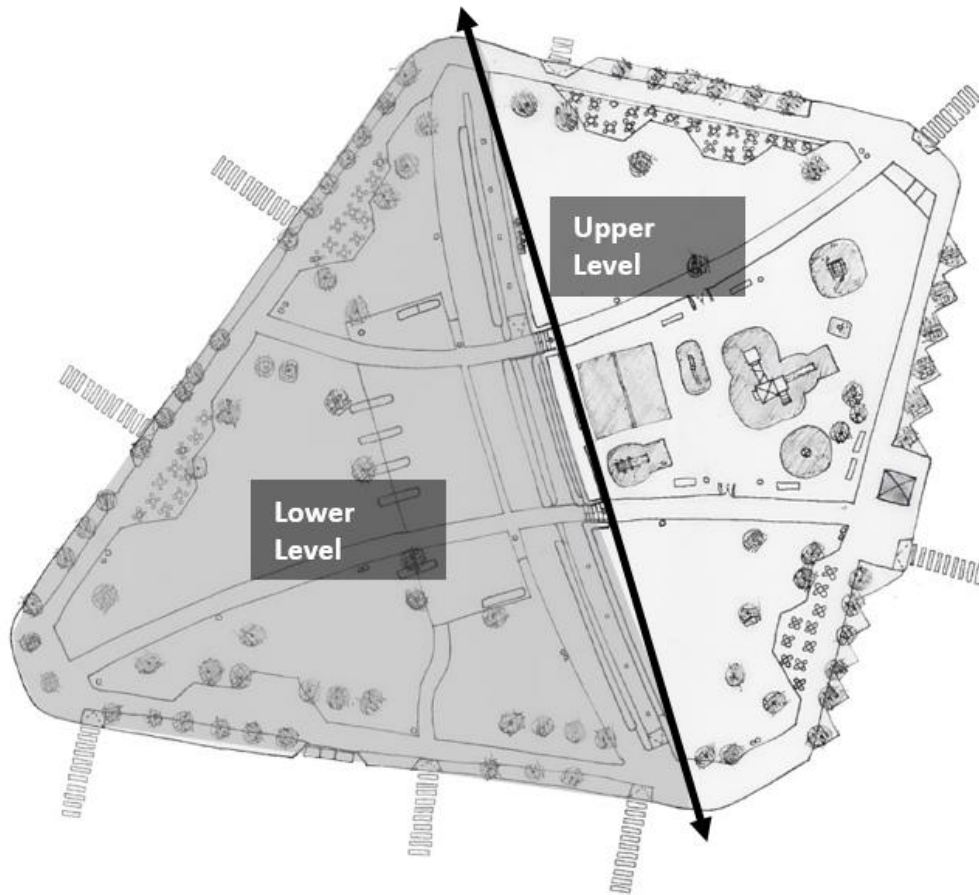


Figure 5-30: Ilioupolis piazza's two levels



- Green area
- Playground
- Path
- Café/ Restaurants
- Sitting areas
- Peripheral path
- Main piazza
- Fountain
- Fountain lane
- Kiosk

*Figure 5-31: Ilioupolis piazza – areas*



Figure 5-32: Ilioupolis piazza – playground and quiet areas



Figure 5-33: Descriptive Ilioupolis piazza's terminology as used in the text



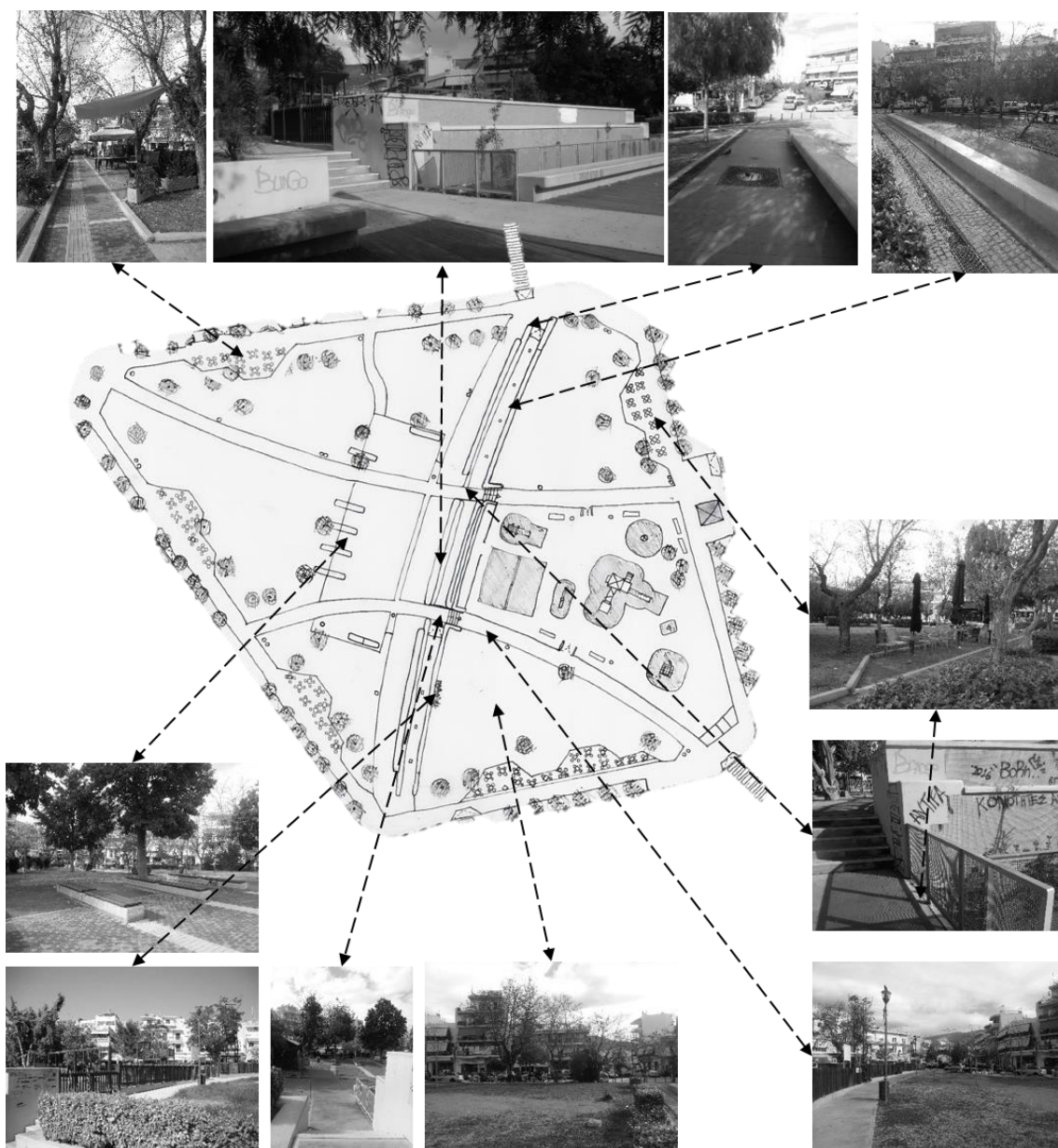
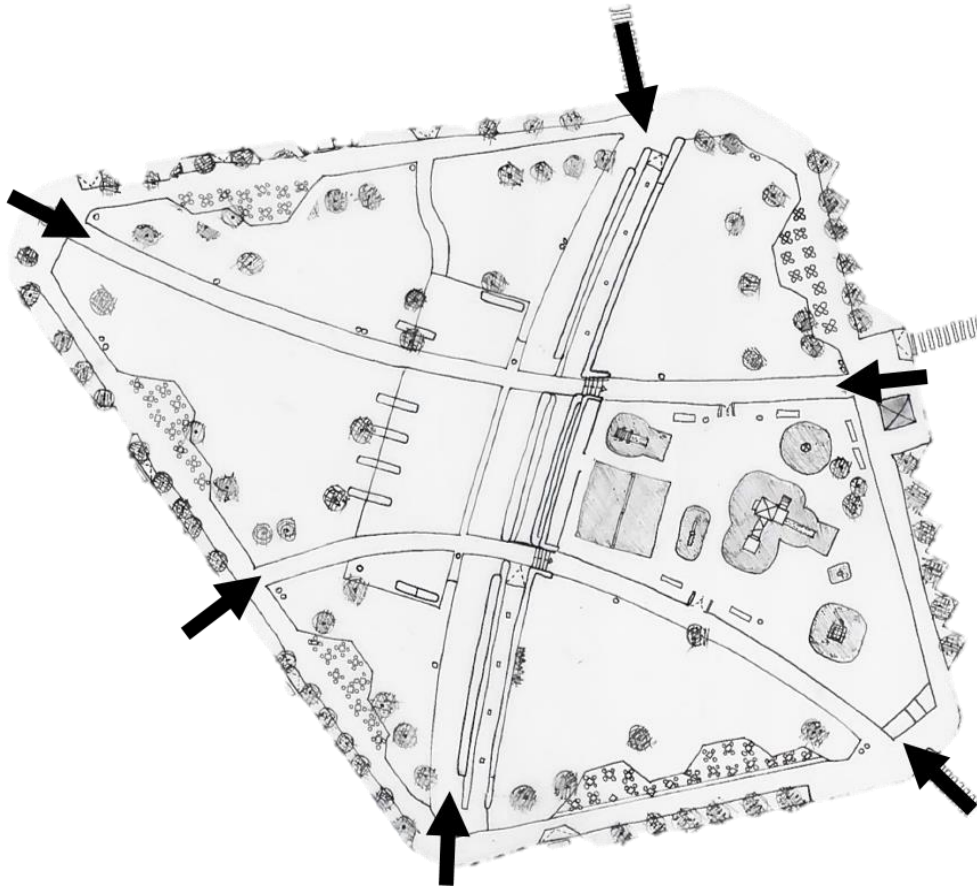


Figure 5-34: Ilioupolis piazza – views

The piazza did not have a specific entrance or a main flow of incoming movement. It attracted a variety of people of different ages although it was surrounded by a medium volume traffic street. Easy, unobstructed access was often mentioned by guardians as of major importance for families visiting the playground.



*Figure 5-35: Ilioupolis piazza access*

The piazza was surrounded by a very lively area of shops, kiosks, restaurants, cafes and other uses that occupied some of its space with chairs and tables (Figure 5-36).



Figure 5-36: Ilioupolis piazza – surrounding commercial/ leisure uses

When the weather was good people stayed in the square to eat or drink coffee, while the children played.

*'It is because there are the cafes... and many people come. Because you say to yourself: I will drink coffee and combine it with play.'* (Mother, Ilioupolis).

The guardians mentioned the piazzas' kiosk as an ancillary space very frequently in the interviews. The surrounding uses often transformed the piazza into a passage, while many people mentioned that they were waiting for friends or family shopping in the surrounding shops.

*'They go to the super-market and then they bring their children to play, while it is day people will come. I do the same'* (Grandmother, Ilioupolis).



At the same time, the lack of play spaces in the extended area made the playground under study the centre of the play activity in the area



Figure 5-37: Ilioupolis – nearby play spaces

The playground comprised relatively new play equipment<sup>29</sup> and was paved with soft material around each structure. The rest of the area was covered with soil (Figure 5-38, Figure 5-39).



Figure 5-38: Ilioupolis playground

<sup>29</sup> Baby and children swings, a baby slide, a see-saw, a complex bridge-slide-monkey bars structure, a roundabout, a rope structure and a baby spring swing.



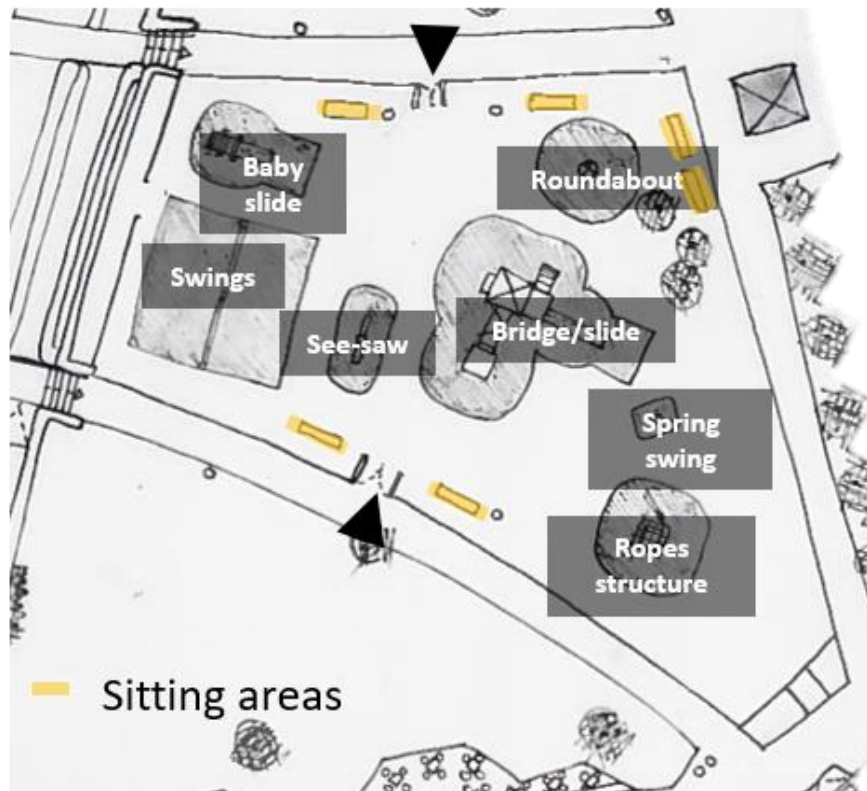


Figure 5-39: Ilioupolis playground – equipment

Its fence was short, made of wood, transparent and shorter than the other cases allowing the guardians sitting on the cafe's tables nearby to supervise children (Figure 5-40). Benches were scattered around in the space for guardians to sit on. The playground had two functional gates that did not lock.



Figure 5-40: Ilioupolis playground – fence

People observed in Ilioupolis were children and guardians as well as older people relaxing in the piazza. Guardians were mainly parents and grandparents or other relatives. Surprisingly, passers-by were one of the main groups of users. Other people observed included teenagers and a group of religious preachers. No people walking dogs were observed. The piazza's layout, comprising a main area surrounded by benches, concentrated everyone in the same area. Guardians used to sit on the main ledge, the benches, and the parts of the right and left ledges that were closer to the main ledge in order to supervise the centre of the piazza, while other people sat on the benches.

## **5.4 General Trends and Patterns of Use – A Description of the Cases' Everyday Context**

Approaching the case studies as a whole, ascribing to Flyvbjerg's argument: 'in the study of human affairs, there exists only context-dependent knowledge' (p.71), in what follows I describe the cases' patterns of use, and everyday life as emerged from my fieldwork. At this point, I also explore the ways the socio-financial crisis emerged and informed the findings, acting mainly as an omnipresent context, its effects evident through my fieldwork.

### **5.4.1 Crisis**

*'We are a nation of depressed, broken people trying to comfort each other'*  
(Field-notes).

The effects of the socio-economic crisis as explored in Chapter 2 (See: Chapter 2) emerged both through observations and interviews (as described in Chapter 4). The Crisis was omnipresent in this research from the homeless people searching in the garbage bins surrounding the piazzas to the way every conversation was revolving around unemployment, taxes and immigrants. Guardian's comments on how their everyday life has changed with the austerity dominated our discussions. The majority of discussions included a part where I was explaining what am I doing with my life, why I left Greece and people encouraging me to stay abroad to avoid unemployment. I found myself building rapport only by answering questions regarding my scholarship and what will I do when I finish my PhD.

The last years, local playgrounds re-emerged as the main spaces for children's play and socialising, as spaces where the neighbours met and relationships

strengthened. Guardians often commented on the ways their everyday life and spare time were structured around the public space and children's play. The crisis restricted family's choices of going out, making the free, public space an alluring destination:

*'Usually, in previous years, when people were more affluent, they would go to the commercial playgrounds... Now I see people that used to afford to go to commercial playgrounds going to public playgrounds.'* (Grandmother, Ilioupolis).

The question of what is the playground's Public Value in such a context, how it informs interaction and affects peoples' everyday lives emerged and informed this study.

Participants confirmed my observations of a constant re-appropriation of the public space. Both public space and the playground attracted more people than the previous years on an everyday basis: '

*'The park and playground serve people from the neighbourhood who don't have any money or time to go somewhere else. Many people would take food with them and would eat in the playground. That way they combine a day out with children's play. You wouldn't see that before. Or they have cups with coffee with them. You wouldn't see that before the crisis as well. They would go to cafes or commercial playgrounds'* (Mother, Vyronas).

At the same time, however, financial difficulties hindered some people from going out completely:

*'And generally, if you go out with the children you will spend money. Even in the piazza, there is the kiosk there [...] If you are going to spend money if you go outside, then you may not go out at all'* (Grandmother, Ilioupolis).

All piazzas researched were rather lively places, concentrating the neighbourhood's social life. People were observed to meet friends, share their problems and hang out:

*'They stay at home worrying... I can't do that. I can't stay home and worry... I need to get out'* (Lady, Vyronas).

It is interesting to note that in Dexameni, the most affluent of the three case studies, the participants did not comment on any changes in the use of public space:

*'Although the crisis has caused some damage to the residents' status, people are still very affluent' (Grandfather, Dexameni).*

The comments revolved around the lack of playground's maintenance rather than families' needs for a free, clean leisure-space:

*'No with the crisis they do not maintain the playgrounds... It is dirty, there is animal poo, and there isn't any guard.' (Grandmother Dexameni).*

### **5.4.2 Patterns of Use**

#### **Piazza's Patterns of Use**

It was interesting to observe, that although the piazzas had different patterns of use – informed by the various groups' timelines – the playground spaces were used in similar ways (Table 8, Table 9). Each case's layout and position in the cityscape, as well its users, affected this. For example, Vyronas case offered a strolling path which older people from the neighbourhood could easily access and spend time on (Figure 5-20 and Figure 5-7), while in Dexameni, access was difficult. At the same time, the playgrounds' similar patterns of use can be explained by the similar ways children's lives and timetables were structured in Greece, resulting in them visiting the playgrounds on similar hours of the day.

The three cases were observed to have different patterns concerning the use of the piazzas. In Vyronas, the piazza was lively in the mornings. In all its different areas people sat to read newspapers, chat, relax etc. During the evenings, however, the piazza cooled down and the playground became its most lively spot:

*'It is nice that there are playgrounds in the square, in different areas in order for the children to play' (man, Vyronas).*

Vyronas' playground, although small was often crowded; people strolling in the elongated piazza often stopped in order to rest in the benches and let the children play.

By contrast, in Ilioupolis, people visited the piazza mainly in the evenings, meeting friends and socializing. This resulted in the co-existence of a variety of ages. In the mornings, I observed mainly older people sitting in the benches or people with shopping bags that they had just finished their chores:

*'At this time, especially during the weekdays it is quiet but in the evenings, when the sun sets and you may sit here more comfortably, it is too crowded... too noisy...But I like the playground here. It would be really deserted otherwise. It is better that way' (Man, Dexameni).*

Similarly, Dexameni was almost empty in the mornings, only nannies with toddlers used the playground and few people were sitting in the café. Tourists with maps were observed at that time. In the evenings, it turned into a lively place as the café, the piazza and the playground were filling.

At the weekends, however, I observed the same mode in all three case studies: people used both the piazzas and the playgrounds in the morning rather than the evening. The cafes were full as people visited the piazzas to meet friends and hang out on their day off. The regulars still met in the evenings and, in contrast with the weekdays, they stayed longer, even after dark. Teenagers were observed more during the weekends as well as they had more free time away from school responsibilities.

Table 8: People observed in the field [data taken from observations and interviews with the participants.  
For the exact ages in the age groups please see: 4.4 Methods ]

Location	People observed in the piazza	People observed in the playground	Accompanied Children's number of visits to the playground (frequency per week)	Accompanied Children's duration of visit (range in total hours)	Playground's peak use (time of day)	Piazza's peak use (time of day)
Dexameni	Café users  Adults walking dogs  Adults living nearby  Teenagers  Children  Adults accompanying children  Tourists	Guardians  Teenagers  Children	1-3	1-5	Evening	Evening
Vyronas	Teenagers  Old people  Children  Adults accompanying children  Passers-by  Adults walking dogs  Adults living nearby –  Greek/ Albanian Group	Guardians  Children  Old ladies  Teenagers	8	3-4	Evening	Morning
Ilioupolis	Café users  Old people  Adults living nearby  Children  Adults accompanying children  Passers-by  Teenagers  Other	Guardians  Children	1-3	1-3	Afternoon- Evening	Evening

Table 9: People in the Piazza

LOCATION	TIME OF DAY	WEEKDAYS	WEEKENDS
Dexameni	<b>Morning</b>	Nannies Toddlers Tourists Café users	Café users Adults walking dogs Neighbours Teenagers Children Adults accompanying children
	<b>Afternoon</b>	Tourists Café users	Tourists Café users
	<b>Evening</b>	Café users Adults walking dogs Adults living nearby Teenagers Children Adults accompanying children	Café users Adults walking dogs Adults living nearby Teenagers Children Adults accompanying children
Vyronas	<b>Morning</b>	Teenagers Old people Passers-by Adults walking dogs Adults living nearby	Teenagers Old people Passers-by Adults walking dogs Adults living nearby Children Adults accompanying children
	<b>Afternoon</b>	-	-
	<b>Evening</b>	Children Adults accompanying children	Teenagers Old people Passers-by Adults walking dogs Adults living nearby
Ilioupolis	<b>Morning</b>	Adults accompanying children Toddlers Old people Passers-by Café users	Adults accompanying children Toddlers / children Old people Passers-by Café users Religious preachers
	<b>Afternoon</b>	Passers-by	-
	<b>Evening</b>	Café users Old people Passers-by Teenagers Children Adults accompanying children	Café users Old people Passers-by Teenagers Children Adults accompanying children

### The Playgrounds' Patterns of Use

The playgrounds were observed to have similar patterns of use in all the cases. During weekday mornings, both in school and non-school periods, toddlers were the only users of the playgrounds. In the afternoons, when the temperature rose, the playgrounds were deserted. For an hour between 12.30 and 13.30 guardians with children that had just finished school made a quick stop in the playground. In the evenings, the playgrounds often became too crowded.

By contrast, at the weekends, children of all ages, not just toddlers, were observed in the playgrounds in the morning. In the evenings, both the playground and



piazza were less crowded than the weekdays. Guardians commented on visiting other places at that time. It is interesting to note that in Dexameni, no nannies were observed during the weekends as well.

The weather conditions highly affected the playground's use as people avoided being in the public when it was cold, rainy or too hot. As a result, the playground was not in use during the winter days and during early evenings in the summer. It was at these times that other people were observed in the space.

In Dexameni and Ilioupolis, people mentioned visiting the playground 1 to 3 times per week and staying there from 1 to 3 hours. Vyronas was a quite distinct case as people visited it almost every day and had created a quite strong 'playground community'. People in Vyronas stayed for 3 to 4 hours. It is important to note that in Dexameni and Ilioupolis, people planned their playground visit, whereas in Vyronas the majority of people were either part of its everyday "community" or were just passers by stopping for the children to play. The playground space was experienced as a resting spot in the urban environment. Two large groups were observed in all three cases: the closed "regulars" and the open "one time visitors".

The main reasons for leaving the space was to prepare lunch or rest in the afternoons. Often people mentioned that they got bored and tired:

*'Because we have other things to do. We will not stay all day. One hour is more than enough' (Mother, Ilioupolis).*

The lighting conditions in the space and the surrounding area affected people's behaviors. In Ilioupolis, where the piazza and playground were adequately lit, people stayed after dark, guardians in groups chatting on the benches or in the cafes, while in Dexameni, the inadequate lighting resulted in an early deserted piazza. In Vyronas, the social conditions compensated for the inadequate lighting and people stayed chatting and socializing long after dark.

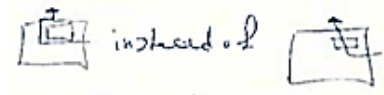
## 5.5 Summary

It becomes evident even from this short introductory description of the cases that although the cases shared various characteristics they differed in many others. Their socio-economic status, their spatial layout, their surrounding uses and access, as well as the networks that had been established in each one, affected their patterns of use. Similarities and differences can be traced not only among the different cases but

also between the ways participants were using the same space. Here I presented the main characteristics of each space and its use, in order to structure a solid understanding as a base for the following chapters' findings.



*'A group of three teenage boys wander around. They do not cross, rather choose the longest path surrounding the playground' (Field-notes, Ilioupolis, 28/04/2017).*





# 6. Heterotopia of Deviance

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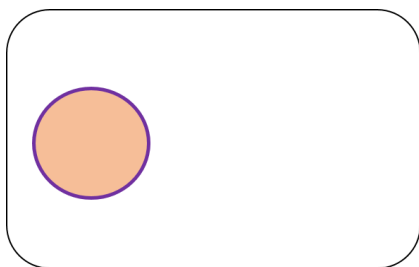


Figure 6-1: *The Heterotopia of Deviance*

## 6.1 Overview

In the next three chapters, I present the findings of this research. I describe my observations, providing examples and quotes from my field-notes and participants' interviews. The concept of heterotopia and its expressions allowed me to explore the transformations of the playground and the piazza areas and focus on both spaces' relational status.

In this chapter I examine the characteristics that structured the playground as a Heterotopia of Deviance: a child-centred space protecting children by institutionalising and controlling play. The norms regulating the playground's function emerge through an exploration of user perceptions and behaviours and the mechanisms that were employed in order to ensure the "normal" order. To illustrate the particular characteristics of behaviour in the playground, I describe the observed differences as compared with behaviour in the piazza. Exploring the ways children existed in the piazzas, I structure a description of the perceptions and fears surrounding children's protection intending to deepen understanding on the ways participants perceived and used the playground space.

## 6.2 Classification of Space

### 6.2.1 Introduction: Normative Interactions with Space

One of the clearest and most strongly evidenced findings of this study was that people's experience when in the public realm was largely informed by an unwritten, shared classification of space (Figure 6-2, Figure 6-3, Figure 6-4) (See: Goffman, 1971). Many have commented on the results of an over-specified public space (Beets and Foley, 2008; Carver et al. 2008; Kylin & Bodelius, 2015; Loukaitou-Sideris, 2003, 131; Wheway, 2015; Valentine, 1996b; Valentine and McKendrick, 1997) for children.

All three piazzas were clearly defined physical spaces, comprising a variety of physical boundaries, infrastructure and materials. These physical characteristics were observed to be associated with particular sets of behaviours and users informing the space's Public Value and constructing a classification of space. Within each observed site, areas were categorized according their intended use and the type of users they were supposed to serve. This classification was observed to be shared between the three cases revealing that broader societal norms regulated people's interaction with space. For example, the usually empty, green areas and the areas with soil were perceived as dirty spaces, bearing only aesthetic and not practical value and as such were avoided, while the paved areas comprising other infrastructure were the ones used for walking and sitting.

In line with the established classification of space, people often self-regulated their behaviours according to each area's expected behaviours. Adults tended to use the space according to its intended use. The established classification of space was also emphasized in the interviews, often referring to the physical boundaries between the different areas:

*'If you were supposed to enter the flowerbed, there wouldn't be bars around it'*  
(Father, Dexameni).

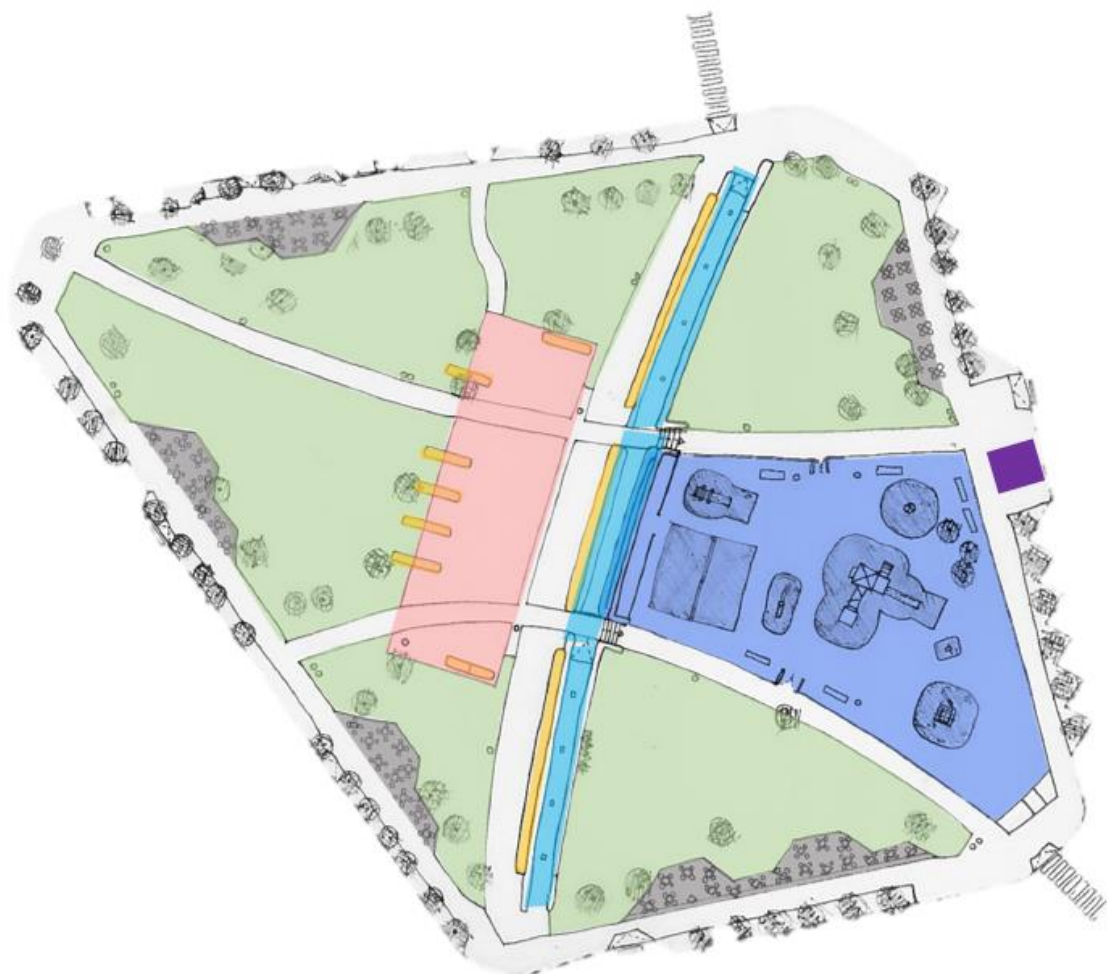
Any behaviours deviating from those instructed were not tolerated:

*'If you want to step on the benches, you should go step on your own couch!'*  
(Old man, Ilioupolis).

Embarrassment was often mentioned as a force towards abiding with the rules:

*'What will other people say? They are my neighbours, I see them every day'*  
(Lady, Vyronas).





Green areas	Dirty/ non-go areas
Playground	Play area
Café/ Restaurants	Commercial areas
Sitting areas	Sitting areas
Empty space	No prescribed use
Kiosk	No prescribed use
Decorative elements	No prescribed use

Figure 6-2: Ilioupolis – classification of space



Green areas	Dirty/ non-go areas
Playground	Play area
Café/ Restaurants	Commercial areas
Sitting areas	Sitting areas
Empty space	No prescribed use
Cinema	No prescribed use
Decorative elements	No prescribed use
Fenced areas	Non-go areas

Figure 6-3: Dexameni – classification of space

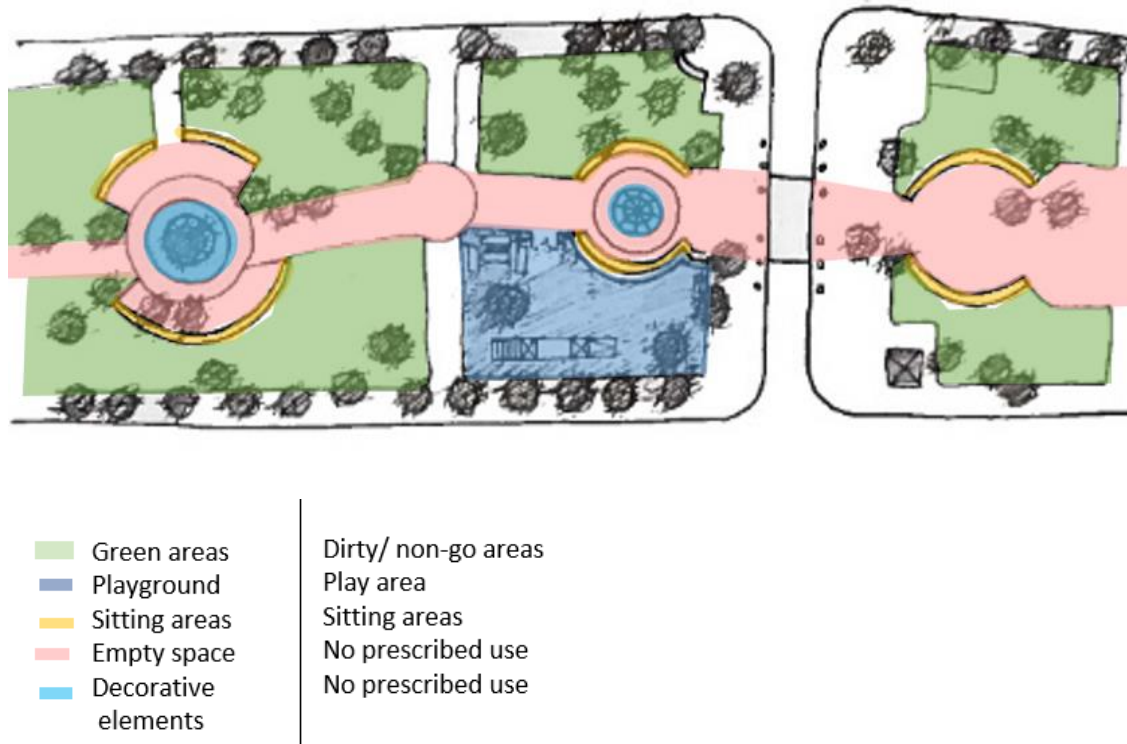


Figure 6-4: Vyronas – classification of space

The majority of conflictual incidents observed were about people not abiding by the “appropriate” behaviours of each area:

Two ladies with dogs chatting: *‘I usually come early in the morning or late at night in order to avoid the old people hanging out. I don’t want to argue with them’* (Lady, Vyronas).

However, as the majority of participants observed had internalised the classification of space, the conflictual incidents were few. In contrast, participants were more often observed to avoid conflict:

*‘The dog approaches the girl and sniffs her feet, while begging for food. The owner is busy talking on the phone. She tries to drive the dog away from her food. After a, while she gets up (she seems distressed) and leaves. I can see her eating in a bench across the street’* (Filed-notes, Ilioupolis).

Play in the piazza, not supported by the classification of space, was found to be undesirable:

*'To play myself? Here? These are childish things... That's why there is the playground for the children to play. Not me' (Man, Vyronas).*

*'Young adults climb the statue. The old ladies observe annoyed, making facial expressions of disapproval, but don't intervene' (Field-notes, Dexameni).*

Classification of space excluded adult play from both the piazza and the playground. Adults very often commented on the need for a specialised adult play-space in order to justify play or playful behaviours:

*'I would play if they installed 'gym-like' equipment. They have some outside the other playground' (Woman, Vyronas).*

This is interesting in relation to the playground equipment. For the participants in this research, the equipment and infrastructure in the space instructed its classification and, as a result, its use. Moreover, adult play emerged as being understood differently from children's, revolving around physical exercise. Spaces with play equipment (the playgrounds) were perceived as intended for children, while "gym-like" equipment were thought necessary to support adults' play.

The piazzas did not include any play facilities or other infrastructure for use by children and they did not take into account the child's scale and abilities, restricting the co-existence and interactions of different age groups and as a result their Public Value. Similarly, the playground did not accommodate adult's abilities and needs. In this context, the piazzas emerged, both through the observations and interviews as being classified primarily as adult spaces, while the playgrounds emerged as being classified for children's use:

*'I don't belong to the playground. This is for children. To play' (Man, Dexameni).*

### 6.2.2 Children in the Piazza: From Playfulness to Danger

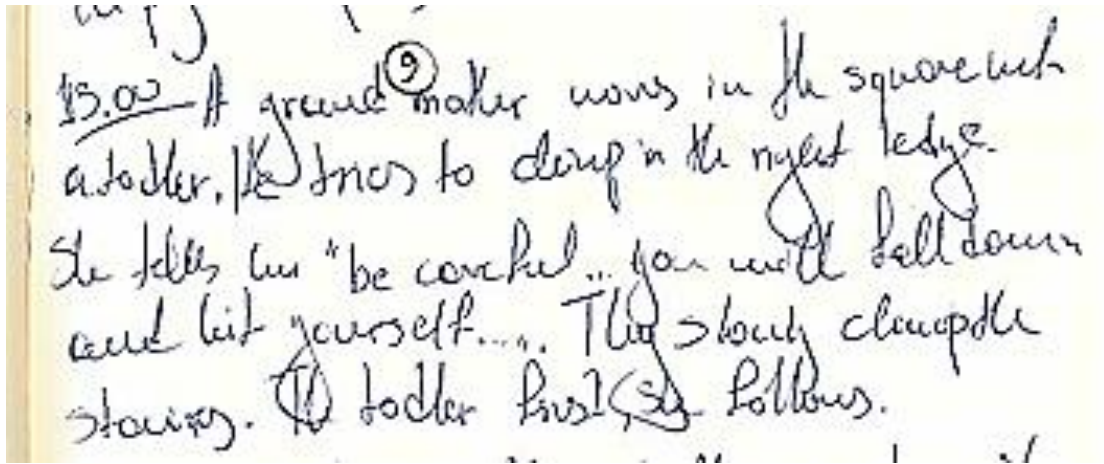


Figure 6-5: Normalisation in Ilioupolis piazza

Observations suggest that the enforcement of spatial classification norms intensified when children were using the piazzas. Well-rehearsed fears about children's safety (Christensen, 2003; Gill, 2007; Jones, 2000; Thomson and Philo, 2004) affected the way they were using the piazzas. Norms relating to safety – usually invisible during normal adult use – became apparent when children used the piazzas. The classification of areas as, clean-dirty or for children-for adults, was translated through the dangerous – safe dipole. This created distinct – both physical and symbolic – boundaries in the physical and social space that restricted, children's, movement:

*'Because they are safer there... It is there where the playing structures are'*  
(Nanny, Dexameni).

The piazzas were not perceived as appropriate play-spaces (Figure 6-5):

*'A mother mistook a faulty bench-seat for a play-structure and rocked, laughing. When she realised that it wasn't a play structure, she prohibited her child from playing there'* (Field-notes: Dexameni).

People often commented that the conical structure in Vyronas piazza was just *'a Christmas tree when the time comes'* (Mother, Vyronas) not suitable for playing simply because it was not inside the playground.

Children's safety and well-being was the number one concern in the piazzas. Guardians mediated for children in the space in order to safeguard them, while, at the same time, they were considered responsible for their children's actions. The guardians

were the ones to ensure the implementation of the rules, the smooth function of the space and the non-conflictual interaction between the users. “Good parenting” norms (See: Allin et al. 2014; Blackford, 2004; Knaak, 2010) regulated guardian’s acceptable behaviour in relation with the space. Two similar incidents illustrate the interactions between guardians, children and other users of the space:

*‘A young child (around 6) climbs in the really slim tree in the left green area in front of the café. The tree is about to break, it is slim and short. Old men from the nearby café start shouting at him to stop and get down quickly. As the child doesn’t listen to them, some of them stand up from their chairs. Finally the boy gets down of the tree and moves to the empty space. The old men start murmuring and discussing about the incident’ (Field-notes, Ilioupolis).*

In a similar incident, however, that took place a couple of days after the first one, in full view of the same old men, no one intervened. In this case a father was accompanying the child climbing the same tree. It was expected that the guardian should normalise this behaviour.

In contrast with adults who were free to move around, children’s experience of public space was found to be structured by boundaries and limitations. Social boundaries, created by societal and guardians’ fears, emerged as an important factor in regulating the presence of children in the piazza. At the same time, the different paving materials, benches and other infrastructure were used by guardians as spatial indicators, limiting children’s movement:

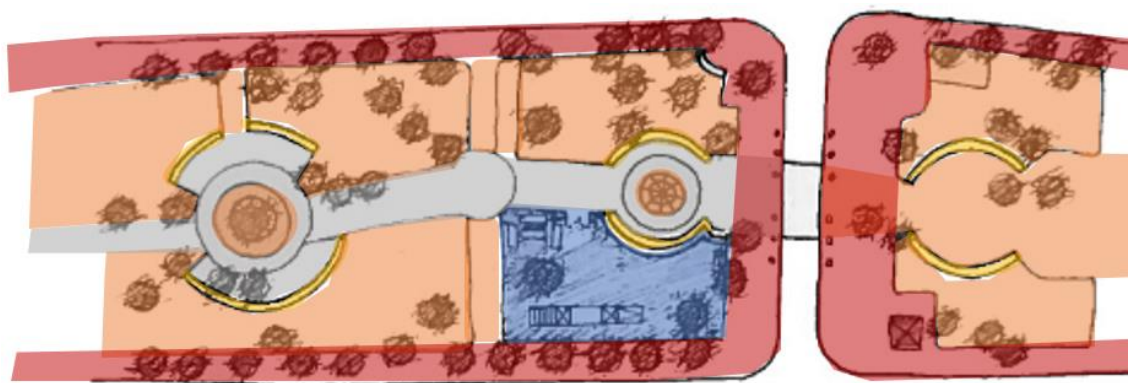
*‘You are allowed only to the path and back. Don’t go further!!’ (Mother, Ilioupolis).*

Three different degrees of ‘danger zones’ were found to connect with the distance from the playground space and the proximity to the street (Figure 6-6, Figure 6-7, Figure 6-8). These, as in the case of Ilioupolis, did not map always directly onto any spatial elements.





Figure 6-6: Classification of space to safe-dangerous areas – Ilioupolis



- Safe area
- Supervised area
- Dangerous area
- Non-go area

Figure 6-7: Classification of space to safe-dangerous areas – Vyronas

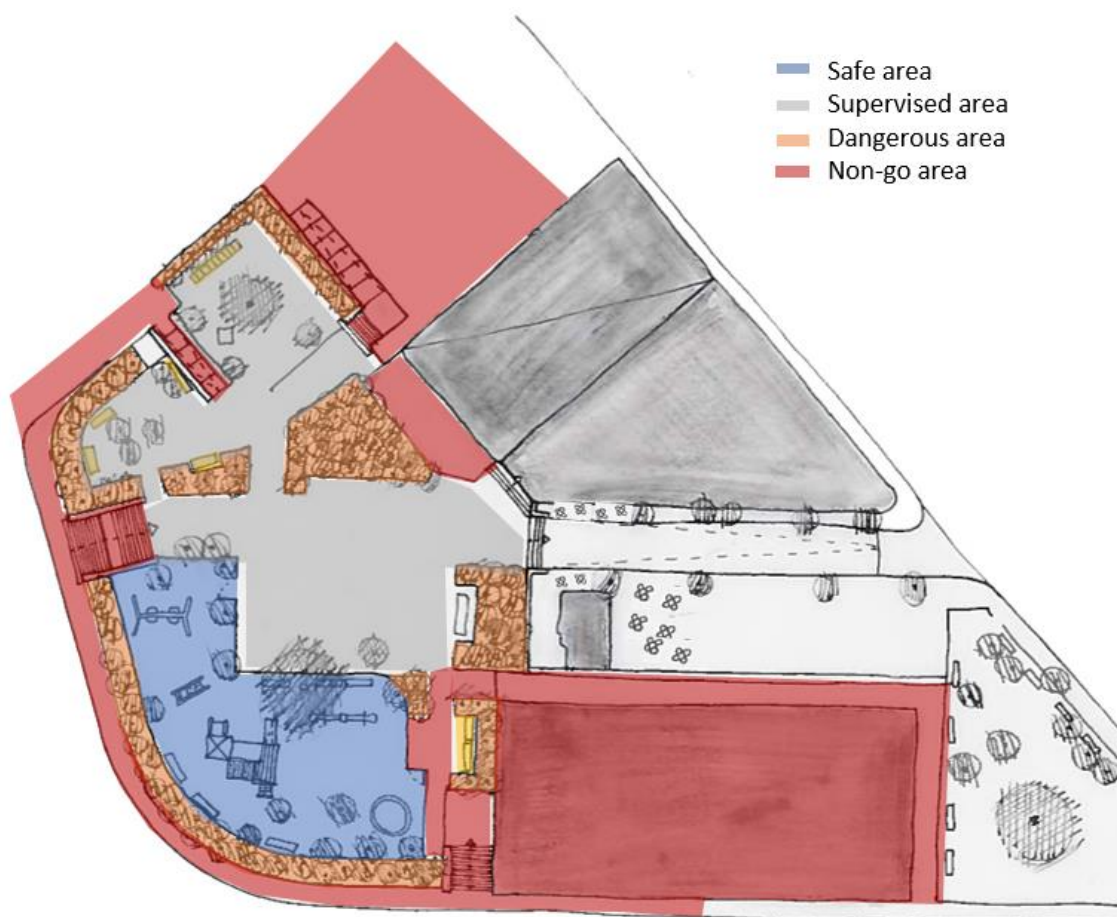


Figure 6-8: Classification of space to safe-dangerous areas – Dexameni

Similarly to all the other users, children, internalising adult fears, were concerned about the dangers of public space. They were observed to adapt their behaviour according to adults' anxieties, following the classification of space, asking permission or notifying adults about their intentions when interacting with the space:

*'You see? He came to ask his grandmother first!' (Grandmother, Dexameni).*

*'Granny look! I am in a cage [the conical structure]! Can I climb?' (Girl, Vyronas).*

### 6.2.3 Playground – The Children's Space

Among these classification norms, preoccupied with children's safety when in public, the playground emerged as the children's rightful place to be; a child-centred, safe, regulated, with limited Public Value, space including "special" infrastructure for play that should be kept clean and safe at all times. Playgrounds have been framed by



the literature to spatialize and reproduce not only socio-cultural stereotypes (Agergaard et al., 2016; Gross & Rutland, 2014) but also conceptions of childhood and adulthood (Blackford, 2004; Drew et al., 1987; Gol-Guven, 2016; Sutton-Smith, 1990; Thomson, 2005, 2003):

Playgrounds are not neutral spaces. The production of playgrounds carries a range of social, cultural, political and ecological implications. Playgrounds are employed discursively to help produce and maintain divisions between adult and child (Maxey, 1999, p.20).

There is a vast literature exploring age as an organising principle for social control (Alanen, 2009; Alderson, 2000; Thorne, 2008; Williams & Nussbaum, 2001) and spatial segregation (Esley, 2004; Horschelmann & Blerk, 2012; Kylin & Bodelius, 2015; Kraftl, 2006; Mitchell & Walsh, 2002; Olwig & Gulløv, 2003; Rosebrook, 2002; White, 1993).

*'I think of the playground as a space for children. It isn't for adults. You go there in order for the children to play... the word is 'παιδική χαρά' [children's joy]... it is self-evident' (Father, Ilioupolis).*

As stated in the interviews the playground was the only alternative for play – other than staying at home – and often the (only) chance of children to be in the public realm. Guardians wanted the children to take full advantage of the time in the playground, transforming it into a space with a specific “serious” purpose:

*'We came here for you to play. Don't sit here. Go and play' (Mother, Dexameni).*

All adults in this research correlated the playground space with play itself, often arguing that they would not have come to the playground space if they did not have to bring the children to play. Similar to previous literature on playgrounds (Blackford, 2004; Hiniker et al. 2015; Morrongiello & Dawber, 2000; Mulcahy et al., 2010; Wilson, 2013) the playground emerged as a Heterotopia of Deviance informed by fixed conceptualisations of childhood both as a precarious stage in human life (Aries, 1962; Olwig and Gulløv, 2003; Olk, 2009; Piaget, 1962, 1952; Zeiher, 2009) and as a 'repository for hope' (Kraftl, 2008, p.82).

At the same time, perceiving the playground as a space including specialised play-equipment strengthened the belief that one should *only* play with this equipment

*'We are staying here [outside] as inside is for those that want to swing' (Boy, Vyronas).*

Perceptions of playgrounds as solely children's spaces excluded adults, hindering the co-existence of different age groups and limiting their Public Value, while their child-centred design and scale intensified the children's space classification affecting people's behaviours:

*'Do you see anything I could play with?' (Father, Vyronas).*

## **6.3 Characteristics of the Heterotopia of Deviance: Protection and Control**

### **6.3.1 Playground: A Safe Space**

The classification of the playground as children's space providing 'special equipment' constructed it as a Heterotopia of Deviance; a place where the children, as deviant subjects in need of protection, could be confined and supervised:

*'In the playground one is usually more relaxed... The child plays and you can sit, chat... In the piazza I follow him more and keep an eye on him. In the playground not to the same extent.'* (Father, Dexameni).

Agreeing with previous literature, participants in this study portrayed the playground as a space where society confined and controlled playing children in order to ensure their safety (Gagen, 2000a, 2000b; Gill, 2007; Lansdown, 2011). The fact that in all three case studies the playgrounds shared similar patterns of use is telling of the way children were approached as a homogenous group with specific needs and structure in their lives. At the same time, the fears suggesting its creation and the norms surrounding the playground regulated play indicating "proper" ways to play in order for the children's time there to be "safe", "useful" and "valuable". The playground's design and infrastructure, guided children's play towards acceptable behaviours. The playground fence (physical) and avoiding conflict and injuries (social) were the two main focal points playgrounds' rules revolved around. As it came out of

the interviews, the child “should” stay confined and controlled, while playing “calmly” and properly without causing any trouble in order to avoid injury.

### 6.3.2 The Fence

The playground’s fence emerged in this study as the element imprinting children’s deviance in the physical public space. All three playgrounds were clearly defined, while their entrance points were easy to control and lock (Figure 6-9).

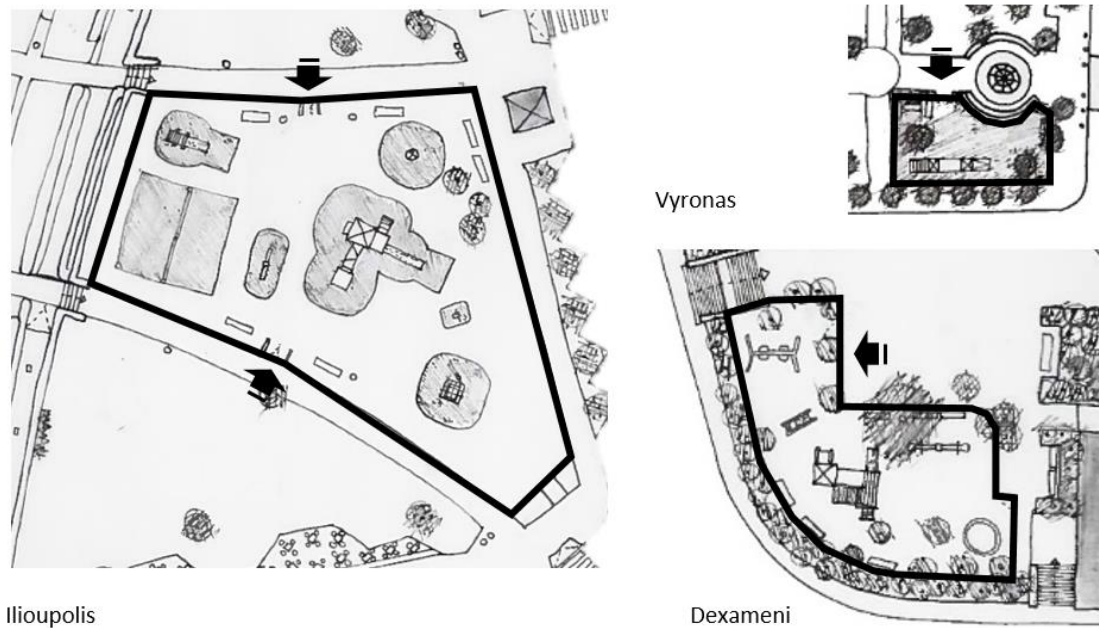


Figure 6-9: The playground boundary

The fence physically defined the limits of the “children’s space” in relation to its adjacent space. A porous physical structure bore a strong socio-spatial status acting as a physical indicator that this area accommodated deviant subjects in need of protection. My findings suggest that control was exerted through the playground’s boundary. Supervision and segregation, two of the main mechanisms structuring children’s experience of the piazzas, were inscribed in the playground’s design:

*‘I would prefer the playground space to be more controlled.’ (Mother, Ilioupolis).*

It is interesting to note that children [even toddlers] had become familiar with the playground’s spatial restriction in their everyday lives, recognizing this cut-out space as their own:

*'Mother with toddler in a pram are walking down the piazza. The toddler sees the playground space and lifts his hands asking to play' (Field-notes, Vyronas).*

The fence acted as a landmark in the city's landscape indicating where the 'rightful place' for playfulness may be. When asked about the importance of the playground fence, for example, a girl replied:

*'We need the fence. Because without it we may get out chasing the ball and get lost' (Girl, Ilioupolis).*

At the same time, guardians recognised the fence as an indicator of different classifications between the inside and the outside. Unexpectedly, they often<sup>30</sup> commented on how the abolishing of the fence could potentially change the character of the playground as a children's space and allow them to engage with intergenerational play:

*'I would like it... It would allow more goings inside-outside and maybe this perception of 'now I am in the playground' would be less strong' and maybe I would play more inside the playground...' (Father, Dexameni).*

### **6.3.3 Conflict and Injury**

As places created in order to safeguard children, this study's playgrounds' function revolved around children's safety. Similarly with the norms regulating children's presence in the piazza, the majority of norms and rules observed in the playground intended to avoid conflict and injury. Conforming to the "proper" use of the play structures was often mentioned as the main prerequisite to avoid both conflict and accidents:

*'They should play properly. So they will not get hurt. And that way, other children can play as well. They take turns on the slide' (Mother, Ilioupolis).*

The playground's play behaviour norms emerged often through my observations of arguments:

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<sup>30</sup> It very early became clear that guardians's responses balanced between different identities (protective vs playfull guardian) and contradictory behaviours.

*'You shouldn't play like that! You will break it!' (Girl, Dexameni).*

Guardians were really vigilant to spot behaviours that could create conflict with other children or guardians and they hurried to stop them before arguments occurred:

*'Boy slides his feet in the soil, his mother scolds him telling him: 'stop doing that, you are creating dust' (Mother, Dexameni).*

The vigilance of guardians, securing peace and safety in the playground space, along with self-regulation of all the users' behaviour decreased the number of conflict incidents. When, however, conflict, regarding good manners and disputes, or fighting and injury, was taking place, guardians were the ones that intervened.

A common observation was that of a hidden, undercurrent conflict. Although the playground space emerged as a "safe" space where conflict and open confrontation was avoided, many incidents were observed when inappropriate behaviours created an undercurrent tension in people's behaviours:

*'When a boy rushed to the bridge and a grandmother was helping a toddler climb at the same time, the boy's grandmother murmured to me: 'Doesn't she see that M. was there first? Why does she place the baby there?' (Grandmother, Ilioupolis).*

She was clearly annoyed and tense, closely watching M. so he did not accidentally hurt the boy, but she did not interact with the lady. Participants' vigilance intensified when such incidents were taking place in order to make sure the children were safe. Conflict between guardians was avoided, while more subtle forms of disapproval were used like, glances, staring and facial expressions or movement of the head.

#### **6.3.4 A Socialising Hub**

The playground emerged from both interviews and observations as a space for both parents and children to socialise (Allin et al. 2014; Bennet et al., 2012; Bunnell et al., 2012, Daniels and Hohnson, 2009; Doll and Brehm, 2010; Ferré et al., 2006; Frost, 2012; Galani, 2011; Johnson, 2013a; Kinchin and O'Connor, 2012), and for children's social growth (Loukaitou-Sideris, 2003):

*'It is easier to chat to someone here...' (Grandmother, Ilioupolis).*

Through the interviews it emerged that playing in public contrasted with playing alone at home; it became a social activity, a time when one meets and interacts with other people:

*'Everyone knows each other here. I meet my friends' (Mother, Vyronas).*

Although school was mentioned as the primary hub of socialising the playground acted as the ground that sustained the social relations in an everyday base.

*'I know some people, O's friends' parents from school mostly, not other people that I have met in the playground alone' (Father, Dexameni).*

Social relations often overwrote the spatial affordances as both children and guardians preferred a playground their friends use or one they knew they would find their friends at the time:

*'I like both the playground and the piazza, because my friends may be with their bikes in the piazza and I will go to join them!' (Girl, Ilioupolis).*

The regulars had a more extended circle of friends in the area, while often they were not open to new people:

*'We chat with some parents. We will not befriend everyone!' (Father, Vyronas).*

In Dexameni, a grandfather argued that regulars have formed closed (condescending attitude) groups, while in Vyronas, the Albanian guardians used to speak in their own language. Even when I was interviewing them they often spoke to each other excluding me from this interaction.

The playground's norms were, once again, informing interactions between people structuring it as a Heterotopia of Deviance, a space different than the surrounding piazza. I observed that although when in the piazza people interacted only with their acquaintances, while entering the playground guardians abiding to the playground's norms greeted the rest users. Often, although many people answered that they did not know the people in the playground, I observed them chatting and greeting other guardians:

*'Either you like it or not you chat with other parents' (Mother, Ilioupolis).*

But:

*'Even if we talk we will not keep the relationship' (Father, Ilioupolis).*

Some commented on how this space “makes you” socialize:

*'Even if you don't know them you will get to know them' (Father, Dexameni).*

Moreover, guardians commented on feeling more relaxed when there were other people around:

*'I like it to tell you the truth...because there are people around. It isn't segregated... If you need help there are people around' (Grandmother, Dexameni).*

At the same time, children were observed to socialize easily, constantly making new friends with whom they continued playing the next days:

*'Children make new friends easily though. They will play with other children. Adults are more closed, they just supervise their kids and that's it. They wouldn't chat with anyone' (Father, Ilioupolis).*

Guardians encouraged children's socializing in line with the playgrounds character as a space where children learn to socialise:

*'If any lady sits close enough we may speak... We speak about the children, in order for them to develop a relationship between them... So they would play together...'* (Grandmother, Ilioupolis).

However, this kind of socialisation, between people of similar age, although it may increase the playgrounds' Social Value (See: 2.3.2) it did not inform its Public Value. This socialisation did not welcome other people while it did not encourage co-existence and interactions between different age groups. I will explore further down how the playground norms affected the space's Public Value.

### **6.3.5 The Ideal Playground**

Adult perceptions of childhood structure conceptions of the “ideal” places for children (Edmiston, 2010; Horschelmann & Blerk, 2012; Gol-Guven, 2016; Gulgonen

and Corona, 2015; Kylin & Bodelius, 2015; Loukaitou-Sideris, 2003; van Vliet and Karsten, 2015). Participants' discussion of their ideal play space in turn revealed their underpinning perceptions of childhood. Often they structured their ideal playground model as one that they could effectively control in order to minimise unexpected incidents commenting on what was missing from the case studies:

*'Like this [playground] but cleaner, with more play structures, soft pavement... To be safer' (Grandmother, Dexameni).*

The concerns about children's safety (Christensen, 2003; Gill, 2007; Jones, 2000; Lansdown, 2011; Thomson and Philo, 2004) were clearly articulated once again. Guardians, perceiving the playground as a children's space, characterised as "good" a playground that is safe for children to play in:

*'I was surprised to hear a mother in Ilioupolis listing the technical regulations as established by the law (area of soft material around the structures, distance between the structures etc.)' (Field-notes).*

The perception of children as people in need of protection was materialised in the spatial characteristics of playground as a heterotopia. Through the interviews, the "good" playground was identified as one that was adequately segregated from its surroundings, clean, fully paved comprising soft material, sitting areas and low challenge equipment, while allowing unrestricted supervision. Guardians often equated dirt, the most visible element of disorder, with danger stressing their preference for a controlled space:

*'The area is dirty, it has graffiti... They only clean it during Theophany when the mayor comes. It is a bustle... Ok, maybe in a lesser extent than other places because the people in this area are more educated in comparison to other areas' (Grandfather, Dexameni).*

However, as literature has already pointed out (Jacobs, 1961; James, 1990; Jones, 2000; Skelton, 2000; Thomson & Philo, 2004; Valentine, 1996a, 1996b; Ward, 1978) my findings suggest discrepancies between adult and child preferences for playground design, revealing their contrasting understandings:



*‘A mother walking through the piazza was negotiating with her boy “the other playground is bigger, better” to receive the answer from the boy “the other one is too crowded!” (Field-notes: Vyronas).*

While adult’s answers revolved around safety, children, tended to prefer spaces where their friends or other children were. They often expressed their preference for making the play infrastructure not safer, as emphasised by adults, but more challenging and as a result more interesting:

*‘I would prefer it if the slide was higher’ (Girl, Ilioupolis).*

### **6.3.6 A School for Norms**

The playground emerged, through both observations and interviews, as a space loaded with norms and expected behaviours for both children and guardians (Allin et al. 2014; Crust et al. 2014; Gross and Rutland; 2014; Knaak, 2010; Murnaghan, 2013; Richards, 2012). These were different than the ones expected in the piazzas, strengthening its character as a Heterotopia of Deviance. It was perceived as one of the spaces where the child would learn to socialise, co-operate and co-exist with other people. As guardians mentioned, the playground gave them the opportunity to socialise with strangers, make new friends and interact with a variety of different people. The playground emerged as a space of learning social and physical skills; a space of learning societal norms. It often functioned as a “school” after school, where guardians were always vigilant to gratify the acceptable behaviours and normalise all the others. Guardians were observed to clap their hands in endorsement of following the rules or recognition of the children’s achievements, while children themselves often advertised them: *‘ta daaaaah!’ (Girl, Vyronas).*

Conflict was often used as an opportunity to teach children good manners and respect for others strengthening the playground’s character as a societal norms’ learning environment:

*‘We intervene when they are fighting or if one wouldn’t share his toy. I would intervene and say ‘give your toy to the other children to play for a, while... In order to teach them to give... And receive... To socialize’ (Grandmother, Dexameni).*

I noticed many incidents of using arguments to “teach” children good manners:

*‘Who said that? Did you say that? Don’t say such words’ (Mother, Ilioupolis).*

The playground as a Heterotopia of Deviance acquired performative qualities. Although usually approached as settings where children's culture is taking place, playgrounds are at the same time 'settings where there is a particular type of public culture operating' (Mitchell & Walsh, 2002, p.118), 'sites of habit' (Thomson, 2003, p.58; Wilson, 2013). Perceptions of how a child should behave and what guardians must do were shared between guardians and were also the ones used to judge adults' abilities in instilling societal norms to children.

## **6.4 The Heterotopia of Deviance Mechanisms**

### **6.4.1 Introduction**

In order to maintain the normal order of the playground space and ensure children's protection, the Heterotopia of Deviance employed specific mechanisms regulating its function. These are defined as the practices and rules that were employed in order to fulfil the place's purpose, that of keeping children safe by controlling people's behaviours.

### **6.4.2 Profiling**

There is supporting evidence that profiling was the main mechanism regulating access to the playground. This emerged from the classification of the playground space as a children's space, and was in line with societal perceptions and stereotyping. The perceived 'child-friendliness' of the playground spaces informed them as distinct spaces. People in this study did not perceive the playgrounds as part of the public space, but rather as places for children's use – an attitude directly affecting the playground's Public Value. Literature discusses processes of "othering" children in their use of public space (Aitken, 2001; Germanos, 2001; Holloway & Valentine, 2000a; Olwig & Gulløv, 2003; Pain, 2006; Valentine, 1996; White, 1993). This study supports this argument and also suggests that child-centred spaces, in this case the playground, employ similar processes of "othering" the adults. Profiling of the playground users was quietly taking place by the guardians at all times, making them more vigilant when a "suspicious" person was spotted:

*'If there is anyone, they should be someone who tries to pass his time, or has bad intentions.'* (Father, Vyronas).

While in the piazza guardians expected other peoples' presence, in the playground guardians' fears of children's safety did not welcome the presence of other adults:

*'If it is a young man we will talk to him, we may say to him 'do you want something here? ... We will ask him... we don't want him to stare at the children' (Grandmother, Dexameni).*

Often, guardians tried to "profile" me (See: Drew et al. 1987) in order to justify my presence in the playground space:

*'I thought you were these boys' nanny!' (Grandmother, Vyronas).*

When asked what they would do if they spotted an unaccompanied adult in the playground space, the vast majority of guardians answered that they would not necessarily act, but would survey the individual for as long as they were there:

*'It depends on his age. If they were a couple or a teenager I wouldn't react in the same way as I would if it was a 40 years old man. I wouldn't speak to him, I would just be vigilant' (Father Ilioupolis).*

The fence's physicality was sending a clear message of the distinctiveness of that space. The action of crossing the playground's physical boundary and entering a "children's" space was what often triggered guardians' suspicions. The action of crossing the playground socio-spatial boundary and defying the established classification of space in order to enter a "children's" space was what triggered guardians' suspicions:

*'Why would they be in the playground? What do they want' (Grandmother, Ilioupolis).*

There is strong evidence that other people's presence in the playground was a gender and age issue. I often observed teenagers and older women using the space, while children were there but men only when it was empty:

*'I also sit further up in the piazza when I am with my husband. But with my lady-friends we prefer the playground' (Lady, Vyronas).*

While male adults were considered dangerous, older people or childless mothers were seen with sympathy:

*'I would think that... ok... She came to see the children... Often the ones that do not have children of their own, crave to see children playing...'* (Grandmother, Ilioupolis).

At the same time, similar to previous findings (Aitken, 2001; Germanos, 2001; Holloway & Valentine, 2000a; Olwig & Gulløv, 2003; Pain, 2006; Valentine, 1996; White, 1993) the profiling of teenagers as potentially dangerous and demoralising subjects, or simply as a nuisance, was observed to exclude them and especially their play, from the playground. Although teenagers liked to play, they often commented on how they chose the structures that were not occupied by children in order to avoid confrontation with the guardians:

*'They don't tell us anything but if a child wants the swing they may look at us strangely'* (Teenage boy, Ilioupolis).

However, when “outsiders” were allowed to stay in the space they had to follow the “children’s space’s” rules. Some guardians commented that they did not mind the presence of other, usually young, adults (and teenagers) as long as they did not hinder children’s play:

*'I don't mind older people sitting in benches and watching the children. And teenagers. I only think that if teenagers used the space they wouldn't leave enough space for children to play [...] and I would be worried about their vocabulary in front of the younger children [...] This is why I prefer the fence we were talking about.'* (Father, Ilioupolis).

Literature has addressed the subject of other people in the playground space (Weck, 2017; Wilson, 2013). Although there are studies approaching the playground as a space of children’s socialisation (Galani, 2011; Jansson, 2008; Cole-Hamilton & Gill, 2002; Bennet et al., 2012; Sutton-Smith, 1990; Bunnell et al., 2012, Allin et al. 2014), the playgrounds’ processes of “othering” adults restricted their Public Value and specialised their use. In this study, the suspicions that guardians had expressed about certain unaccompanied adults were, accordingly, felt by those adults who tended to

avoid these children's places, considering them superfluous and childish (Edmiston, 2008), 'places only for children' (Blackford, 2004, 232):

*'A grandfather in Dexameni argued that he wouldn't stay in the playground if he wasn't with the toddler as he would be embarrassed by the people looking suspiciously at him. "And maybe just because it is this space nearby [the piazza], if you want to sit in a bench, you have much better choices than to sit in a bench here [in the playground]". (Field-notes).*

The number of sitting choices in the adjacent place was often mentioned by the participants as a factor that justified, or not, the "outsiders" presence in the playground space:

*'No, I don't sit in the playground. There is so much space in the piazza, why should I go to the playground?' (Man, Vyronas).*

People often claimed that this is "self-evident" as there were better and quieter spots in the piazza to sit.

Literature has addressed the subject of other people in the playground space (Weck, 2017; Wilson, 2013). Although there are studies approaching the playground as a space of children's socialisation (Galani, 2011; Jansson, 2008; Cole-Hamilton & Gill, 2002; Bennet et al., 2012; Sutton-Smith, 1990; Bunnell et al., 2012, Allin et al. 2014), the playgrounds' processes of "othering" adults restricted their Public Value and specialised their use

### **6.4.3 Supervision**

Many studies claim supervision as a way to avoid accidents (Boulton, 1993; Loder, 2008; Morrongiello & House, 2004; Schwebel, 2006; Chelvakumar, 2010; House, 2014; Sharkey et al, 2014; Hudson et al., 2008; Huynh et al, 2017; Thomson, 2005; Bruya & Bruya, 2000) placing it in the centre of 'good parenting' norms.

#### **Playground**

All three playgrounds were designed as controlled, easily supervised spaces. The playgrounds' layout, fenced, with the sitting areas in the perimeter surrounding and overlooking the play area, offering unobstructed views, intended to facilitate supervision:

*'We control them better in a closed space' (Father, Vyronas).*

My findings confirm that constant supervision turned space into a panopticon, a space where people supervised one another and normalized behaviours (Figure 6-10, Figure 6-11, Figure 6-12). Fears of injury and fears of other people in the playground space, perceived as a threat towards children, made supervision a self-evident practice for guardians. This finding supports previous studies that associate injuries in the playground with parenting attitudes (Morrongiello & House, 2004; Pain, 2006):

*'He plays only inside the playground in order to closely supervise him' (Mother, Vyronas).*

My observations suggest that guardians' vigilance intensified when the space was crowded:

*'I am standing... Today that wasn't crowded I sat down in the bench... Otherwise one should be vigilant... I need to watch what is happening in the space' (Mother, Ilioupolis).*

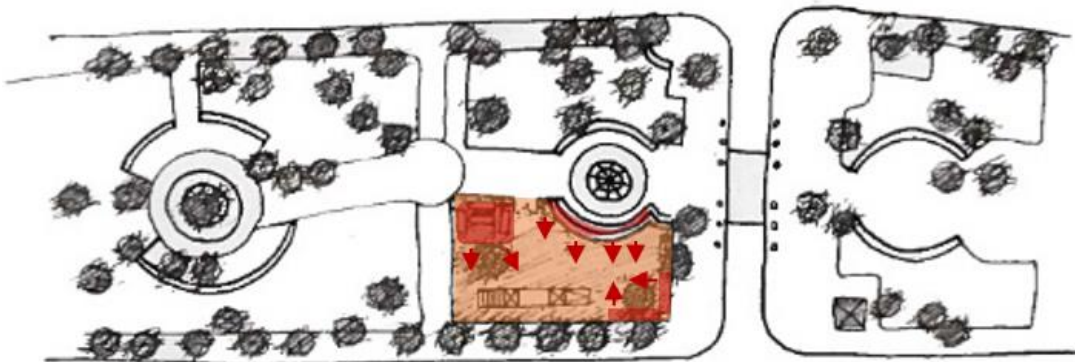


Figure 6-10: Vyronas – The playground panopticon



Figure 6-11: Ilioupolis – The playground panopticon



Figure 6-12: Dexameni – The playground panopticon

## Piazza

*'Mammy will not last any longer...'*

In order to gain a better understanding of the Heterotopia of Deviance in the playground, I describe my observations of children's actions in the piazzas. When children moved to the "dangerous" piazza guardians' vigilance was observed to intensify, making the supervision mechanism clearer. The findings suggest that adult fears appeared to render adult presence essential to securing their children's safety (Katsabounidou, 2015; Mackett et al. 2007). Examining the norms that surrounded children's presence in the piazza highlights the social perceptions that surrounded the playground's necessity.

While facilitated by the playground's design, supervision in the open public space was often mentioned by the guardians as a more demanding task:

*'And in the piazza I follow him... [Laughs] I am afraid!'* (Mother, Ilioupolis).

The playground's supervision ring (Blackford, 2004) was transferred to the adjacent piazza, usually placing guardians in the margins supervising children who played in the centre (Figure 6-13, Figure 6-14 and Figure 6-15).

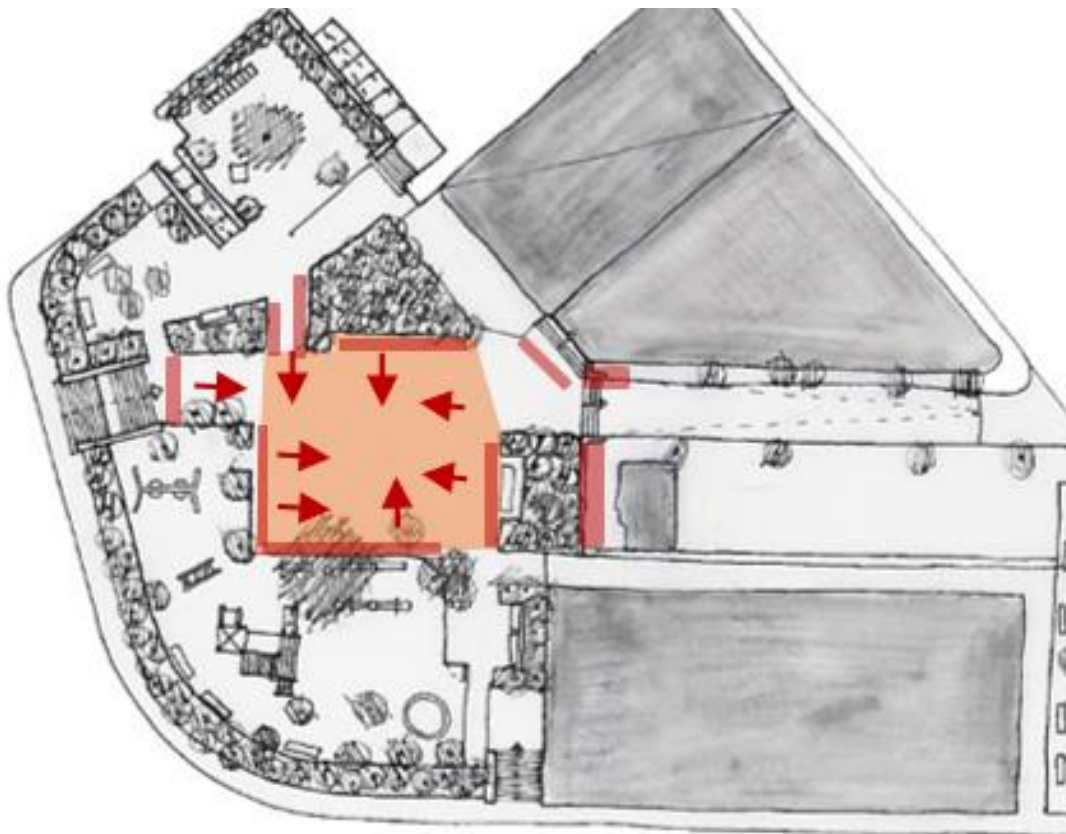




Figure 6-13: Dexameni – The piazza panopticon

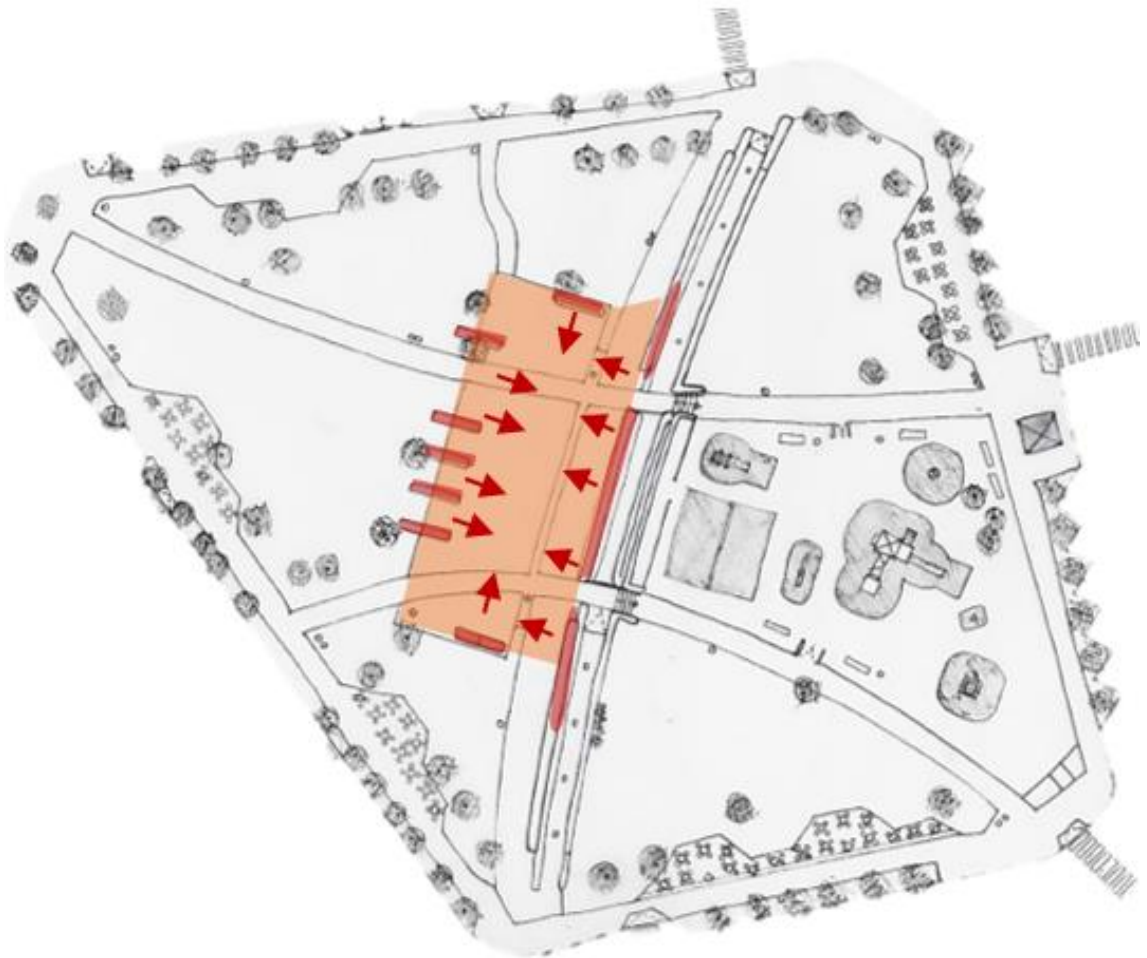


Figure 6-14: Ilioupolis – The piazza panopticon

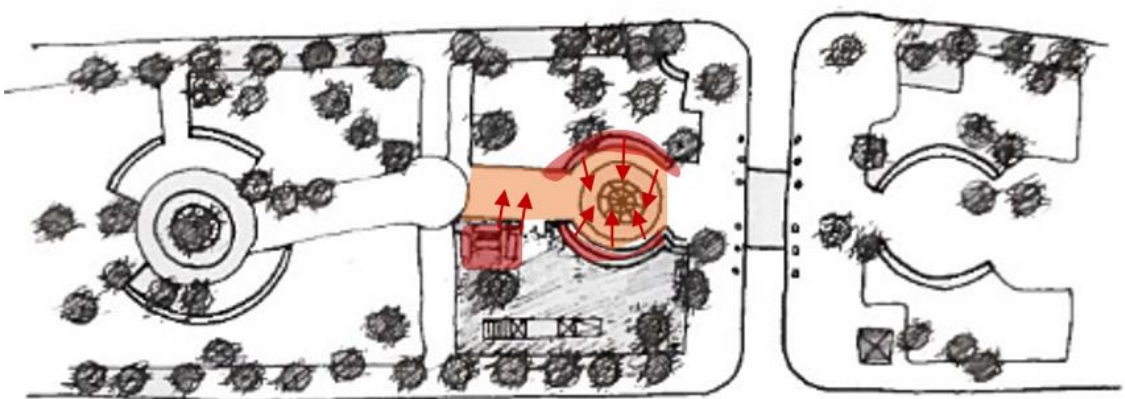


Figure 6-15: Vyronas – The piazza panopticon

I observed that in Dexameni, where space did not facilitate the creation of a highly supervised area, guardians still placed themselves in positions that created a ring

surrounding any play activity; a human fence that was always ready to normalise and intervene. In contrast with the playground space that facilitated supervision, in the piazzas the need to supervise overwrote the spatial characteristics of the space and created a new situation that was not supported by the space itself. At the same time, inaccessible or hidden spaces, hindering supervision and immediate intervention, were perceived as dangerous (Figure 6-16):

*‘Father takes toddler out of this area in order to check it first himself and then enters along with him’ (Filed-notes, Ilioupolis).*

In Dexameni, guardians constantly followed children around supervising them at all times making sure that they did not enter these spaces. In Vyronas and Ilioupolis on the other hand, guardians were more relaxed when in the piazza as there were not any visual obstructions and the inaccessible spaces were few.

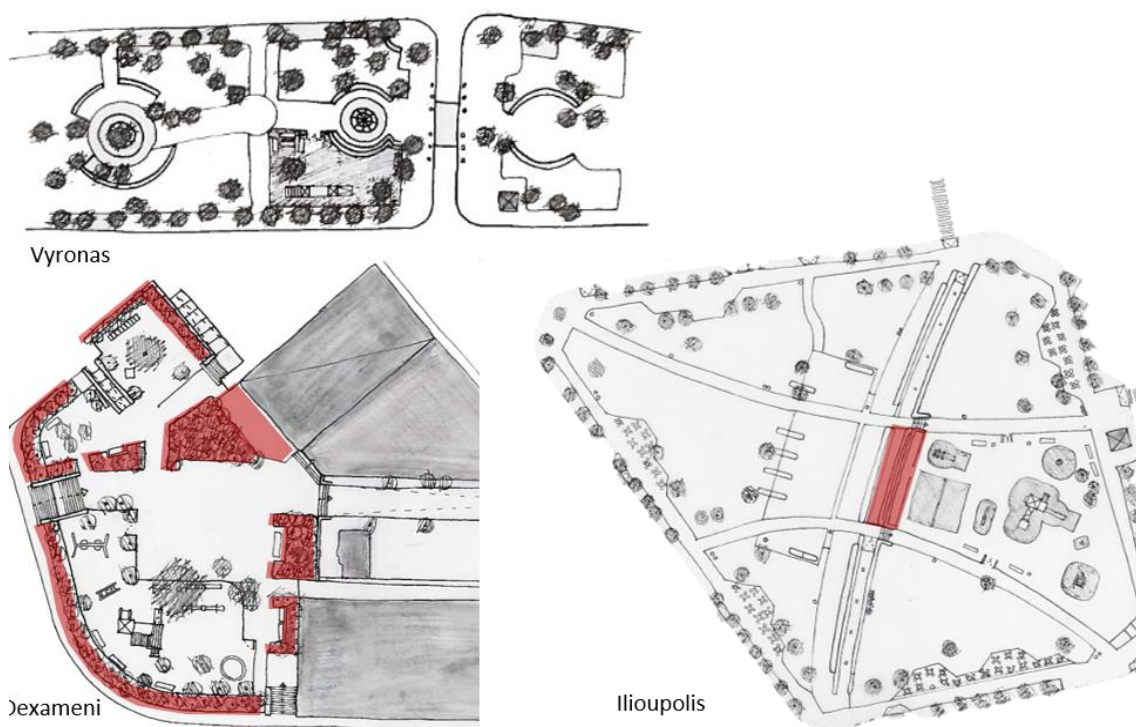


Figure 6-16 Inaccessible and hidden spaces

The necessity, according to the guardians, to supervise children when in the piazza, produced protective “bubbles” with invisible boundaries and children were only allowed to move inside these limits (Figure 6-17). Guardians’ gaze (supervision) was often used in the interviews as a way to measure distance and space:

*'As far as I can see them' (Father, Vyronas).*

Guardians commented on following children around in order to extend the bubble's boundaries set by guardians' gaze:

*'Everywhere inside the fence. If he goes outside we will follow him' (Mother, Ilioupolis).*

This was often the case in Dexameni where the trees and the flowerbeds did not allow unobstructed views:

*'Where do I sit? Nowhere!' (Nanny, Dexameni).*

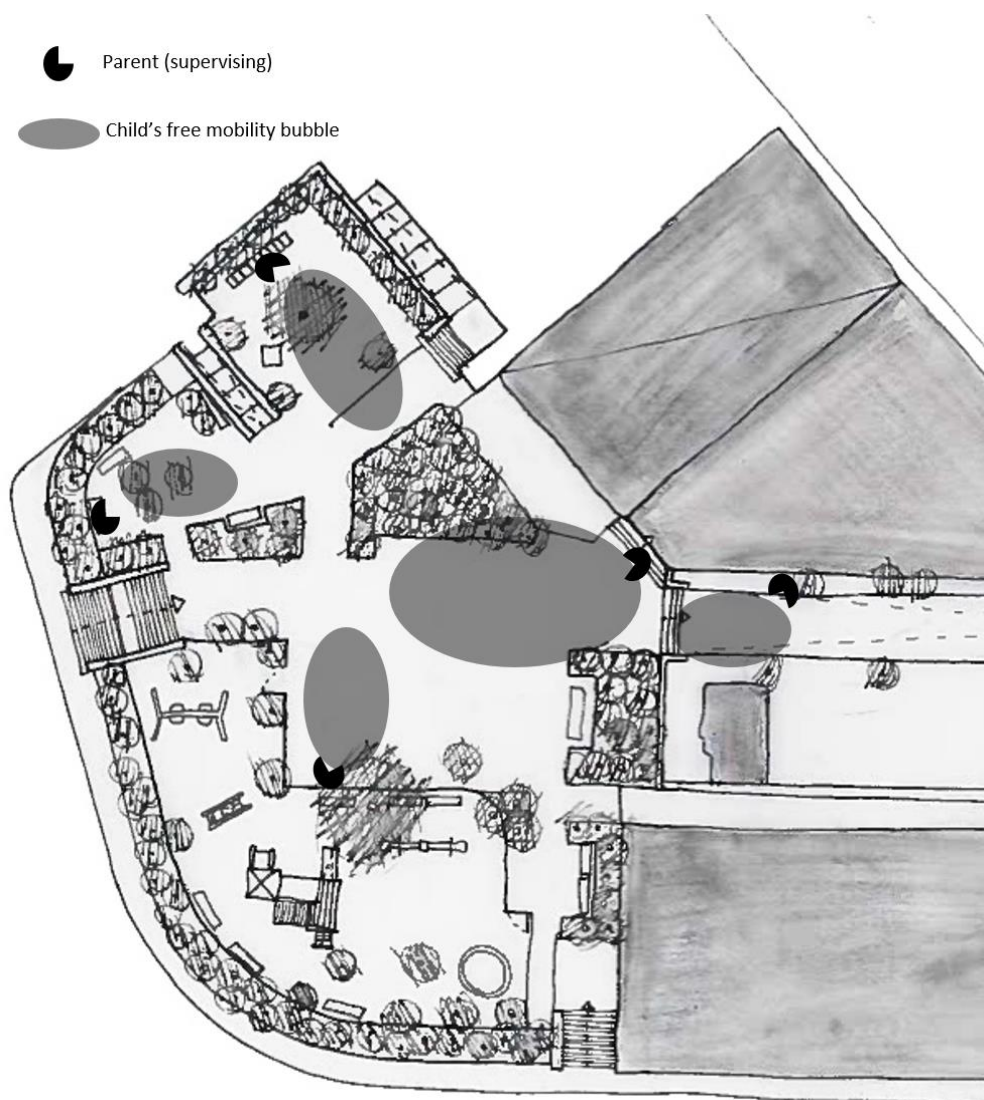


Figure 6-17: Example of individual families' supervision bubbles in Dexameni with the guardian reference point

Children were restricted to different bubbles set by the guardians but as guardians followed them around the boundaries of these bubbles changed and extended:

*'As far as I can see her. I follow her around as well so she can go further away... But only in the piazza and the playground, not further than that...'* (Mother, Dexameni).

As a result, the need to supervise not only created bubble-areas but also distance – bubbles continually changing as the guardians and children moved around the piazza:

*'A mother with a girl are walking in the peripheral path. The girl is ahead of the mother cycling. The mother asks her to stop every time she reaches the corner of the piazza so she can catch up with her. After the mother reaches the corner as well the girl runs towards the next corner and waits'* (Field-notes, Ilioupolis).

This girls' bubble-boundaries were continually changing and negotiated as both subjects were moving in the space and visibility was affected by different spatial characteristics each time.

My observations suggest that each case study's layout, spatial characteristics and number of people in the space – more people in the piazza meant greater restriction – at each time supported or hindered supervision and as a result children's movement:

*'Stay here, where I can see you. Don't go further'* (Father, Ilioupolis).

This resulted in a more extended or a more limited area of free movement in each case (Figure 6-18, Figure 6-19, Figure 6-20). For example, it is interesting that in Dexameni and Ilioupolis – which in total is bigger than Vyronas – I observed that some children were facing more restrictions emerging from their guardians' sitting positions and their obstructed views, than Vyronas piazza where did not have so many visual obstacles:

*'Come back. I can't see you there...'* (Grandmother, Ilioupolis).



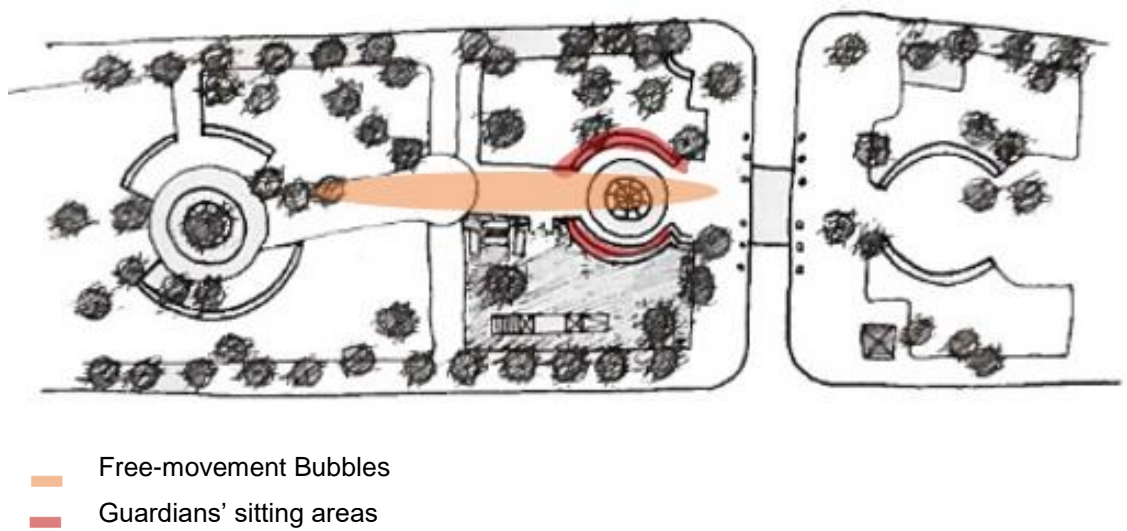


Figure 6-18: Vyronas – Example of supervision bubbles with guardians' sitting areas as reference point

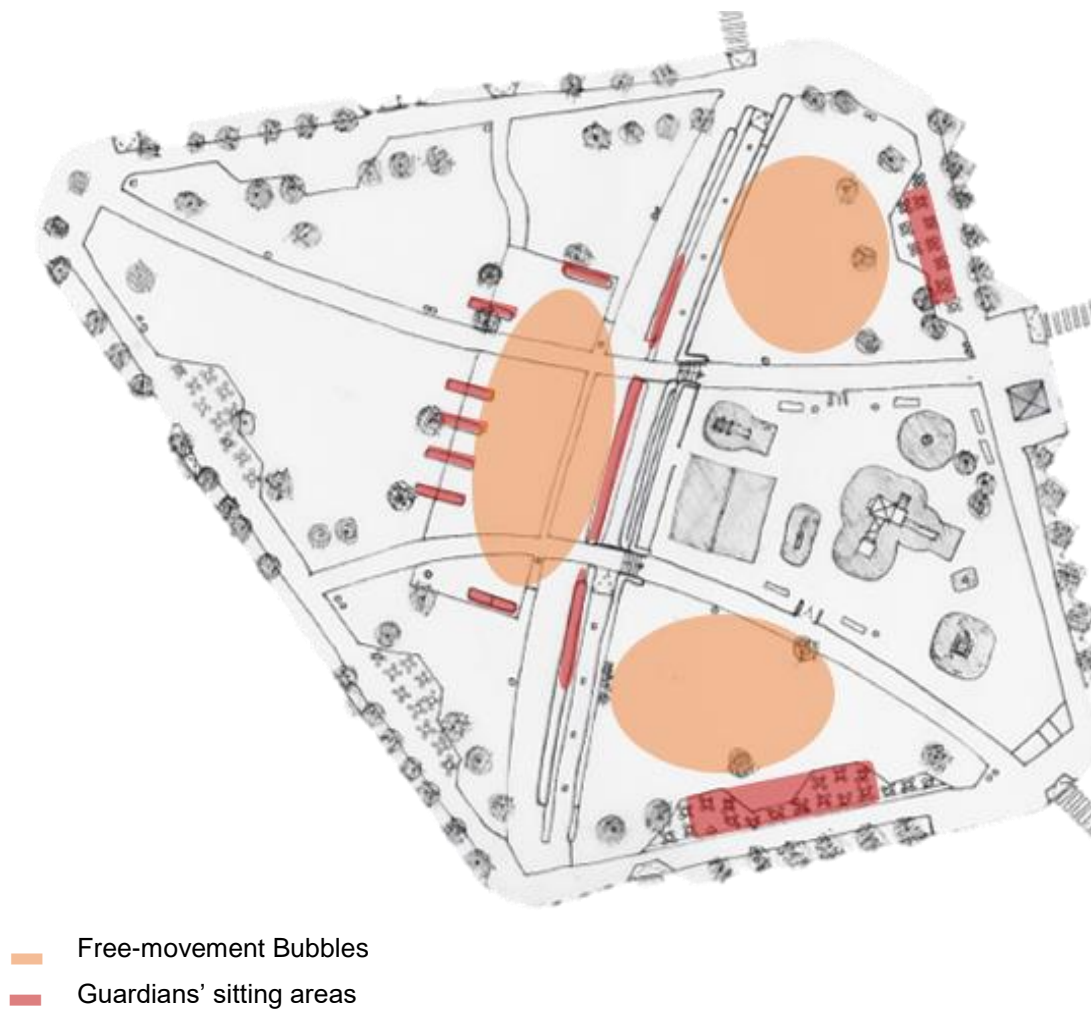


Figure 6-19: Ilioupolis – Example of supervision bubbles with guardians' sitting areas as reference point

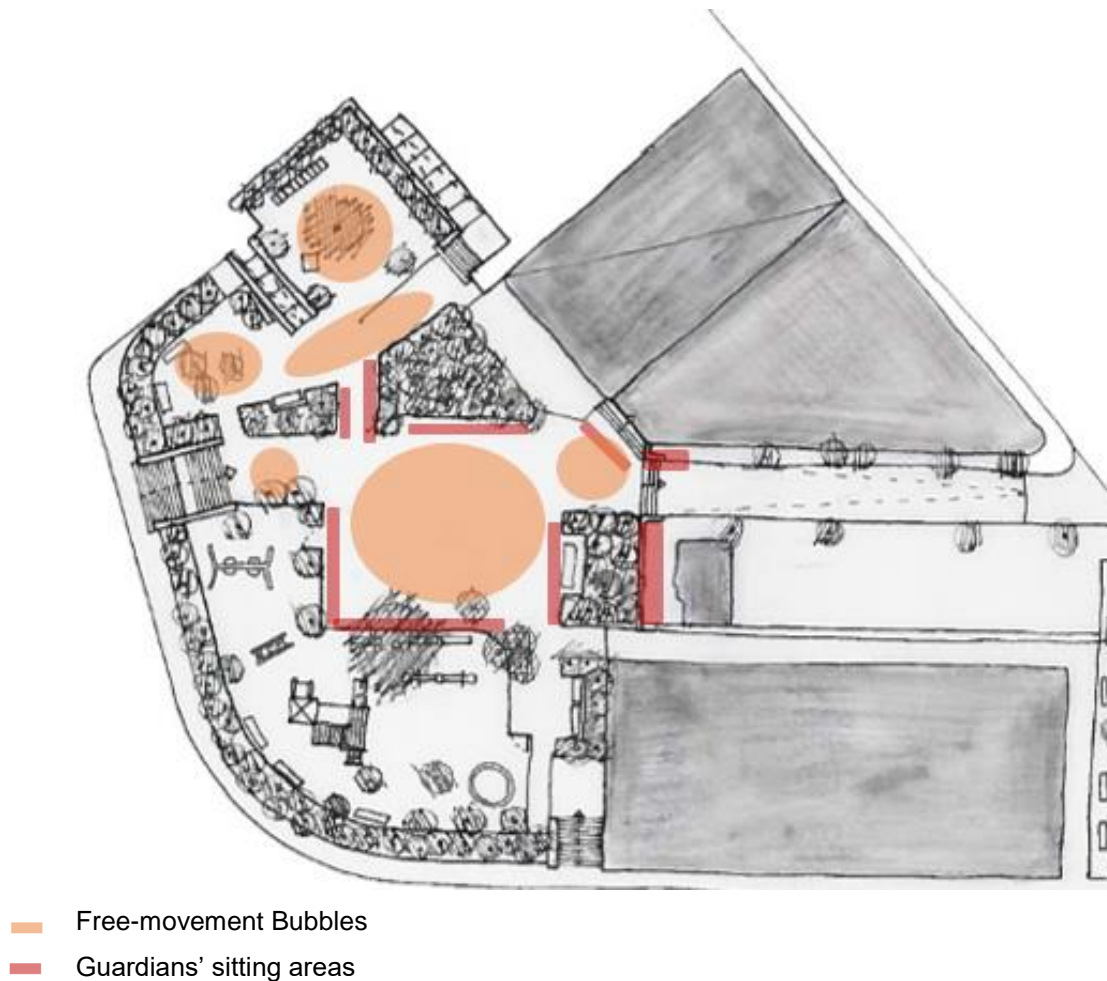


Figure 6-20: Dexameni – Example of supervision bubbles with guardians' sitting areas as reference point

I was surprised to often observe children not allowed to play in the designated-for-play playground itself as their guardians could not supervise them from the café area:

*'The café is one reason people come but they don't sit there as they can't supervise the whole space, while children are playing. Even from the corner table, one had to get up and go check where the children were, every five minutes.'* (Father, Dexameni).

It is evident that supervision, preoccupied with children's safety, overwrote the spatial classification of space. In this study, no space was considered a safe space if it was not supervised agreeing with previous studies that have specifically attributed the 'strict regulation and control of traditional public spaces' (Loukaitou-Sideris, 2003, 131) to parental anxieties (See also: Beets and Foley, 2008; Carver et al. 2008; Valentine and McKendrick, 1997). The fenced playground space responded to adult fears and

preoccupation with children's safety, facilitating supervision of children's play through its physical space.

#### 6.4.4 Segregation

The playground, a designated-segregated space (Gagen, 2000a, 2000b; Aitken, 2001; Solomon, 2005), accommodated guardians' fears about children being in public. Guardians often commented on how they felt more relaxed in the enclosed "safe" space:

*'If the space was different, I still would like him to stay in the playground... To be restricted there... Because I am responsible for him...'* (Grandmother, Ilioupolis).

*'Everywhere inside the fence. If he goes outside we will follow him...'* (Father, Ilioupolis).

Segregation and supervision emerged through the interviews with guardians and carers as the two main attributes a children's space should have. The fence encouraged both supporting the playground's character as a Heterotopia of Deviance:

*'The two areas [playground and piazza] are incompatible. Children shouldn't mix with all this 'thing' [the piazza]'* (Nanny, Dexameni).

The need for segregation – answering to concerns about safety – regulated access and reduced the playground's Public Value. When asked, guardians commented on both the need to refrain children from running outside and the need to bar other people from using the space and potentially harming children:

*'So the children wouldn't go out... or others getting in... strange people... You know, dangerous...'* (Mother, Dexameni).

The need for a fully functional fence with a door that locks out of the reach of children was prominent in our discussions in all three cases:

*'Because children are more constrained that way... more secure. The fence is necessary for the children's safety'* (Nanny, Dexameni).

There is strong evidence that the quality of the play equipment was given secondary importance after the need for a fenced space. Guardians often admitted that they were choosing smaller playgrounds, offering fewer play opportunities for the sake of safety. When I asked a father in Vyronas why they did not visit another local playground – one considered bigger and better maintained, he answered:

*‘The other playground has too many doors! I can’t control them from getting out into the street!’ (Father, Vyronas).*

Guardians often argued that they would not visit the piazzas if the playground was not fenced:

*‘There is the danger of going out to the street. The playground’s fence provides safety. If the playground was not here I would not even bother...’ (Mother, Ilioupolis).*

One wonders: Is it the playground or its boundary that attracts families in the piazza? I try to answer this question further down. At the same time, guardians commented on the potential dangers the fence’s materiality itself may pose, while were sceptical about its porosity. They mentioned that it could cause injury or “escapes”:

*‘Maybe the bars could be wooden as well... it would be safer... His younger child fell and injured his head in the cement’ (Father, Vyronas).*

Any “holes” in the perimeter of the playground were diligently blocked or closed as they appeared to prevent children from getting in and out, while at the same time intensifying supervision.

It is really interesting to note that it became clear, through the interviews, that it was more the idea of the fence, rather than its physical characteristics that put guardian’s fear at ease.

*‘People are afraid of something but can’t really articulate what. They want the fence to protect the space but don’t know from what exactly. When I ask they stop to think. They then reply, either for the safety of children from going out or people coming in, or both of these. When I tell them that the second thing can still happen as the door isn’t locked, they seem perplexed, pause, and then they say it is still better than no boundary at all’ (Field-notes).*



Although guardians recognised that the fence acted more as a social boundary than physical – one that could be easily transgressed as the door was left open all the time – they argued it was necessary:

*'It offers an extent of security for sure... We have the impression that they can't get away easily, can't get out... do something dangerous for their safety' (Mother, Ilioupolis).*

Although everyone interviewed commented on the importance of the door, the physical opening and closing mechanism of the playground as a Heterotopia of Deviance, the need to lock and be kept closed at all times, my observations did not confirm such behaviours. Only in Vyronas (the smallest playground) the door was always closed and locked for as long the playground was occupied:

*'The other playground has three doors, we can't control them' (Father, Vyronas).*

By contrast, in Ilioupolis (the middle sized case study) the doors were two and less easy to control:

*'Yes there are. If you find the door closed and you enter, you must close it again. If you find it open you may say to yourself 'it was open anyway.' (Father, Ilioupolis).*

In Dexameni, however, (the largest playground) the door was constantly open although guardians commented on the need to be able to lock and segregate the space:

*'There are rules, unwritten ones. Like the door... there is a rule... And the playground should close, should be a separated space... Now some people would close it, while others wouldn't....' (Father, Dexameni).*

However, although the door was not regulated, access to the playground decreased the playground's Public Value (See: 6.4.2) and did not allow the co-existence of different age groups.

### 6.4.5 Normalisation Practices

#### Playground

As a space created to accommodate and facilitate specific behaviours for both children and guardians (Allin et al. 2014; Crust et al. 2014; Gross and Rutland; 2014; Knaak, 2010; Murnaghan, 2013; Richards, 2012), the playground emerged as a field of normalisation practices. When un-ruled behaviours threatened the playground's order, normalisation practices were implemented to secure safety and dissipate any conflict. The vast majority of the observed normalising incidents were revolving around alternate uses of the play structures or aggressive behaviours that could lead to injuries (Figure 6-21). Play was subscribed to a "proper" way and was institutionalised, while the structures were entitled with a "normal play use":

*'We are good girls. We slide the normal way' (Girl, Dexameni).*

Any deflection from the rules was followed by a counter-action of normalisation.

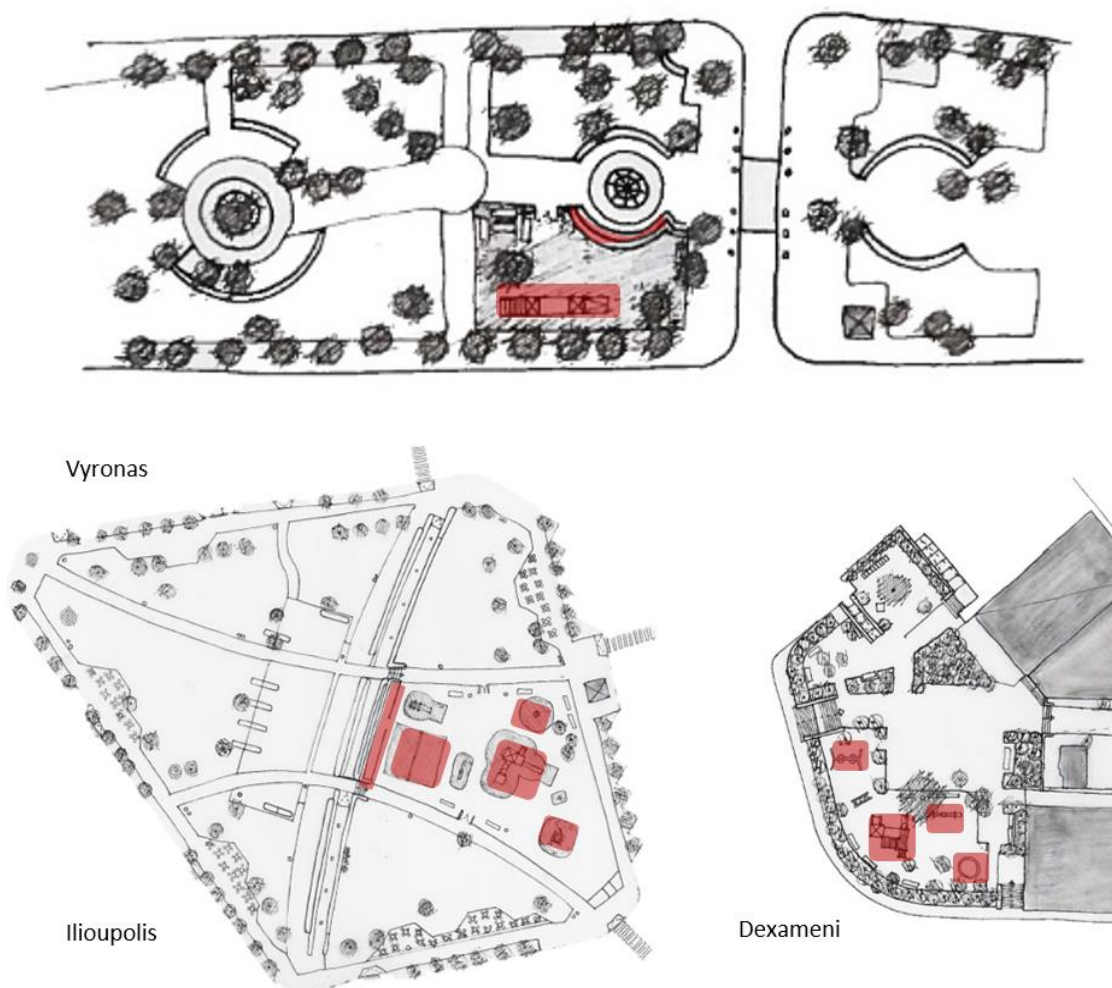


Figure 6-21: Normalisation in the Playground

Normalisation practices included interventions, usually orally in order to pinpoint the unaccepted behaviour and restore the order. When the spoken indications were not effective, the ones performing the normalisation practice approached, trying to make themselves visible and repeated the comment. After that, one may raise their voice. No physical intervention was observed at all times. Reference to a person of power who was not present was also used when guardians or careers could not discipline children:

*'I will call your father' (Grandmother Ilioupolis).*

Another practice, rarely observed but really interesting nevertheless, was normalisation through ignoring:

*'Mother places toddler to the structure to play although boys are telling her that they play there now with their ball 'little boy, you can't play here, we are here now'. The boys' game is interrupted, they don't throw the ball to avoid accidents. After some time they get bored and search for a different spot to play' (Field-notes, Dexameni).*

In this incident, the boys, not wanting to hurt the toddler with the ball, withdrew. It occurs from my observations that the ultimate normalisation practice was the physical removal of the undisciplined child from the space.

Some authors highlight the discrepancy between adult and child perceptions and uses of play spaces (Jacobs, 1961; James, 1990; Jones, 2000; Skelton, 2000; Thomson & Philo, 2004; Valentine, 1996a, 1996b; Ward, 1978). It is interesting to note that although the vast majority of normalisation practices was exercised by adults, I often observed children themselves normalising each other according to what was considered acceptable:

*'Not like that! You should play that way!' (Girl, Dexameni) (See also: Zeiher, 2003).*

## Piazza

Exploring normalisation practices in the context of the different spaces allows me to expand on the ideas about childhood and 'good parenting' affecting the playground space. An examination of the ways normalisation affected children's presence in the piazzas will contribute to a better understanding of normalisation

mechanisms in the playground as a Heterotopia of Deviance. My findings suggest that the mere classification of the piazza as not-a-child's-space, and as a result its infrastructure as not play structures, justified normalisation practices:

*'This is not a toy' (Mother, Vyronas).*

The spatiality of normalization for children in the piazzas, in contrast with the playground's that was revolving around the play structures, included all the classified-as-dangerous areas: the hidden and inaccessible spaces, at the edges of the supervision bubbles and in piazza affordances as well as all unexpected behaviours (Figure 6-22):

*'Child passing by with his father wants to climb the conical structure. The father pulls him saying "not again" (Field-notes, Vyronas).*

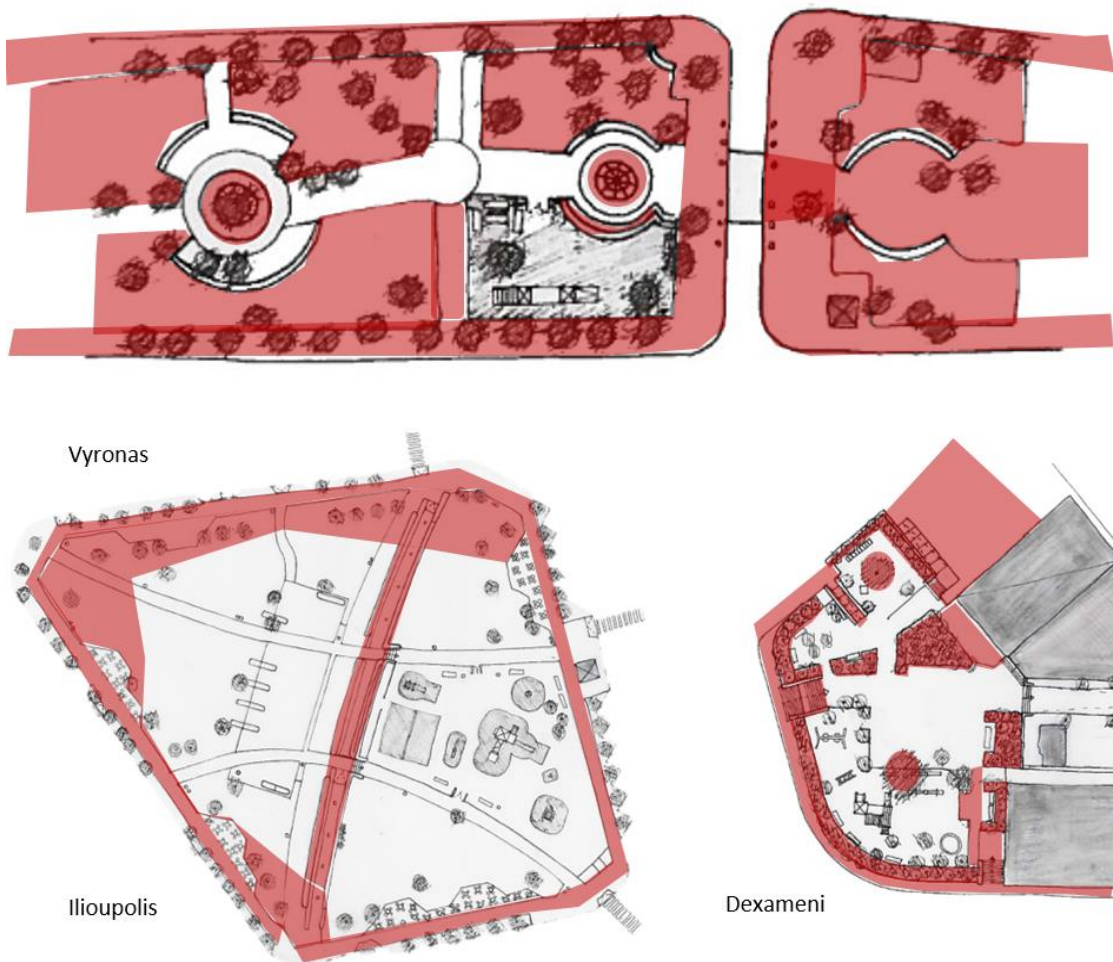


Figure 6-22: Normalisation in the piazzas

A common observation in the piazza was that when the one responsible to normalise alternate behaviours did not do it, or did not do it on time, other adults in the area stepped in. I did not observe this behaviour in the playground space. The guardians that did not succeed in controlling their child often became the focus of critical gazes. Societal perceptions about what was considered safe underlined these practices.

I often found myself troubled about the “proper” behaviours:

*‘My horror when the children play with the dangerous bin is a direct result of societal perceptions about children’s’ safety. The fact that no one keeps an eye on them makes my concern acute’ (Field-notes).*

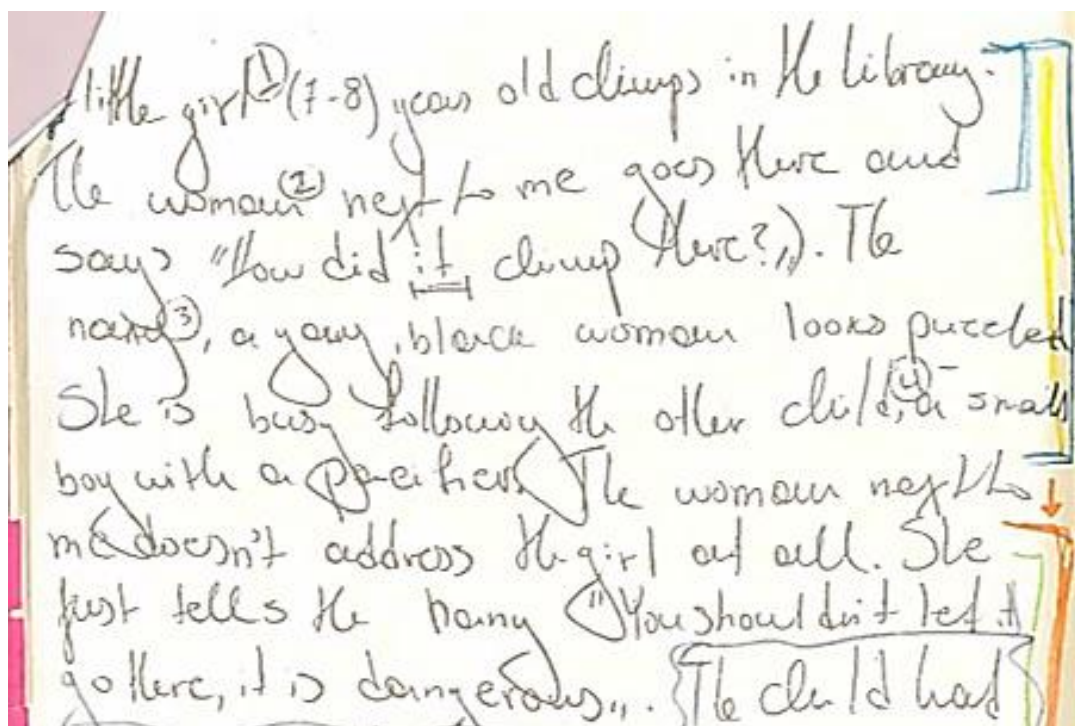


Figure 6-23: Normalising one's parenting

At the same time perceptions about good-parenting often justified other people's intervention to children's behaviours (Figure 6-23): when a little girl climbed the library in Dexameni a woman from the piazza scolded the nanny:

*‘You shouldn't let **it** go there, it is dangerous’.*

The lady felt she had to intervene and dictate the nanny to be more careful by normalizing the nanny's “parenting” rather than the child's behaviour.

It becomes evident that the difference in the intensity of normalisation practices as well as the places this was taking place responds to adults' perceptions about children's well-being. In the Heterotopia of Deviance –a considered as safe space – normalization practices were limited to indicating a “proper” way to play, while in the “dangerous” piazza classification of space regulated all interactions with the space.

#### **6.4.6 Assistance**

##### **A Guardian's Duty**

Although, keeping in mind the classification of space, assisting was expected mostly in the “dangerous” public space, I often observed it in the playground's play structures. Societal norms, made guardians solely responsible for children's safety indicating their involvement with children's activities:

*‘Grandmother comments on how a father in the playground speaks in his phone and isn't supervising his daughter that is playing with some coins. The grandmother mentions that the girl could eat them and get choked. However, she doesn't say anything to the father directly’ (Field-notes, Vyronas).*

My observations suggest that guardians assisted children in using the structures in order to safeguard and protect them from injury. This especially occurred when there was a problem with the structures, for example when a child could not get the merry-go-round to spin as it was too stiff. I often observed guardians engaging in play in order to offset the lack of play companions:

*‘If the children don't find any friends, we play with them perforce’ (Mother, Ilioupolis).*

Moreover, I observed guardians assisting children in order to teach them how to play or use the play structures properly strengthening the playgrounds' deviant character as a space promoting specific behaviours:

*‘Sometimes we slide or play in the monkey bars, until he is old enough to learn how to play alone’ (Grandmother, Dexameni).*

Although assistance was instigated by the need to safeguard children and help them engage fully with the space's features, I observed that it often led to an undercurrent

normalising of behaviours and children's play by dictating children "proper" ways to play.

It is interesting to note that guardians often referred to assisting children in the playground, a practice enforcing the Heterotopia of Deviance safety concerns, as play:

*'They play... I once saw a mother in the bridge helping a little boy' (Girl, Vyronas).*

*'Guardians considered any activity around the play structures as play: 'it was very hard for me to read between the lines when parents were replying that they play with the children and identify the ones that would consider supporting children, while they climb the stairs as playing' (Field-notes).*

### Nannies: Employed to Assist

It is interesting to examine the case of play as employment examining the Nannies, observed in Dexameni. My findings suggest that as nannies were employed to play, protect and keep children company, they acted as an assisting but not as a normalisation mechanism. Although I observed them commenting and scolding children playing recklessly when something serious happened, they were not the ones to normalise the unrolled child. This was the case when a boy threw a glass bottle at a girl. I observed the other guardians enquiring about his mother and instructing the nanny to tell her what happened, rather than requesting from her to normalise it. The mother (not the father) not the nanny was the one accounting for the child's behaviour.

At the same time, being in the piazza with a nanny seemed to be a different experience for the children as restrictions and different kind of rules applied:

*'I usually bring my bike but today I came with the nanny and I couldn't bring it' (Girl, Dexameni).*

My observations suggest that nannies' play was tolerated in the playground:

*'Yes, I play all the time. Not in the play structures. He is young, he wouldn't go there. And only with the child. I need to be vigilant' (Nanny, Dexameni).*

Moreover, nannies did not socialise with other guardians, rather engaged in quick catch ups with their acquaintances, moving between different groups of guardians always vigilant to follow the child around.



#### 6.4.7 Self-regulation Practices

There is evidence that people, both adults and children adjusted their behaviours according to society's norms and other people's expectations, conforming to the Heterotopia's of Deviance rules. Self-regulation, a variation of the normalisation process taking place, the normalizing of oneself, supported the playground's balance. Adults self-regulated in order to avoid conflict, to not hinder play and to not hurt anyone, while children self-regulated in order not to be hurt and to not hurt other children. Guardians often regulated their behaviours following perceptions about the 'good parenting' behaviour, aware of the societal gaze in the playground. The playground was not only a space to construct children's identities and behaviours (Crust et al. 2014; Gross and Rutland; 2014; Murnaghan, 2013; Richards, 2012) but also one where both children's and guardians' behaviours could be performed (Goffman, 1956). My observations suggest that many of the guardians' comments about children's behaviour lacked any persuasiveness, uttering the words quietly, but loud enough to be heard by the surrounding people, just because this was what was expected from them.

Unsurprisingly, play in the playground space referred only to children. The playground, constructed as a space for children in the public (See: 6.2.3), excluded adult play. Similar to other studies carried out in a western context (Alderson, 2000; Cole-Hamilton & Gill, 2000; Smith, 1995) my findings revealed that conceptions of age not only make the playground space a children's space but also made play a child's "right". Is not this, however, another way to distinguish between adulthood and childhood? When we refer to a child's right do not we exclude adults from play? As Aitken (2001a) argues:

In adulthood we separate ourselves off from places and people to the extent that we no longer know how to play (p.19).

Play created feelings of awkwardness for adults (Aaron, 1965; Edmiston, 2008; Sutton-Smith, 1997) who often did not engage in children's play to avoid "spoiling" it.

The few guardians who played were observed to be self-conscious, frequently regulating their behaviours according to what was expected from them. Often guardians mentioned that they would really like to play, but they did not do so as they were embarrassed about what the other guardians may think:

*'If only there was a condition that would allow parents to play... I would most certainly play' (Moher, Dexameni).*



*'For example, we wanted to play on the monkey bars, but I was ashamed to do so because I was expecting someone to say to me that there are children that want to play' (Father, Ilioupolis).*

Guardians that enjoyed play, and played actively with their children and their friends in the piazza, commented on how they self-regulated their behaviours when in the playground:

*'The play structures bias you towards child's play. He would ask me to climb the bridge but I didn't want to climb for this reason. You feel this is for the children. I usually play peripherally in the structures. I am their ice cream shop's customer, or the shark around their pirate ship.'* (Father, Dexameni).

They often stopped when they were hindering children, as:

*'Children come first in this space' (Mother, Dexameni).*

At the same time, adults' anxiety to keep the children's space safe led them to use broken play-structures, not in use by the children (Figure 6-26, Figure 6-25, Figure 6-26):

*'I don't want to break anything' (Father, Ilioupolis).*

Ironically, however, when they commented on other guardians' play people tended to be critical:

*'The same mother that told me that she would like to play in the structures made a movement with her hand near her head indicating that he was crazy when she was talking about a father that was playing actively with his son in the playground!' (Field-notes).*

Children were often used to legitimise adult playful behaviour:

*'I only saw one playing in the see-saw in this playground. With his child, not alone!' (Mother, Ilioupolis).*

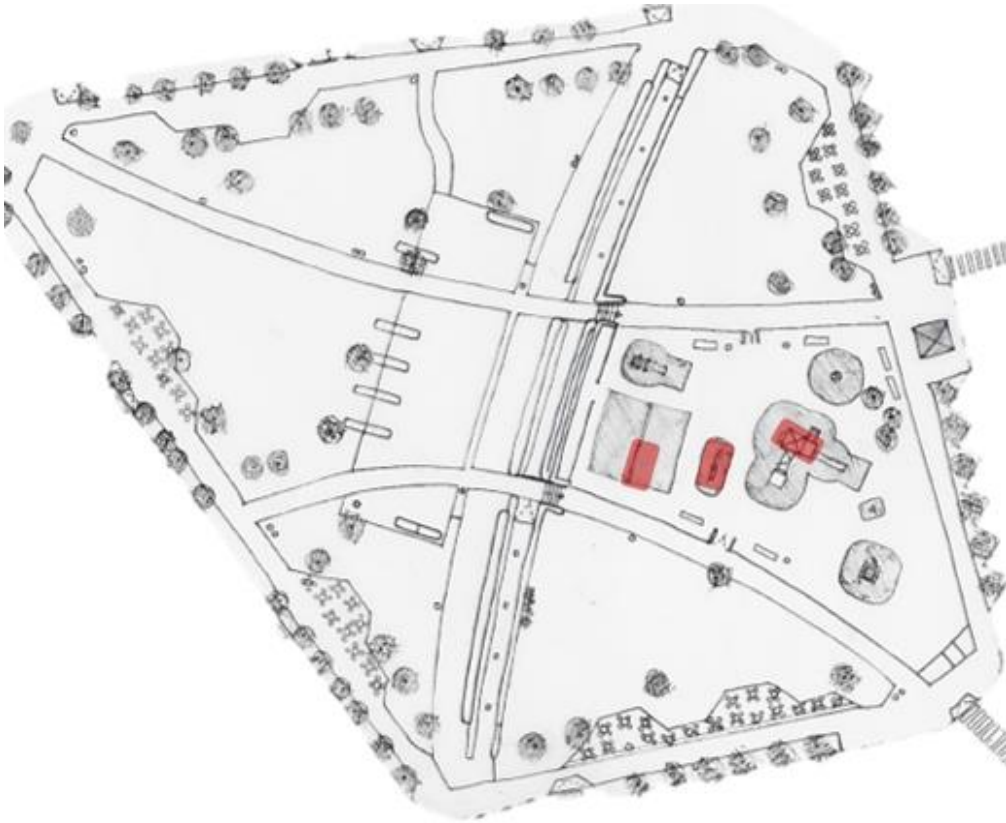


Figure 6-24: Ilioupolis – Adult-child play in the playground

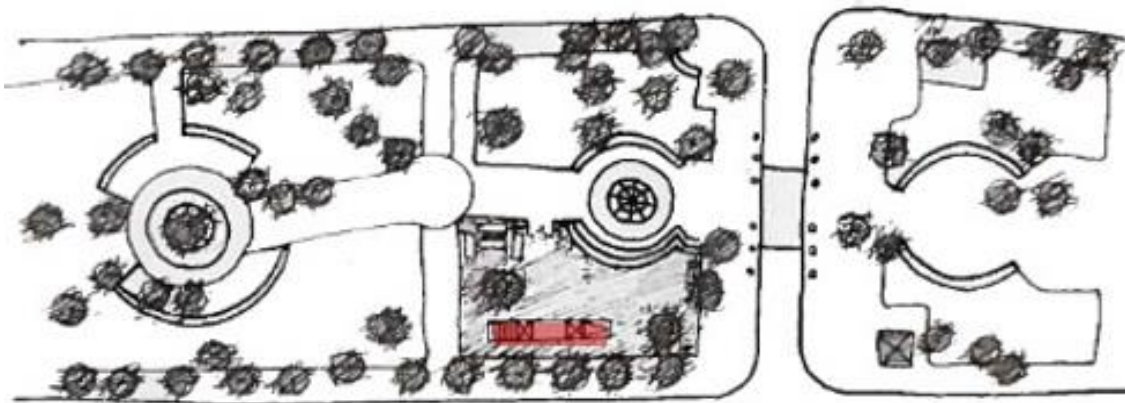


Figure 6-25: Vyronas – Adult-child play in the playground

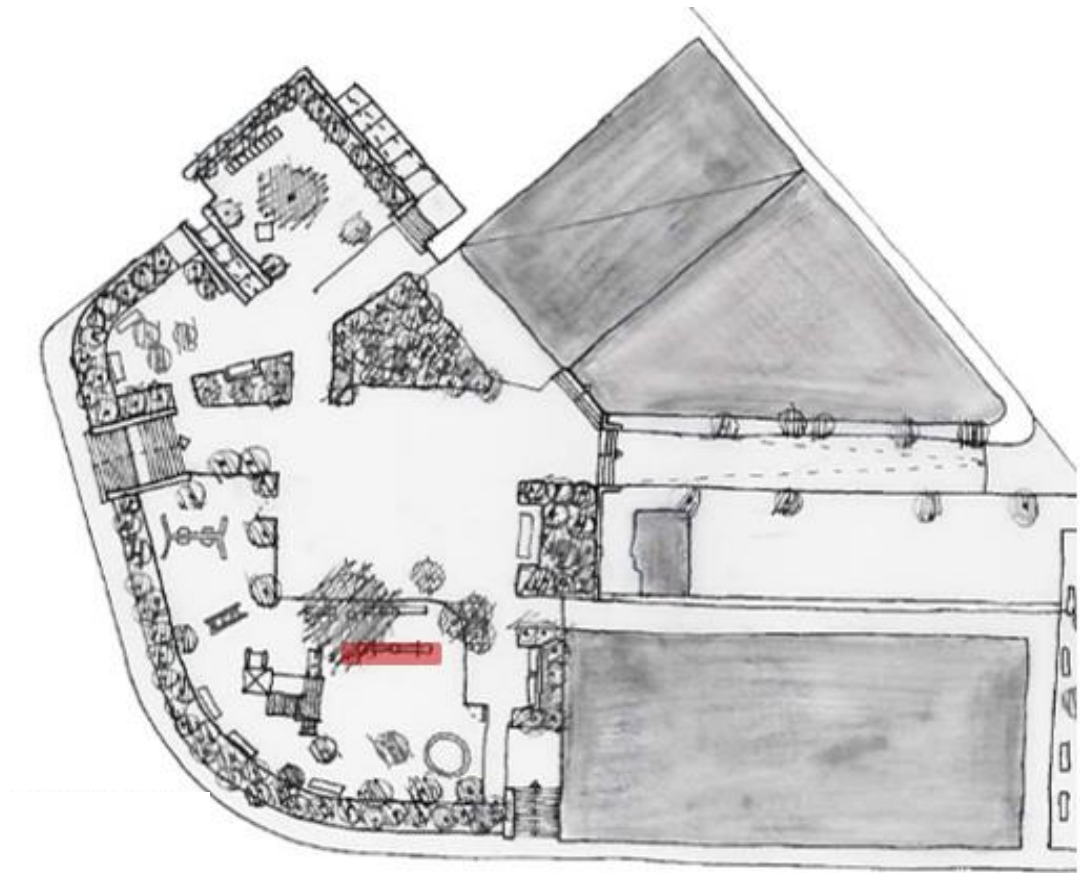


Figure 6-26: Dexameni – Adult-child play in the playground

My observations recorded two acceptable play behaviours: “peripheral” and “sedentary” play. “Peripheral play” took place when the children playing in the structure created a story that the guardian could engage, moving around the play structures without, however, actively playing or using them. Similarly, “Sedentary play” took place when guardians sitting, supervising children engaged in children’s play from their seat:

*‘The father was be the home base for girls chasing game, tickling them when they approached’ (Field-notes, Dexameni).*

In contrast with the supervision mechanism, my findings suggest that self-regulation relaxed in the crowded places as the panopticon qualities ceased:

*‘But it’s hard to see this here because it’s so crowded that’s not so clear... Comparing it with the other playground which is smaller and everyone knows the rules... They are rules, we know them. In the other playground, there is no way one will leave without closing the door. If you leave without closing the door it will be a matter of*

*discussion, we will say 'look what happened' here you will not say that' (Father, Dexameni).*

Literature focuses not only on the play behaviours that specific kinds of spaces support (Gagen, 2000a, 2000b; Holloway & Valentine, 2000a; McKendrick et al., 2000a; Smith & Baker, 2000) but also on how conceptions of childhood and adulthood are structured in space (Blackford, 2004; Drew et al., 1987; Gol-Guven, 2016; Sutton-Smith, 1990; Thomson, 2005, 2003; Maxey, 1999). The playground was not a play space. Rather, it was a play-space for children, not welcoming players from other age-groups. This norm, widely accepted by the participants, limited “playful” interactions in the playground, making guardians into supervisors instead of play-partners.

Other adults, not accompanying children, self-regulated their behaviours in order to avoid conflict with the guardians and the other users, always giving priority to children and their play (Figure 6-27, Figure 6-28, Figure 6-29). As I have explored above, following the classification of the playground as a children’s space people not accompanying any children tended to avoid it. There is strong evidence, however, that those who did use it tried to manage guardians’ expectations and fears. For example, although teenagers stated their willingness to play, they commented on choosing the empty structures in order to avoid conflict with the guardians:

*‘We play in the empty ones [structures] so the parents can’t say to us anything’ (Teen, Dexameni).*

Teens in Vyronas did not like to play in or near the playground as guardians scolded them for potentially pushing away the younger children.

Moreover, it is interesting to mention what a teenage boy told me during an interview:

*‘We visit the playground only at times when parents and children usually use it but we make sure to be there before they come. We sit here and they play around. They don’t say anything to us’ (Teenager boy, Vyronas).*



Figure 6-27: Ilioupolis – Adults not accompanying children in the playground

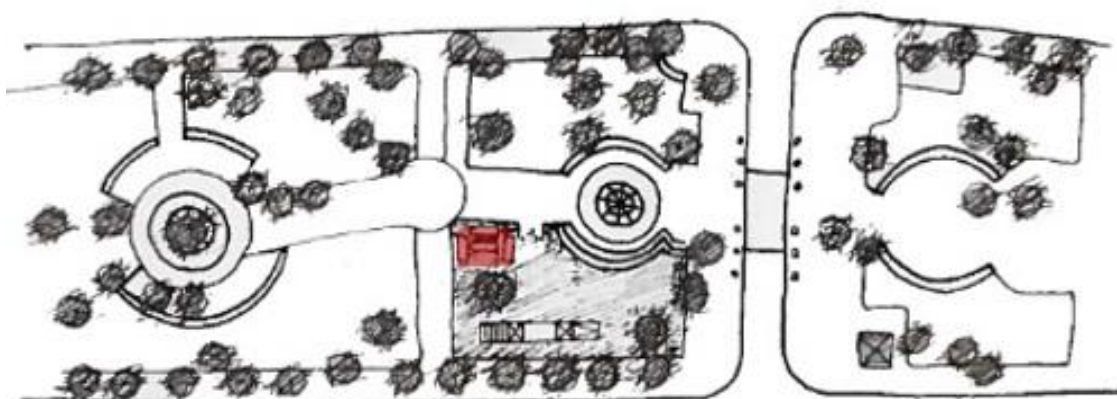
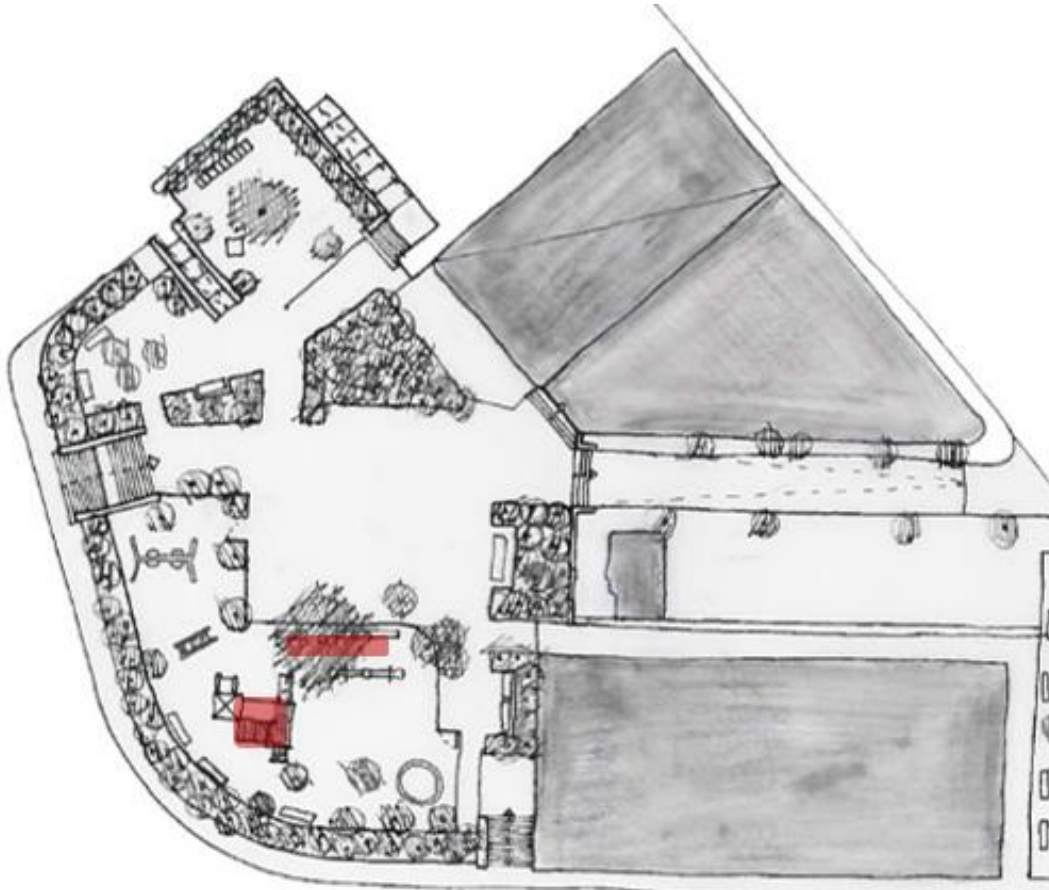


Figure 6-28: Vyronas – Adults not accompanying children in the playground



*Figure 6-29: Dexameni – Adults not accompanying children in the playground*

My observations confirmed that when the guardians came the teenagers retained their position. To my surprise, I realised that this was exactly what I was doing. I felt that being in the space before the participants, legitimised my presence. When, however, I entered an already full playground and started moving around groups of guardians they tended to avoid me. Their experienced eye caught my movements in the space, while my presence raised their suspicions. Many of them commented on how they thought I was selling something.

## **6.5 Beyond the Heterotopia Norms: After-hours**

In order to extend understanding of the playground as a Heterotopia of Deviance I am going to briefly describe what took place when children were absent. The Heterotopia of Deviance was accommodated in the playground space, needing the playground's specialised space to exist. However, it was also dependent on its users and the behaviours it accommodated. My findings suggest that the playground's orderings as a Heterotopia of Deviance were abolished during its afterhours. Briefly



examining what was taking place then will expand our understanding of what made the playground different from the surround piazza and structured it as a Heterotopia of Deviance.

Unfortunately, for health and safety reasons this research was limited to observations only during the daytime and early night-time. Interviews, however, supported that the playground was used differently at night:

*'They come at night, drink, litter... That is why the door should lock (Mother, Dexameni).*

Moreover, in the daytime, at times when the playground was empty, I observed different groups and users overlooking classification of space and its "proper use". When people were alone in the playground, free from any societal gaze and the need to follow certain behaviours, they were observed to appropriate the space more actively:

*'If I was to play I would like for the space not to be crowded as the children have priority in this space' (Mother, Vyronas).*

These were the only times when teenagers' and guardians' play was observed. One hot afternoon, in Ilioupolis, when both the piazza and playground were empty, a group of teenagers occupied a bench, chatting, shouting, teasing and pushing each other:

*'One throws a water bottle in the empty space. They chase each other in the empty piazza, in and out of the playground. The bench acts as their home base. They run around it and then move further away only to return again to the base. They occupy the central and right part of the piazza, leaving only the left part for a mother with a toddler that exits the playground. Then, four of them enter the playground, play in the swings and the bridge and then return to the bench to find the rest of the group' (Field-notes, Ilioupolis).*

Similar incidents were observed in all three cases. The absence of other people in the space, allowed teenagers, usually pushed to the margins of the space, to appropriate it and transgress the boundaries usually set to them.

Teenagers enjoyed playing on the structures when they were unoccupied in all three case studies. Teenagers argued in the interviews that they were attracted to the playground space for two reasons: socialising and play. Some structures such as the

circular structure in Dexameni, the bridge in Ilioupolis, and various sitting areas were supporting hanging-out facing each other, while other structures challenged them to invent new ways of playing:

*'Teens in Dexameni jump from the bridge competing how far they can go'*  
(Field-notes, Dexameni).

There is evidence that when children were absent the playground stopped functioning as a Heterotopia of Deviance and acquired different connotations and uses as a fenced area in the piazza. Adults, despite not identifying with the playground (See: 6.4.2) – *'What should I do in the playground?'* (Old man, Ilioupolis) – often commented on finding its spatial introversion alluring. They preferred the playground to the piazza's sitting areas for its "enclosed" character and for the infrastructure that supported socialising. Benches, for example, appealed because they allowed one to chat, while supporting the back in a shaded location:

*'We prefer this area because it is 'more private' and because we like the benches' placement'* (lady, Vyronas).

In the Vyronas playground, a group of young adults mentioned that they preferred this space especially for its enclave character:

*'Even the way the benches are dispersed is a reason we like this playground. The space feels familiar'* (Teenage boy, Vyronas).

Although designed for children, the playground space, was observed to be a space appropriated by a variety of different groups. The playground Heterotopia of Deviance was supported by the physical space, but the physical qualities of the space itself did not define it. Rather, it was the practices and subjects, designed to be accommodated, that gave the playground its deviant character and not the inherent qualities of its segregated design; the product of a social condition (See: 3.6.3) (Chung, 2012; Jacobs, 2004; Miller, 2015; Rymarczuk & Derksen, 2014) affected by the space and its physical characteristics. This suggests that the playground was structured as a Heterotopia of Deviance only when it was used by the children. At the same time, this after-hours use did not enrich the playground's Public Value as defined in this study (See: 2.3.2) as the various (age) groups did not co-exist or interact. Non-player groups created their own orderings, transforming the playground and questioning its



segregated character, only at times where the “rightful” users of the space, namely children and their guardians, were absent. They did not transform it to a public space where strangers and people from a variety of age-groups can co-exist and interact.

## 6.6 Summary

My fieldwork supported my theoretical frameworks’ stance that the playground was created and designed as a Heterotopia of Deviance, functioning under a set of societal norms and societal fears with a view to protect the children. In this, the first chapter describing my findings, I examined the playground as a Heterotopia of Deviance through its physical characteristics, while describing its users and the norms that structure it.

Despite the playground appearing to physically be part of public space – physically accessible to all users – it was not socio-culturally perceived as public space. Rather it emerged as a distinct space, classified as “children’s”, employing distinct mechanisms of physically segregating and controlling, while profiling users and regulating access. A Heterotopia of Deviance created to protect children constructing them as “others” in the public realm. It comprised not only the built environment but also the social practices and the events it contained. A set of norms establishing a perceived-as-normal order informed people’s behaviours in order to secure children’s safety and promote “valuable” play. These were shared not only between its members but were also in line with broader societal ideas about good parenting, childhood and play. A system emerging from societal fears regulated the playground’s function by classifying the space and profiling its users. Supervision and segregation of the vulnerable become the cornerstone of a protecting culture, while assistance, normalisation and self-regulation of behaviours intent to restore balance and discipline the un-ruled.

The playground was perceived as a place for childhood, a state of human life that is usually thought as one that deviates from the “normality” of adult life providing “special equipment” for supervised “safe” and “valuable” play. Control and safeguarding emerged from my fieldwork as the playground’s main design requirement. In line with its child-centred character and special design, classifying playground as an area with a specific purpose, the participants (both guardians and people in the piazza) perceived it as a place for children’s protection, regulation of play and segregation. Both the playground’s function and the interactions between playground and the piazza were found to be regulated by social norms and shared perceptions revolving around

childhood and “good parenting”. Perceptions of playgrounds as solely children’s spaces, preoccupied with children’s safety and wellbeing, excluded adults use, while their special design and scale intensified the children’s space classification.

However, as observations of special incidents or after hours’ use of the playground revealed, the playground’s norms were abolished when other users appropriated the space. The different behaviours taking place suggest that the playground’s deviance was structured around perceptions of children’s well-being and safety. At the same time, they reveal the potential of the playground space moving away from its characterisation as a children’s space (Figure 6-30).

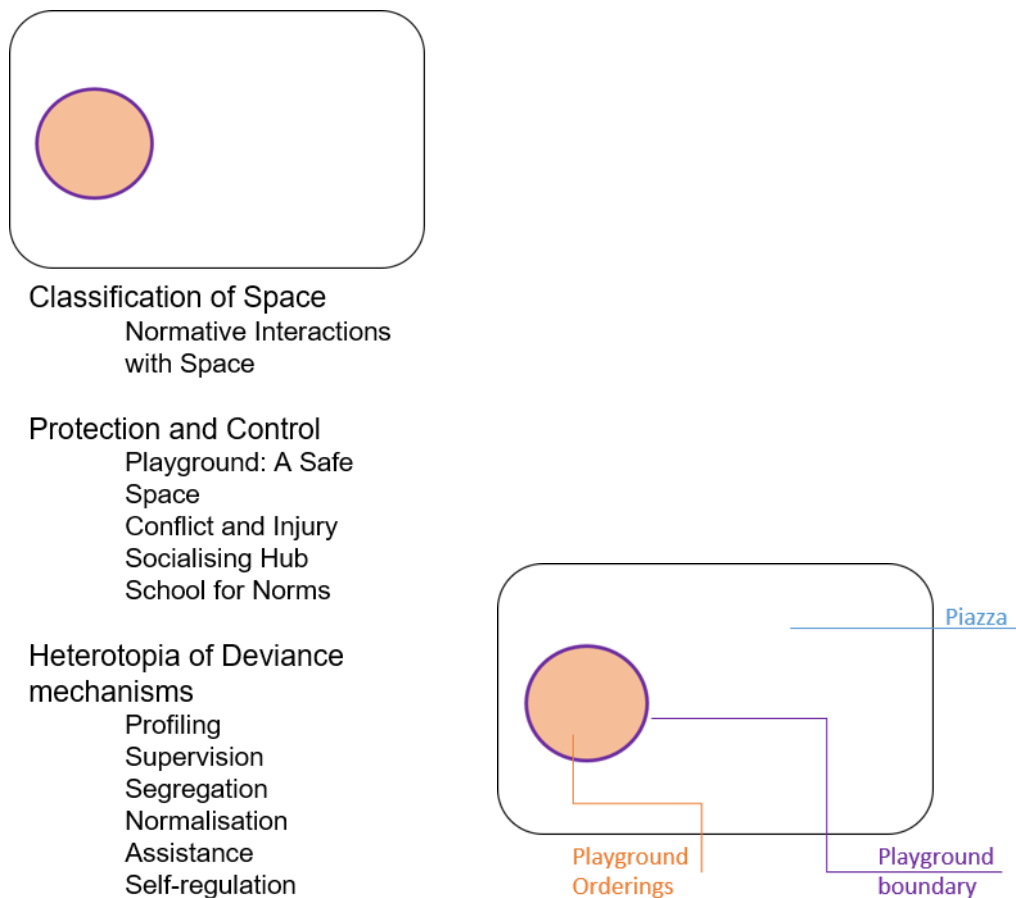


Figure 6-30: The Heterotopia of Deviance

*'Older children play in the piazza. A girl runs to her father who is placed in the playground sitting area. She talks to him through the bars. Then she runs back to the ball game taking place in the piazza' (Field-notes, Dexameni, 23/4/2016).*



# 7. Heterotopia of Transgression

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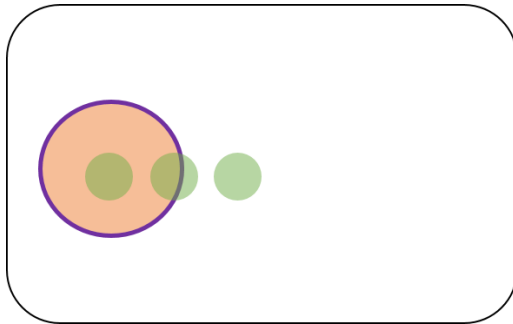


Figure 7-1: The Heterotopia of Transgression:

*'Transgression, then, is not related to the limit as black to white, the prohibited to the lawful, the outside to the inside, or as the open area of a building to its enclosed spaces. Rather their relationship takes the form of lighting in the night which [...] lights up the night from the inside, from top to bottom, and yet owes to the dark the stark clarity of its manifestation' (Foucault, 1998b, p. 74).*

## 7.1 Overview

Up to now I have described the playground space according to its characterisation as a Heterotopia of Deviance for the protection of children, a designated children's space, and I have explored the norms and mechanisms that regulated its function. In what follows I describe my findings concerning the spatial practices that created a Heterotopia of Transgression. Focusing on the spatial characteristics supporting the emergence of alternate orderings I explore transgression as a process, created in the playground space, engaging with the playground's boundary and extending beyond it interacting with the public space. First, I explore the socio-spatial factors that supported negations of the playground's norms. I describe the new situation created inside the playground limits. Then I focus on the playground boundary. I explore the interactions between the playground, as a Heterotopia of Transgression, and the adjacent piazza. Drawing on the transgressive character of play I describe the qualities, both social and spatial, that blurred the playground's boundaries and supported play's alternate orderings overflowing towards the piazza. Finally, I explore the negotiations, a "tug-of-war" game, of the new situation with the established norms described in the previous chapter (See: Chapter 6).

## 7.2 In, On and Beyond the Boundary

### 7.2.1 Introduction: Redefining the Children's Space

While many studies relate defined play-spaces to heterotopic characteristics (Campo, 2013; Karsten, 2003; Kern, 2008; Richards, 2013; Walseth, 2006b; Wesselman, 2013; Vermeulen, 2011) I approached heterotopia as a process and explored its variations and expressions in the playground space. Play bearing “possibility” (See: 3.5), was able to transform the playground and question the norms of the Heterotopia of Deviance. The new situation that emerged cannot be described through specific characteristics and mechanisms as in the case of the Heterotopia of Deviance. Rather, it was created and sustained by children's spontaneous spatial practices. My observations suggest that the playground's, often restricting, physical characteristics and norms regulating its use created the conditions that supported negotiation of the existing and the creation of alternate orderings. The playground had a dual character: on the one hand it was created in order to protect children, on the other it was a designated space of play. Although intending to control and institutionalise play, the playground was, by definition, where play's alternate orderings were supposed to take place.

Although the norms regulating the playground space restricted users and behaviours, at the same time they prioritised children's –often reckless– play:

*‘It is a space for play after all!’ (Mother, Ilioupolis).*

As a result the children were free to take advantage of the available infrastructure and make decisions about their own play and time there. Similarly, as the playground infrastructure was preceived by the participants as being safer than that in the public space, children were allowed to use it in ways that were not acceptable on the other side of the fence (such as hiding behind bushes, climbing in trees). The playground became the space where ‘devils’ (Father, Vyronas) could be set free.

However, although the playground's character as a space for children (Rasmussen, 2004) was constantly stressed by both adults and children throughout the interviews, it could not always fulfil its purpose as a safe play-space. Boredom acted as a creative force challenging existing orderings, while people invented new ways of interacting with the space in order to compensate for its inability to accommodate what participants perceived as “valuable” play.

The Heterotopia of Transgression actively used space to challenge and negotiate established norms and behaviours. Play's transgressive characteristics

(Glenn et al., 2012; Nardo, 1986; Richards, 2013; Staempfli, 2009; Sutton-Smith, 1997; Thyssen, 2003; Winnicott, 2009) structured the playground as a space of alternate orderings (Campo, 2013; Karsten, 2003 Kern, 2008; Vermeulen, 2011; Wesselman, 2013). Although the process was situated in the playground space, I observed transgression within, on and beyond the playground boundary, with play-related activity constantly transgressing the fence; overflowing from the playground and then retreating back into the enclosed space. Within the playground, the process of heterotopia took advantage of the space's classification as a children's space, engaging with the infrastructure's physicality, while trying to compensate for its age-specific and prescriptive nature. In contrast with previous research (Zeihner, 2003), my observations suggest that children did not use play-spaces only according to their specialised design. At the same time, transgressive practices transformed the boundary itself into a play-structure, with the fence's physical characteristics allowing interaction between the contrasting orderings of inside and outside. Finally, children's spatial practices often extended beyond the boundary taking advantage of the piazzas' infrastructure which offered different affordances to the playground space, often using this to complement the playground's structures. This spatial extension offers interesting perspectives when discussing the Public Value. In what follows, I examine the observed transgressive practices focusing on the physical characteristics that encouraged and supported these.

## 7.2.2 Inside the Fence

### Prescriptive

*'The last one is a rotten tomato!!' (Boy, Ilioupolis).*

Children extended their play beyond the normal behaviours prescribed by play-structures (See: 6.3.1), often reinventing their use and responding to other infrastructure and material qualities. My observations confirmed that play and alternate uses were interrelated:

*'Girls swing vertically in the swings' (Field-notes, Ilioupolis).*

From children jumping on the benches and climbing the fence or using the play-structures in reverse, alternate uses and the invention of new games filled my notes. Children, using the playground infrastructure as and in relation to the play-structures,

negotiated the characterisation of areas in the playground as being for adults or for children turning the area inside the boundaries into a homogenous play area instead:

*'The girl reaches the fence and then runs climbing up the slide. She runs through the bridge and down the stairs' (Field-notes, Vyronas) (Figure 7-2)*

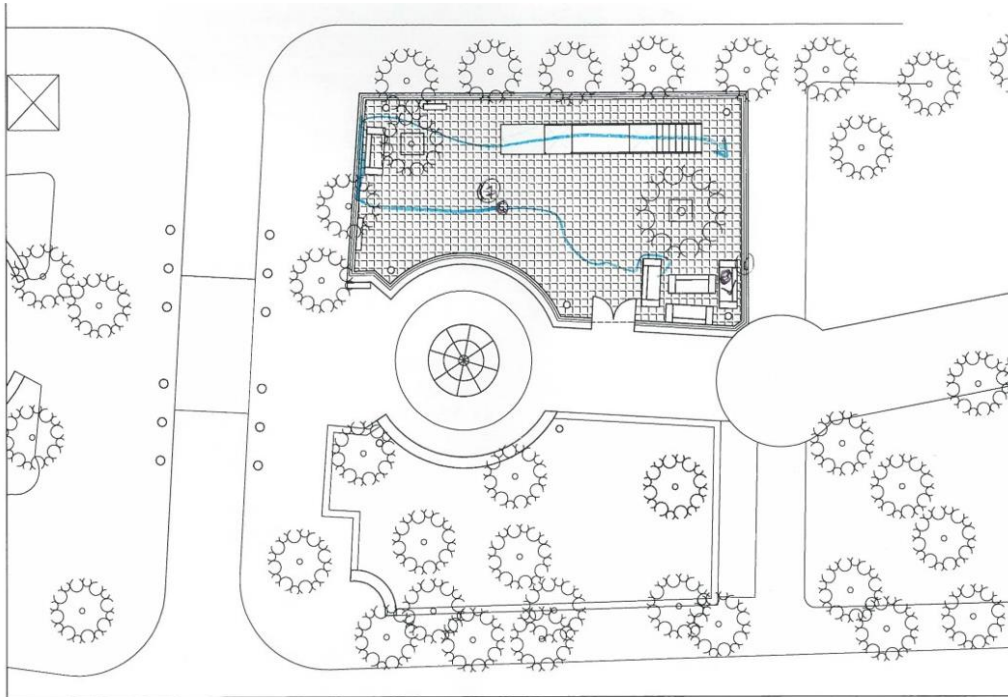


Figure 7-2: Vyronas – Descriptive diagram: The fence as a play structure (girls' movement in blue)

In Vyronas, where the playground comprised only a bridge-slide structure, children engaged with transient affordances in the space (Figure 7-3). These were objects like shopping carts or boxes or animals such as pigeons. I also observed that they used the fence as a play-structure more frequently than in the other cases studies.

At the same time, the play-structures' design, prescribed and specific, tended to discourage interpretations or co-operative forms of play. Play, however, often manifested as a collective experience for both children and adults. Although the structures had a very specific use, for a specific number of users, I often observed children collaborating with their peers in order to manipulate and appropriate the infrastructure, transgressing the set rules to include more of them in their games:

*'One child sits in the seat trying to keep it stably up, while the rest try to balance standing up all at once' (Field-notes, Dexameni).*

Often alternate uses took the form of contest and ability demonstration, while with children were challenging each other:



*'Children try to balance in the see-saw. It is a kind of contest as they take turns. Then they move to the bridge and try to climb using only their hands' (Field-notes).*

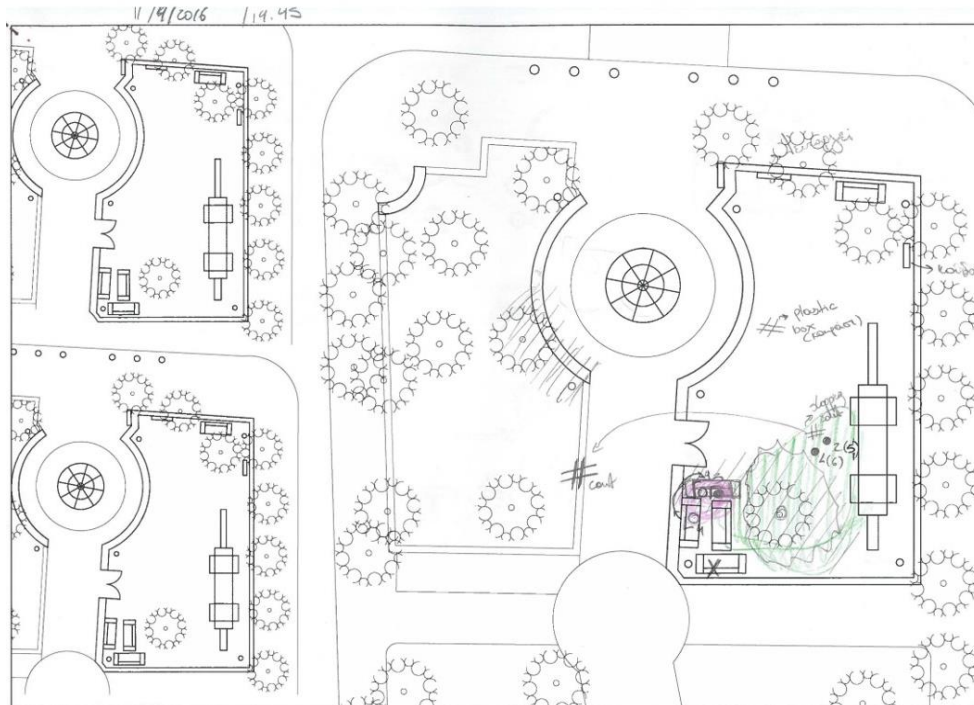


Figure 7-3: Vyronas – Descriptive diagram: Playing with a shopping cart (green: play area, pink: sitting area, #: shopping cart)

### Age-specific

At the same time, the playground, emerging as an age-specific place with pre-defined ways to play and use the structures, did not take into account all the ages' different abilities across the age span of its users. The structures often were too challenging for toddlers and too boring for older children<sup>31</sup>. A common observation was that older children engaged with the structures in a more challenging way according to their abilities in order to make their play more interesting:

*'I like this playground but I would prefer a higher slide' (Girl, Ilioupolis).*

They climbed and sat above the structures, performed dangerous tricks, or used the structures in reverse – climbing through the slide, sliding from the stairs' handrail –

<sup>31</sup> I have already examined the affect this child-centered focus had on the playground's publicness and Public Value (6.Heterotopia of Deviance)

inventing new ways to play, extending their pre-determined uses and defying the “proper way to play”:

*‘Two boys climb and stand up in the baby swings’ (Field-notes, Dexameni).*

Children took advantage of what was available at each time, often playing on structures that were not prescribed for their age. For example, when the swings were occupied in Ilioupolis two girls decided to climb on the baby swings. Similar observations took place in Dexameni where there were not any children’s swings at all:

*‘The children’s swings are occupied, children climb to the baby swings. They try to sit and swing. After a while, the girls in the children’s swings join the other two in the baby swings and all four of them try to climb there leaving the children swings empty’ (Field-notes, Ilioupolis).*

There is evidence that both the physical characteristics of the available infrastructure and the children’s age and abilities determined the ways they experimented with and used the structures:

*‘An older girl walks down the slide, while her younger sister slides down properly. They both run around the structure’ (Field-notes, Ilioupolis).*

In the same way that each child’s abilities and coordination affected his/her capacity to use the structures as intended, I observed that it also affected his/her capacity to transgress the rules. I often observed that older children acted as examples for the younger ones challenging them to use the play-structures more actively than they usually did. Children often used play in order to “teach” more exciting ways to use the infrastructure to other, usually younger, children:

*‘A 4 year old girl shows a 3 year old boy how to walk on the ledge holding the fence; (Field-notes, Dexameni).*

Play encouraged testing one’s abilities and inventing games that included a variety of children’s age groups (often teenagers) ascribing possibility to the playground’s Public Vale as examined in this study. In Vyronas, when two girls were playing together the older girl was utilising every spatial feature and public infrastructure creating a game of

two levels, a tougher one for herself – including the fence which she could climb but her younger sister could not – and an easier one for her sister (Figure 7-4):

*‘They run around, climbed the structure, the older using two steps at a time, the older run down the slide, the younger slid normally, run around the structure, circle a tree and then end up to the fence’s ledge. The older walks in the ledge, while the younger follows from on the ground’ (Field-notes, Vyronas).*

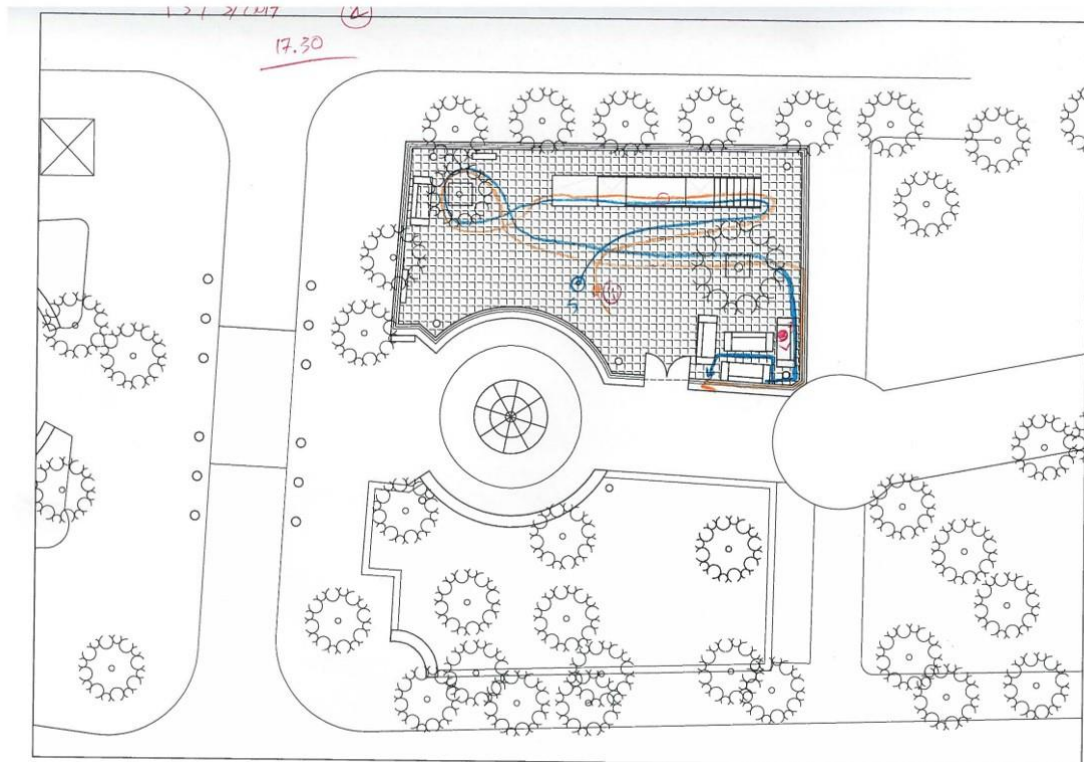


Figure 7-4: Vyronas – Descriptive diagram: Parallel play (Orange: older girl, Blue: younger girl)

### Immobility

The play-structures' immobility often made them difficult to appropriate and manipulate. Children often commented on how they were getting bored of repeating the same activities again and again. However, I often observed children taking advantage of the structures' immobility. They stripped them of any meaning and designated use, using them for what they essentially were – complex systems of metallic poles and beams – as opposed to what they were intended to be. I observed children becoming creative, inventing games and mixing ball – and other games or objects with the stable playground structures:

*'Four boys with a ball go to the rope circular structure and use it as a basket to throw the ball' (Field-notes, Dexameni).*

Similarly, in Ilioupolis:

*'Children after swinging properly for a, while start 'throwing' the swings to each other. The girl revolves the other sitting in the swing. Then she releases the swing and it spins. After a, while, they place their balls in the toddler swings, where the ball can't get away and do the same revolving with the balls' (Field-notes, Ilioupolis).*

The playground space itself acquired new uses and meanings when children used the metallic structures to play ball instead of sliding or swinging:

*'Children are playing ball, throwing it to the bridge structure, then climb and play there, throwing the ball to the ones underneath' (Field-notes, Dexameni).*

It transformed from a prescriptive environment to one full of affordances allowing a variety of interpretations.

### (In) accessibility

#### Inaccessible spaces

Hidden or inaccessible spaces emerged through my observations as parts of the infrastructure supporting transgression and alternate orderings (Figure 7-5). Carving out spaces children played in a world different than the "normal" one taking advantage of their plasmatic-independence as adults could not physically approach. The playground's hidden spaces were limited or non-existent due to the need to safeguard children at all times. Children, however, taking advantage of the child-centred design, were observed to hide in places and structures adults could not easily reach.

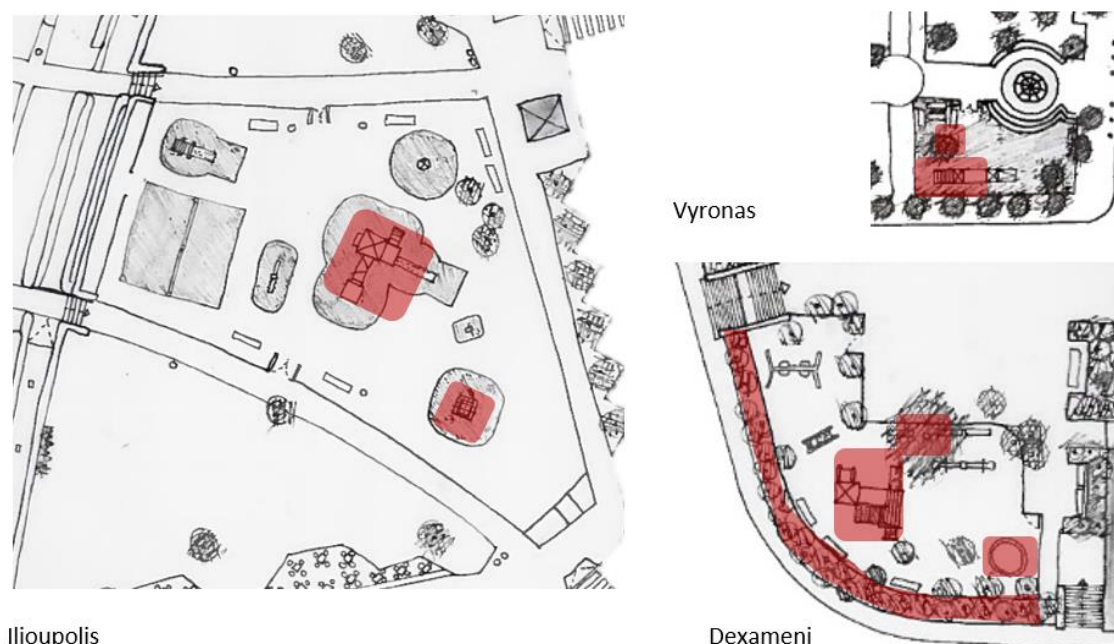


Figure 7-5: Inaccessible spaces in the playground – facilitating the Heterotopia of Transgression

For example they stayed under the bridge structure or upon the ropes structure, playing or socialising, alone or in groups. The play-structures' small scale empowered children to carve out spaces of their own. An afternoon in Dexameni a mother pretended she was Dracumel chasing the little Smurfs around the playground structures. As she could not climb in the structures the children hid on or underneath them singing. This game was clearly in favour of the children. They were in their territory, setting the rules and been able to go to places the adult could not. Moreover, my observations suggest that negotiating the boundaries set by the adults was not only about transgressing but also extending them. Inaccessible places, like the peripheral spaces behind the playground in Dexameni, extended the play boundaries further as adults could not approach (Figure 7-5).

### One Time Observation: The Locked Playground

In a special incident observed in Ilioupolis, the playground itself acted as a space inaccessible to adults allowing transgressive practices to take place inside its boundary (Figure 7-6). The playground was closed for a week due to construction work. Building materials were stored inside the playground at the end of each working day and the door to the playground was closed at all times. Every evening, after the construction workers had left, children entered the playground. In these instances, their play did not revolve around the play structures but rather around the construction

materials (gravel and soil, piles of wooden planks etc.); an adventure playground was created. In a state of “no rules” in the playground space, children occupied the “void” setting new rules and using the space as they liked. They built small sheds, climbed in the piles of tiles, experimented with the different materials in their raw form. Although fears about their safety were present, children’s self-regulation had been abolished, while guardians’ normalisation practices were both limited and ineffectual.

As the door was locked, the children jumped through the fence and played both inside and outside the playground. The closed playground interacted with its surroundings as children staying outside chatted in the upper part of the fountain or talked with the children inside, while children inside interacted with the guardians located outside. In these observations the playground was transformed into an emancipatory space. The locked playground kept the boundary’s spatiality but changed its social meaning; the boundary’s use was reversed as it excluded guardians and supported alternate orderings:

*‘Ha! You can’t enter!’(Boy).*

Guardians stayed outside supervising and attempting to normalise, calling children to ‘be careful’ but were powerless to do anything more, limited by their own self-regulated behaviour and physical limitations. However, an interesting one-off observation suggested that when the playground’s set of norms was abolished intergenerational play was encouraged:

*‘A father helps his 5 year old son to enter through the hole in the door but stays outside the fence to supervise him. After the child climbs the bridge and shouts at him to get inside the playground he jumps the fence, goes to the swings and starts swinging. When, however, he realises that he is watched he says to his son, ‘you should come to swing’ and gets away from the swing embarrassed. He strolls around the playground. He continues playing with the boy, chasing him around but not using any other play structures’ (Field-notes, Ilioupolis).*

The societal gaze – and most specifically, mine – made him stop playing.



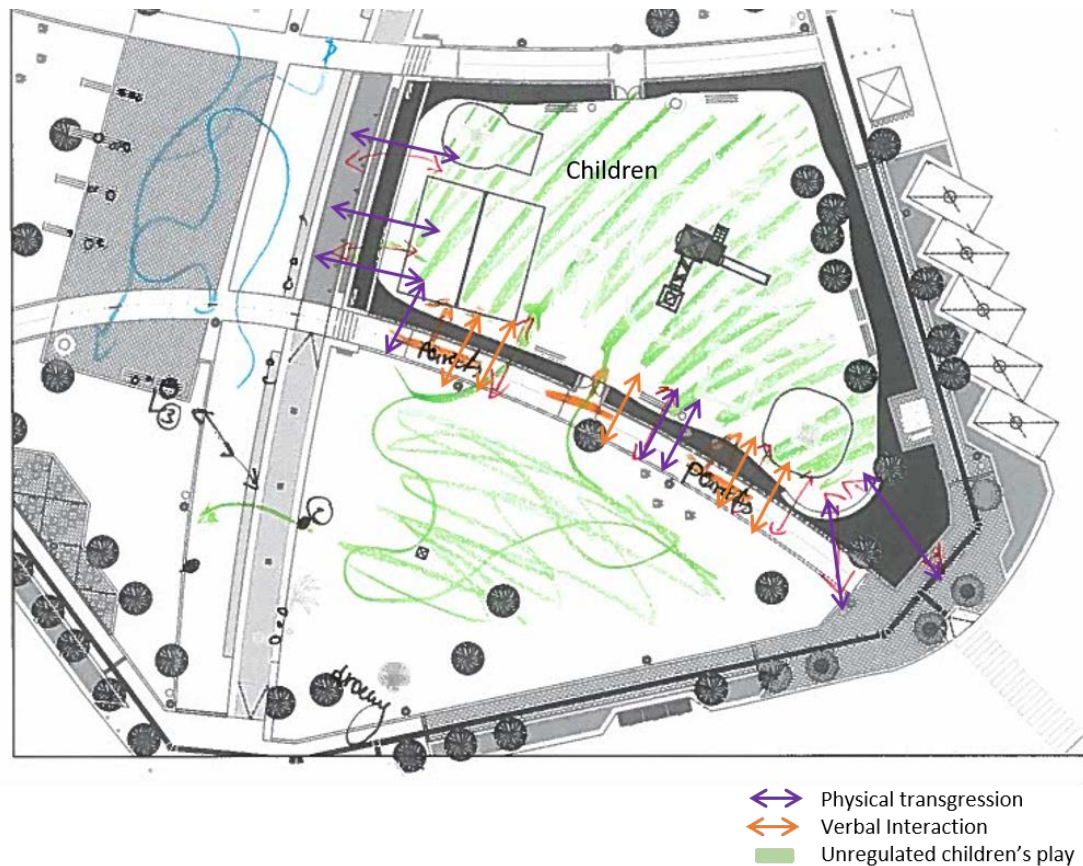


Figure 7-6: Dexameni – Descriptive diagram: Interactions and transgression of the boundary in the locked playground incident

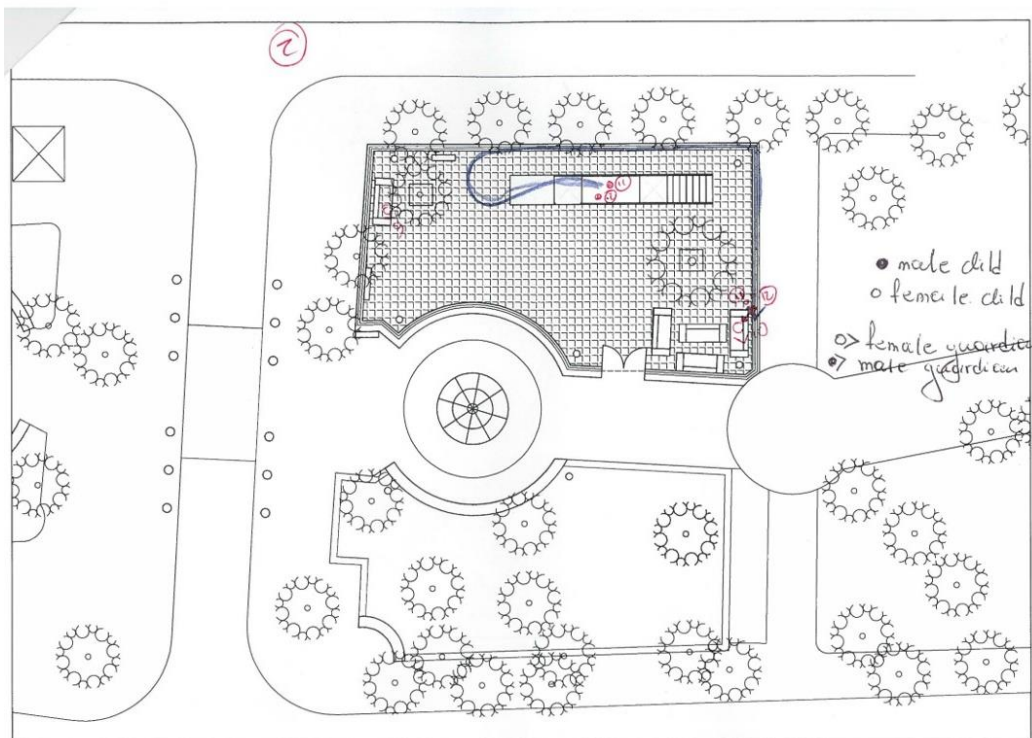
Focusing on this extreme case of transgression of the playground's norms allowed me to expand on the ways norms were expressed and negotiated with self-regulation practices. In the closed playground, where no rules applied, self-regulation re-established the societal norms. This is revealing of the extent to which the playground's physical space was connected to the norms regulating the Heterotopia of Deviance. Even when the space was no longer functioning as a children's play space, adults were conscious to self-regulate according to the Heterotopia of Deviance norms.

## 7.2.2 On the Fence

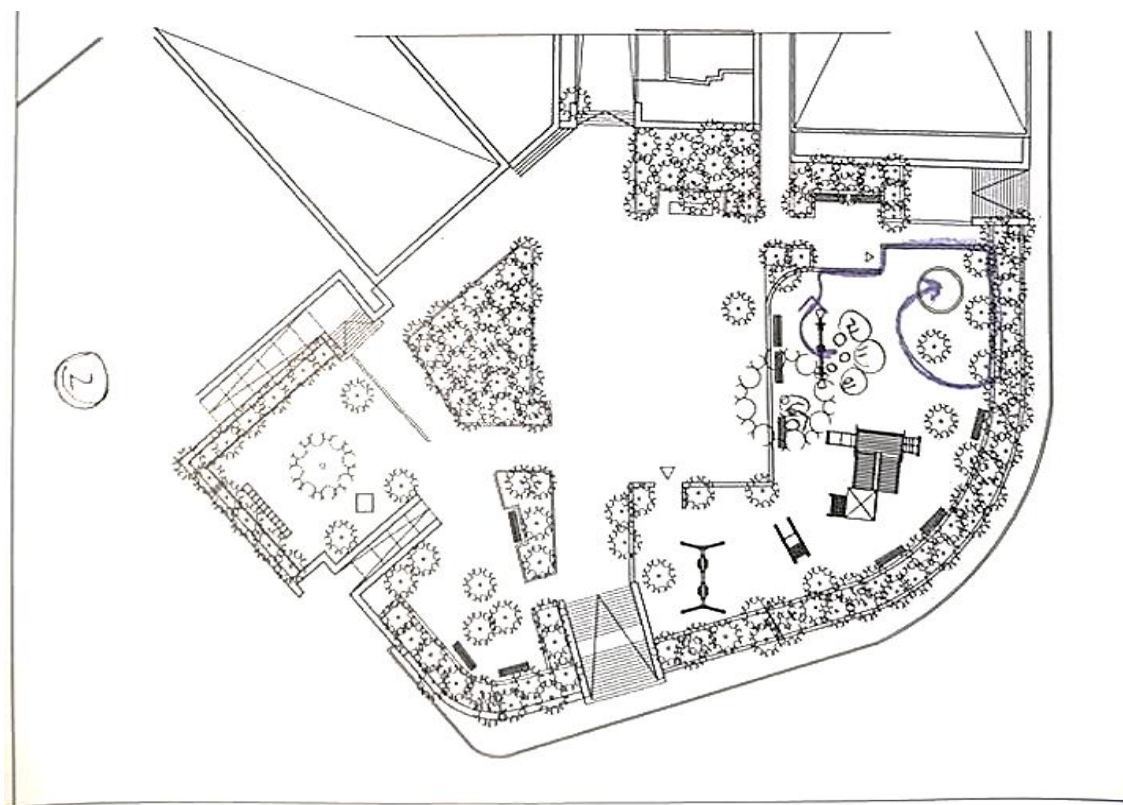
### Prescriptive

Playing on the fence, actively using it as a play-structure that did not bear a pre-defined use, was a common observation in all three case studies. The play boundaries became fluid and negotiable as the boundary itself became a play-structure. Play took place on the playground's boundary, often transgressing it, creating alternate orderings, reversing symbolisms and meanings. For example:

*'Two boys use the fence as a continuation of the play-structure sliding down the slide and then climbing and walking to the fence's ledge in order to reach the stairs and climb again the play-structure' (Field-notes, Vyronas) (Figure 7-7).*



*Figure 7-7: Vyronas – Descriptive diagram: Playing on the fence (blue: children's play movement)*



*Figure 7-8: Dexameni – Descriptive diagram: Girls' play on the fence and rope structure (purple)*



Play was taking place on the fence often extending from the designated play-structures and including the fence, not only as a limit but also as a play-structure:

*‘Children run from the ropes’ structure to the fence. They climb and walk in the bars stepping in the metallic part instead of the ledge towards the ropes’ structure again. They run again towards the rope’s structure and climb to the top’ (Field-notes, Dexameni) (Figure 7-8).*

The fence’s materiality supported or hindered these behaviours. For example, in Vyronas and Dexameni I observed children walking on the ledge, something that was not the case in Ilioupolis where there was not one. Play often used the boundary as an axis revolving around or parallel to it. Hide and seek games used the fence as a base extending to the surrounding space in and out the playground (Figure 7-9).

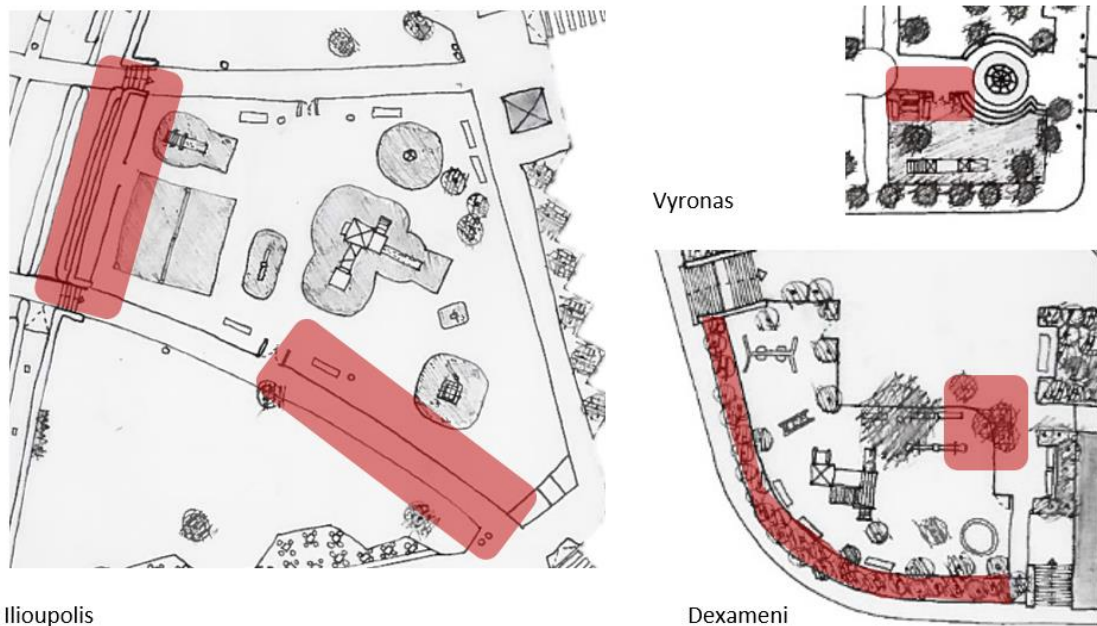


Figure 7-9: Hide and seek games' spatiality

### Age-specific

While the playground structures were referring to specific ages proposing a “proper” use, the playground fence often accommodated different ages’ and abilities’ play. I observed toddlers to constantly sit on the short ledge in Dexameni to play with the soil, the ledge’s high was appropriate for their size, while older children were climbing and sitting on the top vertical metallic bar. Similarly, in Vyronas, the fence’s ledge had different levels following the grounds’ slight inclination (Figure 7-10).

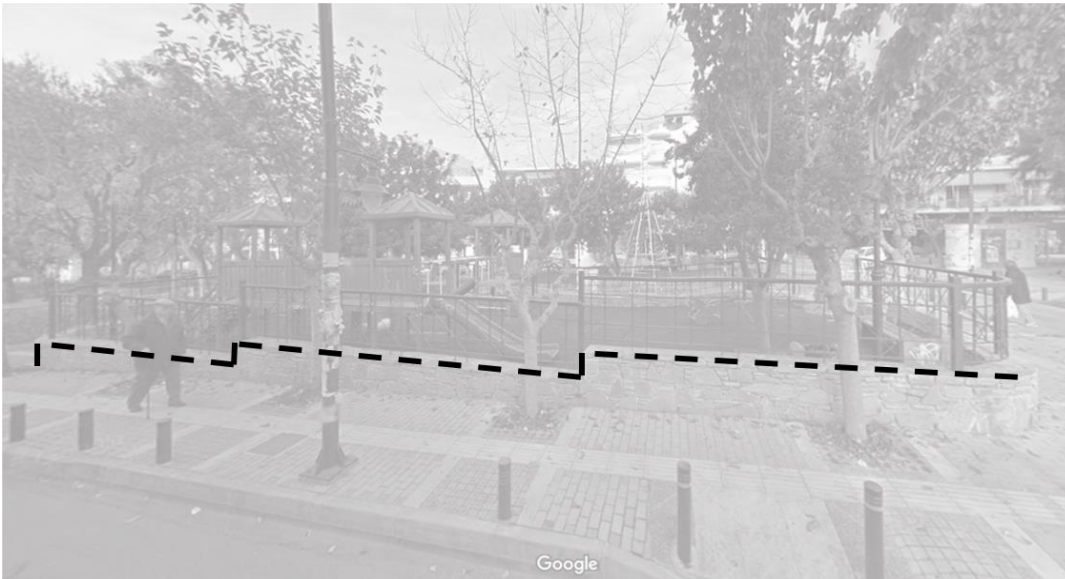


Figure 7-10: Vyronas – fence’s ledge

I observed toddlers climbing and walking in the shorter parts, while older children run perimetrically on the ledge jumping up its different levels. Children’s play created spatial interpretations that allowed all different abilities to co-exist:

*‘I like it, I can climb on it!’ (Girl, Vyronas).*

In many instances, in the Vyronas case, I observed children playing only in the fence without using the bridge structure at all:

*‘This is for babies... Look what I can do here!’ (Girl, Vyronas).*

At the same time, as the fence was not a designated play-structure, it allowed adults to interpret it in various ways. In Dexameni a father playing with his daughters “the floor is lava” named the fence as a safe base for them to rest, while they were running around the playground. The father did not use any of the structures but was walking around hanging from the fence bars in order not to step on the “lava-soil”. My observations suggest that the fence itself was one of the limited areas that fostered intergenerational interaction. This resulted from not being identified as a play-structure and not having predefined intended behaviours that excluded adults. The fence emerged as a spatial element allowing challenging the norms that restricted adults to the playground, while at the same time proposed alternate forms of parenting and adult-child interaction.

## Immobility

The fence's materiality and more specifically its immobility, affected the ways the playgrounds and the piazzas communicated. I often observed it was used as a stable play-structure encouraging climbing and hanging. The spatial characteristics of each case, however, informed different behaviours in the field even in pretty similar incidents. In Dexameni, when a dog was tied outside the playground space children petted him from inside the playground through the fence's bars withdrawing their hands every time the dog moved. In a similar incident in Ilioupolis, however, the children had to exit the playground to pet the dog as the fence's wooden bars did not allow for the children's hands to reach out. When the dog started barking the children stuck their backs to the fence scared and "exposed" to the danger.

While the playground fence emerged as a boundary, an immobile, stable physical structure separating the two areas of playground and piazza, its door functioned as a moving part of this structure. As the focal point of all supervising practices sustaining the Heterotopia of Deviance, the door emerged as an important feature in the Heterotopia of Transgression, regulating the playground's interaction with its surrounding space. I observed children manipulating the door in different ways. In the case of Vyronas, where the door was kept closed most of the time, manipulating it was itself an act of transgression for the children:

*'A girl rushes to enter the playground first and then playfully closes the door to her mother. She asks the girl to let her in. The girl looks at her waiting to be asked again. The mother says: 'can I enter, please?' Only then the girl opens the door' (Field-notes).*

The girl made a statement that "this is the children's space". When a boy could not open the door, as the bolt was too high, he unbolted the bolt keeping the other side of the door to the floor (Figure 7-11). He found an alternative according to his size and abilities and managed to enter the playground without asking for help.

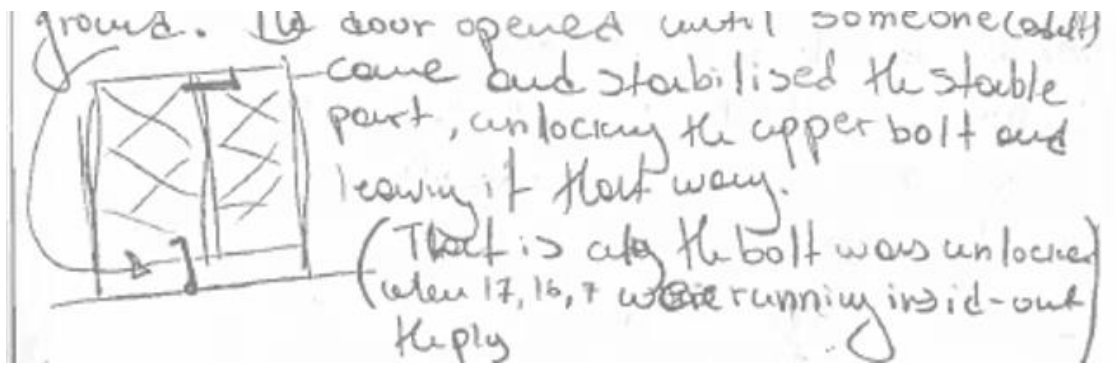


Figure 7-11: Vyronas – abstract from field-notes depicting the two bolts of the playground's door

Playing with the door was a solitary activity and often took the form of exploration and testing of one's boundaries. One day:

*'A little boy shakes the door persistently using it as a noise game making his intention to go out clear. It is sooo annoying. His grandfather gets up, opens the door and takes him to the conical structure' (Field-notes, Vyronas).*

I observed similar incidents in Ilioupolis and Dexameni, however, much less frequently than in Vyronas, as both playgrounds were bigger and the doors were left open.

### Porosity

Physical porosity of the playground fence emerged as the main attribute encouraging multiple forms of inside-outside interaction (Figure 7-12, Figure 7-13, Figure 7-14) revealing that there was the possibility of interaction between different age groups, between players and other people, in the segregated playground and as a result the possibility of Public Value. It supported both play and social interaction allowing the playground's communication with its surrounding space, segregating but not isolating the two areas:

*'It should be made of wood, with no gaps... Now the children climb and can slip through the bars... Once a toddler run to the street! That is very dangerous... (Father, Vyronas).*

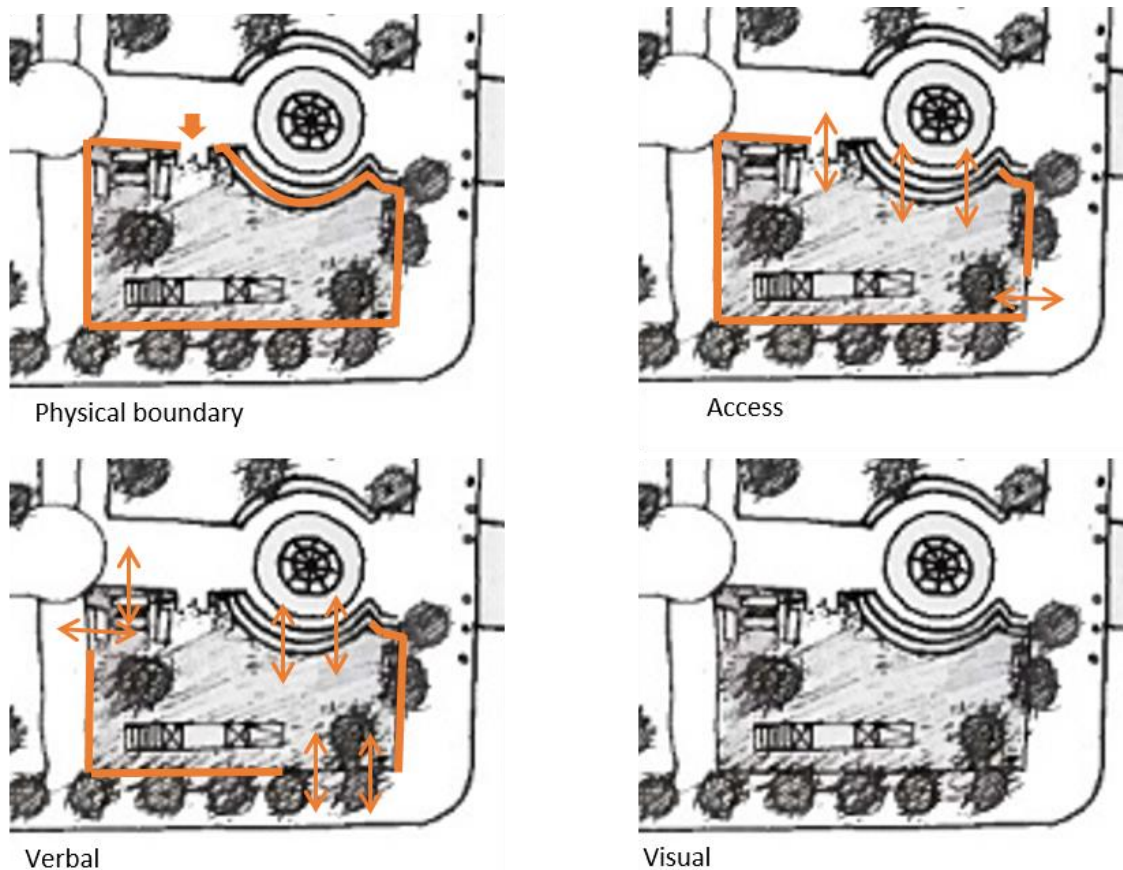


Figure 7-12: Vyronas – Boundary's porosity



Figure 7-13: Dexameni – Boundary's porosity

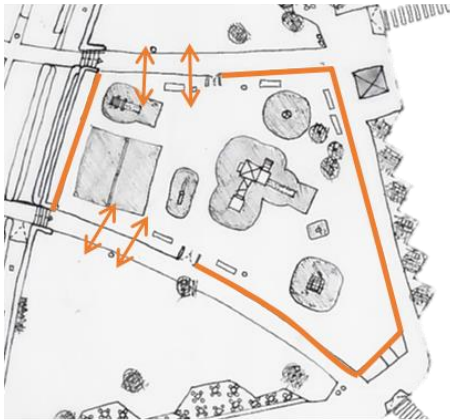




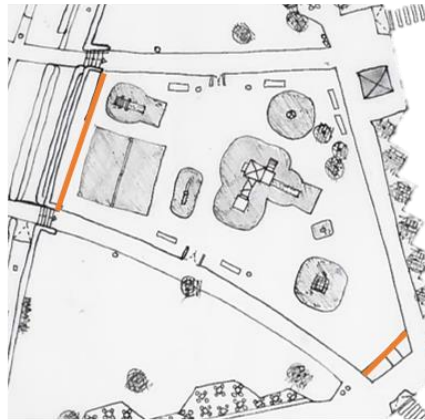
Physical boundary



Access



Verbal



Visual

Figure 7-14: Ilioupolis – Boundary's porosity

In Ilioupolis, children were taking advantage of the boundary's changing porosity as often posters and banners were hanged there. I noticed that very often children used these areas to hide behind. At the same time, hide and seek games were supported by these posters even though the fence allowed views (Figure 7-15).



*Figure 7-15: Ilioupolis – fence*

By contrast, in Vyronas it was the fence's high cement ledge what transformed the sitting area into the perfect hiding spot (Figure 7-16).



*Figure 7-16: Vyronas – fence supporting hide and seek games*

In Dexameni, however, the porous fence, allowing views inside – outside, was not observed to support similar games as one could not hide easily (Figure 7-17).



Figure 7-17: Dexameni – fence

Moreover, I often observed people stopping to chat with the people in the playground. The ones inside reached out to people outside the playground as well:

*‘A girl walks on the fence’s ledge and starts shouting and waving to the people in the café across the street. They wave back to her’ (Field-notes, Vyronas) (Figure 7-18).*

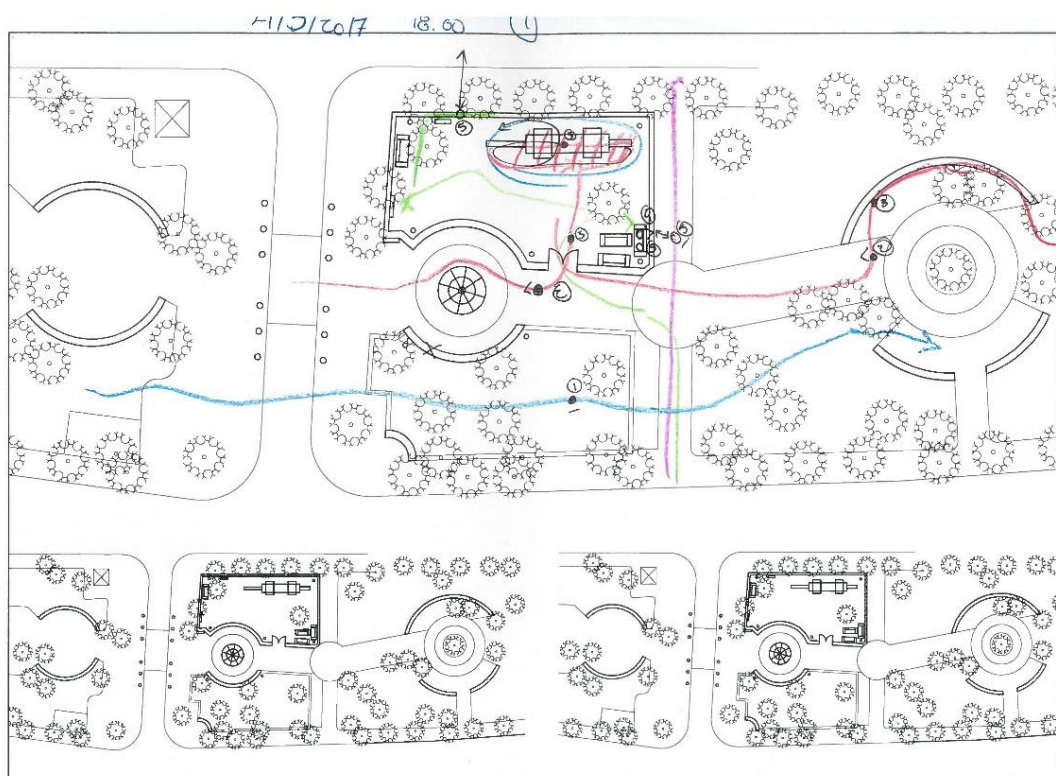


Figure 7-18: Vyronas – Descriptive diagram: Girl (green) waving to people across the street

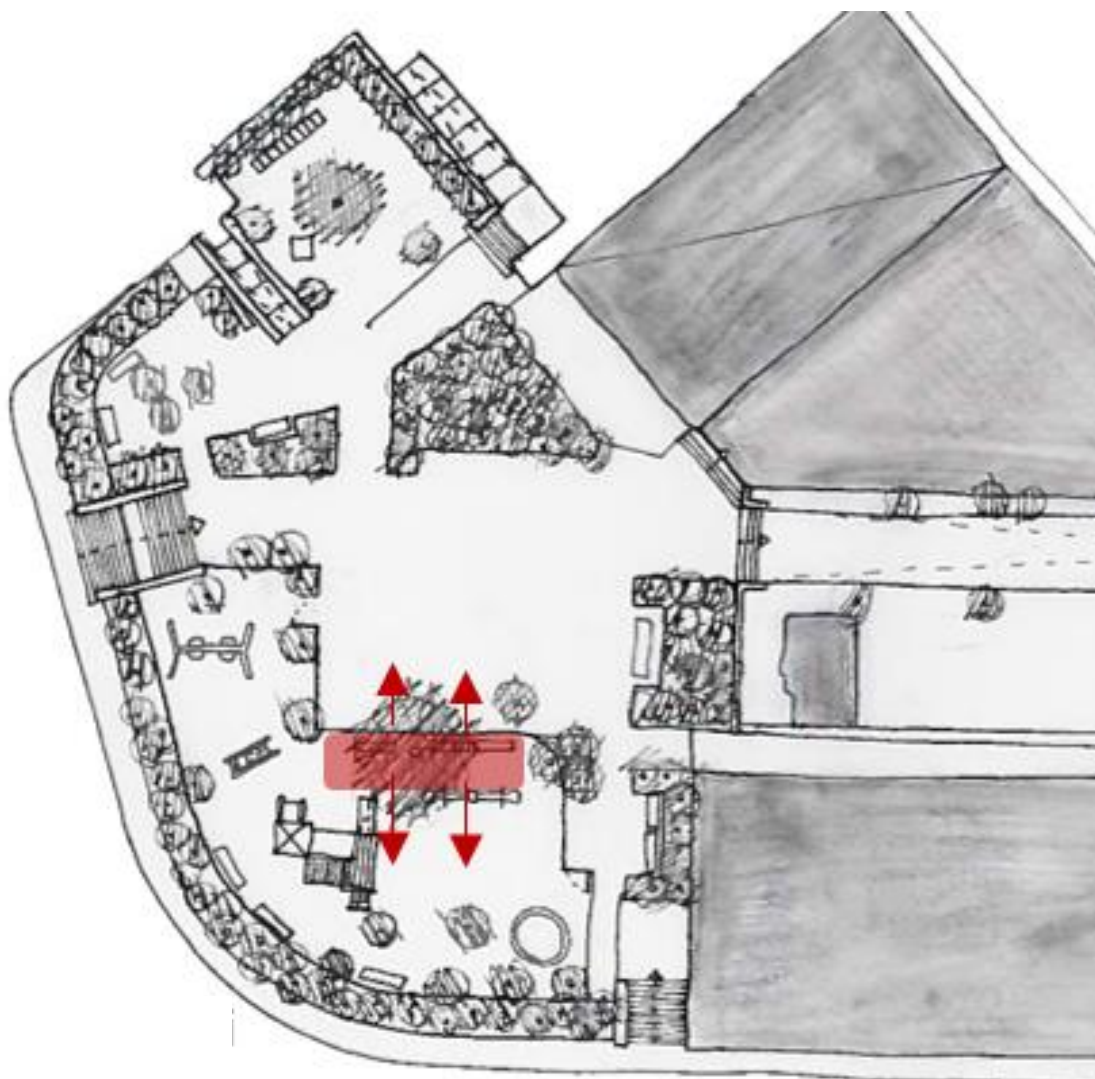


I could tell that this was clearly a game for her: she was reaching out, taking advantage of the fence's porosity, and making adults in the piazza notice her from inside the segregated children's space. She was claiming space by making herself visible. Similarly, in Dexameni, I observed children walking inside in the fence's ledge, while waving to guardians chatting outside.

My findings suggest that the different views through each playground's fence affected supervision practices and children's mobility (Figure 7-19, Figure 7-20, Figure 7-21). Supervision took place both from inside the playground to the piazza and the opposite. This inside-outside interaction affected both the in-out flows and children's mobility in the piazza. For example in Dexameni guardians often stayed in the playground's sitting areas chatting, supervising the children playing in the piazza through the fence<sup>32</sup>. Although children were under constant supervision for longer my observations suggest that this practice resulted in them having more extended spatial freedom as they stayed visible for longer. This supported an overflow from the playground to the piazza, often extending play space and allowing children to engage with the piazza's affordances. Similar behaviours were observed in Vyronas. By contrast, in Ilioupolis guardians were often observed to use the cafes supervising the playground from the outside. Unobstructed supervision of the area outside the playground door allowed children to transgress the playground boundary and play more actively in the piazza without being followed or normalised.

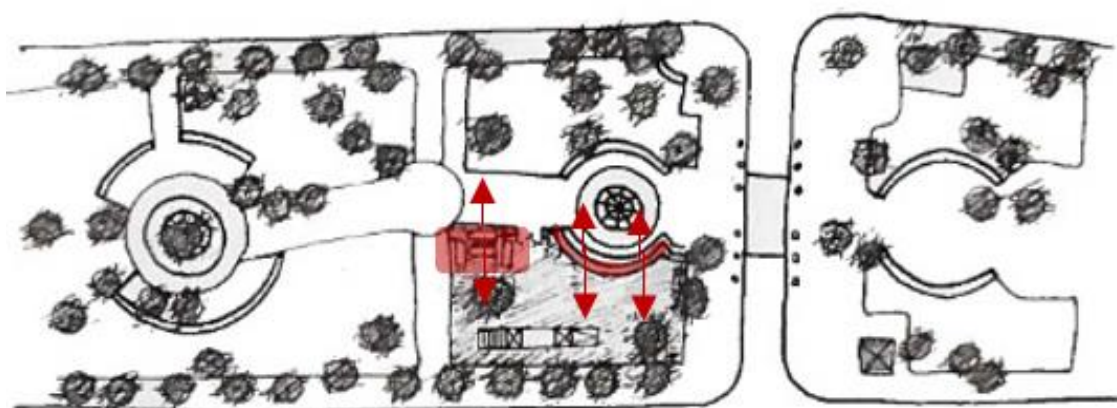
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<sup>32</sup> there were not any sitting areas in the piazza



— Guardians

Figure 7-19: Dexameni – Supervision through the fence



— Guardians

Figure 7-20: Vyronas – Supervision through the fence



— Guardians

*Figure 7-21: Ilioupolis – Supervision through the fence*

### Lack of infrastructure

At the same time, the fence was often used to compensate for the lack of other basic infrastructure. In Vyronas, where benches were randomly placed, the fence's relatively wide cement ledge acted as a sitting area. Similarly, I observed people sitting in the ledge in Dexameni in order to sit closer to and supervise the playing children. Moreover, people used the fence to hang bags, jackets, locking bikes etc. In that way, the fence was transformed to an active part of the playground and was not perceived as the enclave limit. It becomes quite evident that in Vyronas the fence was almost identified with the playground space, compensating for both sitting areas and play-structures (Figure 7-22).



*Figure 7-22: Vyronas' sitting area*

### (In) accessibility

Although the door was the physical feature that supported or hindered play flows, I often observed play transgressing the fence itself. The fact that the subjects segregated in the heterotopia were children, and thus more physically active than adults, gave them an advantage over space, while made the physical characteristics prominent in the socio-spatial function of the space. Often older children, avoiding the controlled and supervised door, just jumped above the fence to enter or exit the space. Playful hanging, climbing in the fence and entering the playground was observed in all three playgrounds several times:

*'It is just more fun!' (Boy, Vyronas).*

In Dexameni piazza, where the fence was higher and the bars vertical and difficult to climb above, a tree ripping the fence acted as a climbing structure. Children often climbed and stayed on the top of the fence in order to avoid adults. A characteristic of this case study was that play overflowed from different parts of the playground and not only from the "controlled" door:

*'Children wearing helmets, leave their bicycles in the playground corner and start playing outside with a toy helicopter. After a, while they enter the playground and then exit behind the fence, in the bushes from a gap in the ledge and then through the gap in the playground and out again' (Field-notes, Dexameni) (Figure 7-23).*

By contrast, in Ilioupolis, where the fence was shorter but less porous children were observed to transgress it mostly in the corner of the playground where they could climb in some cement structures. In Vyronas, where the fence was short but more porous children climbed above, using the cement ledge as a step or slid through the bars (Figure 7-24). One day, I even observed a boy exiting through the fence, among the bars, to visit the kiosk nearby.





Figure 7-23: Dexameni – Descriptive diagram: Boys' movement (red) through the fence's gap

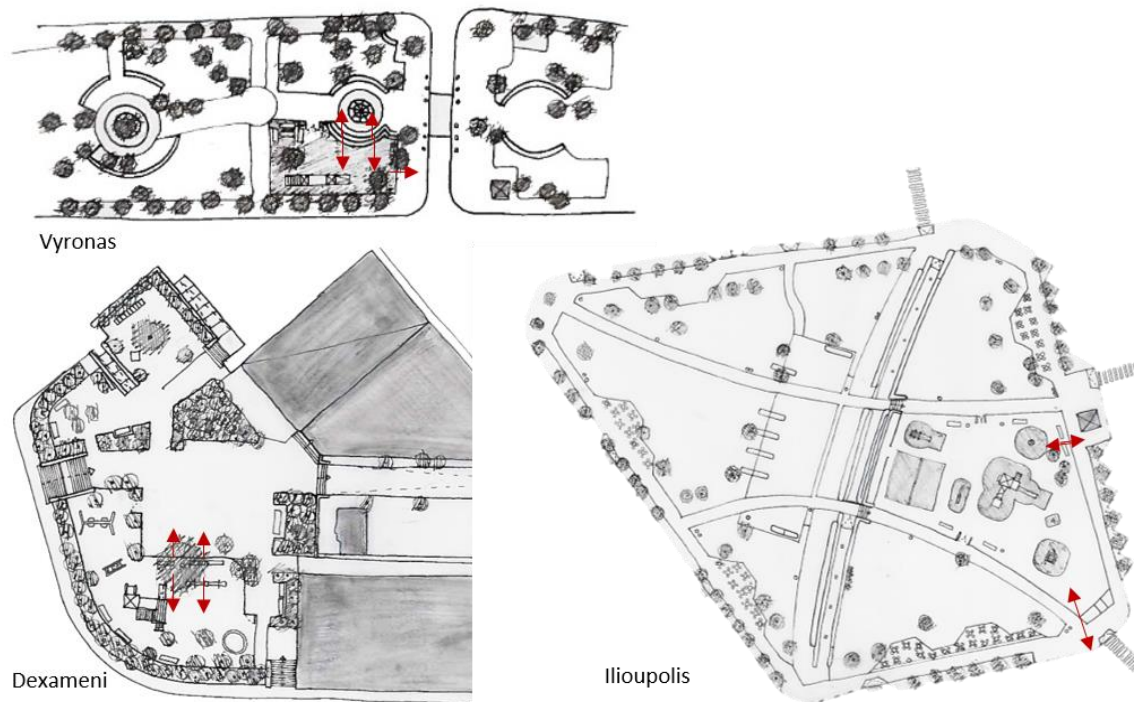


Figure 7-24: Fence's physical transgression

At the same time, the fence's porosity and perceptions of the playground as a children's space allowed the playground to acquire a transitional character structuring children's experience of the public realm. My findings suggest that the playground space, fenced and "inaccessible" to other adults often gave children the chance to choose when and how they interacted with the public outside. The fence's porosity allowed children to observe the outside and choose when they are going to interact with it:

*'A group of girls hide, squeezing between the fence and the electrical box and watch the people outside' (Field-notes, Ilioupolis).*

The spot they chose kept them semi-hidden from the playground but opened up for them the public realm. In an incident in Dexameni when a man walking and shouting scared the children playing both in the playground and the piazza (Figure 7-25):

*'The children run from the fence to the center of the playground and try to hide behind some bushes. They continue to observe the man from a distance' (Field-notes, Dexameni).*



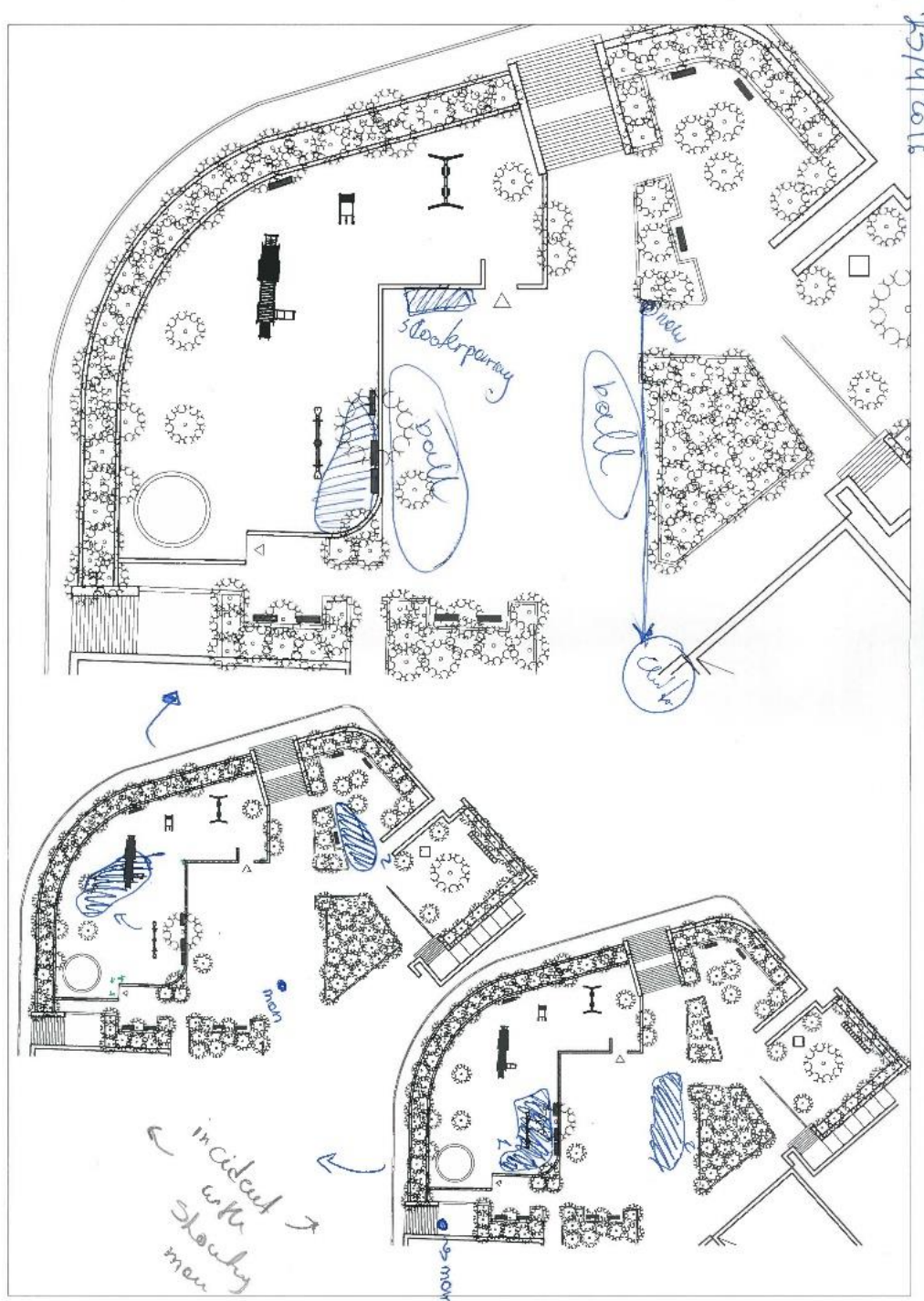


Figure 7-25: Dexameni – Descriptive diagram: incident with shouting man

In a similar line:

‘A group of 5 year olds sit in the fence’s ledge with their feet hanging outside the playground watching the older children’s ball game taking place in the piazza. They

*get out closely observing the older ones, while they try to take a ball down a tree branch (Field-notes).*

The playground emerged as a safe space through which children observed and familiarized themselves with what they thought of as potential danger.

### **7.2.3 Beyond the Fence**

#### **The Fence**

Literature has argued that children create their own spatializations rather than remain[ing] utterly confined within the limits of adults' geographies' (Jones, 2000, 37), challenging as well as reproducing existing social relations, questioning the adult order (Alfrink, 2014). In this study, play transgressed the boundaries but also transgressing the boundaries was a form of play in itself. Hiding, playing with the visual perspectives, going further than they were told – running or sending the ball further away – climbing through the playground fence or just opening the door and exiting the playground, children questioned the boundaries. Children used boundaries in their games in order to explore and challenge space and its limitations:

*'Boy draws a circle in the playground soil and puts his parents 'in prison'. His father moves, the child sees him for further away 'eeeh, you are a prisoner!' –'yes but I drew a bridge and I escaped!'* (Field-notes, Dexameni).

Children's play often revealed their perceptions about the enclosed playground space and in many cases it questioned it or even reversed it:

*'The children defied their parents that told them to stay inside the playground to play. They exited from the hole in the fence and were calling their parents sitting in the playground sitting area 'you are in a cage!!'* (Field-notes).

The playground, designed to bar children – acting as a cage – ended-up barring guardians regulating their behaviour, while play transgressed both boundaries and the Heterotopia of Deviance norms.

A common observation was the accidental games taking place between the playground and the piazza, blurring the playground's boundary and extending play. The fence offered a play affordance, a kind of obstacle players had to overcome. Often,

people from inside and outside the playground engaged in some form of playful interaction as balls exited the playground space (Figure 7-26):

*'Someone kicked it so high from inside the playground that the ball lands in the flowerbed!! The children kick it back in again laughing' (Field-notes, Dexameni).*

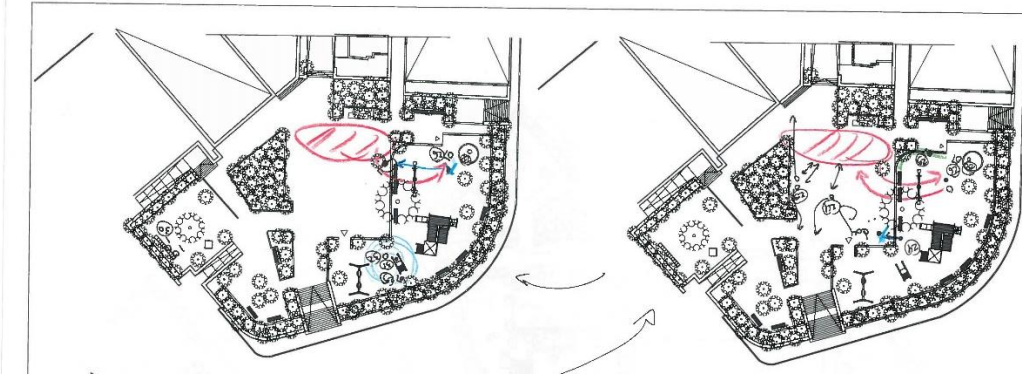


Figure 7-26: Dexameni – Descriptive diagram: The ball (red arrows) exits the playground space, it creates a new game

Swift interactions between different age groups were observed to take place through the fence revealing that although access was restricted, the fences' porosity supported co-existence and interactions, the Public Value's indicators, between various age groups.

A major finding of this study is that the fence's physicality often supported play to take place outside the playground. This was the case when ball games were taking place directly outside the playground, often by children that had got bored playing in the structures. The fence supported ball games, providing a physically defined goalpost – *'from the tree to the second bar' (Boy, Dexameni)* –, while acting as a solid layer to stop the ball from running away. This resulted in a strange paradox, according to which the fence did not confine play inside the playground but actually supported transgression, while occasionally blurring the notions of "inside" and "outside". As a result, the absence of the fence was mentioned by the guardians as potentially ending up restricting play:

*'No, it's better that way. The older children got used to it as well and they play football. When they kick they kick to the fence. If it was open...the ball could hit a child in the playground. If the two areas were together, the older children wouldn't have anywhere to play' (Mother, Dexameni).*

## Piazza Infrastructure

The piazzas' infrastructure (Figure 7-27, Figure 7-28, Figure 7-29), especially those elements placed closer to the playground, compensated for the problems created by the playground's design limitations. My findings suggest that the more the child developed the further he/she extended from the playground space and into the piazza. Such affordances were observed in the statue (Dexameni), the fountain (Ilioupolis) and the conical structure (Vyronas) as well as the trees, bushes, flowerbeds, stairs or even loose parts like leaves, branches and soil.



Figure 7-27: Dexameni – Piazza infrastructure



Figure 7-28: Vyronas – Piazza infrastructure



Figure 7-29: Ilioupolis – Piazza infrastructure



Play overflowing the boundary was observed in all three cases. In Dexameni I observed children every day exiting the playground and playing in the piazza, taking advantage of its infrastructure and related affordances, using it as an extension of the play-structures and then returning back to the enclave:

*‘A group of boys plays in the swings, they exit the playground to run towards the statute, climb the statue and then run back again to the circular play equipment in the playground’ (Field-notes, Dexameni). (Figure 7-30)*

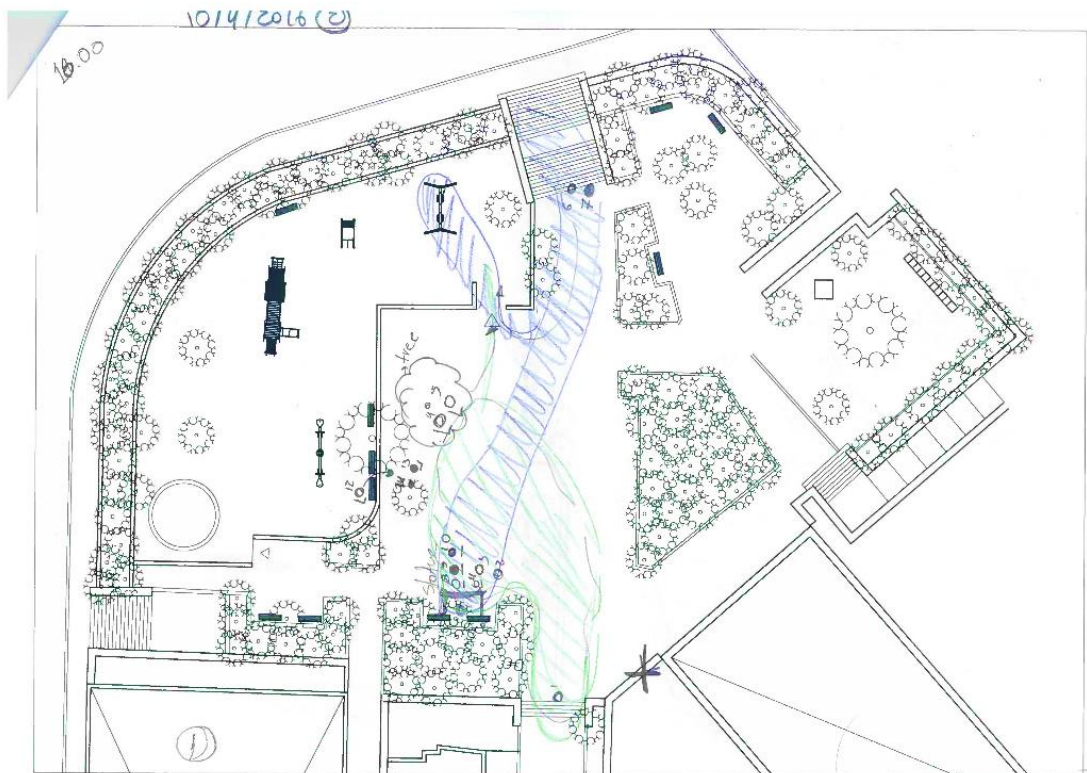


Figure 7-30: Dexameni – Descriptive diagram: The boys’ play (purple) in the statue and playground

Similarly, in Ilioupolis, children engaged with the piazza’s infrastructure (fountain structure, ledges, stairs and trees) in their games taking advantage of both playground doors to move in and out on different areas:

*‘A boy runs from inside the playground to the green area, climbs a tree, jumps down the ledge, runs around in the piazza, climbs the ledge again, into the upper level green area’ (Field-notes). (Figure 7-31)*

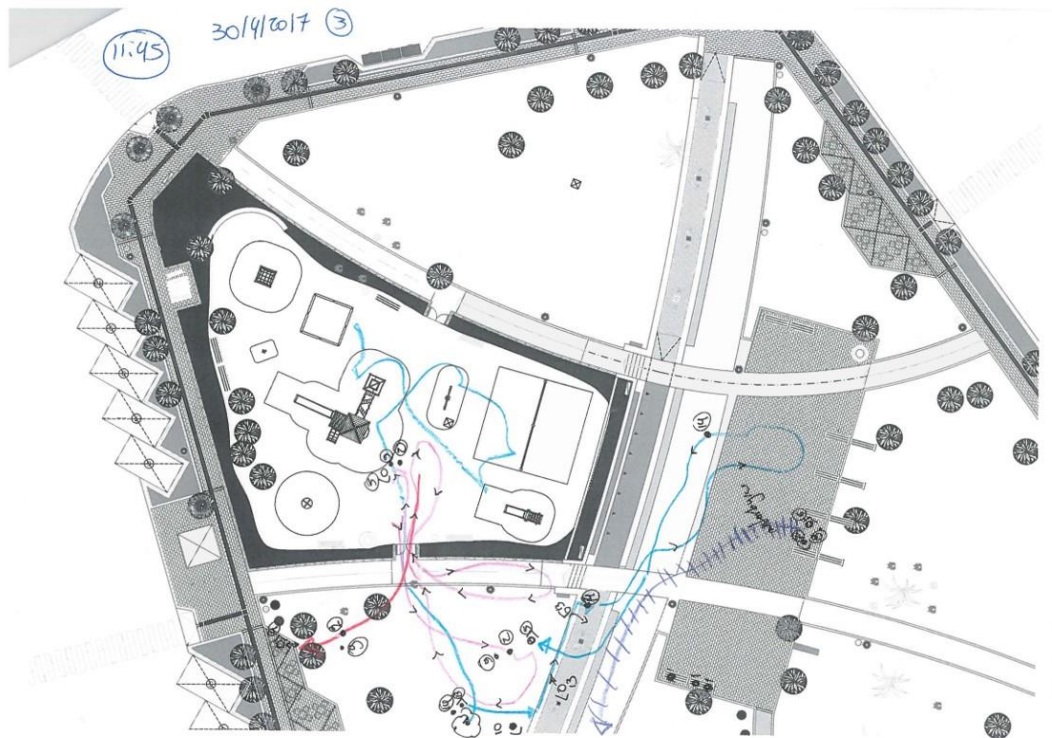


Figure 7-31: Ilioupolis – Descriptive diagram: Boy's movement (num.34, blue)

The playground space assisted their play and exploration of the public piazza acting as a home base where children returned before going out again:

*'Two twelve year old girls use the bench near the playground entrance to put on their roller skates and then go out playing in the side path using the fence as a safety structure for balance. They play in the peripheral path, enter from the second door, exit again' (Field-notes). (Figure 7-32)*

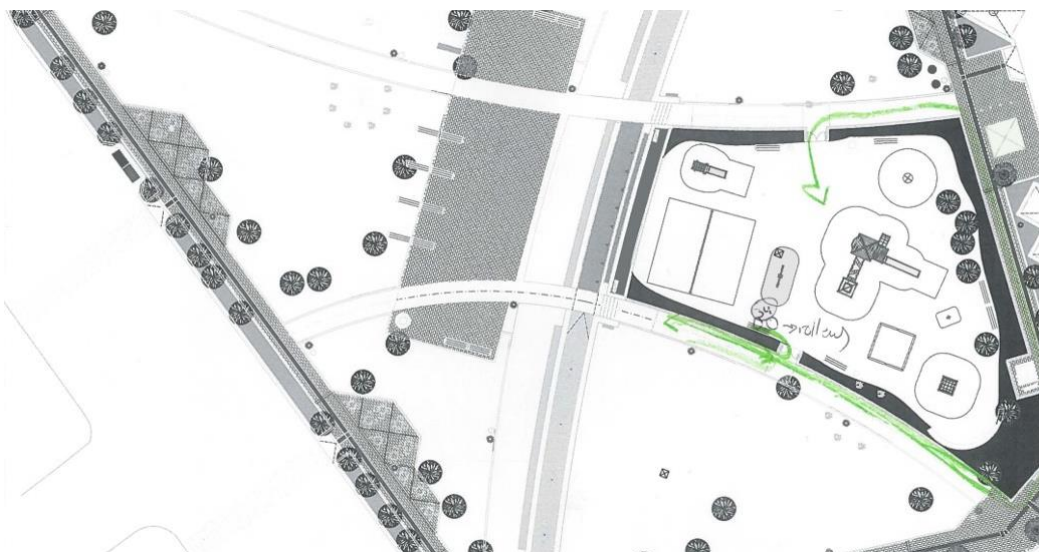


Figure 7-32: Ilioupolis – Descriptive diagram: Girls with skates (green)

Using Vyronas' conical structure as an example I illustrate this situation (Figure 7-33). The conical metallic structure placed right outside the playground door was used by children in the same way and intensity as the bridge structure inside the playground. The structure and the bridge acted as the edges of a dipole where children moved and played (Figure 7-34).



Figure 7-33: Vyronas – The conical structure and the playground<sup>33</sup>

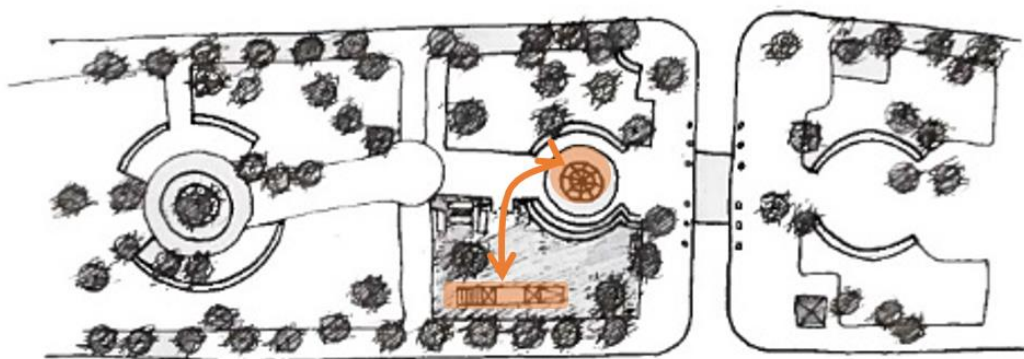


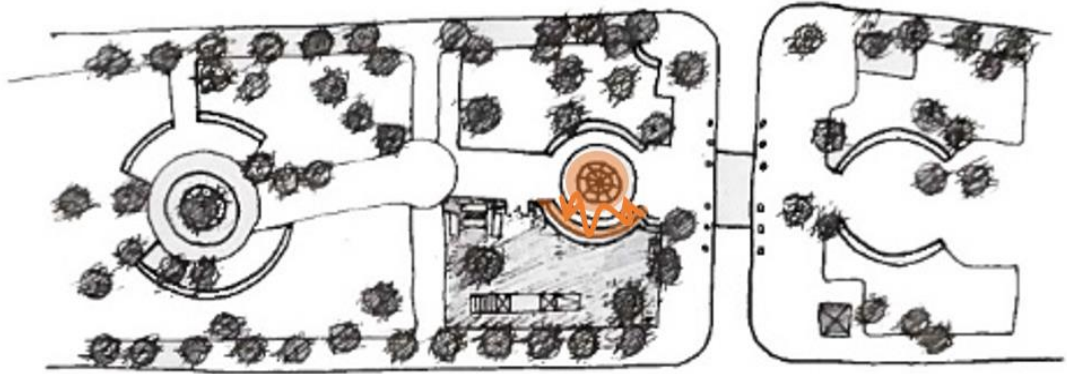
Figure 7-34: Vyronas – The conical structure – playground bridge dipole

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<sup>33</sup> This photo was taken after the official fieldwork had finished. The play structures in the playground have been updated and are not the same as the ones when the observations took place.

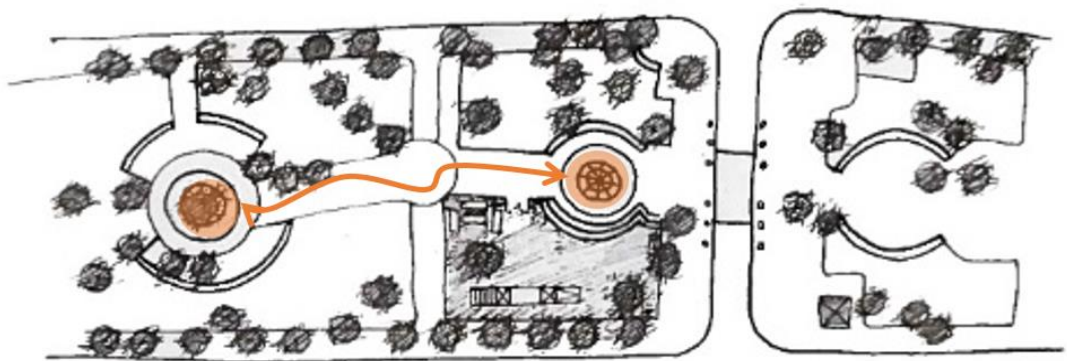


I observed children to either move in and out the playground between the conical structure and the playgrounds' bridge using the structure to extend the play area adding a more exciting element to their play. They often climbed the playground fence creating a second play area between the exterior of the fence and the conical structure (Figure 7-35).



*Figure 7-35: Vyronas – Play area comprising the conical structure and the fence*

Other times they also ran further down to the flowerbed and then back up again creating a third kind of play area extending between the conical structure the flowerbed and the playground space (Figure 7-36).

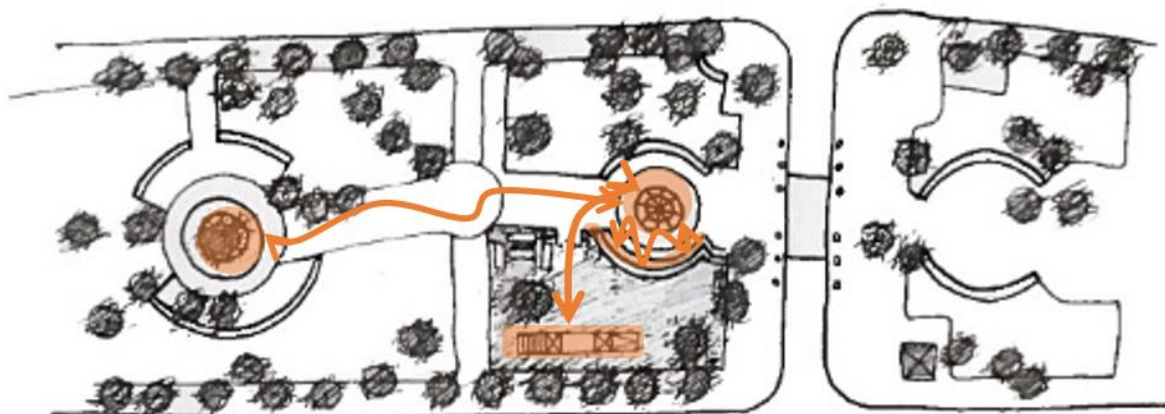


*Figure 7-36: Vyronas – Play area comprising the conical structure and the flowerbed*



*Figure 7-37: Vyronas – The flowerbed*

In some cases they run out of the playground, climbed and jumped or hid inside the structure pretending it was a tent. Another time, two girls entered the structure with their balls. They kicked the balls inside the structure to make them bounce back in the metallic beams or they exited the structure, threw the ball inside the structure and then entered again.



*Figure 7-38: The play area informed by the conical structure – Vyronas*

The boundaries guardians set continually extended as the children grew older and their abilities allowed them more independence:

*'I now allow him to do things I wouldn't allow him to do when he was younger... Now he is more able in doing some things he has tried again and I am not afraid.'*  
(Father, Dexameni).

As children progressed, according to their abilities and development, the space offered stepping stones through which they could measure their progress. For example, in Vyronas, the younger children cycled around the conical structure, in and in front of the playground, while older children, with bigger bikes, moved from the playground to the flowerbed and back. Moreover, the younger ones followed the paved path, while the older ones cycled through the green areas, the paved areas, the short ledges; everywhere in the piazza (Figure 7-39).

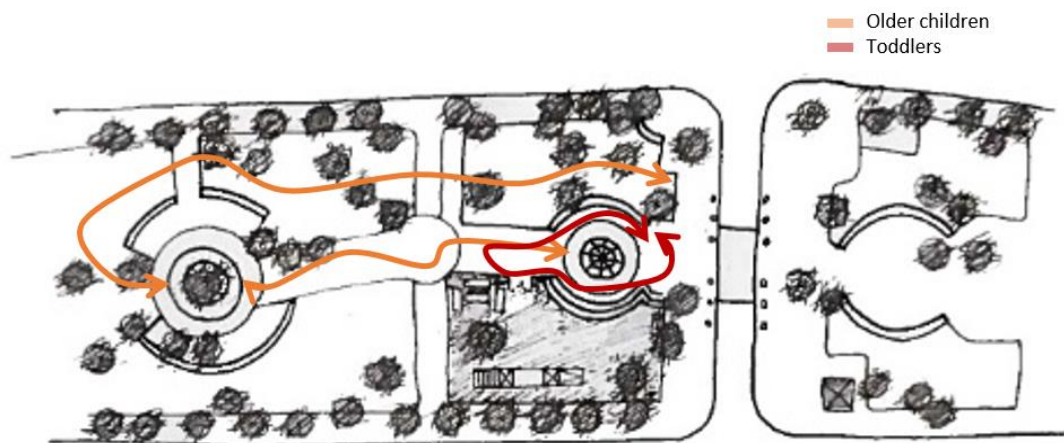


Figure 7-39: Vyronas – Older children (orange) and toddlers' (red) cycling spatialities

### Empty Areas

Coming in contrast with the explicitly dense and use-oriented playground space, the free, empty areas in the piazza (Figure 7-40), not bearing a clear classification and prescribed use, often accommodated games and alternate uses complementing the playground space. At the same time, while the playground excluded energetic, more aggressive forms of play – such as chasing and playing ball – I observed that extending play in the surrounding area – near the fence or in the piazza – the children took advantage of the available space to move freely:

*'It is better that way [not comprising sitting area] as children play in this space. No one would sit there anyway as ball games occupy that space'* (Mother, Dexameni).



Children extended towards the main piazza areas, consisting in all case studies of a big empty space characterised by the lack of sitting areas (Dexameni) or the placement of these peripherally in this area (Ilioupolis).

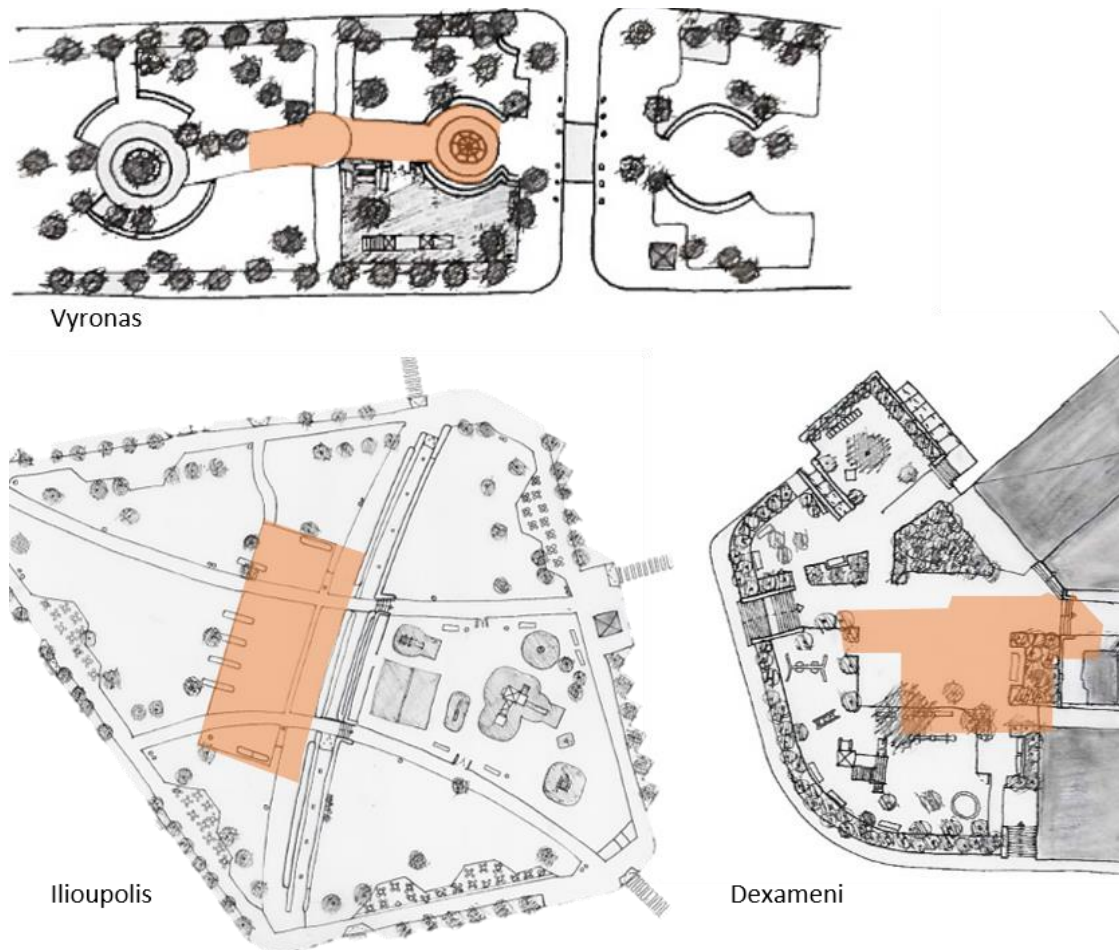


Figure 7-40: The piazzas' empty areas

*'Three boys with scooters play in the playground, moving around the structures. They don't have much space, bumping in other children. Then they exit and continue playing outside in front of the door, moving in the empty space. They comment on the different paving materials, using them to structure a pretend play where they are in the desert' (Field-notes, Dexameni).*

Guardians liked the coexistence between the piazza's space and the playground:

*'It has other uses for those who do not accompany very young children' (Father, Ilioupolis).*

Although many guardians did not consider it safe because of its proximity to the street, the piazza often acted as an extension of the playground space:

*'The play-structures are safer, there is a lot of greenery around so the children could play and do other things... Cycle, if we bring our bikes.'*(Father, Ilioupolis).

### Transient Affordances

#### Loose Parts

My findings suggest that transient affordances and loose parts in the adjacent piazza were also supporting boundary transgression:

*'X. chasing a pigeon exits the playground and starts running around the green area (Field-notes, Ilioupolis). (Figure 7-41)*

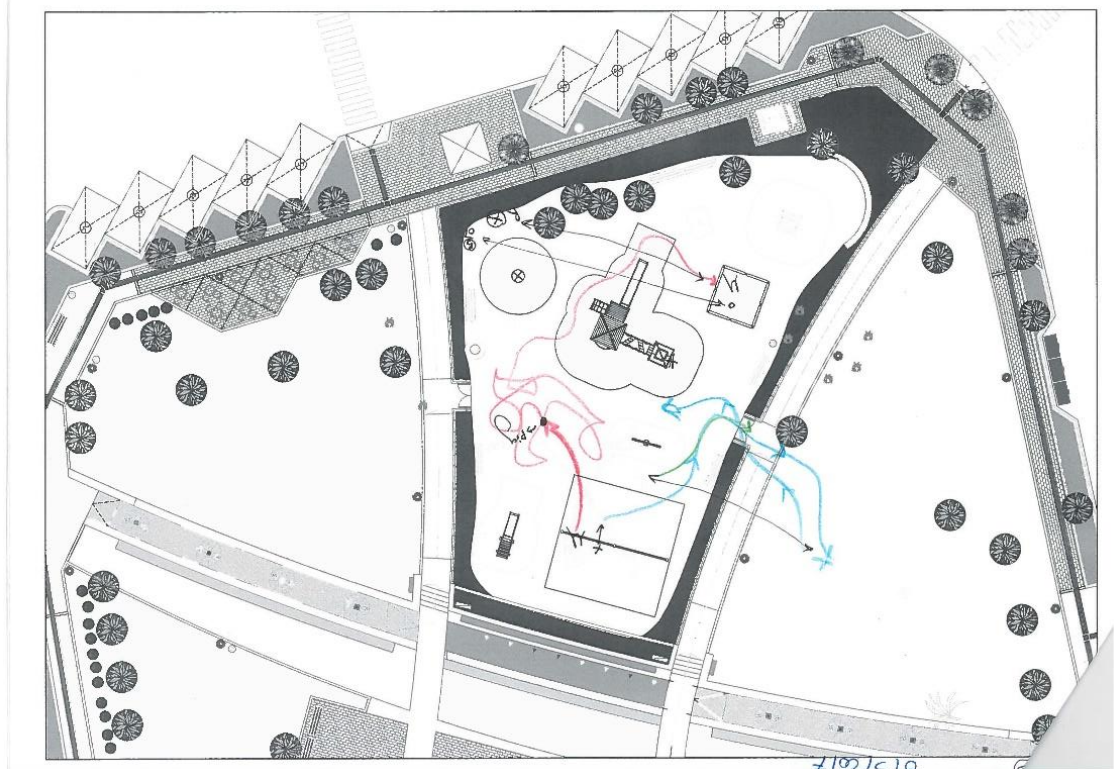


Figure 7-41: Ilioupolis – Descriptive diagram: Girl (blue) moving out of the playground chasing a pigeon

The variety of different materials one could find in the piazzas in all three case studies, such as leaves, branches and other loose parts, made these areas very alluring to children that engaged in different forms of play:

*'P. prefers playing going up and down. Chasing pigeons. He gets bored really quickly in the piazza' (mother, Ilioupolis).*

Similarly, water spilling from the broken becks outside the Ilioupolis playground attracted play, completely reversing the areas' orderings and classifications. The transient affordance of water turned the green area from a "dirty" to a play area, while making the playground less interesting by comparison. As noted above (See: 7.2.3) affordances enriched play and allowed children to reinvent both the playground and piazza:

*'A boy finds a branch in the flowerbed. Enters the playground and uses it to 'sweep' the soil' (Field-notes, Dexameni).*

## Toys

Toys, approached here as transient affordances, although often the cause of conflict between children, were observed to enrich play and extend both the social (cooperative play) and the spatial (space's boundaries) play area. My observations suggest that playing with toys allowed children to engage more closely with the space's physical characteristics, in a different dimension than the one offered by the immobile play-structures i.e. rolling the car to the fence's ledge, transforming the fence into a motorway:

*'A boy playing with a wheel moves inside-outside the playground in order to test the toy to all the different terrains familiarizing himself with the spatial characteristics' (Field-notes, Dexameni).*

Moreover, playing with toys often utilised spaces that were left empty or were not used at all; "filling the gaps" in the field and appropriating all different expressions of space:

*'A group of girls are playing with a set of small orange traffic cones in a small area in front of the café's ramp in Dexameni, in a nook, protected by the flowerbeds' (Field-notes, Dexameni). (Figure 7-42)*

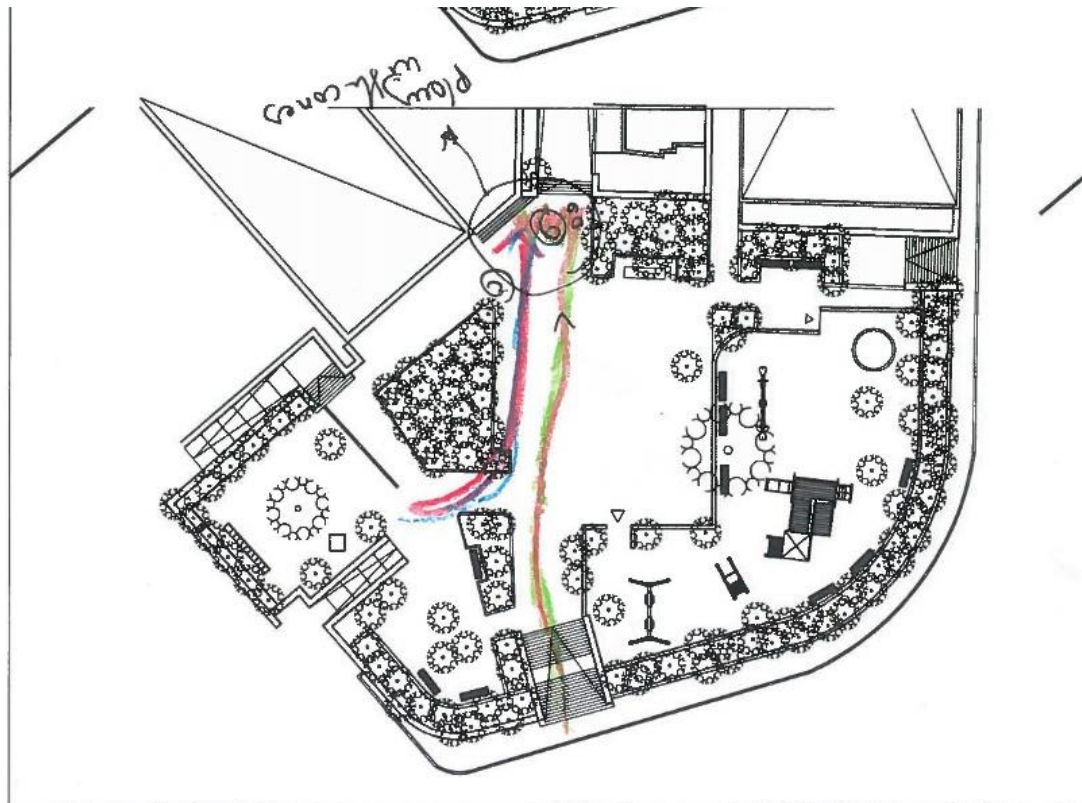


Figure 7-42: Dexameni – Descriptive diagram: Playing with cones (6)

### One Time Observation: Water Play

Taking a more focused look into a special incident of water play I describe how unexpected, transient conditions supported transgression practices, often extending outside the playground boundaries. This observation relates to the “closed playground” incident described above (See: 7.2.2) and allows us to extend our understanding on the playground’s orderings. Through this example I intend to structure a clearer understanding of the spatial practices constituting the Heterotopia of Transgression and their relation to the existing norms. The water play incident took place on a day that the watering becks were left open in the upper level green areas in Ilioupolis case flooding the space outside the playground with water. Two different behaviours were observed. On the one hand, guardians and children either rushed to leave the area in order not to get wet, often entering the playground. On the other hand, people exited the playground and engaged in water play. The water created either transient boundaries or play opportunities depending on the user and their personal perceptions.

The creation of an unexpected socio-spatialisation with its own orderings was observed. Children played, chasing each other in and out of the playground and the piazza with bottles filled with water from the becks. The green area where the becks



were located acted as the base where the children returned to refill their bottles. Play extended to the upper part (including the playground) and the empty space in the lower part of the piazza (Figure 7-43). I observed that different elements and phases of children's play were placed in different areas – filling the bottle in the upper part, chasing in the lower –; the piazza affordances along with the playground structures created an extended and challenging play area.



Figure 7-43: Ilioupolis – The spatiality of water play

At the same time, there is evidence that the unexpected condition created a void of rules, a breach in the “normal”, challenging classification of space and encouraging intergenerational play and children's agency. As no established rules applied to the space for as long as the transient affordance lasted, I observed many intergenerational play incidents. Some guardians took full advantage of these new orderings and the lack of rules and played with the children. I observed a father playing with the water along with the children, getting wet and running around. All of them played equally dictating the game's development, often turning it into an imaginary play game sequence:

*‘This is a waterslide and I am going to fix the pipes’ (Boy).*

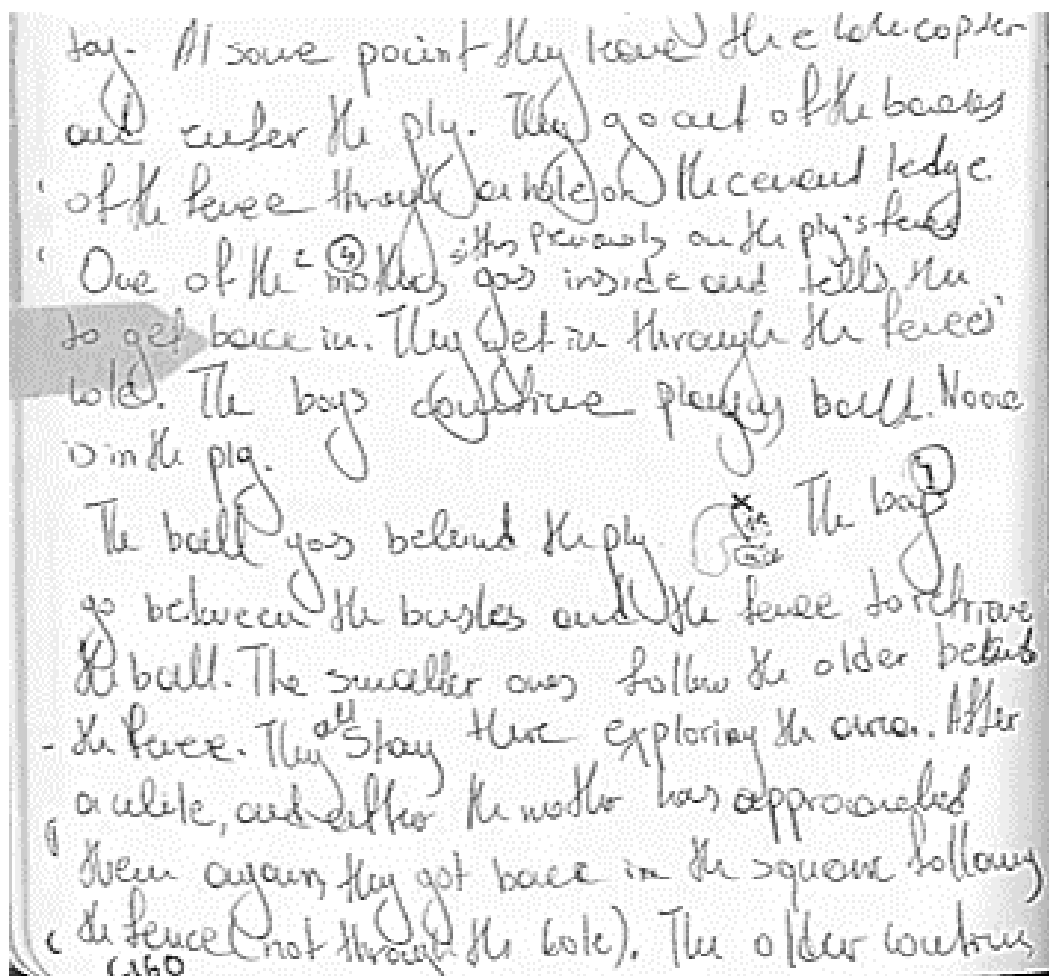
The father did not stop the children, but encouraged them to get wet, indicating which beck was throwing out more water. It is interesting to note, however, that the father did not enter the playground, still considering it to be a children's space, while the children moved in and out playing in both areas using the playground as their "castle". Children-initiated, play-centred transgression of the playground norms did not engage the adults that were still following the norms prescribed by the Heterotopia of Deviance. However, unexpected, transient situations that negotiated and redefined the character of the space, creating a dispute as to what the "norms" were, allowed adults to experiment with and transgress the established norms and engage with the socio-spatial opportunities, adopting different forms of parenting.

## **7.3 Tug-of-War**

### **7.3.1 Negotiating the Norms**

My findings suggest that alternate orderings, in a dialectic, constant negotiation with the normalisation mechanisms, were always accompanied by an extent of self-regulation or by normalisation practices. The Heterotopia of Transgression was not self-sustained, rather it constantly contested the playground's state as a special place for deviant subjects that accommodated the force of play. What was considered "normal" and "proper" was challenged, while new orderings emerged, in an endless tug-of war affecting the playground's porosity; interacting with its surroundings but retaining its deviant and physically defined, segregated centre. I observed that perceptions of the playground as a purpose-created play space led to tolerating, even encouraging, alternate uses and orderings. Safety was still guardians' main concern making both children and adults regulate their behaviours, while negotiating transgressive practices. On the one hand, the normalisation practices, as described in the previous chapters, were still present (Figure 7-44). On the other hand, self-regulation practices acquired a greater importance. However, in order to make sure that the playground space fulfilled its purpose, as a container of "valuable" and "safe" play, guardians often tried to compensate for the insufficient play provisions. I observed them encouraging and assisting transgressive uses, often extending the uses of play-structures and thereby extending the number of affordances, allowing children to experiment with risky kinds of play. In what follows I describe the self-regulation and normalisation practices in connection to the continually changing orderings of the

Heterotopia of Transgression, exploring how assisting – a Heterotopia of Deviance – mechanism – was in this scenario observed to support transgression.



day. At some point they leave the helicopter  
 and enter the play. They go out of the back  
 of the fence through a hole on the cement ledge.  
 One of the <sup>(5)</sup> mothers sits previously on the play's fence  
 and goes inside and tells her  
 to get back in. They get in through the fence's  
 hole. The boys continue playing ball. None  
 in the play.  
 The ball goes behind the play. <sup>(6)</sup> The boys  
 go between the bushes and the fence to retrieve  
 the ball. The smaller ones follow the older behind  
 the fence. They all stay there exploring the area. After  
 a while, and after the mother has approached  
 them again, they get back in the square following  
 the fence (not through the hole). The older continues  
 (160)

Figure 7-44: Field-notes abstract – Negotiations of the boundary – Dexameni

### 7.3.2 Self-regulation

*'I like to play outside as well but I am careful.'* (Girl, Vyronas).

My findings suggest that self-regulation and transgression of the norms were not mutually exclusive. I observed children often negotiating the limitations, rules and boundaries set for them instead of directly transgressing them. Both internalization of rules and their transgression were observed to structure behaviours, often combined in “test-and-proceed” tactics. The children, aware of the spatial restrictions applied to them, used to reassure the guardians before transgressing the rules:

*'I am aware of what I am doing'* (Boy, Dexameni).

The test-and-proceed tactic of the Heterotopia of Transgression was observed to be a leading practice, structuring alternate orderings. Children did not just refute the existing status, rather they negotiated it, manipulating and shaping it to their own needs:

*'The girl on the tree tells her mother approaching her: 'yeah yeah, I know...'. She doesn't come down though, she just starts hanging from the branches' (Girl, Ilioupolis).*

Guardians aware of this mechanism were often observed to use it for controlling children by making them accountable for their behaviour:

*'How are we going to trust you again?' (Mother, Ilioupolis).*

My observations suggest that children were self-conscious of their behaviours, often turning the playground to theatrical stage where they performed alternate orderings:

*'A girl swung on a branch and then jumped down theatrically, while spectators, both children and adults, encouraged her' (Field-notes, Dexameni).*

This theatricality, difficult to distinguish from play itself, was often used to test the field's tolerance of the emergence of alternate orderings.

### **7.3.3 Assisting Transgression**

At the same time, there is evidence that assistance, previously explored as a way to keep children under the guardians' control, often supported alternate orderings (Figure 7-45, Figure 7-46, Figure 7-47):

*'A father is rocking a 7 years old girl in the baby swings. All the other swings are occupied by children. She doesn't really fit and she needs assistance for rocking. Her father rocks her (transgressing the rules!!)' (Field-notes, Ilioupolis).*

Similarly, in Dexameni where there were not any children's swings at all, I observed children climbing the baby ones, while guardians were pushing them. Often guardians feeling the children's boredom or tension proposed themselves to move to the piazza, extending the play area and transgressing the previously set boundaries, or provided

extra stimuli, such as plastic pallets, boxes, branches and other objects, supporting alternate use:

*'A grandfather breaks a branch from a tree and gives it to the girl. She starts running around hitting and poking things in the piazza (Field-notes, Dexameni).*

At the same time, my findings suggest that children took advantage of guardians' vigilance, engaging more easily with alternate uses as they knew they would be assisted if anything went wrong. For example a girl in Dexameni climbed a tree and called her father to take her down when she could not do it herself.

As supported by my observations, when children were testing both the norms and their own abilities, guardians' assistance tended to act as a normalisation force. In these cases, refusing assistance was experienced as an empowering process for children:

*'I can do it, I am not a baby' (Girl, Vyronas).*

Being able to use the structures in new, more exciting and dangerous ways was often interconnected with being old enough, and "not a baby" to use them the normal way. Even in the cases when children asked for their guardians' assistance, they were the ones dictating their actions:

*'I help him. He tells me how quickly he wants to move and I push the swing' (Mother, Ilioupolis).*

My findings suggest that assisting children's play sometimes acted as an excuse for adults' play in the children's space. Safe play and assistance were interconnected. Guardians were often observed to engage in play to keep them safe:

*'Only with the children. Both helping them, when the children are small and to play with the children, running, sliding down etc.' (Father, Ilioupolis).*

Play's alternate orderings were often observed to reverse the established norms, transforming assistance into play and blurring the boundary between the two:

*‘A father plays in the see-saw with four children. He balances the one side of the see-saw and the children try to balance on the other side of the structure’ (Field-notes, Dexameni).*

It is important to make clear, however, that in this tug-of war-game intergenerational play was still not a common observation in the playground space (See: 6.4.7):

*‘For example, we wanted to play on the monkey bars, but I was ashamed to do so because I was expecting someone to say to me that there are children that want to play’ (Father, Ilioupolis).*

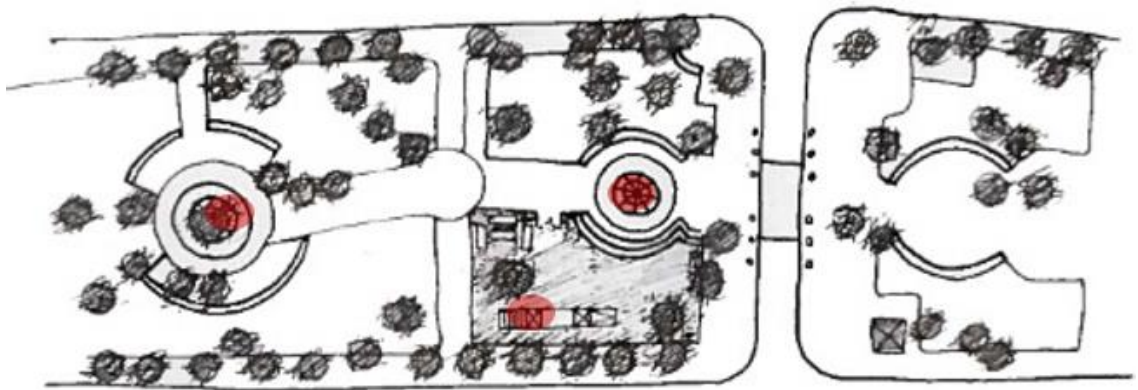


Figure 7-45: Vyronas – Assisting play in the piazza and the playground

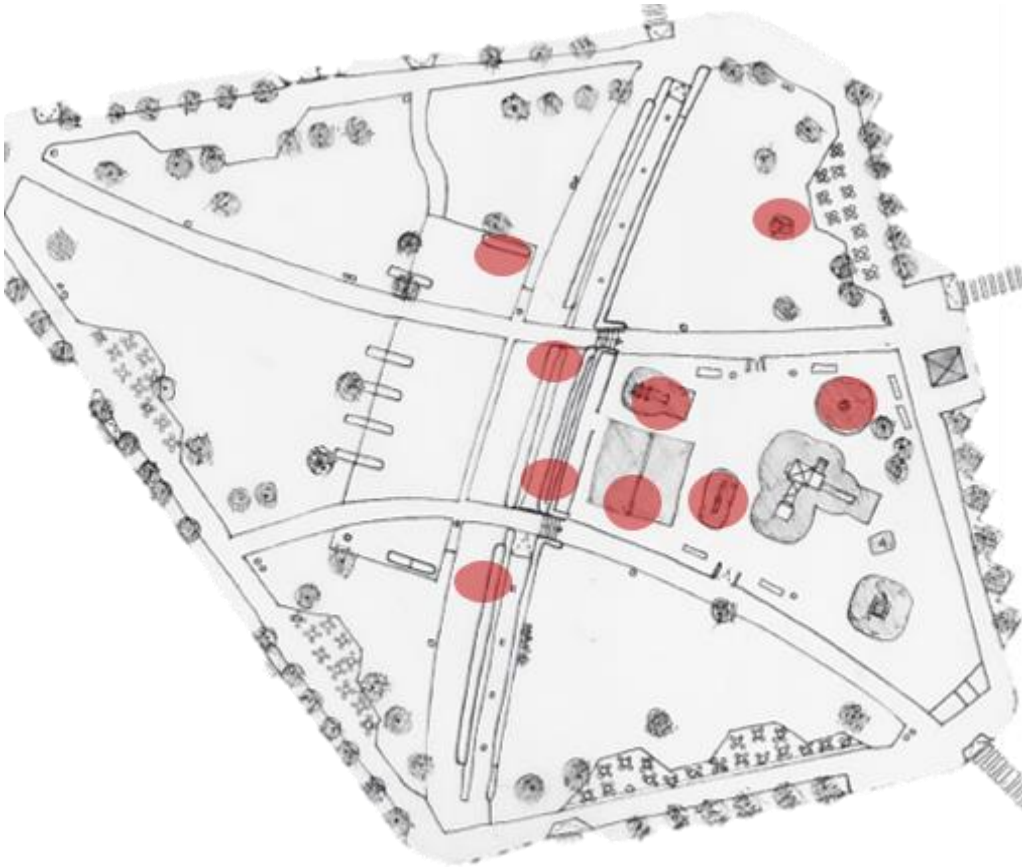


Figure 7-46: Ilioupolis – Assisting play in the piazza and the playground

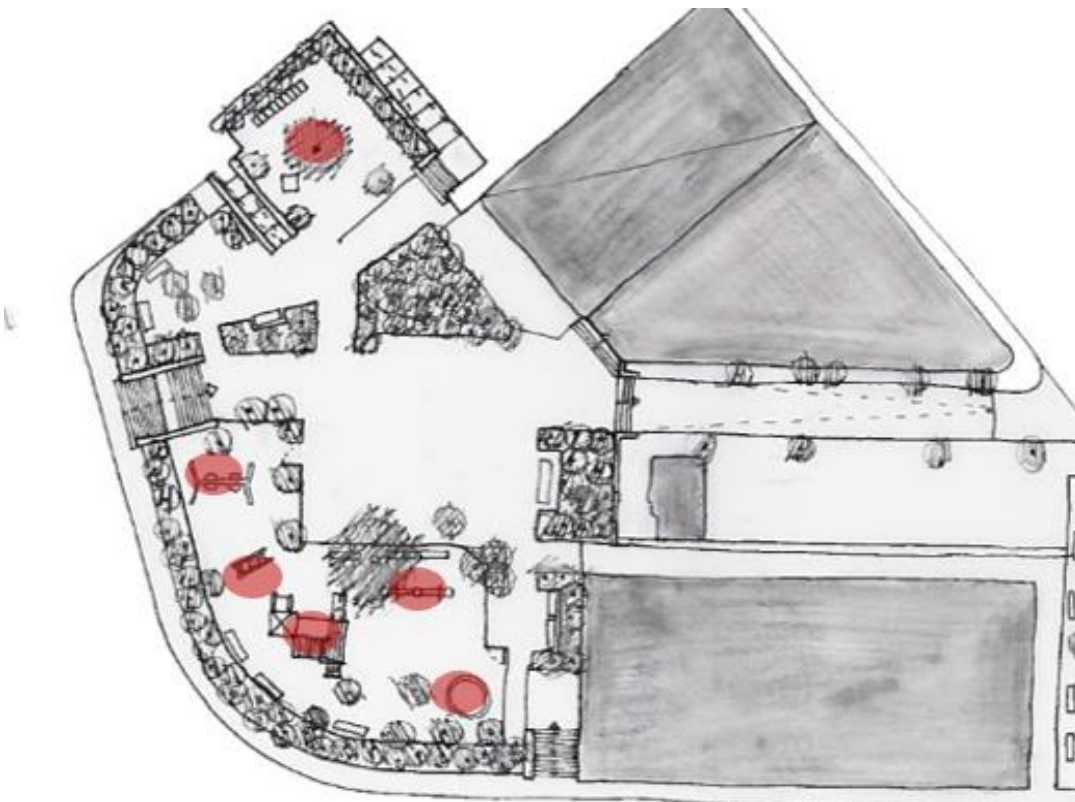


Figure 7-47: Dexameni – Assisting play in the piazza and the playground



### 7.3.4 Normalisation

Normalisation practices often negotiated with the transgressive ones forming an action-reaction dipole. In this context, I often observed that the need to follow the norms created awkwardness when these norms were not clear to the participants and especially to adults. This was the case when play overflowed the playground space transgressing the boundary. The playground was considered to be a children's space, and as such also a safe space, relaxing the supervision requirements. The playground structures ascribed to a "normal play use", supported normalisation processes when alternate uses were taking place. This situation was creating a condition of normalised transgression, while boredom, justified alternate uses relaxing guardians' normalisation practices: A mother in Vyronas, self-conscious, trying to justify her parenting told me:

*'They are bored... there aren't any play-structures'* when her son was jumping in and out the fence.

Unaccompanied children's spatial practices were often observed to be a force of transgression challenging the norms. Unaccompanied children existed outside of the established set of norms although often abided to it. Not followed by a guardian, the main subjects enforcing the norms, they were free to dictate their play and their behaviour. There is evidence of differences between unaccompanied and accompanied children's play. Children unrestricted by guardians' supervision and normalisation practices were observed to use the space more aggressively, often inventing new uses. They did not stay restricted to the playground space but used both playground and piazza for their benefit, taking advantage of both areas' infrastructure. Although I observed incidents when guardians intervened and normalised un-ruled unaccompanied children, this was the case only in extreme and dangerous situations. A girl playing with the grandson of a man I was interviewing replied when he asked her why she comes in the playground at weekends:

*'I am too bored at home' (Girl, Dexameni).*

Unfortunately, my ethics limitations did not allow me to approach unaccompanied children and as a result the data I have were acquired only through observations.

## 7.4 Summary

In this chapter I described my observations regarding transgressive play in the playground. Play negotiating and challenging not only the normal order and the playgrounds' deviant and safeguarding character but also its boundaries transformed it into a Heterotopia of Transgression. Children, when in play, questioned and transgressed the boundaries, either the physical ones or those their guardians had defined. My observations suggest that the playground was not isolated from its surrounding space, but rather it interacted with it; often "borrowing" infrastructure in order to address the needs described in the first part of this chapter. The piazzas' infrastructure or the lack of it was complementary to the playground's use-specific structures, while other, usually commercial, places surrounding the field, supported an extended stay in the piazza. An overflow of activities and play was observed. The playground retained its position as the centre of play; the home-base concentrating the play activity. However, play often overflowed its boundaries giving piazzas a complementary function to the playground, encouraging flows revolving around the playground space. During this overflow the Public Value of the playground was not affected – it continued accommodating children and their guardians while restricting interactions – however, we can point out that the piazzas publicness benefited by children's presence.

In this study, the fence, a key element defining the playground as a children's space, a Heterotopia of Deviance, was continually transgressed and questioned. The playground space, prescribed with a specific use revolving around play, did not stand up to the expectations of either guardians or children. The fence, however, acquired some interesting characteristics that were not intended in its designated use. I observed that in the Heterotopia of Transgression, the fence stopped manifesting as an immobile boundary segregating the inside from the outside. Instead, it encouraged play, filling the inadequacy of the playground's structures, and supported interaction and views inside-outside.

Transgression here refers to the socio-spatial practices consciously contesting and negotiating the existing norms or physical boundaries. The playground space, created to contain children transformed from an institutionalised space into a space of transgression, while Heterotopia of Deviance emerged as a "defined" and purpose-centred, socio-spatial formation, Heterotopia of Transgression is framed as a process, a collective but child-initiated experience of interpretation and negotiation. In this line of thought, while the playground's Heterotopia of Deviance was regulated by specific norms, often imposed from a common socio-cultural understanding shared between

the users, the Heterotopia of Transgression was created and evolved as a set of spatial practices. Evidence of transgression emerged in the form of spatial manipulation and contesting of social norms and fears, alternate uses, challenging any classifications and creating new orderings. Transgression and normalisation acted in this research as action-reaction forces, making each other not only negotiable but also visible<sup>34</sup>. The Heterotopia of Transgression was situated in the playground space, being defined by its boundary. However, it constantly overflowed the playground. It challenged the norms and transgressed the fence, blurring the boundaries, often using the fence as an affordance. The boundary emerged as part of the playground, bearing a use or play value, and not just as a segregating physical structure. At the same time, the heterotopia's socio-spatial opening and closing mechanisms, along with the physicality of the adjacent piazzas allowed this overflowing towards the piazzas allowing, even if momentarily, the co-existence of different age groups in the piazza characteristics associated with the definition of the Public Value in this study. The playground interacted with its surroundings and retreated back in its enclosed area in an organic way; the way a snail moves and retreats into the enclosure of the shell when it finds an obstacle (Figure 7-48).

Play and affordances emerged through the observations as the two main elements structuring the Heterotopia of Transgression. Children's play was the activity that created alternate orderings, negotiated norms and reinvented the space changing both hierarchies between players and classification of space. My observations suggest that transgressive play reinvented space, ignoring the institutionalised "proper" way to play proposed by the playground's design. In a constant engagement with space play created new symbolic spaces functioning under new rules, using the existing space in new ways. It extended the play-structures' use and engaged with the space's infrastructure creating a variety of affordances and proposed new spatialities.

It becomes clear that it was children's practices and play that instigated the Heterotopia of Transgression, transgressing both the social norms and physical boundaries. Children challenged play's institutionalised character and invented new practices defying the existing norms. They questioned the social roles, while playfully evading guardians' rules. Adults supported or normalised these practices but they were not observed to initiate them. As a result, these practices were not observed to enrich or inform the playground's Public Value. Rather play extended one way, from the playground interacting with the adjacent space without affecting the strict unwritten rules regulating access to the playground space.

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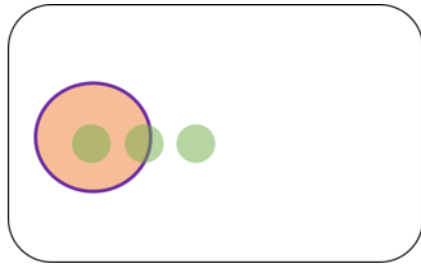
<sup>34</sup> in the same way steam becomes visible only when it hits the glass surface

Play's transgressive attitude created a new, dialectic<sup>35</sup>, continually negotiated condition between alternate and "normal" orderings. Transgression and self-regulation or normalisation practices were expressed as a tug-of-war game as play's alternate orderings negotiated with the control mechanisms and created a new condition of constant change. The playground ceased being a confining, safeguarding Heterotopia of Deviance and was transformed instead into a space of transgression.

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<sup>35</sup> Dialectic is referring to a contradiction of ideas or arguments firstly introduced by Plato and then employed by Hegel. The Oxford dictionary of literary terms mentions: 'The interplay of contradictory principles or opposed forces, as understood in the European tradition of philosophy influenced by G. W. F. Hegel and including Marx and Engels. Some schematic versions of dialectical philosophy speak of a unification of opposites in which the thesis is opposed by the antithesis but united with it in a higher synthesis' (Baldick, 2015, p.n/a). Dialectic deals with the explicit meaning of statements, and emphasizes coming to shared conclusions (Sennett, 2012, p.45, 2010).

Dialogic on the other hand refers to the co-existence of ideas or elements with different attributes without seeking resolution. The Oxford dictionary of literary terms defines dialogic as: 'Characterized or constituted by the interactive, responsive nature of dialogue rather than by the single-mindedness of monologue' (Baldick, 2015, p.n/a).



## Redefining the Children's space

### *Play Transgressing the socio-spatial boundaries*

- Inside the fence
  - Prescriptive
  - Age-specific
  - Immobility
  - (in)accessibility
- On the fence
  - Prescriptive
  - Age-specific
  - Immobility
  - Porosity
  - Lack of infrastructure
  - (in)accessibility
- Beyond the fence
  - Piazza
  - infrastructure
  - Empty areas
  - Transient
  - affordances

## Dialectic

### Tug-of-war

- Negotiating the Norms
- Self-regulation
- Assisting Transgression
- Normalisation

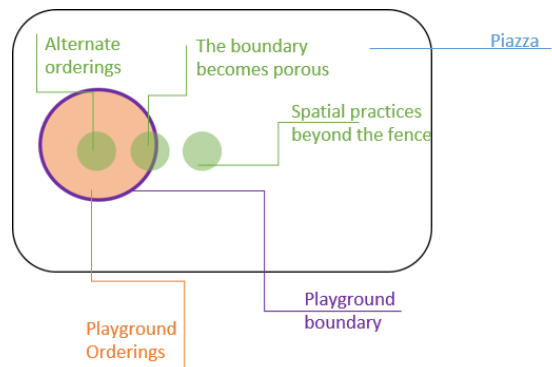


Figure 7-48: *The Heterotopia of Transgression*



*'I came through the main entrance in order to take a look around and choose a seat. Unfortunately the café tables are full at this time. The piazza is full as well. As I climbed up the stairs I could see children sliding towards me on scooters and skates. When I passed through the ball-game area the children were searching for their ball. That made crossing easier'*  
*(Field-notes, Dexameni, 07/05/2017).*





## 8. Heterotopia of Resistance

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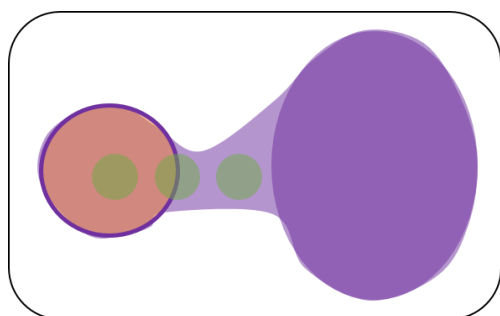


Figure 8-1: *The Heterotopia of Resistance*

### 8.1 Overview

The term “Resistance” is used here to describe a dialogic socio-spatial situation. It comes in contrast with the term “transgression” used previously, bearing a dialectic character. The term transgression is used in this study to refer to transgression of existing norms or physical boundaries, an act with a specific reference point which tries to transgress or move it further. The term resistance, however, goes further meaning a collective practice of proposing new orderings having abolished the reference point that defined transgression. Heterotopia of Resistance did not just transgress the established norms but created a new reality, a “new normal”, inventing new boundaries and allowing different elements to co-exist in a dialogical way. It was not in a constant state of action-reaction like the Heterotopia of Transgression but in a state where different expressions of orderings co-existed conversing with each other to propose new socio-spatial realities. Whereas the action-oriented Heterotopia of Transgression negotiated the space given to it and its norms, the Heterotopia of Resistance emerged as appropriating and creating its own space. Rather than transgressing spatial boundaries, it created new boundaries.

It is important to clarify from the beginning that the Heterotopia of Resistance’s spatial footprint often included but was not limited to the playground. I use the term “island” in order to describe the Heterotopia of Resistance’s fluid and continually changing spatiality; its centre situated in the piazza, conversing with the playground space.

In what follows I describe my findings concerning the Heterotopia of Resistance approaching it through its alternate orderings: alternate in contrast to what was considered as “normal” (See: Chapter 6), but at the same time constantly changing, and not as an established condition.

## 8.2 The Spatiality of the Heterotopia of Resistance

### 8.2.1 Situating the Island: The Playground Catalyst

Existing theory approaches heterotopia as pre-defined structures, independent of adjacent spaces (Bolaki, 2015; Kern, 2008; Liu, 2009; Muzzio & Muzzio-Rentas, 2008; Shane, 2008). In this study, there is strong evidence that in all cases, the playground heterotopia interacting with its surrounding space, attracted and justified play in the piazza. An intergenerational play area was created, catalysed by the playground space, but having a life of its own. People taking advantage of the piazzas' affordances sustained a new play-space, distinct from the playground but in constant relation with it.

The Heterotopia of Resistance was not placed in the playground space and was not equated with the play overflowing from the playground. Rather, as a new expression of the playground heterotopia, it was centred outside the playground, continually conversing with it, both socially and spatially blurring the boundaries between the two areas, abolishing the classification of space. This situation's alternate orderings were often observed to co-exist (Chatzidakis et al., 2012; Hetherington, 1997) in the same physical space with or displace the already explored Heterotopia of Deviance (See: Chapter 6), allowing this study to theorise heterotopia as part of a process of sequential transformation.

The obvious distinction from the overflowing of play-related activity during the Heterotopia of Transgression is that the centre<sup>36</sup> of the Heterotopia of Resistance was situated outside the playground. I often observed children playing in the piazza without entering the playground at all, but rather they stayed outside playing at the tables, or in the green areas and the benches:

*'Two boys come from across the street. They cycle around. [...] They start playing ball outside [...] they decide to climb the conical structure [...] they seem tired. One of them goes to the short ledge. The other follows. [...] They climb the flowerbed, walking around. [...] They decide to rod their bikes again' (Field-notes, Vyronas).*

Although not making use of the playground's structures, they had chosen this space to meet their friends and play in the piazza. On this day, the island, was informed by the adjacent playground space, but did not include it as the playground remained empty. Many guardians, especially the ones using the space regularly, were observed to stay

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<sup>36</sup> The centre of the play activity is here defined as the space accommodating the highest average density of people/children.

only outside the playground for as long as their visit lasted, while the children were free to move around taking advantage of the island's infrastructure.

The adjacent shops and restaurants were observed to support people's presence in each case, often motivating them to exit the playground transferring socialising that usually takes place in a café to the public space. People often confirmed in the interviews that when meeting friends they often bought a coffee from the cafes, staying in the piazza or the playground, supervising their children playing:

*'It is because there are the cafes. And many people come. Because you say to yourself: I will drink and coffee and combine it with play...'* (Mother, Ilioupolis).

I often observed that guardians, sitting in the café or in benches further away chatting, often left their children's play under the supervision of other guardians. Their visit's purpose was not to play in the playground but in the play island created around and in it. Some of the guardians who stayed in the piazza argued that they would not visit the piazza if there was not the playground nearby, while others commented on how the piazza's empty space supported play:

*'Yes of course I would bring them here to play. Because the space is larger than in front of our house... They play there as well, but in the piazza the space is bigger, they move more...'* (Father, Ilioupolis).

In Vyronas, there were not many shops and other commercial uses around the playground. However, the fact that the participants were living in the adjacent neighbourhood supported a prolonged stay in the piazza. I often observed the regulars popping in to their homes and then returning again to the playground:

*'Go give the keys to your father. Be careful in the street'* (Mother, Vyronas).

It soon became obvious that the playground was not as segregated as the ideas creating it indicate. Rather it was part of a network where the playground was the centre and other auxiliary places surrounded and supported its function (Figure 8-2). In Dexameni, the quite segregated piazza did not allow connections with the surrounding area. However, the coffee shop in the piazza itself acted as an auxiliary use, often supporting children's and guardians' presence in the piazza.

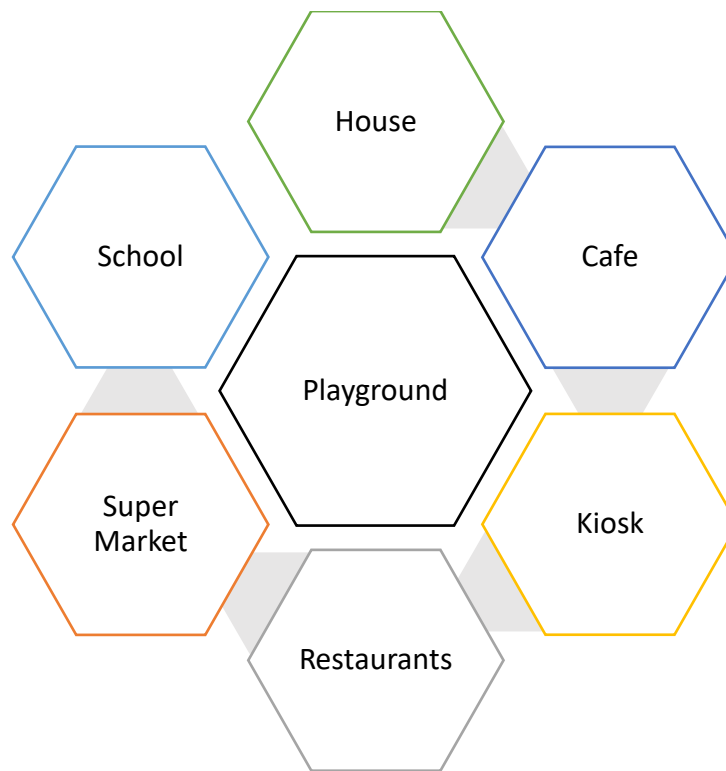


Figure 8-2: The playground as part of a complex

Moreover, I very frequently observed people, and particularly children, playing with the piazza's infrastructure when they walked alongside their guardians. It is important to clarify that, this was not observed in other piazzas that did not include a playground<sup>37</sup>:

*'A boy of about 13 years old is walking with his mother down the piazza. He passes through the conical structure and climbs on the flowerbed/bench, while his mother walks around them. They continue walking' (Field-notes, Vyronas).*

Especially in Vyronas, people wandering about stopped to play in more than one spot in the island i.e. the conical structure, then climb the concrete benches, then the flowerbed (Figure 8-3).

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<sup>37</sup> Although these cases were beyond the scope of this research, my experience as a resident of Ilioupolis area confirms this.

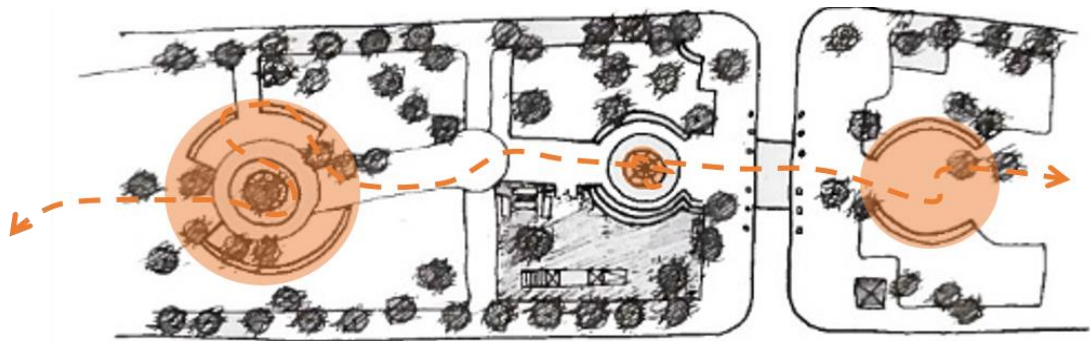


Figure 8-3: Vyronas – play path

The piazza's elongated path-like shape and rich infrastructure sustained play and playful behaviour for as long as one was walking down the piazza. It is interesting to note that further down the playground, although the infrastructure continued being rich and full of play affordances, children's engagement was limited strengthening the argument that the playground space created play opportunities in the public realm. Similar observations took place in Dexameni around the statue and Ilioupolis when children climbed and ran in the lower level's ledge (Figure 8-4, Figure 8-5).

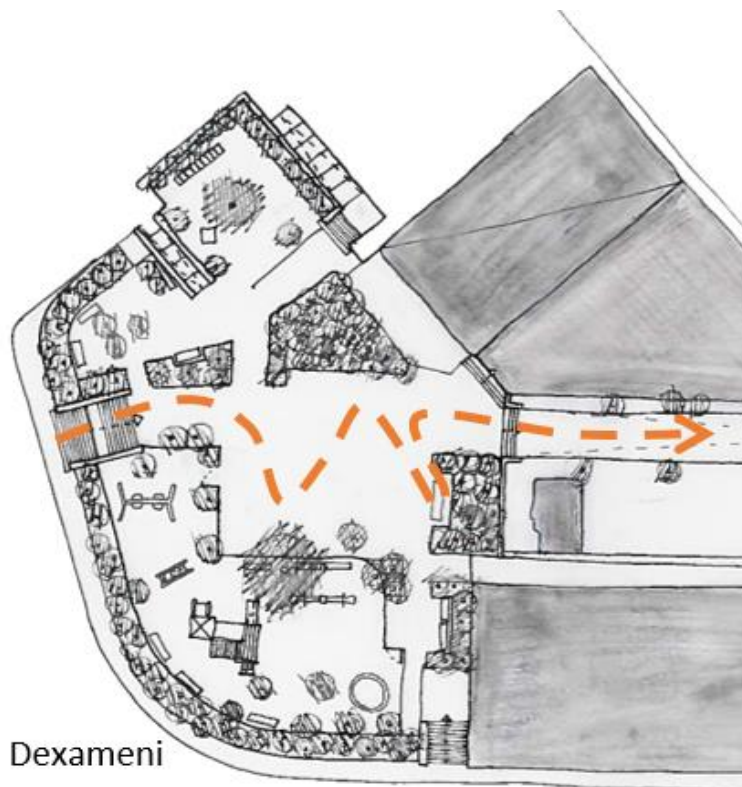


Figure 8-4: Dexameni – play path



Figure 8-5: Ilioupolis – play path

Many guardians mentioned that they were just passing by and seeing the games taking place in the island stopped to play:

*‘We don’t usually visit this playground but this day we were passing by and – saw the other children playing and he asked to play as well.’ (Mother, Vyronas).*

*‘Girl walks down the piazza with her father. Outside the playground she climbs the fence, enters the playground, then climbs the fence and exits again and continues walking down the piazza to catch up with her father’ (Field-notes, Vyronas).*

### 8.2.2 Fluid Boundaries

There is strong evidence that the existing physical characteristics affected the ways Heterotopia of Resistance conversed with the existing socio-spatially established situation in the piazzas. The Heterotopia of Resistance was not defined by specific spatial characteristics and boundaries – as was the case in the Heterotopia of Deviance – but rather appropriated the existing physical space. I often observed



children moving abolishing the boundaries set by the social classification of space (See: Chapter 6):

*‘Boys with bicycles run through the green areas and paved path as they are made from the same material. They don’t stop or change their route’ (Field-notes, Vyronas).*

Green and paved areas were used in similar ways, while I observed that the different levels of the piazzas made play exciting. At the same time, I tested and confirmed my suspicions that the more space was given over to particular people in play, the more play expanded occupying the available space displacing the “normal” uses:

*‘When the ball game taking place in front of me extends towards the bench I am sitting, I move to the edge of the bench and lift my feet. Half the bench became their goalpost. After a, while I decide to change position as the ball is threatening me. The ball game extends to the whole area, using the whole bench as a goalpost and occupying double area than in the beginning’ (Field-notes, Ilioupolis).*

At the same time, as play would not stay confined within specific boundaries, relations between different areas of the field emerged. In many cases play taking place in specific areas affected the function of other areas, or created new boundaries. Uses displaced from their original areas were observed to take place in other parts of the site supporting the claim of an observed co-existence of orderings in the same physical space. To give a characteristic example: In Ilioupolis, ball games were taking place in the upper part’s green areas, taking advantage of the fact that it was an empty space. Moreover, the bushes in the upper part had a double function, on the one hand, they were protecting people sitting on the ledge from the ball game taking place in the green area, their very existence allowing the game to take place. On the other hand they were acting as a goalpost. Every time ball games were taking place there, the area in the ledge that was not protected by bushes emptied:

*‘Two men sit in the lower ledge in front of the bushes. After a, while they notice that the ball from the boys playing football gets to the lower level. They check around the area and decide to move: “they will throw a ball to our heads!” (Field-notes, Ilioupolis).*

The fact that this area had a “defined” goalpost and no grass growing transformed it into a ball game area (Figure 8-6).



*Figure 8-6: Ilioupolis – The ball games area in the upper part*

The orderings of the Heterotopia of Resistance, occupying the green areas abolished the “normal orderings” that classified both the green areas as dirty and the ledge as a sitting area (Figure 8-7). By contrast, in Vyronas, ball games were observed only in the paved areas as the green areas retained their classification as dirty (dogs) and dangerous (close to the street) even in the Heterotopia of Resistance.

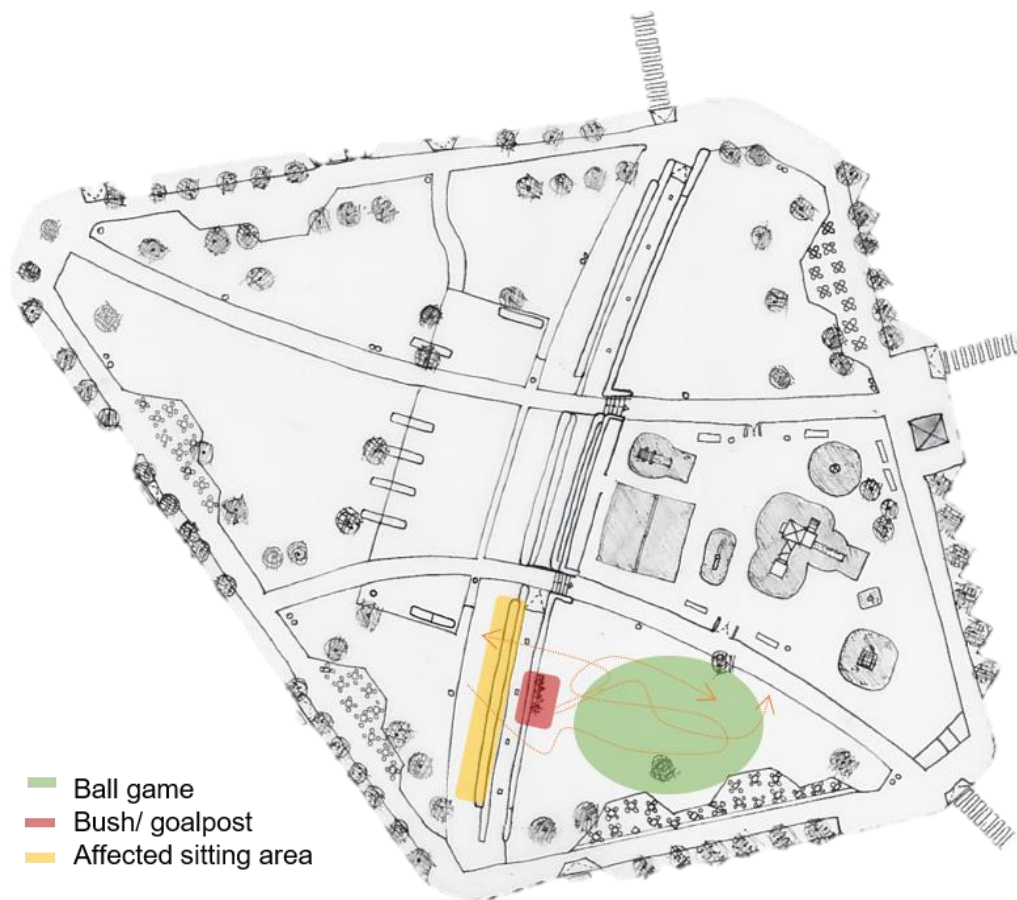


Figure 8-7: Ilioupolis – The ball games spatiality in the upper part

The physical boundary of the playground fence, already porous in the Heterotopia of Transgression, seemed abolished in the island as play was taking place through and above it. This was evident when accidental games were taking place between the playground and the piazza. I, very frequently, observed people throwing the ball in and out of the playground. A common succession of events, observed almost every day in Dexameni, was taking place when the ball entered the playground from over the fence. Children were abolishing the obstacle by climbing the fence directly:

*'A small boy collects the ball that just landed in his feet. He ignores the children outside asking him to give it back. He just plays on his own. A boy jumps above the fence, take the ball from the boy and throws it out again to the rest of the group. The he climbs in the tree and jumps out again' (Field-notes, Dexameni).*

### 8.2.3 Proposing New Classifications

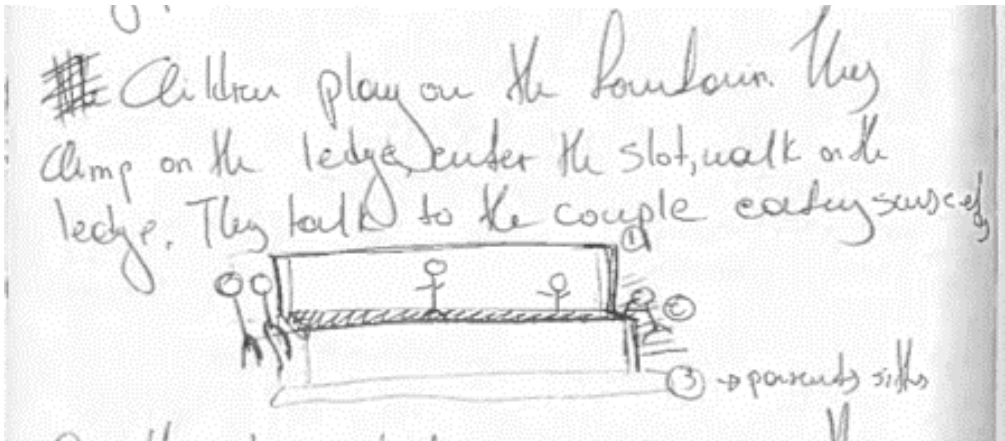


Figure 8-8: 27/04/2017 Ilioupolis

My observations suggest that in the Heterotopia of Resistance, the previously shared classification of space was abolished. Play was authoring a new kind of classification, however, not a fixed one, but one that was constantly co-authored and shifting in a constant process of 'similitude' (Hetherington, 1997, p.43). The island's main characteristic, emerging through my observations, was play. Play was the force that created and sustained the island by proposing alternate orderings and reinventing physical space.

Facilitated by the playground's Heterotopia of Transgression, the play island's Heterotopia of Resistance was observed to "form" its own life that outgrew both the playground and the piazza, and bore meanings defining it as different to just an extended play area in the public space. The question of what constitutes a play space in the urban landscape emerges. The findings agree with studies proposing that there is no relationship between purposed-designed play infrastructures and the likelihood of playing outdoors (Thomson & Philo, 2004; Valentine & McKendrick, 1997; Gülgönen & Corona, 2015). Rather, the playground space catalysed play in the public space supported by the spatial affordances of the public space's infrastructure. This study moves its focus from the playground space and proposes a more extended playful space in the city: an emplacement without defined space that engages with the urban landscape and creates multiple expressions of representational spaces (Lefebvre, 1991).

The main characteristic of the Heterotopia of Resistance was its alternate orderings. These alternate orderings were not normalised, but rather co-existed with or displaced what was considered "normal" (See: 6.2). The term "alternate" is used here not only to approach orderings as different to what was expected in this space but also

as constantly alternating, creating different interpretations of the social situation. My findings suggest that the alternate orderings manifested in the Heterotopia of Resistance in some cases took advantage of the lack of norms and in others overwrote the existing (for example when children used space in ways different than those intended by their design). I observed that the Heterotopia of Resistance was in a state of constant flux, while different orderings co-existed in a dialogic way.

While the playground space bore a variety of rules and connotations, proposing a “proper” use accompanied by normalisation practices, the play island manifested as a free-to-interpret milieu supporting unrestricted creative behaviours (Figure 8-8). The piazza infrastructure provided an abundance of affordances without a designated play use. This lack of a “proper way to play” in some cases was observed to increase supervision practices, while also decreasing normalisation ones. This allowed children a greater freedom of alternate uses and supported a variety of spatial interpretations and different forms of play to take place. Questioning and engaging with the rules in different ways, both children and adults, established a variety of alternate orderings interacting with the space and negotiating its meanings. Children in Ilioupolis, for example jumped from bench to bench playing, while using the fountain as a sitting area (Figure 8-10):

*‘They don’t use the stairs, they jump down the ledge directly’ (Field-notes).*

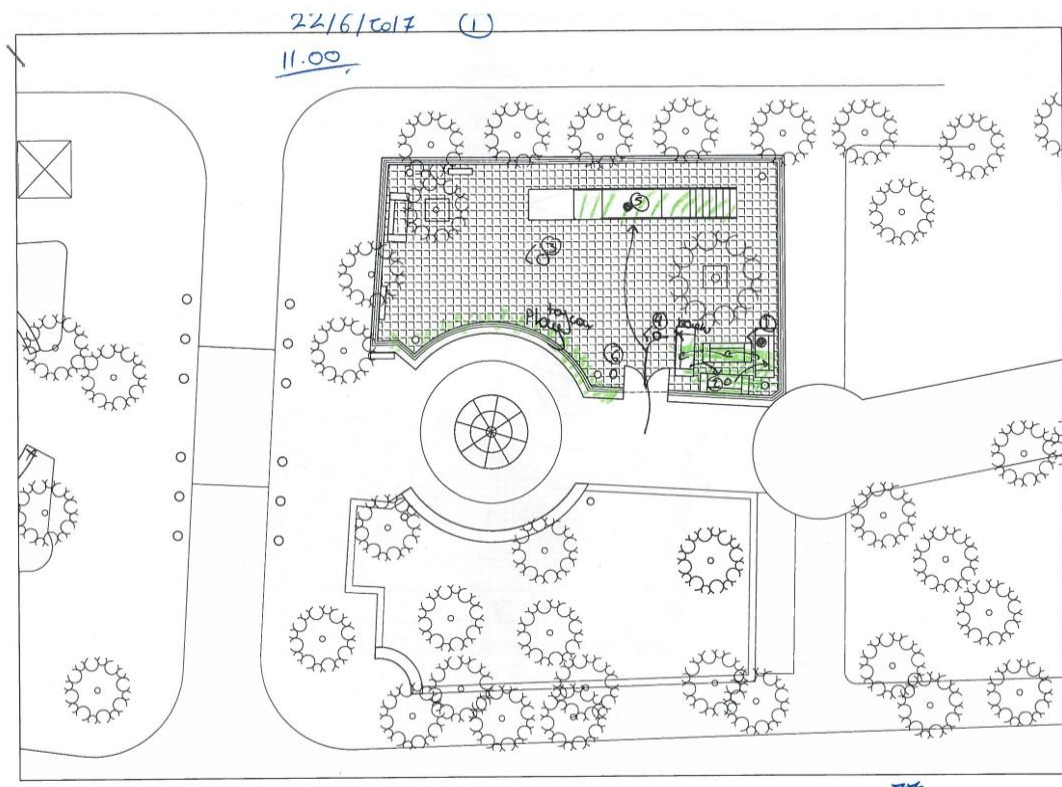


Figure 8-9: Vyronas – Descriptive diagram: Jumping from bench to bench



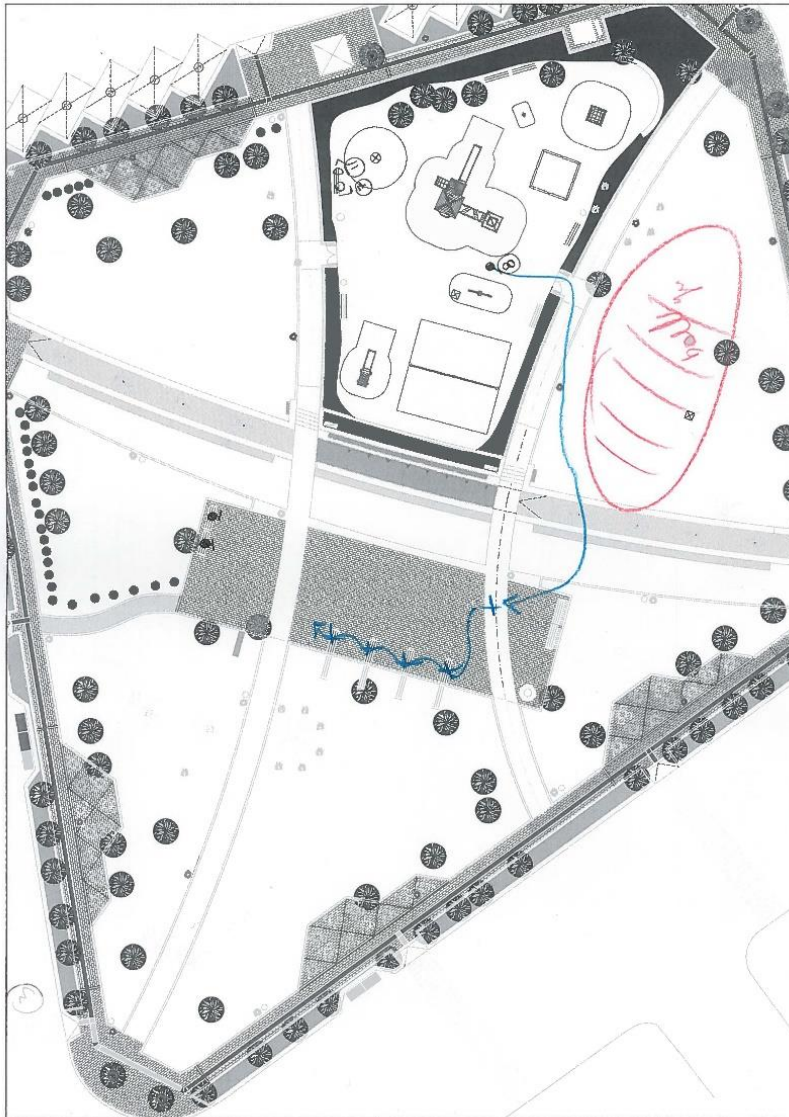


Figure 8-10: Ilioupolis – Descriptive diagram: Jumping down the ledge (blue)

In the island I observed people using almost all infrastructure in their favour, either physically (climbing, jumping etc.) or in order to support their games. They climbed or hung from lamps and trees taking advantage of elements they could use as goalposts for ball or Frisbee games. Space emerged as an equal partner in play during these observations with the different areas affording different kinds of alternate use, allowing various kinds of games and interaction to co-exist.

Moreover, Heterotopia of Resistance was continually manipulated and reinvented. Imaginary play, toys and other ways to “extend” the space’s use created a new play-centred situation. A new space was created acting as a different layer

transposed upon the characteristics of the physical space, but bearing new spatial practices. These new spaces did not refer to the mere engagement with affordances. Whole new worlds with their own meanings and symbolisms were created:

*'The flowerbed is a prison and the boys try to free the princess. Sticks they found are their swords' (Field-notes, Dexameni).*

Inventing imaginary places, play ascribed space with new rules and attributes defying the established norms or using the physical elements in new ways. In Dexameni, two boys discussed how they were "cleaning" a "dirty" area in one of the flowerbeds, thereby engaging with the adults' normative classification of space, while performing their agency reclassifying the area as play space:

*'I am cleaning this litter here. Here, take this branch to clean the dust. This house is dirty, we have to clean it!' (Boy, Dexameni).*

In what follows I briefly describe my observations concerning the ways the play island manifested in each case study as well as the main alternative "classifications" created<sup>38</sup>.

### Dexameni

In Dexameni case study, the lack of benches in the piazza created a huge vacant space that supported games in need of space. I observed people playing everywhere in the piazza, running and climbing in the infrastructure, while ball games, scooters and acrobatics occupied the empty space. At the same time, the flowerbeds scattered around in the space, offered play affordances and hiding spots. Older children were playing ball in the same area every day taking advantage of the space's affordances and using the area between the playground's fence corner and a small tree as a goalpost. Smaller ball games, of fewer participants, were scattered around in the empty space and some times in the library area. At the same time, people often took advantage of the piazza's small inclination to slide down on their scooters from the statue towards the stairs (Figure 8-11). It is interesting to note that people often commented on the space's materiality and how it did not allow them to move easily between areas of the piazza:

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<sup>38</sup> As these were constantly shifting this is just an example of the most often observed behaviours



*'I could play with my scooter in both areas. Now there is soil in the playground. I can't. My scooter doesn't roll.'* (Girl).

The quiet areas often accommodated younger children's and toddlers' games as they were more isolated from the often aggressive and active games taking place in the piazza's main empty area. The Heterotopia of Resistance occupied the whole space, ascribing it to play, displacing the rest uses.



Figure 8-11: Games in Dexameni

## Vyronas

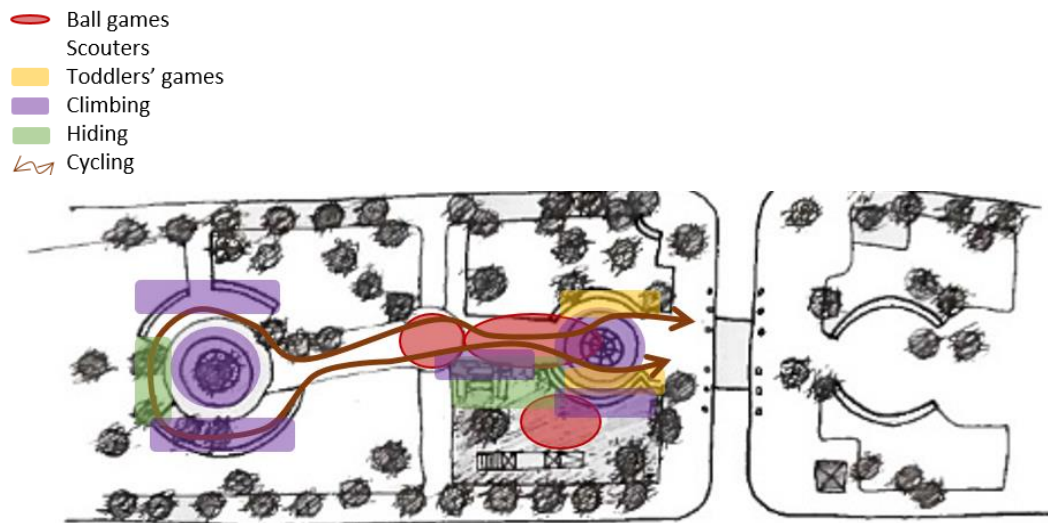


Figure 8-12: Games in Vyronas

The flat piazza facilitated cycling and ball games. The piazza's main area, although restricted, accommodated games that needed space like cycling, playing with scooters or Frisbees, performing acrobatics and ball games. Often, more than one ball game took place side to side. Moreover, I often observed play in the conical structure and around the playground fence, using it as a visual barrier for hide-and-seek or as a climbing structure. Its bars' shape allowed both climbing and creeping through the gaps, while its cement ledge encouraged hiding or sitting. The variety of bench-types and flowerbeds in the piazza supported many different games as well such as hide-and-seek or chasing games (Figure 8-12). In contrast with Dexameni, where I observed a variety of ages in this case, apart from adults it was usually older children that played in the piazza:

*'They used to play in the playground when they were younger, now, however, they play outside' (Mother, Vyronas).*

This was explained by guardians' answers as correlating to the proximity of the piazza to the street. However, some toddlers were observed enjoying the empty area, running around and exploring the surrounding space and variety of materials. In this case, the Heterotopia of Resistance did not abolish completely the sitting areas but guardians continued using them. However, it pushed other people to the sitting areas further down giving the space adjacent to the playground to play and guardians.

## Ilioupolis

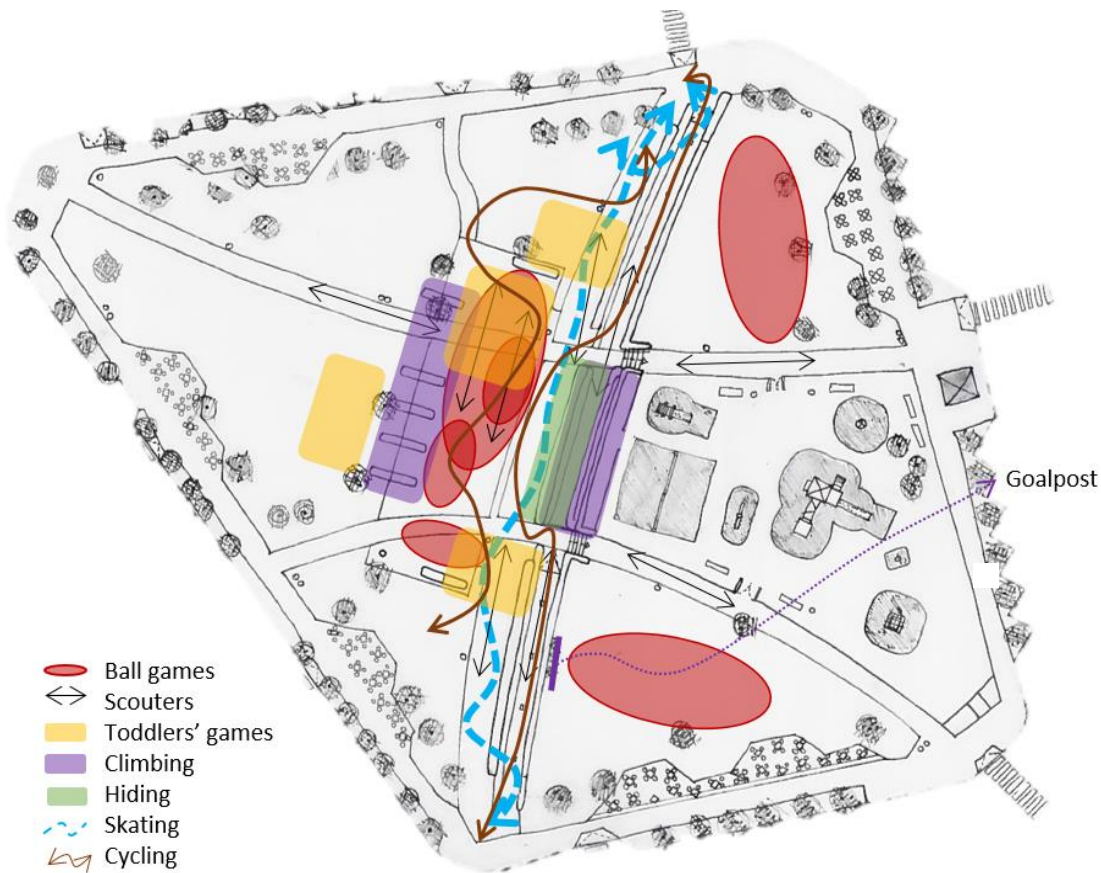


Figure 8-13: Games in Ilioupolis

In Ilioupolis, the piazza offered a variety of infrastructure and paving materials, informing affordances and interpretations (i.e. walking in the wooden path, racing in the wooden path, sitting in the ledge, climbing the fountain, playing in the paths etc.). This case's two levels, informed different kinds of play. The upper level accommodated ball games, while the lower one games that needed space like scooters, cycling and Frisbee. The lower level's green areas were not in use; the guardians often commented that they preferred the children to play in the paved part. However, I observed acrobatics that needed space taking advantage of these areas. At the same time toddlers used that space to explore or play with the soil. The empty space behind the ledges was used as play space, cycling lane and storage space for bicycles and balls. The broken fountain was the centre of both pretend and vigorous or rough-and-tumble play. It functioned as a climbing structure with different levels of difficulty, as an observation point and a hiding spot. At the same time it accommodated pretend play. I observed children of different ages using the fountain to test their abilities trying to jump from the upper part or, if they did not feel comfortable, stepping down a level (Figure 8-13). Similarly to Vyronas, play did not cancelled the sitting areas. However, it

occupied the whole piazza space abolishing the physical boundaries and often the fact that the piazza comprised two levels.

In all three cases different kinds of games took advantage of the different spatial elements. It is suggested that each space's material characteristics informed a new classification of space revolving around play. This, however, was not stable but was constantly shifting.

#### 8.2.4 Inaccessible Spaces – Cradles of Resistance

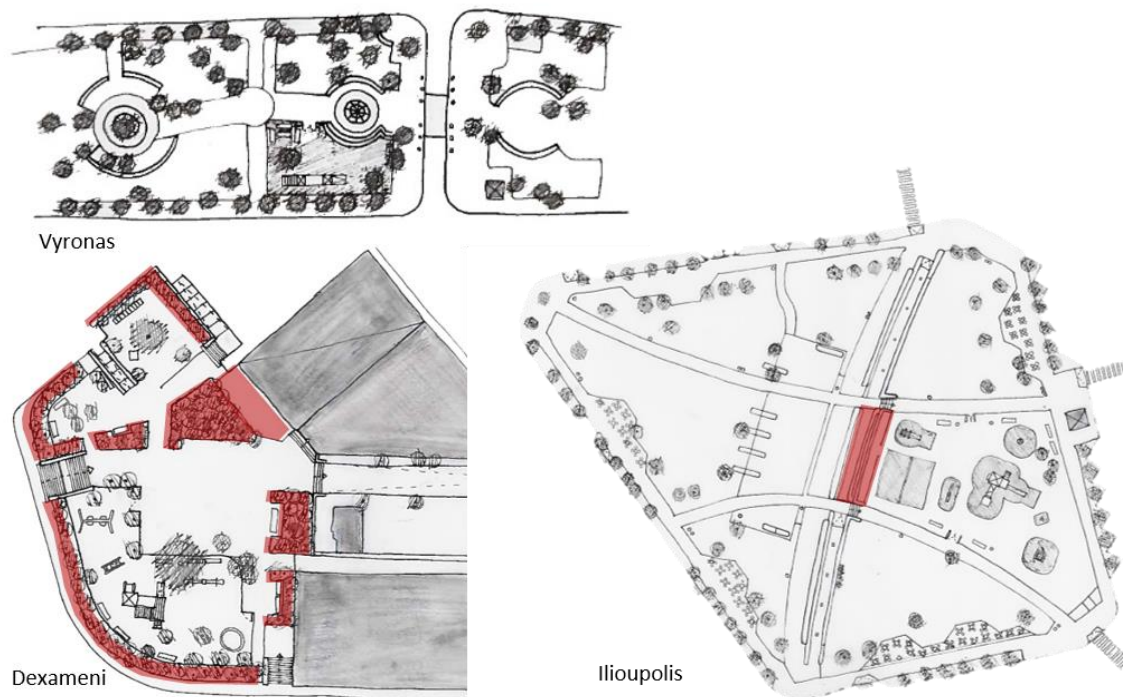


Figure 8-14: Inaccessible and hidden spaces facilitating the Heterotopia of Resistance

Inaccessible and hidden spaces in the island acted as empowering spaces, found spaces (See: Borden, 2001; Rasmussen, 2004), out of adult reach, in the middle of the public piazza for the – often dependent-on-adults – group of children (Figure 8-14). They often accommodated alternate orderings away from guardians' control. I need to clarify here the difference between inaccessible places in the Heterotopia of Transgression and the island. The inaccessible places of the Heterotopia of Transgression refer to areas of the playground and the play-structures. These allowed children to withdraw or perform alternate uses in these specific structures, staying confined, however, in the playground space. The inaccessible spaces described in this

chapter refer to places in the piazzas, empowering children in their use of public space, allowing them to exist in the public away from adult imposition. These allowed children to move in and appropriate the space, often supporting freedom of movement.

Children – as more active people – were climbing and reaching spaces inaccessible to the guardians. An everyday observation was children entering the flowerbeds and other “dirty” areas, hiding underneath the play structures or climbing to high places to play undistracted. My findings suggest that children, actively using the inaccessible spaces, created their own classification of space supporting their agency. In this new classification, hidden and inaccessible spaces – the most “dangerous” spaces according to normative spatial classification – emerged as cradles of emancipatory practices:

*‘Get out of here, it is dirty! Come on, I can’t reach you there, it is dangerous! (Mother talking to girl in Ilioupolis’ fountain).*

I observed inaccessible spaces transforming from dangerous, dirty areas to empowering spaces: to a “safe zone” but this time “protected” from norms and normalisation practices, rather than danger and dirt.

In Dexameni children climbed in the flowerbeds, hiding between the bushes, however, their favourite place was the entrance of the tank (Figure 8-15). This was barred with high fence creating some kind of a cage.

*‘They jump the bars and enter, wondering around or throwing stones and branches in the metallic door of the tank creating noise. Guardians comment on this behaviour, telling them to stop and get out. They are unable to approach or do anything. Children stay there for a long time playing before returning back to the piazzas’ reality’ (Field-notes, Dexameni).*

Another time:

*‘A girl climbs in the tank’s fence as far up as she can go when her father told her that they need to go home. She is too high, he can’t reach her’ (Field-notes, Dexameni).*

Similarly in Vyronas:



*'When the mother started scolding the boy that hit me with the ball, asking him to apologise, he hides inside the conical structure where she can't enter' (Field-notes).*



Figure 8-15: Dexameni – the tank's entrance

In Ilioupolis, I observed children using the fountain in the same way.

One day in Dexameni when the trees had been sprayed with pesticide and the playground was locked, the whole fenced area was transformed into an inaccessible space. Children climbed the fence and entered the space. They did not play with the structures, as they usually did in the playground. Instead, they behaved the same way as when they used other inaccessible spaces: they explored around searching and investigating what was there, while staying near the fence in order to avoid the sprayed areas. By contrast, in Vyronas, the lack of inaccessible spaces was observed to affect children's independence: although children were observed to lay more claims in the space, they could not get away from guardians' intervention.

Children often used these –inaccessible-to-adults – places as small cooling-off areas away from both the play activity and the normalization mechanisms. They, climbed into trees or other high infrastructure, taking advantage of the space's height-related affordances. This created two parallel levels: the ground level one – where guardians could intervene – and a higher one, in the top of the trees and the play structures where children were free to rule as they wished. In Ilioupolis, the fountain was used as an observation spot. From there children observed both the piazza and the playground space. Similarly, in Dexameni, the tops of the trees accommodated children's groups skilfully avoiding both guardians and the play action. Moreover, my observations suggest that Ilioupolis' and Vyronas' piazza structures, acting as inaccessible spaces, supported children's being in the piazza, while keeping them safe. Although guardians perceived them as dangerous for the children, hidden spaces often acted as safe spaces from dangerous adults or aggressive games that could not approach there. In Vyronas:

*'When a lady with a barking dog moves down the piazza, the toddlers playing outside the playground enters the conical structure and stays there 'protected' until the dog leaves' (Field-notes).*

The enclosed space of the structure offered a safe space in the public realm for the children, allowing them to exist in the public in their own accord. Similarly, I observed children hiding inside the fountain in Ilioupolis or the flowerbeds behind the trees in Dexameni to avoid balls.

### 8.3 Play Building Resistance

'Resistance necessarily entails accounting for the importance of both the space and the transgressional behaviour that constitutes it' (Dodge, 2015, p.331).

Play was observed to be the main force informing the Heterotopia of Resistance, occupying the island, negotiating physical space and emplacing its constantly changing orderings and qualities to the public realm (Harvey, 1996; Herbert & Beckett, 2009; Lofland, 1985; Nevárez, 2006). Play, conversing with the physical space, created alternate orderings appropriating both norms and spatial boundaries. This allowed multiple appropriations of the island from an extended number of users that were not otherwise observed to come together. Play engaged anyone willing to



participate and transformed the island into an inclusive space. A revealing observation was that children playing in the piazza called each other “παιδάκι” meaning little child, a term children use in Greece when they do not know each other’s names but still want to communicate and play with each other.

At the same time, however, play in the island was not only a children’s matter, as was the case in both the playground as a Heterotopia of Deviance and Heterotopia of Transgression. Rather it engaged other people of different groups and ages, a collective experience supporting engaging and enduring interactions. The playground space attracted and supported play in the piazza, while the island’s characteristics allowed it to thrive and open to include a variety of user groups:

*‘A boy with a scooter is watching with admiration the teens skating in the ledge. He asks them questions. The teens are explaining him the trick, and repeat them in order for the boy to see them again’ (Field-notes).*

Intergenerational play was facilitated in the Heterotopia of Resistance as the island supported adults’ play. Passers-by or other people in the island were often observed to engage in quick games with the children. Sometimes, people walking through the piazza stopped briefly to play with the piazza infrastructure, climbing on the ledges, or the prominent structures:

*‘A group of young adults stopped and climbed in the statue in Dexameni. They climb and laugh making fun of each other’ (Field-notes, Dexameni).*

I observed that ball games engaged other people more easily than other types of games; people did not engage with children’s pretend play but I frequently observed them to stop for a quick football game. Most of the time they seemed to enjoy this interaction:

*‘Toddler kicks ball, ball goes to an old man’s sitting in the red bench fee. Mother tells him ‘come and collect your ball from the sir’. The boy gets closer, the old man kicks it back. The toddler kicks the ball again toward the old man. They play like that for a, while. After a, while the man asks if the toddler knows his grandson, the mother says ‘are you J’s grandfather?’ (Field-notes, Dexameni).*

My observations suggest that adults were playing mostly in areas without a pre-defined use but with spatial characteristics that supported their limited movement abilities (Figure 8-16, Figure 8-17, Figure 8-18).

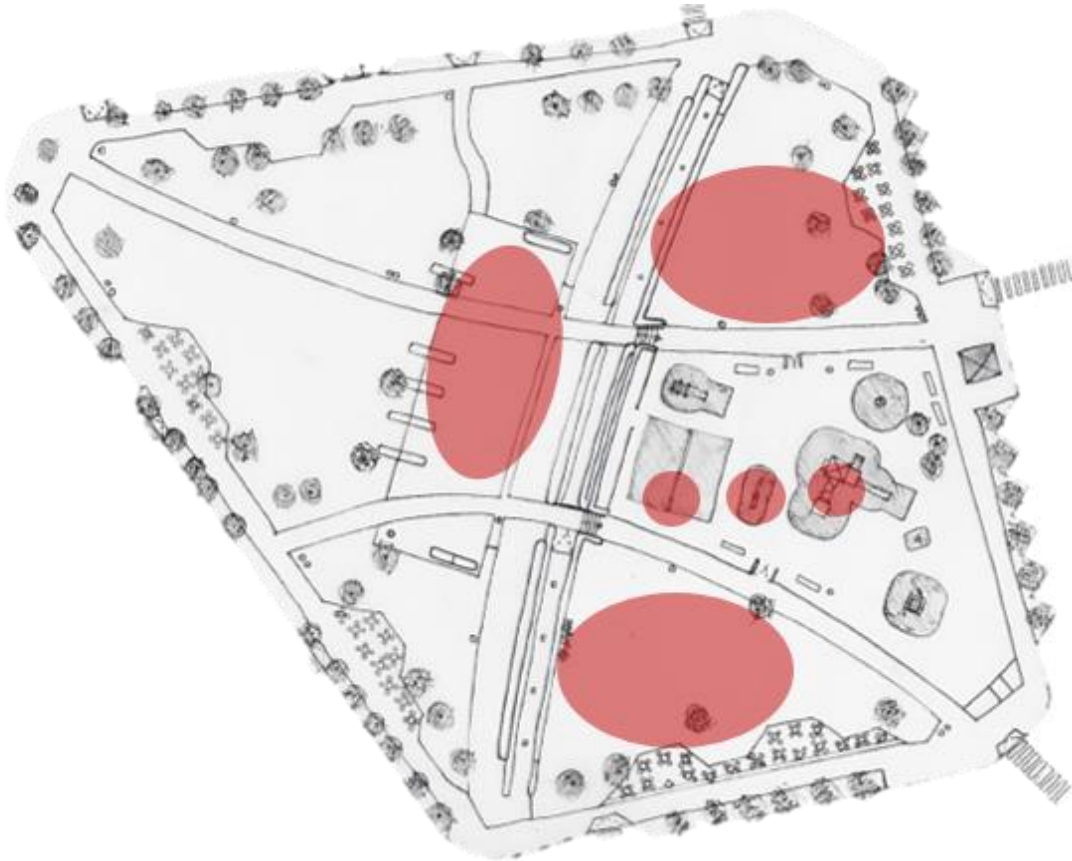


Figure 8-16: Ilioupolis – Intergenerational play areas

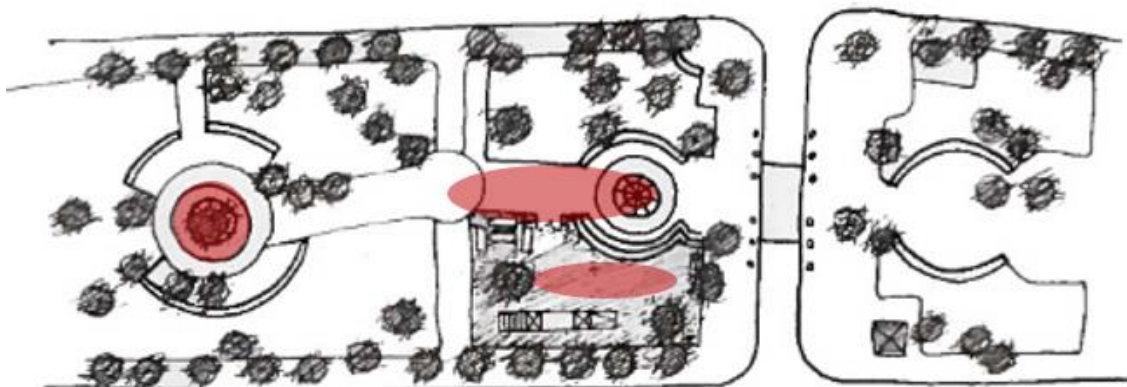


Figure 8-17: Vyronas – Intergenerational play areas

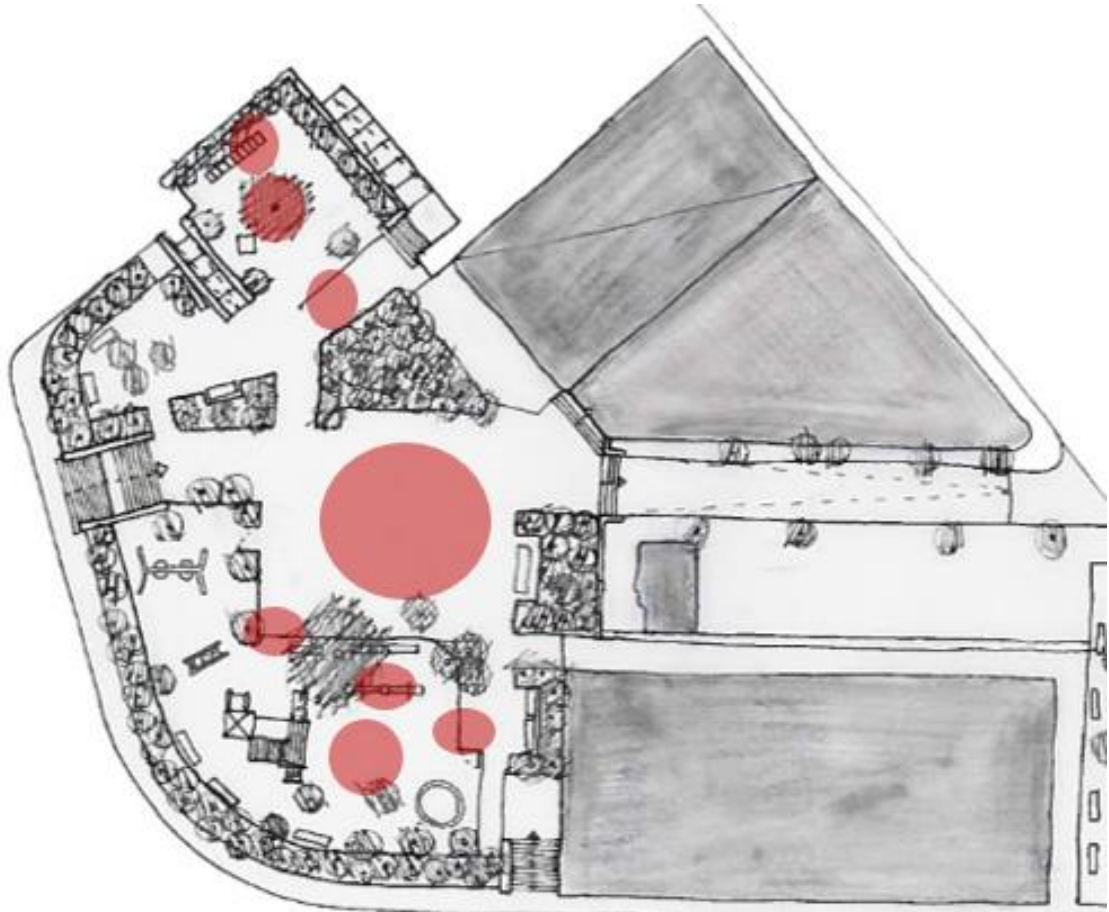


Figure 8-18: Dexameni – Intergenerational play areas

Guardians often commented on how they preferred to play in the piazza area when children played as they were not restricted either by the play structures or societal perceptions about “proper” ways to play:

*‘We don’t play because we can’t fit in the play structures [...] it has happened that I swing or played in the see-saw [...] in the square we can play... if we take a ball we play ball... Just that’ (Father, Ilioupolis).*

Adults’ play, defying the established norms of appropriate behaviour and good parenting as described in the Heterotopia of Deviance chapter (See: Chapter 6), often emerged as a practice resisting the norms prescribing parenting identities and behaviours. In the playground, adults were observed to engage with the slower play structures such as the swings or the see-saw. When in the piazza, however, adults were playing actively with children occupying and manipulating space. Intergenerational ball games occupied the whole piazza area:

*'We only play outside the playground... Mostly football and ball games'*  
(Grandmother, Dexameni).

Guardians were observed to climb the trees or the statue in Dexameni, or young adults the fountain in Ilioupolis. In Vyronas, by contrast, I did not observe any adults playing in the conical structure or the flowerbeds. An explanation for this could be that the space was limited, already occupied by the children, while guardians visiting every day and meeting their friends and acquaintances were feeling embarrassed to play.

*'It is the adult gaze that defines who is eligible to play. Guardians that enjoy to play actively with their children and their friends in the public space, are reluctant to use the play-equipment or play in the playground even when children are inviting them to. At the same time, the guardians of children playing with another guardian (in the public space) like the fact that someone plays actively with their children. But what would happen if this play was transferred to the playground? How does the adult gaze, that supports intergenerational play in the public space, react when this play is transferred to the playground???' (Field-notes).*

It was interesting to observe that piazzas' infrastructure supported adults' limited mobility allowing each age to participate in the play island in their own pace:

*'Sometimes we play hide and seek in the piazza, it is easier'* (Grandmother, Vyronas).

Adults "saw" different affordances than the children, being more susceptible to the established classification of space – which was the reason why they did not play in the playground area. I did not observe any adults climbing and playing in the benches or the ledges although climbing there would have been easy for them; the benches, bearing specific connotations as to their use were not viewed as potential play opportunities. The trees on the other hand, were often appropriated, not ascribing to a specific use:

*'I prefer playing in the piazza, they chase me, I climb the trees etc... I don't play in the playground space though. It is for the children'* (Father, Dexameni).

However, I often observed adults taking advantage of opportunities that enabled them to engage in children's game, interpreting space in a variety of ways:

*'A young mother plays hide-and-seek with her son in the green areas. They use the whole space in the right of the playground taking advantage of the bushes, trees etc.'* (Field-notes, Ilioupolis).

Returning to the literature regarding playful cities and citizen participation (Alfrink, 2014; Borden, 2007; de Lange, 2015; Donoff & Bridgman, 2017; Stevens, 2007) (See: 2.3.1) this study places the Heterotopia of Resistance observed in the field in the centre of the discussion about the play as a way to claim the public realm. The most striking finding concerning adults' play in the island was that not only adults felt more comfortable playing but also adult play was tolerated. It was perceived as "normal", informing the Heterotopia of Resistance as an inclusive, intergenerational realm. The Heterotopia of Resistance was open to other users and engaged them in its activities supporting a space bearing an increased Public Value. People in the Heterotopia of Resistance were observed not only to co-exist but also to engage in playful interactions. :

*'And in the piazza... You play... What can you do?'* (Man, Ilioupolis).

This contrasted with both the public space's classification of space and the playground created as a Heterotopia of Deviance. At the same time, adult play in the Heterotopia of Resistance did not revolve around assisting children's play, as was the case in the Heterotopia of Transgression, rather they participated as equal players, while perceptions of playgrounds as solely children's-spaces excluded adults' play from the playground space, the island was observed to tolerate a variety of its expressions. Play and space interaction acquire major importance in claiming ones' right to the city (Jones, 2013). My findings support that it was children playing in the island along with the perceived affordances that encouraged and justified adults' playful behaviour. However, there is evidence that children had mixed feelings about the spontaneously created games with people they did not know. In Vyronas, my observations revealed that adults were willing to play with the children by kicking the ball back when it comes towards them

*'It is nice... I don't usually play football... I don't play at all, I am old'* (Man, Vyronas)

Children, however, commented in the interviews that they found this annoying; an intrusion spoiling their game. Often, when adults' presence became intrusive or unexpected, it was not tolerated by the children and the game stopped:

*'Why are they doing this? He doesn't want them to kick his ball... Now they spoiled the game' (Grandmother, Vyronas).*

## 8.4 Appropriation

### 8.4.1 Making Community

The Heterotopia of Resistance emerged as a dialogical space appropriated by different groups, in contrast with the clear classification of the piazza as adults' space and the playground as children's. Co-existence and interaction of different age and social groups enriched the play island's Public Value. In the Heterotopia of Resistance, people and activities intermingled, making interactions flexible and inclusive. I place my reasoning in the field of the post-structuralistic new wave of childhood studies (Ray, 2012) and the post-human, new materialism approaches (Spyrou, 2018) focusing on the relational and situated status of age (Kraftl, 2013) as a relational part of one's identity. In this context, interaction is understood to be an important factor for the construction and experience of one's identity. As Hopkins & Pain (2007) argue:

Experience of identity entails more than, for example, acknowledging that what it is to be a child is affected by people of other age groups. It also suggests that identities of children and others are produced through interactions with other age/generational groups and are in a constant state of flux (p.289).

Different groups of users, people of various ages and backgrounds, interacting and socialising, laid and negotiated various claims and spatial limitations ascribing Public Value to the public space. Appropriation of space led to different groups of people laying claims in the island, while supporting children's agency in the space.

I frequently observed people making small-talk with acquaintances and waving to strangers or other guardians in all cases. Both guardians and other people used to smile back at me, while I was in the field without, however, initiating any further interaction. Although it was often mentioned in the interviews that guardians would not visit the piazza if they did not accompany the children, I observed that they actively socialised with other people for as long as they stayed in the island. People met their friends or planned in advance to meet them in the island:

*'I don't come to find my friends but I know the people that pass by. They are all neighbours' (Father, Vyronas).*

My findings suggest that in all cases, what was going on was a quite established two way situation: people visited the island every day to pass their time and keep an eye to the children playing but they chose to stay in the piazza area where they had more chances to socialise. However, it is interesting to mention that people often correlated the stronger community bonds created in the island with a greater extend of control instead of more open, intergenerational interactions:

*'The fence is necessary so I can control who enters and who exits the space. So the people would know each other, the children would be aware' (Grandmother, Dexameni).*

Especially in the case study of Vyronas, there is strong evidence that although there were better choices further down or up the piazza for the children to play, people still chose the playground under study, small and without structures. The island had established a strong communal situation, with a consistent Public Value, that was not observed in the other two case studies. My observations suggest that the conical structure in Vyronas, although blocking the view and occupying space, was an important aspect of the social situation taking place there (Figure 8-19). Acting as the focus of the play island, it allowed people to concentrate around it: 'like sitting around the fire' (Field-notes). Children used it to save their balls from rolling down the piazza or to play in front of their guardians – although the guardians did not really like that.





Figure 8-19: Vyronas – The conical structure and sitting area

At the same time, this situation gave children the chance to participate in the public realm through a relatively safe environment. The piazza was transformed into a social hub, a place where children socialised and conversed with people away from home or other highly controlled institutionalised milieus.

*‘Young adult sitting in the fountain interacts with the children. Children would approach the man, ask him things etc. He is sitting in a space were adults cannot normally approach, a children’s crave out area. He is not intruding, he does not normalize them (usually the reason adults would enter these spaces) but he is hanging out. He is not a threat to children’s alternate orderings taking place in the fountain and children accept him as an equal’ (Field-notes, Ilioupolis).*

I often observed that in the crowded space of the island, claims and ownership became fluid and negotiable. Children were observed to willingly share their toys and food as they played, while grasping the opportunities to engage with other children’s play.

#### **8.4.2 Making Space**

My observations suggest that alternate uses in the island were engaging large numbers of subjects – the whole piazza became a playground – resulting in the establishment of a new “everyday” in this space. Another key characteristic of the Heterotopia of Resistance was that space was manipulated by the users. In the

Heterotopia of Resistance, people constructed different versions of the physical space, in order to compensate for their needs and play. In contrast to studies examining carved out spaces (Jones, 2000; Matthew et al., 2000; Beazley, 2000), “special” play-specific spaces (Freeman, 1995; Herrington & Studtmann, 1998; Luken, 2011), private public spaces (Broto, 2005; Lepik & Bader, 2016; Orillard, 2008), alternative spatialities (Doron, 2008, 2000; Edensor, 2006; Frank & Stevens, 2006) or liminal places (Thomassen, 2014; Matthews, 2003), in this study participants appropriated and intervened in central, public spaces. This can be understood under Petrescu and Trogal’s (2017) framing and definitions (See: 2.3.1) as ‘(re)producing’ (p.3), as making architecture (Borden et al., 2002; Giancarlo De Carlo, 1969).

In Dexameni, I once observed people moving the broken soft tiles from the playground to the piazza to create a bridge over the soil in the trees’ flowerbed or more often accumulating stones to “build a house”. In the same case, an old man was hiding a piece of cardboard in the bushes near a bench. He used to place it in the bench before he sat and then replaced it in the bushes to keep it for the next day. Similarly, in Ilioupolis, people appropriated the tavern’s tables taking advantage of their position in the shade sitting in the, more comfortable than the benches, chairs. One day, I observed a group of mothers moving the chairs in the piazza’s main area in order to be closer to the children playing, while sitting comfortably. Another day I realised that in Dexameni, the library was filled with children’s drawings but not children’s books. The books found there were architectural catalogues, academic books, old encyclopaedias, architectural magazines and newspapers<sup>39</sup>. Children had appropriated it, using as a drawing station leaving their drawings in the piazza, however, it was not a facility referring to them. I like to think of this example as a metaphor for public space itself: Adults appropriated the adult-referring public but children claimed it back using play to structure resistance.

In Vyronas’ and Ilioupolis’ cases, people were experiencing the island as a place they could appropriate, often projecting a plasmatic ownership. In Dexameni, however, they often commented that they did not feel they can lay claims in the area. It is interesting to examine people’s appropriation of space through a counter example: the Dinokratous playground. This, smaller, more isolated playground in the woods, further away from my case study was constantly mentioned in the interviews:

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<sup>39</sup> Characteristic of the area’s socio-economic identity

*'I think Dinokratous playground is quite far away from here... once I walked to Dinokratous playground I got too tired. And I said to myself, 'no it is closer here' (Grandmother Dexameni).*

The guardians living in the area visited it when their children were younger. They mentioned that the structures in that playground were for toddlers and that older children were getting bored:

*'There is another one (Dinokratous) but now that he is older, he prefers this one. The other one is for younger children, less crowded, with fewer play structures' (Father, Dexameni).*

This playground, however, was fully appropriated and manipulated by the people using it. I was told that a group of guardians collected money and bought the play structures, while they were keeping a vegetable garden for educational purposes. The guardians that had appropriated Dinokratous playground still met their friends both in Dexameni and Dinokratous, but they often commented on how different their experiences were in the two places. They argued on how they ruled and had a say about Dinokratous playground, while feeling like a subgroup of the bigger group of guardians in Dexameni:

*'A year ago he tried to organize this carnival here [in Dexameni], and he couldn't because he could not get permission from the municipality. He was going to try to get permission from the municipality and they responded something like 'who will be responsible?' 'Who will bring the food?' 'If you have food you cannot have a sponsor for the food' things like that ... So he, his child was 2 years old then, he said... I will go to do it over there [Dinokratous] and I will not say anything to no one... and eventually it did happen there. And generally events like that take place there. So from this, from this information, I generally know that it is not so easy to organize anything here in general' (Father Dexameni).*

The size of Dexameni, the fact that it was crowded and visited by people not living nearby<sup>40</sup>, even the council's prohibition that did not allow them to organise events such as carnivals<sup>41</sup> estranged people from the space.

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<sup>40</sup> Dinokratous was more hidden and more difficult to approach

<sup>41</sup> In Dinokratous they didn't need permission

An interesting finding was that in this case study, although relations were quite loose, word of mouth dissemination of information was frequently taking place. Participants often mentioned a carnival event that had been organised that way between the regulars:

*'One tells another... There is not a specific invitation' (Mother, Dexameni).*

The way of disseminating this information reveals a loose but extended network of people using the space regularly.

I often observed boredom, justifying alternate uses in the island, relaxing guardians' normalisation practices. Despite children's particularly active and noisy play, adults showed high levels of tolerance, contrasting with previous findings (Day and Wagner 2010; Valentine, 1996a); children often acted as a spectacle for the adults there.

#### **8.4.3 Claiming (One's Right to) Space**

There is strong evidence that the island supported children's agency and territorialisation (Thomson, 2005), allowing them to become active agents in the process of claiming and making space. The Heterotopia of Resistance can be related to other concepts of public space understood to have an increased Public Value through their constant appropriation by a variety of different groups: for example open-endedness (Rapoport, 1990), porosity (Stavrides, 2006), thresholds (Stevens, 2006) or common grounds (Loukaitou-Sideris, 2003), loose spaces (Frank & Stevens, 2006) *communitas* (Turner, 1974), liminality (Thomassen, 2014) and Commoning (Stavrides, 2014, 2015; DeAngelis & Stavrides, 2010). Moreover, the concept bears connections with Rose's paradoxical space (1993), Soja's Thirdspace (1996) and Lefebvre's representational space (1991) (See: 3.4). The new situation's alternate orderings transformed children from passive users in need of protection to active individuals that laid claims on the space, while adults often complied with those:

*'When the dog came near frightening me, a small girl around 5 years old came and took the dog (which wasn't her own) away telling him 'come with me now' and smiling at me' (Field-notes, Dexameni).*

Not being segregated in the playground anymore, play blurred both the physical and symbolic boundaries allowing children, the most segregated group of users, to appropriate the island: One evening, in Dexameni, children had it as a game to run

while holding a dog each by the lead. The ones that did not own a dog borrowed dogs that other adults had taken to the piazza for walking. That evening a whole piazza had turned into a running field for kids and dogs moving around, in and out of the playground space. Visibility (See: 2.5) emerged not as a form of reformation in the public space (Gagen, 2000a, 2000b Loxham, 2013) as the playground intended, but as a way to claim ones' right to the city by making children's resistance tangible (Lefebvre, 1991; Valentine, 1996; Christopoulos, 2014; Sotirakopoulos & Sotiropoulos, 2013; Mantanika & Kouki, 2011; Fraser, 2011; Lefebvre, 1991; Frank & Stevens, 2006; Harvey, 2012).

Appropriation of space became traceable by both the lack of normalisation practices when challenging the rules and the emergence of new rules. An illustrating example of this was Vyronas' case. In Vyronas, guardians did not intervene or at least not immediately when children's play threatened other people. Balls hit people, bikes ran recklessly but no one complained. Usually the "victims" spoke out. The regulars knowing each other and spending many hours every day there had appropriated the space over other people. They did not bother normalising alternate orderings as the island was considered a play area and as such aggressive play was tolerated. In an incident when a ball hit two old women sitting outside the playground the father I was interviewing just whispered 'go sit further down', referring to the women, without scolding the children. Another day, when a ball hit me in the head the mother asked for the child to apologize only after the lady I was interviewing stepped up. I recorded similar observations in the rest cases as well.

I often observed children projecting an attitude of "owing" the island, claiming space by making themselves visible. Some children approached people with arrogance and even engaged in short debates with them:

*'A small child continues calling a small dog 'bad dog' for no reason. He is confrontational. He argues with the dog's owner. She tells him not to call it that way. The boy replies that he has a dog and it may bite her' (Field-notes, Dexameni).*

Once, when the ball hit me, a girl popped up: 'they do that on purpose'. In Ilioupolis, play taking place in the stairs or in the paths hindered passers-by. As described above (See: 8.4) the normalisation practices observed were limited. However, I observed two old ladies, sitting in the circular bench in Vyronas instead of the benches further down, trying to normalise the children who did not really seem to care:

*'You should be careful! What you are doing is not right!'*

My observations suggest that making noise was another way to claim space and make oneself visible. Children throwing rocks in the tanks' metallic bars in Dexameni or cycling fast in the wooden path in Ilioupolis were manipulating space, making noise in order to signal their presence and claims in the area. In Ilioupolis, I often observed children using the wooden path with scooters and bicycles as its wooden tiles made noise drawing attention:

*'A boy cycles furiously in the wooden path in order to make noise. At the same time, he presses his bell. He looks around, shouts 'I am passing through! He plays in the wooden path for more than 20 minutes, making a lot of noise.'* (Field-notes, Ilioupolis).

In Vyronas, I recorded an interesting behaviour:

*'Two boys are throwing the ball to passers-by trying to pass the ball through their feet, while they were walking. At first they wanted the adults to respond and kick the ball back (it was an invitation for a short-time, spontaneous play encounter) but when they managed to lead the ball through the legs of the people as they were walking they abandoned their adult co-players and used them as moving 'play-structures'. When they succeed they cheer loudly'* (Field-notes).

They had set an area where this game took place and whoever was entering it was treated as a potential play opportunity. In a peculiar way, the passers-by were used by the children as a play affordance.

In line with this "reversal" of states that supported children's agency, adults' state as omnipresent protectors was compromised. I often observed boredom, justifying alternate uses in the island, relaxing guardians' normalisation practices. Despite children's particularly active and noisy play, adults showed high levels of tolerance, contrasting with previous findings (Day and Wagner 2010; Valentine, 1996a); children often acted as a spectacle for the adults there. There is strong evidence that the islands in all three cases were experienced as "dangerous" by adults that were "threatened" physically by the children's active play. This comes in contrast with what is usually the case: the children being in physical danger when outside the house. In the island adults were observed to withdraw to the edges of the space as the island's piazza was not an area referring to them anymore. Moreover, I often observed

people seeking alternative routes in order to avoid collision with the ones playing or to keep themselves safe from the balls and bikes:

*‘The boy cycling recklessly almost falls over to an elderly couple walking. They don’t say anything to him. They start walking faster in order to avoid the play area’*  
(Field-notes, Vyronas).

My observations suggest that guardians had specific “safely covered” areas that they withdrew into (Figure 8-20, Figure 8-21, Figure 8-22). In the case of Dexameni, guardians often squeezed between the two flowerbeds in order to avoid the ball games taking place both in the main space and in the quite areas. Similarly, in Ilioupolis, other people squeezed towards the ledge’s corner. Children often played on the left and the right ledge, again squeezing other people to the edges. In Vyronas, where there were not any protected spaces for adults to retreat to, they continued occupying the area in front of the playground, often been hit by the balls.

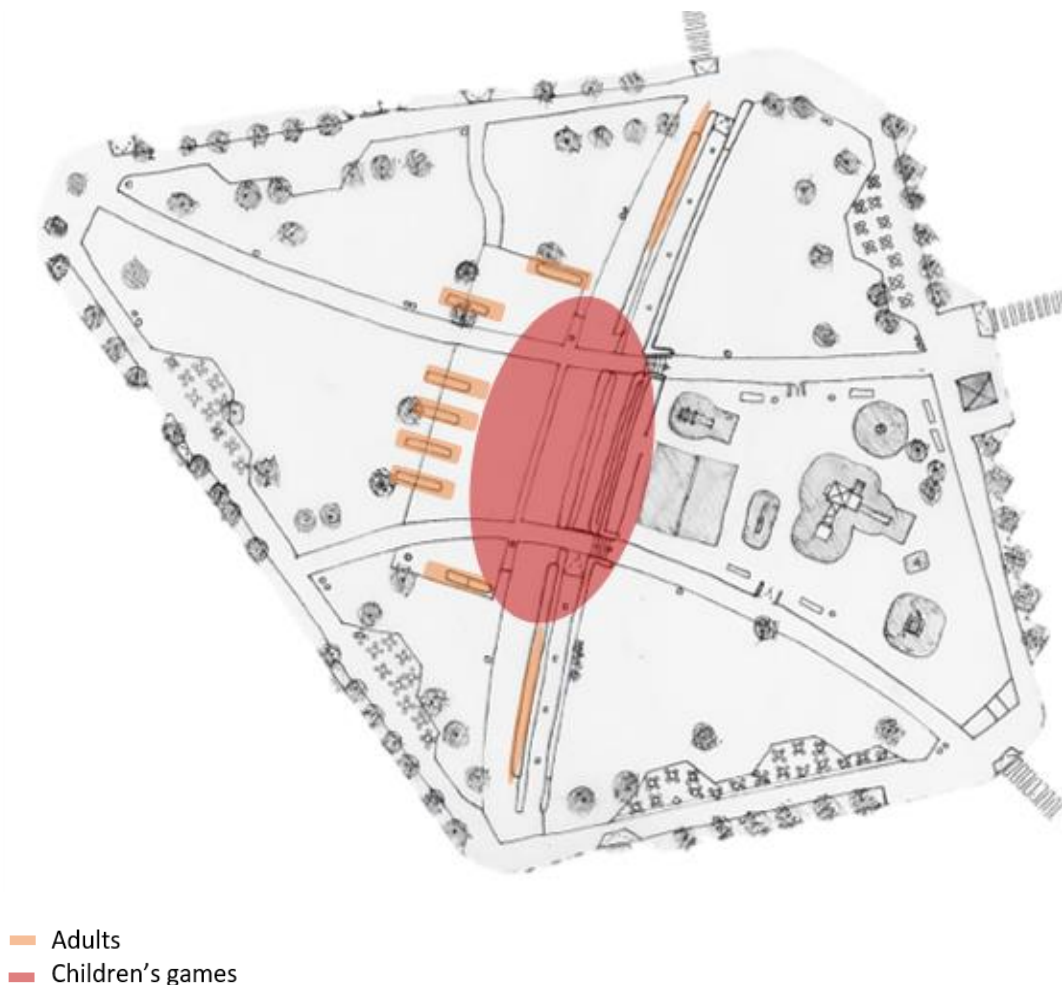


Figure 8-20: Ilioupolis – Children's games push adults to the margins



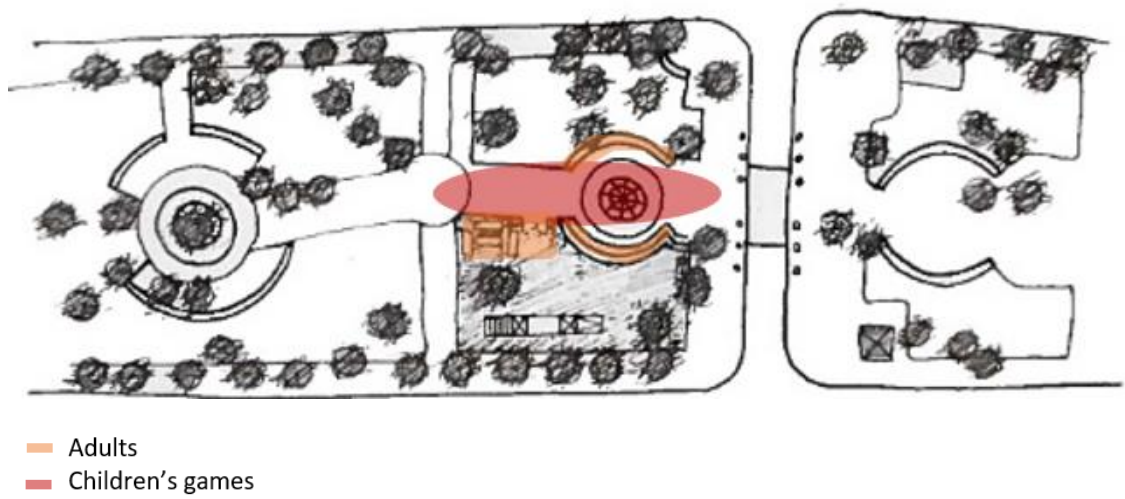


Figure 8-21: Vyronas – Children's games push adults to the margins

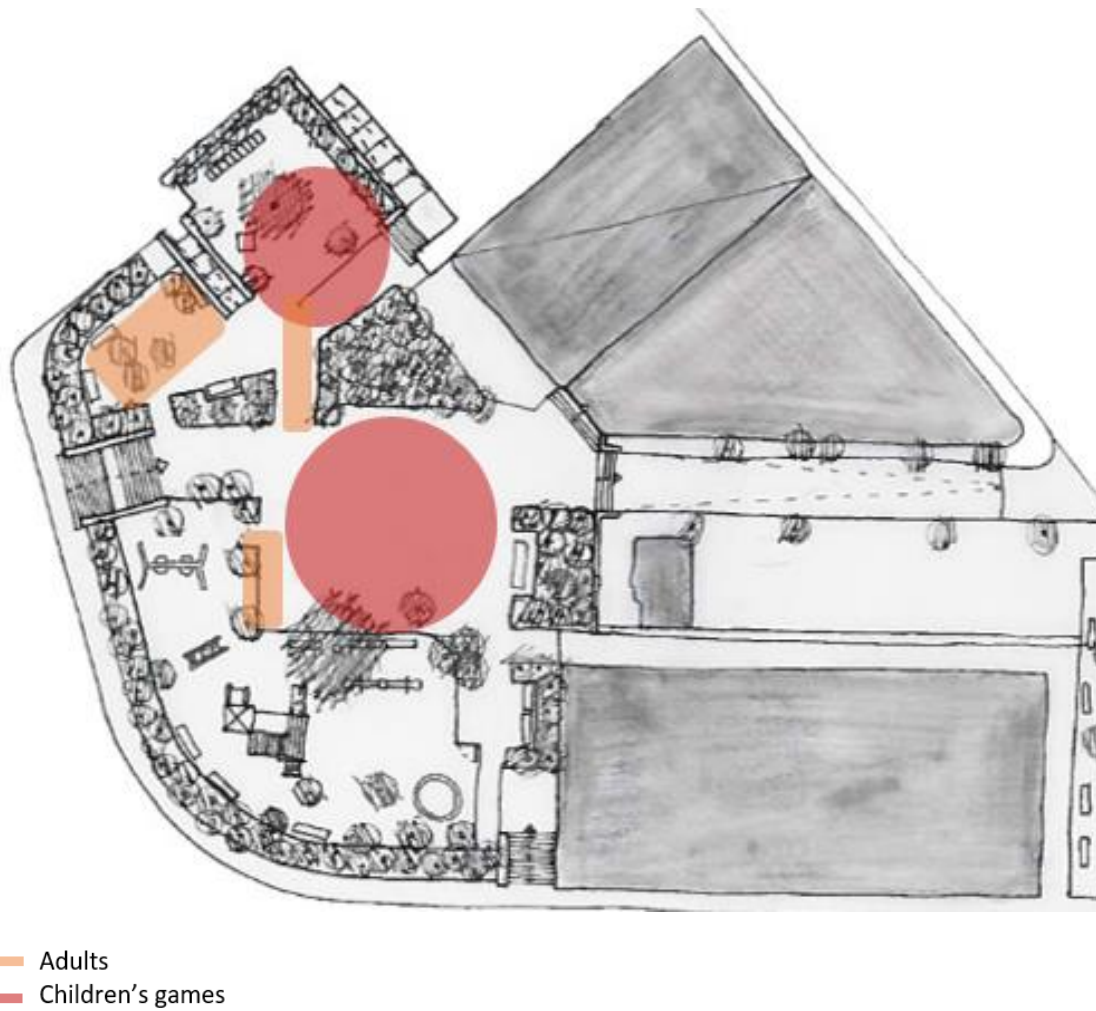


Figure 8-22: Dexameni – Children's games push adults to the margins

*'Mother follows children that exit the playground to play in the conical structure, and then follows them again as they run towards the circular flowerbed' (Field-notes, Vyronas).*

Similarly, it was interesting to observe the ways toddlers, the group with the least agency, created different dynamics in the island, often directing the ways adults experienced the space, exercising a form of agency:

*'I follow him around... We go wherever he wants to go...' (Grandmother, Dexameni).*

In Dexameni, in the mornings, when toddlers were playing in the playground, people moved in waves inside and outside. I observed toddlers following one another, accompanied by their guardians. They all moved as a coherent group. There were times when the playground was completely empty and others when the square was deserted.

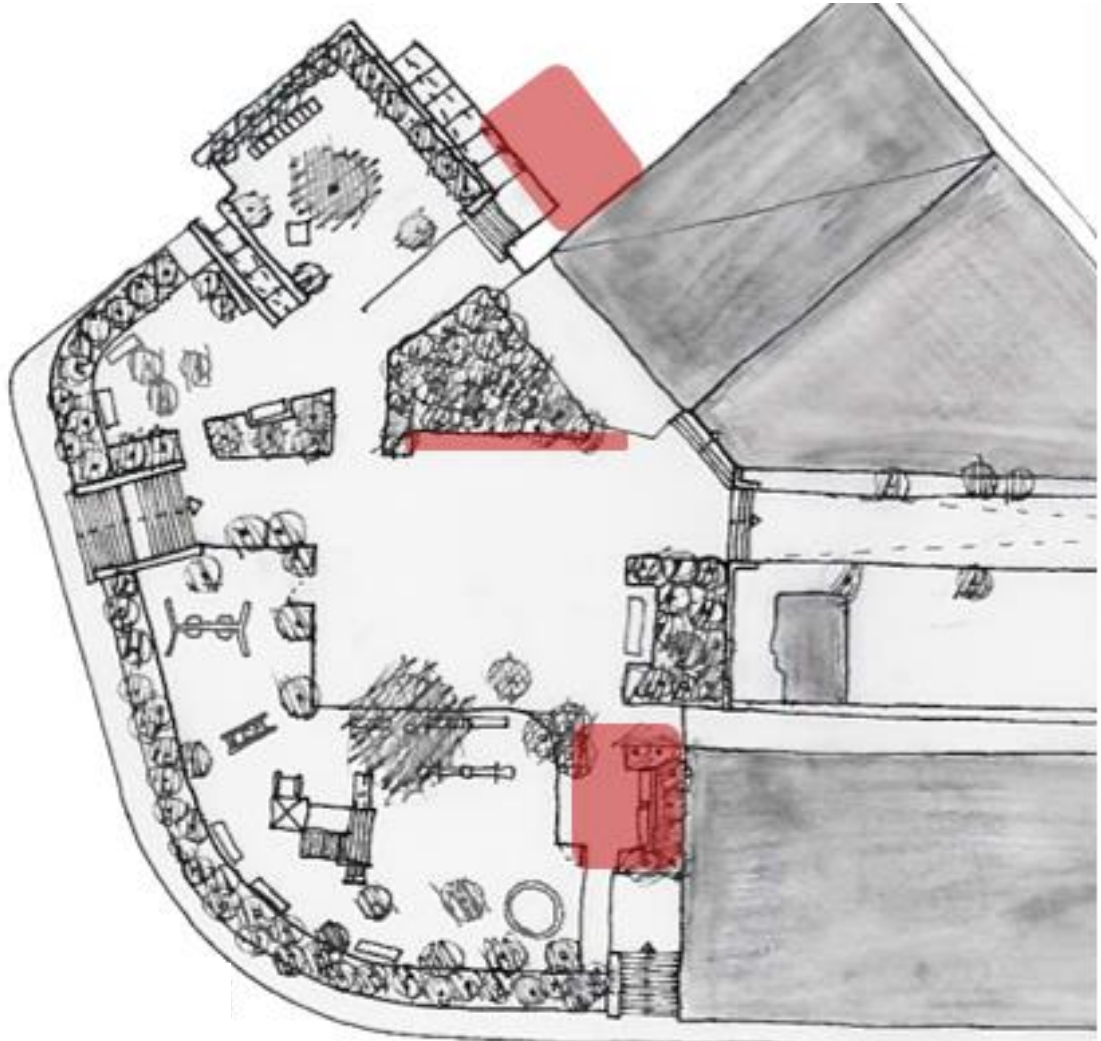
Other groups of people such as older people or people from the neighbourhood were observed in the island as well. Activities other than play were taking place in the margins of the island in order to avoid conflict with the people playing:

*'We sit only here in the side. It is frantic there' (Lady, Ilioupolis).*

In Ilioupolis for example, the religion preachers, the skaters and teenagers were placed in the edges of the ledge and not near the benches or the empty central space. In Ilioupolis and Vyronas, I observed people feeding the pigeons early in the morning and early in the evening, while in Dexameni tourists were a common observation. In Dexameni I also recorded a group of scouts with their adult leaders playing in the piazza early one Sunday morning. In all cases teenagers met after the end of their out-of-school classes and chatted in the piazza, then left from different exits. Old people used the benches in the edges of the piazza in Ilioupolis and Vyronas. In Dexameni, they used the semi-isolated quiet areas. In the mornings, in Ilioupolis and Vyronas, when the piazza was quiet they extended towards the rest of the benches as well. In Dexameni this was not the case as there were not any sitting areas. It is interesting to note that in Ilioupolis, I did not notice any old people sitting on the ledges, where guardians were usually sitting.

Teenagers, a group between childhood and adulthood was of interest in this study as it allowed me to explore both of these conceptualisations. My observations

suggest that teenagers, although marginalised in the Heterotopia of Deviance [similarly to previous findings (Aitken, 2001; Germanos, 2001; Holloway & Valentine, 2000a; Olwig & Gulløv, 2003; Pain, 2006; Valentine, 1996; White, 1993)], claimed their place in the Heterotopia of Resistance (Figure 8-23, Figure 8-24, Figure 8-25).



*Figure 8-23: Dexameni – Teenagers*

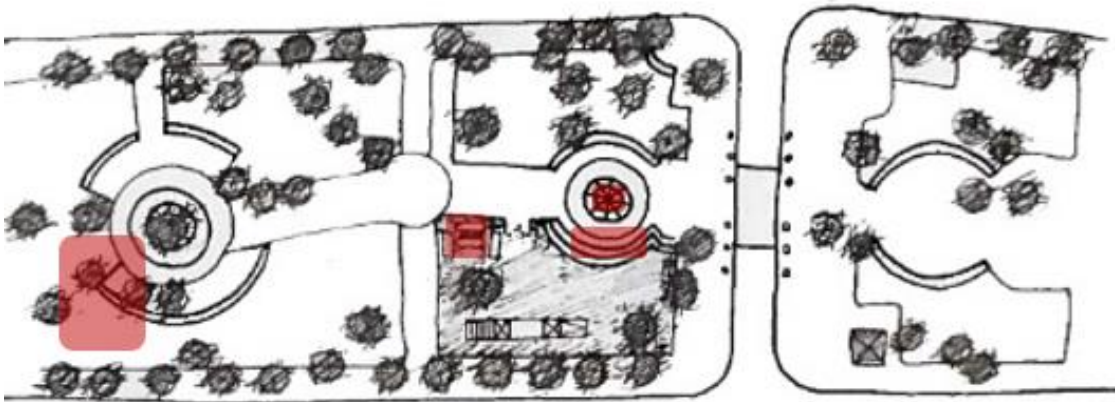


Figure 8-24: Vyronas – Teenagers



Figure 8-25: Ilioupolis – Teenagers

In Ilioupolis, I observed skaters playing in the corner of the right ledge, sometimes moving through the wooden path and up to the left corner. They usually stayed in the corners when it was too crowded and moved when children asked to use this area:

*'Skaters occupying the stairs doing tricks do not conflict with people passing. A little boy asks them to do specific tricks and they try to do them. [...] Skater playing in*

*the stairs moved as children started using this area. They do not go to the edge where they usually stand, but in the area in front of the fountain's ledge which is empty' (Field-notes, Ilioupolis).*

Similarly, in Dexameni I observed teenagers, although hanging out in the quiet areas further away from the play activity, joining the ball games taking place. Claiming space against the norms was a constantly changing negotiation. An interesting observation was that teens claimed space not only through their physical presence but also using noise. Loud voices, shouting and music carved out an area which they claimed as their own:

*'They have loud music playing from a mobile phone. They move and take the phone with them' (Field-notes, Ilioupolis).*

They were observed to deliberately create a sound island putting loud music to surround themselves, a popular teen behaviour in Greece.

The Heterotopia of Resistance was characterised by a constantly shifting hierarchy between its users and groups of users. This was affected not only by the kind of activity – play was always claiming space – but also the number of people. When for example a child played alone with his/her ball near the old people's bench in Ilioupolis, they told him to move. The majority of days, however, when children were playing ball in the same spot, they did not interact at all with the old people sitting in the bench. Moreover, the place each action was taking place affected the orderings created. My findings suggest that closer and around the playground space children exercised more agency than adults. Moreover, intergenerational play was observed to change the hierarchies between players (Edmiston, 2010, 2008; Gordon, 2009; Siyahhan, 2010; Zinsser, 1987), while children often used unauthorized play in order to place themselves in roles with more power than the adults (Sutton-Smith, 1997; Richards, 2012). In Vyronas, the boys using the passers-by as moving targets did so directly outside the playground. Other days, however, when the same boys played further down the piazza, they played alone, lacking the "we-own-this-space" attitude. Finally, there were instances when I observed hierarchies shifting towards adults but in a different way than was the case in the Heterotopia of Deviance. This was the case when adults, usually guardians, were carried away in intergenerational play:

*'Fathers continue kicking the ball too quickly for the children to follow. The boys complain. The father continue throwing the ball to one another. The boys enter the*



*playground and start playing in the swings. The fathers do not stop their game' (Field-notes, Dexameni).*

In this incident, adults claimed space over children in order to play, a behaviour my findings suggest they could not perform without the Heterotopia of Resistance.

## 8.6 Conflict

### 8.6.1 Conflicting Claims: Defining Publicness



Figure 8-26: Ilioupolis – designated space

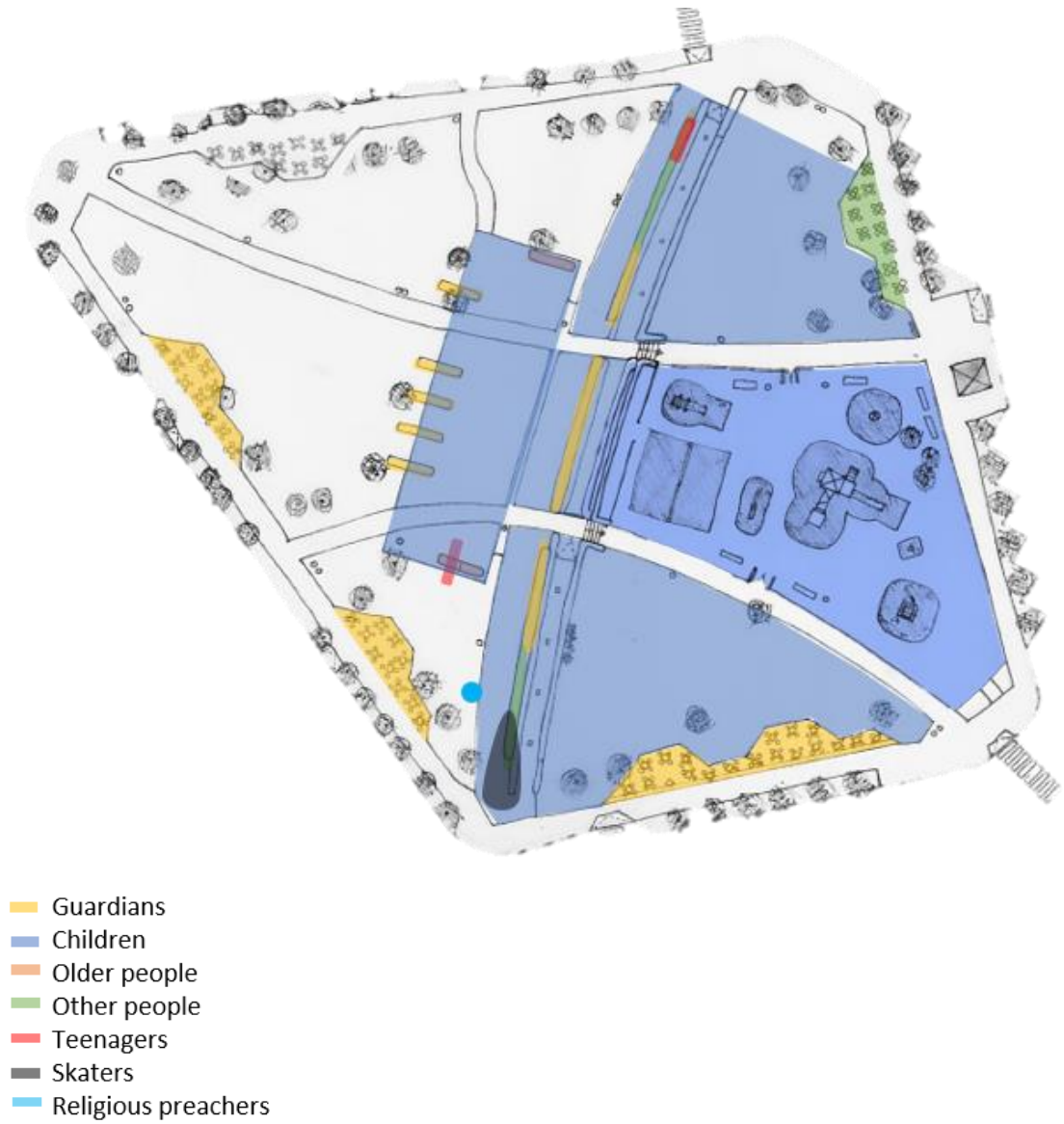


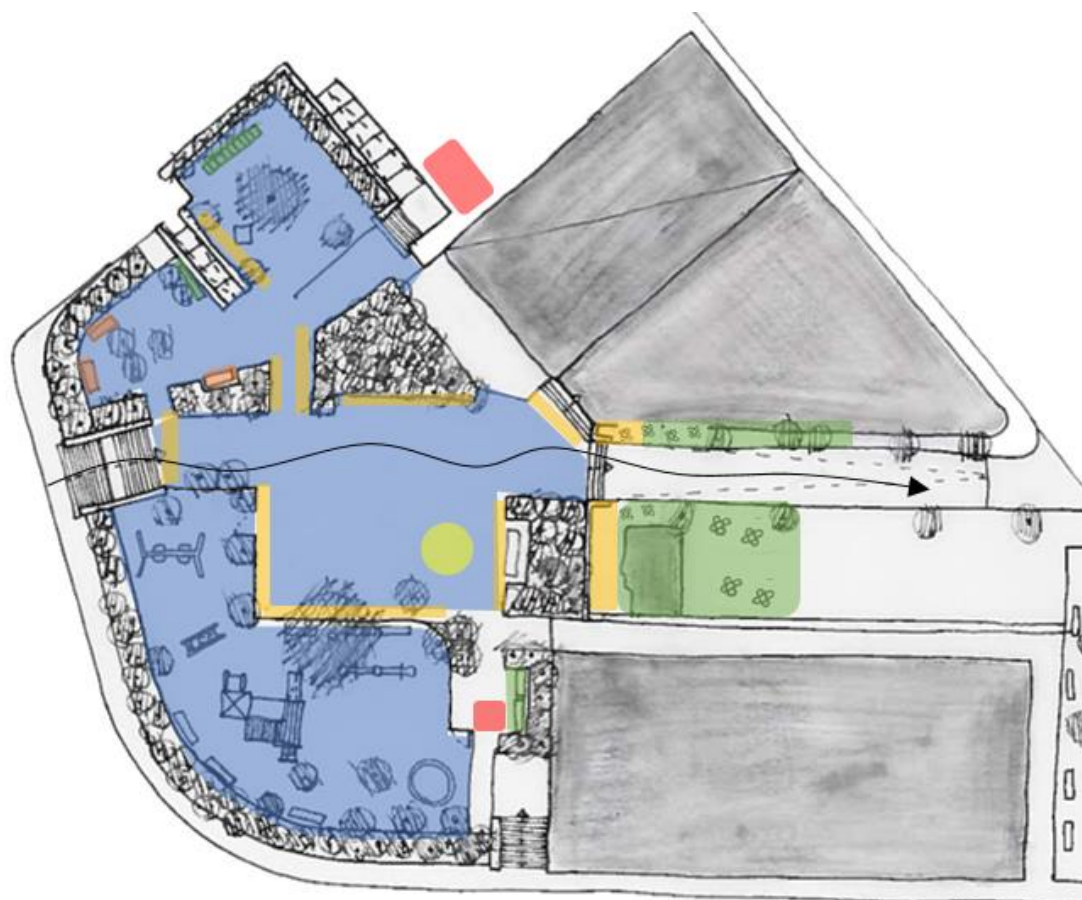
Figure 8-27: Ilioupolis – used space





- Adults
- Children
- Mixed

Figure 8-28: Dexameni – designated space



- Guardians
- Children
- Older people
- Other people
- Teenagers
- Scouts' play area
- ← Tourists

Figure 8-29: Dexameni – used space

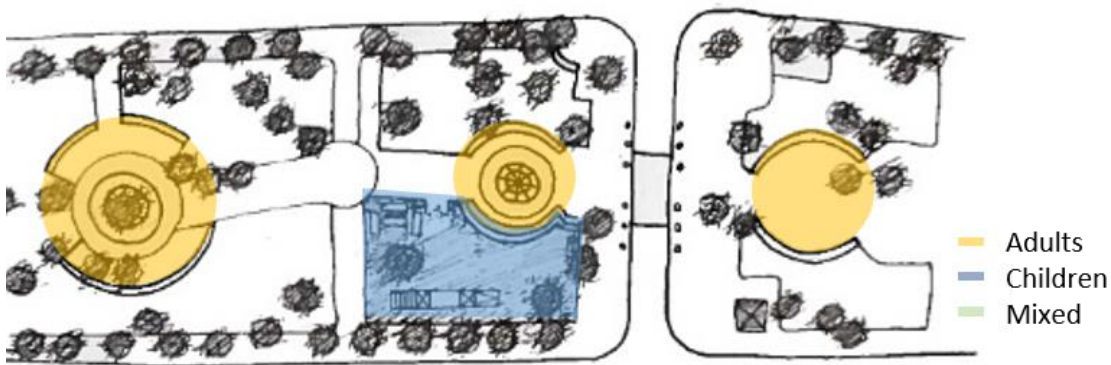


Figure 8-30: Vyronas – designated space

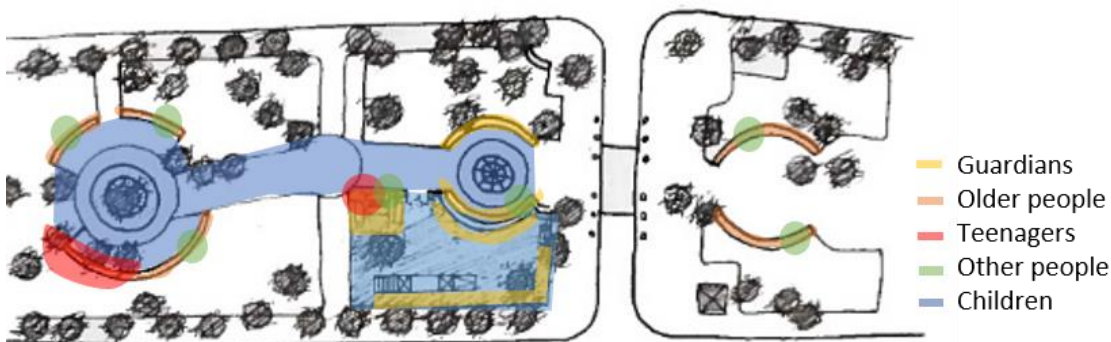


Figure 8-31: Vyronas – used space

As different groups and orderings co-existed in physical space conflicting claims emerged (an indicator of the space's Public Value, See: 2.3.2 and 2.3.3), reflecting a variety of larger scale studies that have examined the tensions and practices emerging in Athenian public space (Arapoglou & Maloutas, 2011; Balampanidis & Polyzos, 2016; Catterall, 2011; Dalakoglou & Vradis, 2011; Hadjimichalis, 2014; Hatziprokopiou & Frangopoulos, 2016; Kaika, 2012; Kandyli & Kavoulakos, 2011; Lafazani, 2015; Maloutas, 2004; Mantanika & Kouki, 2011; Makrygianni, 2015; Matsaganis & Leventi, 2014; Sotirakopoulos & Sotiropoulos, 2013; Souzas, 2015; Stavrides, 2014; Tsavdaroglou, 2015; Tsavdaroglou & Makrygianni, 2013; Tsimouris, 2014; Vaiou, 2014; Xenakis, 2012). The crisis, emerging as a 'new everyday' (Athanasίου, 2014, p.73; Christopoulos, 2014, p.65; Makrygianni, 2015, p.161), structured people's lives and interactions, allowing the mixing (Weck, 2017) of different backgrounds and the co-authoring of people's identities. Sack's (1986) concept of 'territoriality' (p.5) allows us to explore the tensions in both the playground and the piazza. As Thomson (2005) argues:

One of the first acts of territorialisation occurs when people make judgements about a space and perceive it as significant. In other words, think of it as other than neutral. If this is the case, it then becomes a designated or classified area, cleared and maintained for certain activities, where novel conditions might exist and where certain individuals have free or restricted access (p.64-65).

The concept of territorialisation emerged as relevant in this study as people claimed space and exerted power over outsiders, excluding or segregating them. Social norms and self-regulation emerged as factors structuring the territorialisation and classification in the public realm (See also Sack, 1986).

The different groups' appropriation of space created a spatial footprint in the Heterotopia of Resistance distinct from the one proposed by the societal classification of space (Figure 8-26 – Figure 8-31). In this study, conflict is closely related to the notion of public emerging from the different claims over the same physical space, a contested space of multiple publics (See: Cenzatti, 2008; De Cauter & Dehaene, 2008a, 2008b; Franck & Stevens, 2006; Foucault, 1998a; Gibson & Watson, 1995; Hetherington, 1997; Iveson, 1998; Palladino & Miller, 2015a) (See: 2.3.3). Conflict emerged as a social product of a "healthy" public space, enriching its Public Value, a creative tension between different groups and claims coming together in the same space, co-authoring its public character. As such, it is not perceived as an obstruction to co-existence, rather as a means towards publicness. The ways in which conflict was expressed and almost always resolved, defined the Heterotopia of Resistance.

As described previously (See: 6.3.3) in the playground space, accommodating a homogenous group of users<sup>42</sup>, conflict was minimal and revolved around injury. On the contrary, I observed a great deal of conflictual claims<sup>43</sup> in the island between different users and group of users. As play created new, imaginary spaces, alongside the "normal" one, different interpretations of spatial affordances led to different kinds of conflict and arguments:

*'A boy is kicking his ball to the ledge His parents sitting there tell him to go further down as they are chatting. He takes the ball and continues doing the same further down the ledge' (Field-notes, Ilioupolis).*

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<sup>42</sup> Both as a Heterotopia of Transgression and as a part of the Heterotopia of Resistance.

<sup>43</sup> Often resolved

For the boy the ledge was a structure allowing him to play alone in the piazza, while guardians used it as a sitting structure. Play taking place everywhere in the Heterotopia of Resistance dictated mine and other users' actions and movements in the space. Drawing from my experience in the field, every time I had to cross the piazza, an "outsider" not participating in the Heterotopia of Resistance, I had to move around the ball games and be vigilant to avoid any running or cycling children. Similarly, I found myself more than once pulling my feet up onto the bench that I was sitting as children running and playing came too close to me.

I return to the concept of play claiming space in order to better explain the connection between conflict and appropriation of space. As people appropriated and claimed space, conflictual claims emerged. Aggressive play (most of the time children's) was often observed to drive people sitting nearby off. The alternate orderings created by children playing in the piazza were not normalised, instead they displaced the other users. It is important to note that they did not excluded them from the space or the activity. Rather, they changed the equilibria of classification of space as explored previously (See: 6.2). A creative tension between different groups that informed the piazza's public character. One day, a young couple chatting in the circular bench outside the Vyronas' playground got annoyed as the children playing ball continued throwing the ball at them, partly by mistake, partly intentionally:

*'This has started getting on my nerves. It is the third time this happens' (Lady, Vyronas).*

It is interesting to note, however, that I did not observe any incidents where the children threw the ball to guardians or other children, rather they aimed for passers-by or other people that were sitting close enough.

I observed that it was mainly adults, not engaging in play, the ones reclaiming space through conflictual practices in order to protect both the space and the children.

*'Lady with stroller shouts at skaters 'be careful with this thing!'. The boy skating stops. After a while he resumes his play (Field-notes, Ilioupolis).*

The main subjects of the conflict observed were teenagers, usually skaters. People seemed to tolerate children's ball games and children's screams but did not like the presence of teenage boys skating in the corner:

*'Old man shouts at skaters jumping from the ledge and stairs:' with this equipment you break the tiles which I pay with my taxes' (Field-notes, Ilioupolis).*

He did not comment on people's safety from skaters jumps but rather his concern was the damages in the infrastructure<sup>44</sup>. Older people using the piazza every day had appropriated the space and were the ones that spoke out in cases they thought the space was vandalised. On the contrary, I did not observe any conflict incidents initiated by the teenagers when children or teenagers claimed space for themselves.

It is important to note that in the island the status of the "outsider", as explored in the Heterotopia of Deviance, was contested leading to fewer conflictual incidents. Who was identified as an outsider and was treated as such became relative. Guardians staying in the playground's sitting area, while children played outside were not considered as "outsiders". However, other guardians often commented on how at first perceived them as outsiders *'keeping an eye on them'* (Grandmother, Dexameni). At the same time, people that may sit in the playground's sitting area were not raising guardians' concerns as they were misthought of as accompanying children:

*'Once or twice I had seen a lady and asked her 'which children are yours?' she told me I come and watch the children' (Grandmother, Ilioupolis).*

In the play island the status of the "outsider", defined by if she was accompanying or not a child in the space, became vague. Although in the Heterotopia of Deviance, profiling was one of the main mechanisms of regulating access in the playground space (See: 6.4.2), in the fluid and constantly changing milieu of Heterotopia of Resistance, there were no outsiders ascribing to stereotypical characteristics. Rather people acquired different statuses according to their claims in the area.

### **8.6.2 Co-authored Self-regulation**

Self-regulation emerged as a means to resolve conflict. In the Heterotopia of Deviance, self-regulation of one's behaviour was the result of the playground's norms and intended to keep everyone safe and in line with the rules. As described (See: 6.4.7), self-regulation in the Heterotopia of Deviance was part of what was considered "good parenting" and "proper" play (Allin et al., 2014; Blackford, 2004; Knaak, 2010). In the Heterotopia of Resistance, however, as a new situation emerged, fluid and

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<sup>44</sup> I can confirm as a native Greek that the comment: 'I am the one who pays' is common in Greece and is often used when referring to public space and services.

constantly co-authored by the various users, self-regulation took the form of following specific behaviours that allowed users to co-exist and solve disputes and conflict as they emerged. Self-regulation manifested as a way to minimise conflict.

There is evidence that when the play island occupied the piazza people self-regulated their behaviour in order not to hurt other people or themselves:

*‘Boys ask people to move. They are trying to empty the area before they start playing ball’ (Field-notes, Dexameni).*

Children that wanted to perform more dangerous tasks, like kicking the ball from the lower to the upper level in Ilioupolis, or other games that needed space, chose spaces that allowed them to play without putting others in danger (Figure 8-32). However, what impressed me during my fieldwork is that, even in the cases when different groups were playing in the same area at the same time, I did not observe any accidents between the different games. For example, in Ilioupolis boys played ball in the piazza, while girls cycling get in the middle. They did not fight and did not conflict, while none of the two games got interrupted.

A correlation between the numbers of injuries observed and the social situation in each case study was observed. Vyronas, the case with the more structured and closed social life accounted for the most accidents observed. I very early noticed that children were not self-regulating their behaviours and play as in the other cases. The reason for this was the communal situation that had been established. Children and guardians had appropriated the space in such an extent that often overlooked the other users of the space. They claimed space aggressively, playing without taking into account who was around, often causing ball injuries to passers-by or other people in the piazza. By contrast, in Dexameni and Ilioupolis, although different kinds of games were taking place simultaneously in the same space, children were observed to be more conscious of other people’s presence and made sure no one gets hurt:

*‘A girl balancing standing up in the see-saw, gets down when a lady places a toddler on the sea[...] she starts hanging from the tree jumping down’ (Field-notes, Dexameni).*

In these two cases, fewer injuries than Vyronas were recorded.



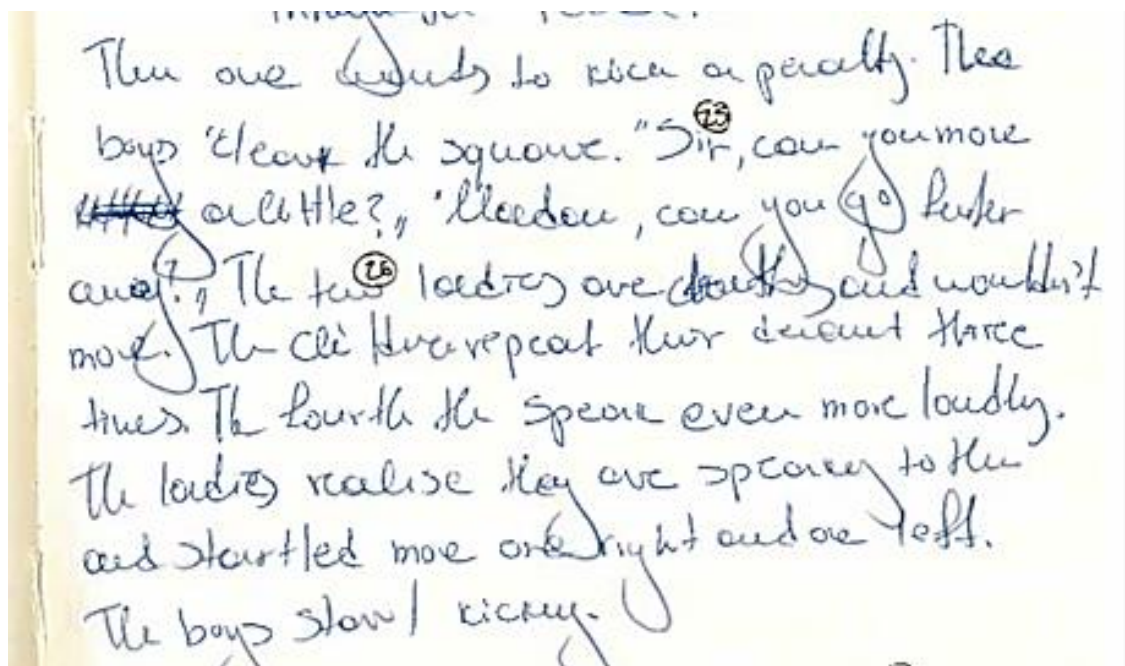


Figure 8-32: Dexameni – Making space for play 07/05/2017

### 8.6.3 The Example of Birthday Parties

An interesting example that helps explore the different dynamics and conflictual claims emerging in the Heterotopia of Resistance is that of the birthday parties. In all three case studies, birthday parties were taking place in the piazza's area. According to the guardians, having one's birthday party in the playground, allowed socialising and play in the open space, meeting friends and having fun instead of staying confined in the house's premises. At the same time, the socio-economic crisis context, restricting guardians' finances and hindering them from visiting other commercial places, emerged through the interviews as another reason for choosing the playground for their children's party. Taking a closer look at the birthday parties' dynamics, exploring tensions, not only between actors but also between spaces, allows us to expand our understanding in of the ways interactions were structured in each case study.

In Ilioupolis, a big long table placed in the green area was surrounded by decorations hanged from the lamps and the trees (Figure 8-33). The party was using both the café and the green area, while, however, creating a distinct "party area" defined by the decorations [figure]. The members of the birthday party, acted like a group, staying close together, did not accept outsiders and did not seem to care to merge with the island population. The adults stayed in the long table, while the children were moving inside-out the playground and around the green area:

*'Birthday people come with balloons and more decorations and decorate the trees. Birthday children go to the playground but do not merge with the rest of the children. They try to slide but it is too crowded and they exit again and stay outside in the green area, chasing each other and playing with the decorations. When they go inside again they play around but they don't blend with the rest children. The green area is occupied by other children chasing each other but they don't approach the birthday area' (Field-notes).*

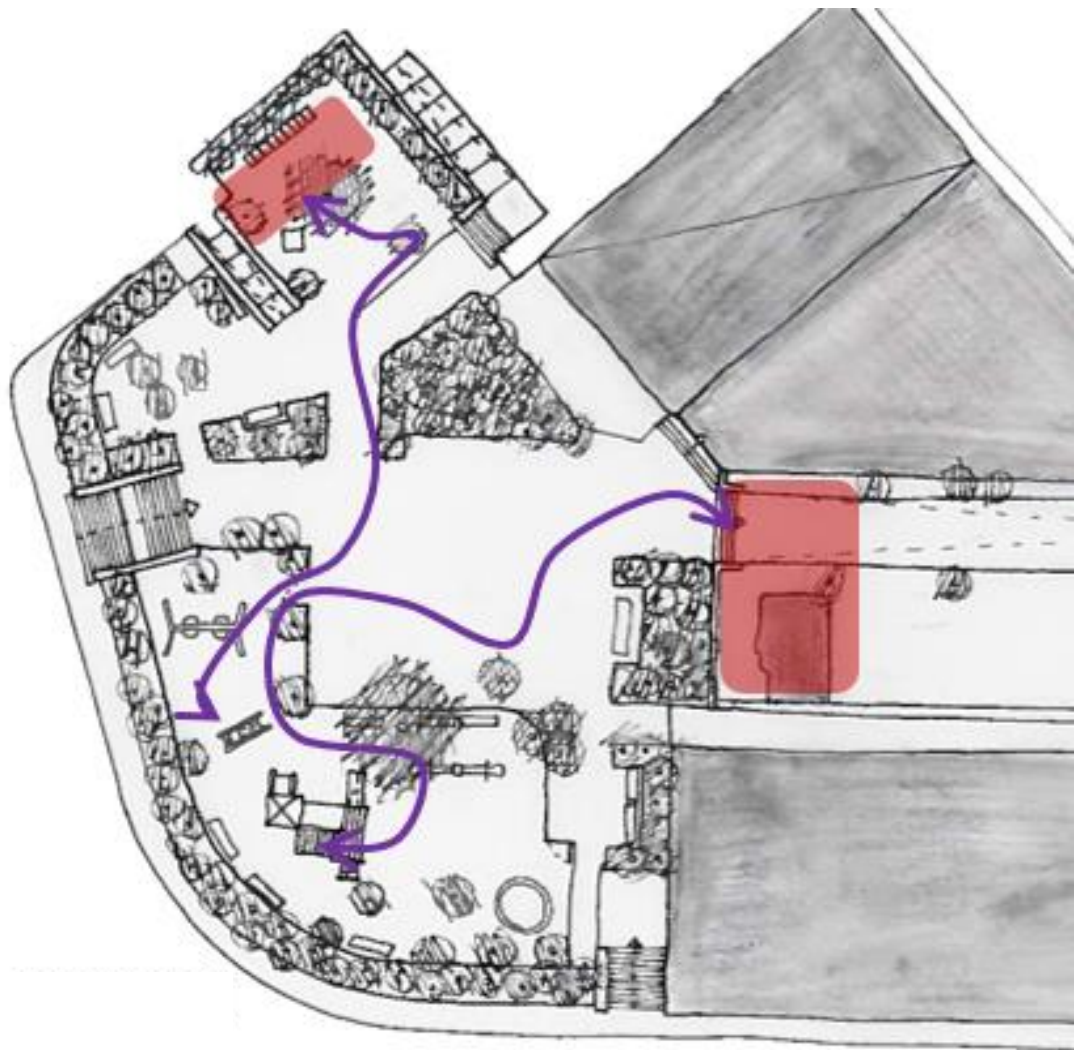
The birthday party children moving around and using the space as a group had to claim, in a non-confrontational way, their space in the crowded island.



Figure 8-33: Ilioupolis – Birthday party areas (red) and connection to the playground (purple)

In Dexameni, I observed birthday parties taking place in the red bench area or in the café (Figure 8-34). Both places were quite distinct and enclosed from the rest piazza and could easily be “controlled”. People attending the party stayed in these areas, socialized, and ate cake without mixing with the rest of the users. Once, I also

observed decoration hanging from the tree and bars in front of the playground. It seems that the guardians chose the party spaces for their convenience to both regulate them and allow interaction and easy access to the adjacent play area, either inside or outside the playground. They were sitting acting as the “base” where children were returning after wandering around the island. In this case, the children did not conflict with the rest people in the island, rather played around as a group, in a similar way with Ilioupolis.



*Figure 8-34: Dexameni – Birthday party areas (red) and connection to the playground (purple)*

Similarly, in Vyronas, the birthday party took place in the guardians’ sitting area outside the playground (Figure 8-35). A table was set with snacks and cake. A grandmother referring to this event complained to me that the birthday party was referring only to the ones invited, excluding the rest of the children playing in the playground. She characterised as extremely rude the fact that the mother did not offer the rest children in the island cake and snacks. She intentionally stressed the fact that the mother organising the party was Albanian (the grandmother was Greek), while she

used herself as an opposite, positive, example bringing cake for everyone when it was her grandson's name day. She mentioned that she offered sweets to all the children as this was '*the right thing to do*', otherwise the other children became jealous. The Vyronas' island stronger community made it unacceptable to exclude children from celebrations and divide users; excluding children from the fun was considered rude. The claims all people had in the space created a form of tension and hidden conflict revealing at the same time what people thought of each other, not only concerning the incident but even perceptions about race and employment. The fact that a group of guardians in Vyronas were Albanians was mentioned really often by the Greek guardians in the interviews. The Albanian guardians, however, never mentioned any racial or other distinguishing characteristic to describe other users.

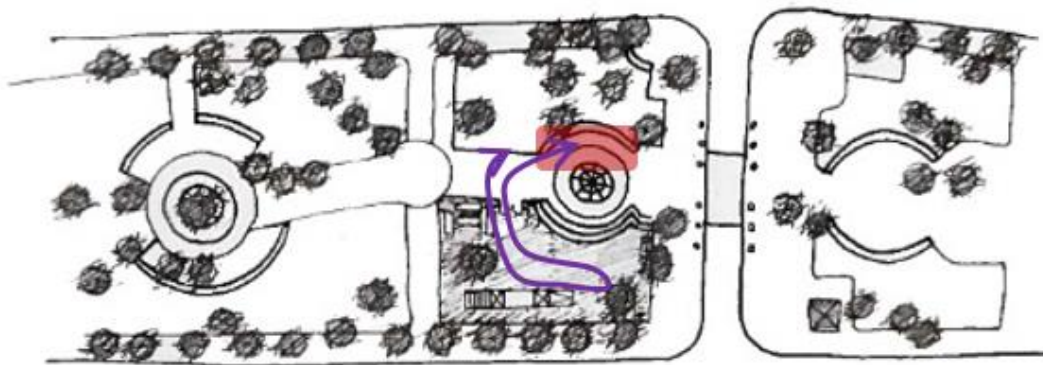


Figure 8-35: Vyronas – Birthday party areas (red) and connection to the playground (purple)

## 8.7 Summary

Here I described the third stage of the playground as a heterotopia, that of the piazzas' metousiosis; the Greek term (μετουσίωσις) means a change of ousia (οὐσία, essence, inner reality). The playground space, was created as a Heterotopia of Deviance, designed and created in order to confine and protect the vulnerable "other". At the same time, however, it accommodated play, a transgressive force that negotiated the established norms and transgressed the set rules. The boundary's socio-spatial porosity allowed the playground to converse with its surroundings, while the piazza's affordances welcomed play overflowing from the playground space and supported flows moving outwards and returning to the playground.

This new situation created islands accommodating play in the public realm (Figure 8-36): Heterotopia of Resistance abolishing any solid classifications and

categorisations. The term “island” refers to the space occupied by the Heterotopia of Resistance both in the piazza and the playground. The Heterotopia of Resistance emerged in this research as a situation drawing from the playground space, while manifesting in the piazza. The island’s footprint was observed to change every day or according to who were using it. At the same time, it functioned under its own alternate orderings, often observed to co-exist or conflict with the previous norms.

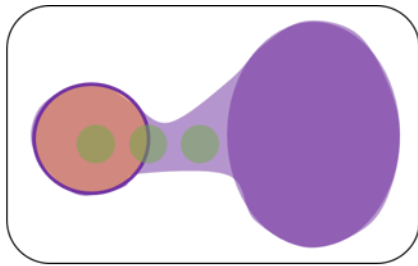
As transgressive play extended further from the playground’s limits towards the piazza, a new socio-spatial situation, accommodating a variety of alternate orderings in a dialogical state, emerged in the piazzas. “Heterotopia of Resistance” was used to describe a form of heterotopia that reinvents space proposing a new socio-spatial reality rather than merely transgressing the existing. This form of heterotopia emerged more as a flux rather than a defined, stable condition. The characteristic of the Heterotopia of Resistance was its alternate orderings. These were not normalised, rather they displaced the “normal” orderings as people appropriated the space. The Heterotopia of Resistance created a fluid situation in which both the piazza and playground space were simultaneously represented, contested and reinvented. Fluid and constantly shifting it did not emerge as a space of resistance in itself but acquired this character through its conversing with its surroundings. Heterotopia of Resistance was dialogic coming in contrast with Heterotopia of Transgression emerging as dialectic: users, actions and conditions co-existed as different in the same space under a constant state of flux.

Appropriation emerged in the Heterotopia of Resistance as both claiming space and making community. The Heterotopia of Resistance referred to both adults and children, bearing an increased Public Value by bringing together various groups of users, while transgression started as a children’s practice in the playground space, resistance to the societal norms referred to all participants in play in the island. The Heterotopia of Resistance included all the subjects in the field allowing them to interact and co-author a new reality. Engaging in play in the island, people of all ages, abolished the established norms that the dominant societal structure had set. At the same time, these different groups co-existed in the same physical space, while co-authoring a new spatiality in the site and proposing new classifications of space.

Conflictual claims emerged from the above mentioned appropriation and informed the publicness of the Heterotopia of Resistance. The various conflictual claims observed to support a creative tension between the different groups of users. It is this tension emerging as a variety of groups of people appropriate and co-author public space that structured its public character. As such, conflict did not emerge as practices that come in contrast with co-existence, but rather as a means towards



publicness. The ways conflict was expressed and almost always resolved, defined the Heterotopia of Resistance.



### The Playground Catalyst

The island  
Fluid Boundaries  
Proposing New  
Classifications  
Inaccessible Spaces-  
Cradles of Resistance

### Play building resistance

*Abolishing boundaries and classification  
of space*

### Appropriation

Making community  
Making space  
Claiming (One's Right to)  
space

### Dialogic

### Conflict

Conflicting Claims: Defining  
Publicness  
Co-authored Self-regulation

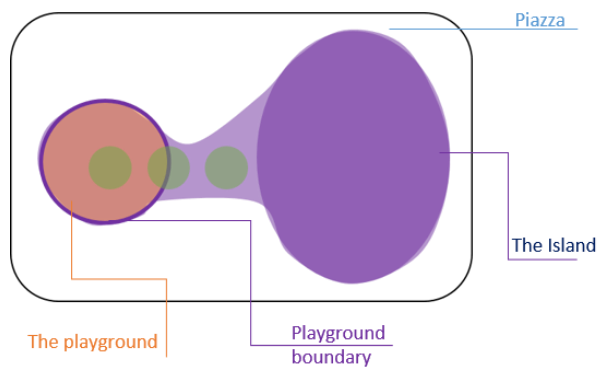


Figure 8-36: The Heterotopia of Resistance

# 9. Discussion

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## 9.1 Overview

In what follows I focus on the main findings in this research, and reflect on their significance by positioning them in the existing literature. This chapter is organised into three main sub-sections: Heterotopia, Play in the City and Claiming one's Right to the City. First I revisit the concept of heterotopia and reflect on how it informed this study. I interpret it in relation to the findings and propose the concepts of "Sequential Heterotopia" and "Heterotopic Affordances". Secondly, I join the main debate about play in the city and propose a reconceptualization of play-spaces. I discuss this study's main finding: the playground catalysing play outside its limits. I position this study in relation to those approaches that frame play as a child's right and propose a complex of play and auxiliary spaces as opposed to the playground enclave. Finally, I place this study in the literature regarding one's right to the city. Critical architectural theory informs my approach. I connect it with studies examining the Greek crisis and explore how each case's context affected its Public Value.

## 9.2 The Playground as a Heterotopia

### 9.2.1 The Three Heterotopias

The critical framework of Heterotopia, was used in this study in order to examine the 'alternate orderings' (Hetherington, 1997, p.39) taking place in the playground space as continuous processes and not as definite and pre-defined structures. Studies have approached places of play – such as playgrounds or sports fields – as heterotopic (Campo, 2013; Karsten, 2003; Kern, 2008; Richards, 2013; Walseth, 2006b; Wesselman, 2013; Vermeulen, 2011). In contrast, this study, approached heterotopia as a situated process and explored its variations and expressions in the playground space. Heterotopia emerged as the product of participants' (inter)actions and practices in space, as a condition "co-authored" by those actors. Three kinds of heterotopia emerged from the findings, each one forming its own orderings and interacting differently with space. This study contributes to the fundamental understandings of the workings of playground as a heterotopia.



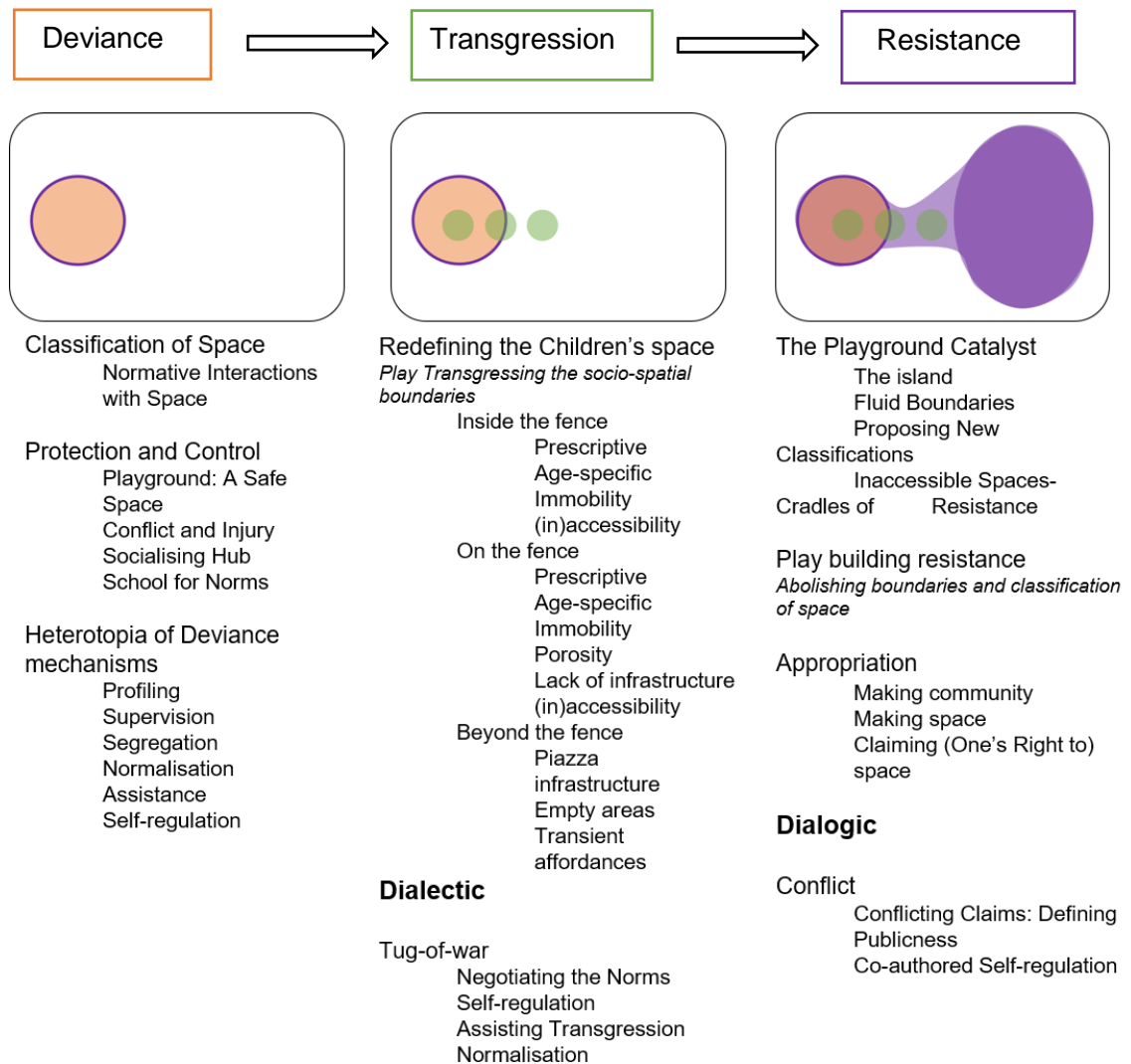
## 9.2.2 The Sequential Heterotopia

Drawing on previous literature on playgrounds (Blackford, 2004; Hiniker et al. 2015; Morrongiello & Dawber, 2000; Mulcahy et al., 2010; Wilson, 2013), I expected the playground to emerge as a Heterotopia of Deviance framed by Foucault's definition. Both space and social norms structured it as such, regulating its function. At the same time, I was conscious to identify play's transgressive characteristics (Glenn et al., 2012; Nardo, 1986; Richards, 2013; Staempfli, 2009; Sutton-Smith, 1997; Thyssen, 2003; Winnicott, 2009) and relate them to the playground as a space of alternate orderings (Campo, 2013; Karsten, 2003 Kern, 2008; Vermeulen, 2011; Wesselman, 2013).

The concept of heterotopia allowed me not only to situate the playground's alternate orderings but also to examine them as temporal and continually changing. Existing theory approaches heterotopia as pre-defined structures, independent of adjacent spaces (Bolaki, 2015; Kern, 2008; Liu, 2009; Muzzio & Muzzio-Rentas, 2008; Shane, 2008). By contrast, this study theorises heterotopia as part of a process of sequential transformation (See: Chapters 6 and 8) and introduces the concept of the Sequential Heterotopia. This is used to describe a set of orderings that follow, and are affected by, each other acquiring different expressions. All the parts of the Sequential Heterotopia are dependent on and informed by the previous one but at the same time they are radically different from each other. In the context of this study, play is the axis around which the heterotopia explored revolves, while informs and catalyses the transformation. The three heterotopias, as examined in the findings, form the expressions of a playground as a heterotopia. The playground as a heterotopia developed from being defined by a closed enclave – an “official play-space” – with strict rules regulating access and use, to an open condition occupying the adjacent public space, abolishing norms and co-authoring the everyday. The playground as a heterotopia, emerging as a Sequential Heterotopia, consisted of the three expressions of heterotopia as described: the Heterotopia of Deviance, the Heterotopia of Transgression and the Heterotopia of Resistance. The three expressions of heterotopia were interconnected to such an extent that each one was dependent on the other.

The findings of this study support the conclusion that the socio-spatial characteristics of the playground space as a Heterotopia of Deviance catalysed the creation of the Heterotopia of Transgression and in turn the Heterotopia of Resistance. More specifically: the Heterotopia of Deviance having a clear purpose, which it failed to fulfil, created the conditions for its own transgression. The Heterotopia of Transgression negotiated the certainties of the Heterotopia of Deviance, while interacting with its surrounding space. This interaction created the conditions for the

emergence of the Heterotopia of Resistance. The physical playground space, its fence and norms acted as a catalyst for the creation of the island in the piazzas. It becomes obvious that this sequence was linear and each expression presupposed the previous heterotopic condition. Transgression was made possible through what it was that it transgressed and resistance emerged as the evolution of transgression and the emplaced implementation of its alternate orderings in the public space.



These three expressions of heterotopia not only succeeded one another but also co-existed (Figure 9-1). This condition takes the argument of the co-existence of alternate orderings (Chatzidakis et al., 2012; Hetherington, 1997) a little bit further

suggesting that multiple layers of alternate orderings<sup>45</sup> can co-exist in the same physical space. In this study, the playground often functioned as a Heterotopia of Deviance for toddlers, while older children structured a Heterotopia of Resistance, moving in and out of the playground. This aligns with the argument made in subsection “Resistance/Transgression”, that heterotopia refers to its subject’s experiences (See brothel paradigm (Heynen, 2008) discussed in Resistance/Transgression). I often observed families visiting the case studies to play in the piazza outside the playground, while others stayed secluded in the playground enclave. Those inside often transgressed the fence, however, they were not allowed to play in the piazza, always returning to the “safety” of the boundary. In this instance, the users transgressing the fence were experiencing the playground as a Heterotopia of Transgression and had to negotiate the spatial limitations, while the ones staying outside co-authored the everyday Heterotopia of Resistance, a new situation of co-existing in public space.

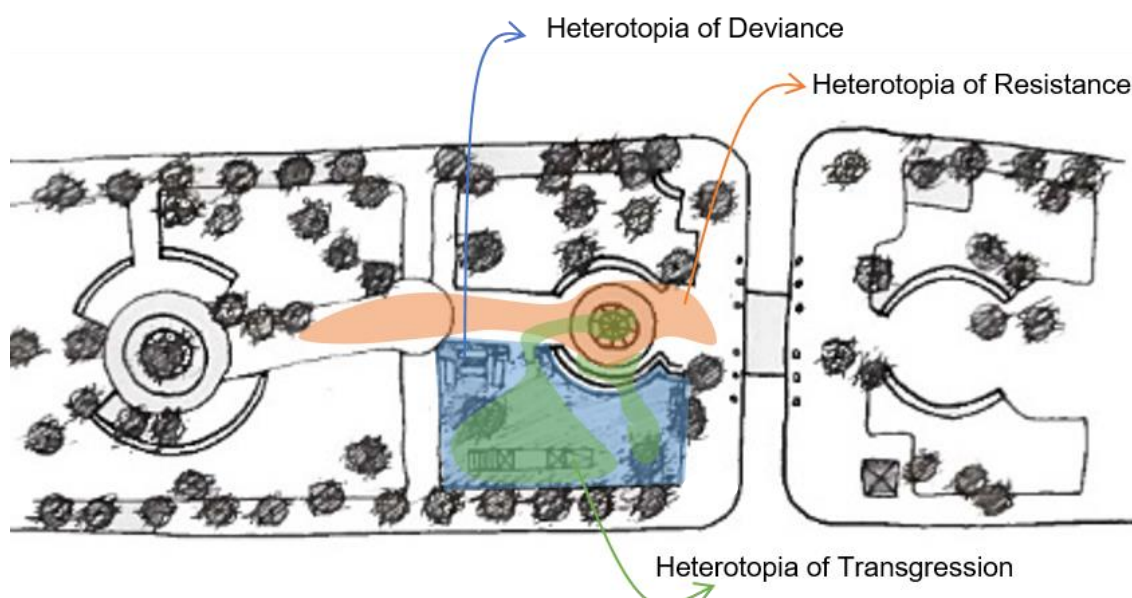


Figure 9-1: Example of co-existing Heterotopias in Vyronas' playground

### 9.2.3 Heterotopic Affordances

Literature approaches heterotopias as either social or spatial entities. Many studies examine heterotopias as taking place in a specific place and being defined by it (Bryant-Bertail, 2000; Cooke, 2006; Collignon, 2015; Ioannidou, 2011; Lees 1997; Nakae, 2010; Orillard, 2008; Soja, 1995) or as vague, spaceless conditions (Chung, 2012; Jacobs, 2004; Miller, 2015; Rymarczuk & Derksen, 2014). Others frame them as

<sup>45</sup> Emerging from the three expressions of the playground as a Heterotopia: Heterotopia of Deviance, Heterotopia of Transgression and Heterotopia of Resistance

emplaced conditions but not engaging with space itself (Andriotis, 2010; Allweil & Kallus, 2008). Foucault (1998a) introduced heterotopias as spatial entities, characterised by their, often, confining space. At the same time, transgression and resistance is often discussed in literature as focusing either on practices (Allweil and Kallus, 2008; Pechtelidis, 2016) or space (Dodge, 2015; De Cauter & Dehaene, 2008; Watson & Gibson, 1995; Zaimakis, 2015)., while existing literature tends to approach heterotopia either as a social condition or as an emplacement of difference, this study adds the bridging concept of Heterotopic Affordances. This proposed new term refers to spatial characteristics and elements that support the formation of the heterotopia but do not define it. They emplace it, encouraging its formation but do not restrict it to a specific spatiality. As in this study's Heterotopia of Resistance, spatial affordances encouraged its creation but the island<sup>46</sup> was not defined by specific boundaries.

Space was part of all three expressions of the playground as a heterotopia, informing and affecting their orderings. As the Sequential Heterotopia moved from deviance to resistance, it ceased to be identified with a specific space – in this case the fenced playground. Instead, it became more flexible, engaging with the public space affordances; it appropriated space interacting with it. Space was not just the container of practices, as is the case in the example of the festival (See: Foucault, 1998a). On the contrary, space informed the heterotopic practices to such an extent that I cannot examine them without taking into account their physical space.

Heterotopia appropriated space, engaged with the affordances but retained its flexibility, fluidity and changeability. Heterotopia of Transgression was defined by negotiation practices which reinvented the playground's physical space. It included but was not confined to the space inside the boundary. The Heterotopia of Resistance, although having a constantly changing footprint, emerged as always neighbouring the fenced playground space, including it or not, while constantly appropriating the piazza's physical space. Heterotopia of Resistance shared, negotiated and in some cases abolished socio-spatial boundaries in a constant process of 'similitude' (Hetherington, 1997, p.43). Heterotopic Affordances allowed the authoring of heterotopias, supporting their flexibility and alternate orderings, allowing them to appropriate space in the public realm. My findings agree with literature that claims that it is the very changing of places' uses and physicality that constitutes acts of transgression and resistance (Doron, 2000). This study also supports previous literature which claims that play and spatial affordances acquire a central role in the process of resistance in the public realm and claiming ones' right to the city (Jones, 2013). Play supported the co-authoring of the

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<sup>46</sup> The spatial footprint of the Heterotopia of Resistance

Heterotopia of Resistance, facilitating intergenerational interaction and appropriation of space.

### 9.3 Heterotopia of Resistance and Play in the City

'I want a city where children live in the same world as you or I do' (Ward, 1978, p.209).

#### 9.3.1 Play in the City

In recent decades, there is a turn in literature towards children's place in the city and more specifically play in the city. Many studies examine carved out spaces (Jones, 2000; Matthew et al., 2000; Beazley, 2000), "special" play-specific spaces (Freeman, 1995; Herrington & Studtmann, 1998; Luken, 2011), playgrounds (Brown & Burger, 1984; Cosco, 2007; Hayward et al., 1974; Luken et al., 2011; Moore & Sutton-Smith, 1997; Susa & Benedict, 1994;), while others refer to the urban landscape as a play-scape in a broader sense (Chatterton & Hollands, 2002). At the same time, literature examining play-spaces in Athens is extremely limited (Galani, 2011; Goumopoulou, 2007; Kaisari, 2005; Katsabounidou, 2012; Maniou, 2012; Mitoulas, 2005). The findings of this research offer an opportunity to publicly discuss and research children's spaces and everyday life in Greece.

There is strong evidence that the playground attracted and justified play in the piazza. The paradox of the playground restricting play and interactions in its premises, but supporting an intergenerational play area outside its limits is a key finding of this study. The physicality of the playground's fence segregated the "children's space" but at the same time allowed games to take place around it on the outside. The question of what constitutes a play space in the urban landscape emerges. Similarly to previous studies, the findings did not support a connection between play infrastructures and playing outdoors (Thomson & Philo, 2004; Valentine & McKendrick, 1997; Gülgönen & Corona, 2015). The, not intended for play, public space's infrastructure was observed to support play in public. At the same time, this study's findings contrast with Zeiher's study (2003) which suggested that children tend to use play-spaces according to their specialised design. I reflect on Cunningham and Jones' (1999) study, asking if the playground can substitute all the lost play spaces in the city and Wheway's study (2015), arguing that the provision of play infrastructure compensates for the loss of children's unrestricted mobility in the public space. On these questions I counteract the Heterotopia of Resistance. This study moves the focus from the playground space and proposes the Heterotopia of Resistance as a playful space in the city: an emplacement

without defined space that engages with the urban landscape and creates multiple expressions of 'representational spaces' (Lefebvre, 1991, p.40).

In the Heterotopia of Resistance, the playground's institutionalised play was transformed to an everyday, intergenerational, co-authored interaction in the public realm resisting the "normal" way of doing things; resisting the "normality" of play and the binary between adults' leisure and children's play (Rojek, 1985). Play emerged as the medium of public space's Public Value as both children and adults, as well as people of a variety of socio-cultural backgrounds, came together co-authoring and appropriating public space. I agree with Castonguay & Jutras (2008) argument that 'after safety, the main concern should be to provide a variety of affordances for play in the same location, rather than any specific equipment' (p.108). Moreover, my findings agree with Alfrink's (2014) argument that play in the city entails the appropriation of space and its use in different ways from the ones it was designed for: 'by appropriating physical space, a kind of resistance is enacted' (p.539). At the same time, it can be argued that the use of different, less prescriptive designs of play-structures could be included in playgrounds to support the emergence of the transgressive behaviours described above. Play structures focusing on multiple affordances rather than prescribed use, while engaging with different physical abilities can potentially enhance intergenerational play in the city.

Interesting connections can also be drawn with studies about skateboarding. Similar to studies about skateboarding in the city, participants in my study appropriated space ascribing different representational identities to it:

To understand the difference between street and park skating is to understand the difference between a represented space and a representational space (Chiu, 2009, p.33; see also: Borden, 2001; Jones, 2013; Woolley and Johns, 2001).

Play defied classification of space and ascribed order (Harvey, 1996; Herbert & Beckett, 2009; Lofland, 1985; Nevárez, 2006) emplacing its own orderings. One could argue that in this study, the piazzas were approached as found spaces (See: Borden, 2001), reproducing space through play; children's spaces instead of spaces for children (Rasmussen, 2004).

### **9.3.2 Reclaiming the 'Child-Friendly': Play as Everyone's Right**

In response to the child-friendly literature examining ways to support children's inclusion in the adult public (McAllister, 2008; NIUA, 2016; NUA, 2017) (See: 1.3), my

findings suggest that child-centred spaces proposed a specific behaviour and excluded specific types of users. In this study, the playground as a Heterotopia of Deviance was not perceived as a space for adults. It was perceived as superfluous and childish and was avoided, while adults that did not act according to these perceptions were seen as potentially dangerous. The playground's child-friendly character limited the space's Public Value, excluding users and regulating behaviours. However, an interesting paradox informs this study's key finding: the playground – the epitome of child-friendly design – is also here understood to be necessary as the catalyst for the Heterotopia of Resistance. Contrasting the current literature (Day and Wagner 2010; Valentine, 1996a) the public realm in all three cases emerged as highly tolerant of children and their play; bestowing them with space and time. The Heterotopia of Resistance would not be possible without the Heterotopia of Deviance<sup>47</sup>. As a result, this study does not argue for the abolishment of child-friendly spaces, rather it proposes a reconceptualization of their definition and orderings. What is therefore of further interest in this study is how to make children's spaces "adult-friendly"; how to give the word "childish" positive connotations and de-criminalise adults' presence in these spaces.

Drawing on observations in the Heterotopia of Resistance, this study reconceptualises the child-adult dipole. Although conceptualisations of childhood and adulthood were clearly constructed in the playground space, indicating specific behaviours and structuring the adult-child interactions, they became blurred in the Heterotopia of Resistance. In this study, play allowed the co-existence of people in public and questioned the established hierarchies (Edmiston, 2010, 2008; Gordon, 2009; Siyahhan, 2010), while children's play was often observed to "justify" adults' play., while I recognise the necessity for children's independent play – often informing the child-friendly design indicators of CFC, see: Lansdown, 2011) – one of the major observations was that play interactions alongside indeterminate spaces allowed and supported adults' play, while the playground as a child-friendly space preoccupied with safety and protection was perceived as superfluous and childish and was avoided spaces without specific use, or whose function was suspended, but offering a variety of affordances allowed adults to engage in play. The Heterotopia of Resistance supported a reconceptualization of play as an inclusive, intergenerational, behaviour. When in play, children and adults co-authored their identities and negotiated the established hierarchies proposing 'alternative ways of being' (Radley, 1995, p.9). Public Value

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<sup>47</sup> As it has been argued in the findings section (See: 7.2.3), and although not included in the scope of this study, similar Heterotopias of Resistance weren't observed in piazzas without a playground.



emerged as the product of these interactions, supporting communication in the public realm.

### **9.3.3 Play Complex**

The study's findings challenge the conceptualisation of play in the city as a behaviour that should take place in specific places. Rather, it connects play to the Public Value of public space and proposes a reconceptualization of the playground as part of a greater complex of play affordances and auxiliary spaces in the urban landscape. The playground space, although a segregated 'well-equipped hamster cage' (Thomson, 2003, p.54), was not isolated, but was supported by a variety of adjacent spaces and uses such as cafes, homes, shops etc. It is proposed that the debate about play in the city should examine and revolve around these complexes of spaces supporting each other and the ways these could inform more aspects of children's lives. Play in the public, interrelated with intergenerational interaction emerged as a force enhancing space's Public Value and as a result its public character.

To extend further, the findings suggest that the playground acted as a catalyst for play in the public realm, while the public space affordances allowed both children and adults to engage in play. This has both design and research implications. My findings support the argument that the Heterotopia of Resistance was facilitated by spatial affordances and adjacent uses to a great extent. It is argued that their absence would have restricted the Heterotopia of Transgression inside the playground's limits not allowing the Heterotopia of Resistance to form. The playground's self-contained space should be understood and designed as part of a complex of both protected and open play-spaces and affordances. The paradox emerging from this study<sup>48</sup> highlights the playground as an organic and indispensable part of the cityscape, interacting and participating in public life, informing play and intergenerational interaction in the public space, rather than a self-centred, secluded enclave.

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<sup>48</sup> According to which the playground barred others from its premises but catalysed intergenerational play in the surrounding public space

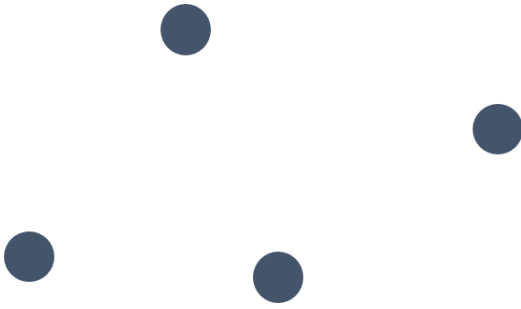


Figure 9-2: Playgrounds dispersed in the urban landscape

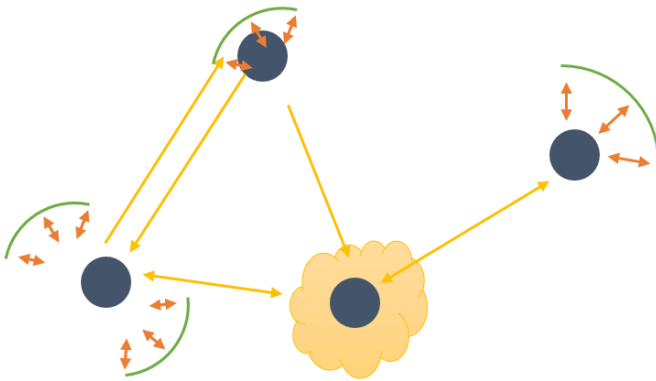


Figure 9-3: Play-complex of playgrounds and supporting spaces

The importance of these findings lies in the fact that playfulness did not emerge in this study as a state of exception but rather as part of everyday. Play extending from the designated play-spaces, appropriated public space suggesting a new way of existing and interacting in the urban landscape.

## 9.4 Heterotopia of Resistance and the Right to the City

### 9.4.1 The Right to Architecture

Lefebvre's (1977) concept of the 'right to the city' (p.144) has been widely used acquiring a variety of meanings (Attoh, 2011; Blokland et al., 2015; Don Mitchell, 2012; Leontidou, 2006; Marcuse, 2009; Stickells, 2011) Here I draw on Lefebvre's (1991) notion of social space and Harvey's (2003) approach of the right to the city as a right that manifests in common rather than individually and connects to reproduction of space:

The right to the city is far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city (Harvey, 2008, p.23).

It is the right to 'reshape the processes of urbanization' (ibid, p.23) rather than being passive receivers of their results. When one claims their right to the city, they claim space, making themselves visible and occupying physical space.

Many scholars explore practices of claiming one's right to the city (Harvey, 2012; Lefebvre, 1991, 1984, 1977; Soja, 1980), bottom-up formed places and interactions in the public space (Allweil & Kallus, 2008; Docherty, 2001; Rofé, 1999; Stavrides, 2014) and spatial appropriation (Fernando, 2006; Jimenez-Dominguez, 2006; Rivlin, 2006; Weisman, 1992). In this study, the playground – created and maintained by the official state – emerged as a space of possibility and resistance., while the playground space was created by and at the same time sustained perceptions about purposeful play, the condition created in the piazza could be understood as taking into account the literature about leisure as resistance (Du, 2008; Genoe, 2010; Jessup et al. 2013; Parry, 2005; Shaw, 2001; Theriault, 2014; Wearing, 1998). However, these approaches do not explore the connection to actual physical space, while they refer to a single player. This study proposes a broader reading of the concept of 'leisure as resistance', not confined to the individual gains of the player but conceptualising it as a social activity placed in urban public space.

Claiming one's right to the city was not a straight forward action. Rather it emerged as a constant negotiation, a test and proceed practice where children tested the defences and responses of the adult world, while proposing their own orderings. My findings agree with Thomson's study (2005) that:

The children's approach to territorialisation was often more informal and temporary than that of the adults, therefore, it changed on a moment-to-moment or daily basis (p.74).

As Jones (2013) argues: 'public space is practiced' (p.1146). It is through the dialogic interaction between heterotopia's alternate orderings and the public realm that resistance emerged not as a utopic condition but as a group of everyday, here-and-now actions. It is this negotiation at the scale of the everyday rather than a utopian conceptualisation of liberation that bears the possibility of change; an everyday, unintentional utopianism (Gardiner, 2004; Kraftl, 2009a, 2007).

Drawing on my approach to space and architecture (Borden et al., 2002; Giancarlo De Carlo, 1969; Petruscu & Trogal, 2017) I argue that the way children reappropriated space was in itself a making of architecture. I reflect on Petrescu and Trogal's (2007) argument about the 'right to architecture' (p.3), a notion that stems from Lefebvre's (1997) right to the city but engaging with the:

More elusive, psychological rights that Lefebvre evoked, such as the rights of imagination, or the right to play (Petrescu & Trogal, 2007, p.4).

The spatial practices informing both Heterotopia of Transgression and Resistance mixed spatial and social in a constant conversation between material and human (Ingold, 2016, 2017) without, however, allowing any claims of collective, global dimensions (Harvey, 2012). I viewed these findings in the light of Ingold's (2017) notion of correspondence:

And as things carry on together, and answer to one another, they do not so much interact as correspond. Interaction is the dynamic of the assemblage, where things are joined up. But correspondence is a joining with; it is not additive but contrapuntal, not 'and...and...and' but 'with...with...with (p.18).

People and space in the field did not emerge as an assemblage of materials, spaces and practices. Space did not act merely as context, the stage where practices were performed, rather it emerged as an 'equal participant' in the reality of the field. Materials and practices 'joined with' (Ibid, p.13) each other, creating a new situation, one that was more than their mere sum; making architecture 'not as a thing, but as a production of space, time and social being' (Borden, 2001, p.1). Manipulating space created tangible outcomes materialising organisational systems and orderings. The Heterotopia of Resistance both appropriated and abolished previous conceptions and classifications of space, while at the same time being affected by it. Space and affordances informed interactions and interpretations co-authoring the Heterotopia of Resistance alongside people.

#### **9.4.2 Crisis and Resistance**

Claiming one's right to the city is frequently connected with the crisis context in Greek studies (Stavrides, 2014; De Angelis & Stavrides, 2010). Public space has emerged as the space where the crisis' side effects as well as appropriation, conflict and normalisation take place. People manipulate and appropriate the urban space

proposing new orderings and ways of living. At the same time, literature revolves around the ways in which the crisis dynamics structure difference as a way to exert power and claim space (Koutrolikou, 2015; Athanasiou, 2014, Dalakoglou, 2012b; Tsimouris, 2014; Kandyli & Kavoulakos, 2011). A variety of studies examining the tensions emerging in the Athenian public space as people engage in a constant battle to claim and reclaim public space open up the discussion about the public space's character and Public Value in the crisis context (Arapoglou & Maloutas, 2011; Balampanidis & Polyzos, 2016; Catterall, 2011; Dalakoglou & Vradis, 2011; Hadjimichalis, 2014; Hatziprokopiou & Frangopoulos, 2016; Kaika, 2012; Kandyli & Kavoulakos, 2011; Lafazani, 2015; Maloutas, 2004; Mantanika & Kouki, 2011; Makrygianni, 2015; Matsaganis & Leventi, 2014; Sotirakopoulos & Sotiropoulos, 2013; Souzas, 2015; Stavrides, 2014; Tsavdaroglou, 2015; Tsavdaroglou & Makrygianni, 2013; Tsimouris, 2014; Vaiou, 2014; Xenakis, 2012). The Crisis has changed the normalities of everyday life making public space porous and open to multiple appropriations supporting 'different forms of publicness' (Athanasiou, 2014, p.76). In the above mentioned literature, however, there are only two references to the playground space and more specifically two playgrounds: Nauarinou Park and Ag. Panteleimonas Square. These use the two playgrounds as paradigms of conflict and appropriation of space (Stavrides, 2014; De Angelis & Stavrides, 2010; Dalakoglou & Vradis, 2010) without, however, focusing on their function and everyday use. This study's findings focused on the scale of the local and the everyday structuring the "everyday heterotopia".

This study places playground alongside the places of everyday struggle discussed in the literature. In a study with a different content but the same focus on the everyday, Vaiou (2014), following a gendered perspective, examines the everyday lives of women in the context of crisis. She uses a cross-scale perspective in order to shape an approach that:

Consciously oscillates between levels of reference which are usually kept apart: on the one hand, discourses and explanations constituted by "big pictures" and global analyses and on the other hand urban space and the spatialities produced (Vaiou, 2014, p.86).

The playground space is one of these spaces of everyday life with great importance as it is one where "normalisation" and struggle takes place and one of the few that children, as a social group, are allowed to use. This study confirmed the argument of the crisis as a new everyday (Athanasiou, 2014, p.73; Christopoulos,

2014, p.65; Makrygianni, 2015, p.161) structuring people's lives and interactions, allowing the mixing (Weck, 2017) of different backgrounds and the co-authoring of people's identities. What is unique to the playground's expression of resistance compared to other examples of social ordering is the engagement of play with space. Although the findings suggest that it was play rather than the crisis dynamics that facilitated the Heterotopia of Resistance, the crisis context emerged as contributing to and supporting alternate orderings. Based on the findings, in the pre-crisis context these alternate orderings were short-lasting and not potent enough to inform the space's everyday. The crisis orderings, motivating people to spend more time in public rather than their home or commercial buildings, highlight piazzas as new centres for city life at the scale of people's routines. This results in a variety of people coming together and engaging with the public realm. However, it was play that engaged people in the Heterotopia of Resistance and supported intergenerational interaction.

Although the Crisis condition emerged through this research more as a context than as specific strategies, it is proposed that it affected the socio-spatial life of the field, informing and sustaining people's actions, interactions and spatial practices. This affected spaces' Public Values and brought 'to the fore a range of tensions that may have been suppressed, or marginalised, in the era of investment' (McKendrick et al., 2015a, p.1). The Heterotopia of Resistance, emerging in this same context, agrees with previous studies on space manipulation (Linardoy, 2013; Mantanika & Kouki, 2011; Sotirakopoulos & Sotiropoulos, 2013), engaging with difference and tolerating "others" practices; either children playing, teenagers socialising or marginalised, minority groups. In this context, the concept of Public Value emerged as connected to the crisis orderings informed by their porosity and affecting them in return.

Stavrides' (2015) distinction between common and public spaces allows for a better understanding between the Heterotopia of Deviance and the Heterotopia of Resistance. On the one hand, public spaces referring to those produced by an authority are ascribed specific classifications and behaviours. The playground space emerged as such a spatiality. On the other hand, common spaces produced by people in similar ways to the Heterotopia of Resistance have an increased Public Value and bear the possibility of claiming one's right to the city.

#### **9.4.3 The Piazzas as Public Spaces of Resistance**

In order to expand further into the concepts of resistance in the public space and claiming one's right to the city (Harvey, 2012; Lefebvre, 1991, 1984, 1977; Soja, 1980) I explore the three piazzas as public spaces in relation to their socio-economic and physical characteristics. Similarly to Lynch's argument, in this study

“publicity’ of a given space stems from an uneasy dialectical relationship between its physical form and its social characteristics” (1996, in Jones, 2013, p.1146). The selection of the three case studies was based on their socio-economic identities and physical characteristics. These, placed in the crisis context, created an interesting diverse tableaux on which to examine the forces and interactions emerging from this context. It was not my intention to compare or generalise the findings but to diversify the sample.

In all cases, the central position of the piazza affected its public character and its importance in people’s everyday life. In Dexameni, the playground and piazza emerged as important in people’s everyday life due to the lack of any similar places in walking distance. In Vyronas and Ilioupolis, however, the importance of these spaces lay in their character as spaces for interaction and socialising rather than their scarcity. Although there were similar spaces in the extended neighbourhood, people still chose these for their public character.

The Heterotopia of Resistance was affected by both the spatial and social characteristics of each case. The protected and vacant space of Dexameni piazza allowed the Heterotopia of Resistance to occupy the whole space (Figure 9-5). At the same time, the lack of sitting areas resulted in a limited presence of adults in the piazza area, affecting social interaction. By contrast, in Ilioupolis, the co-existence of the large vacant space and the abundance of sitting areas in the piazza enhanced interactions (Figure 9-6). At the same time, the design of this piazza in two layers separated the playground space, not allowing communication between the two areas. In Vyronas, although the sitting areas surrounded the playground, their proximity to the playground often deterred other people from sitting there limiting interactions (Figure 9-4). In this case, however, the fact that the piazza functioned as a path guided more people accompanying children towards the playground allowing spontaneous interactions, increasing its Public Value. All three playgrounds were observed to accommodate users and practices not ascribing to the playground’s function during the after-hours (See: 6.5), stressing the playground’s possibility of a potentially enhanced Public Value.



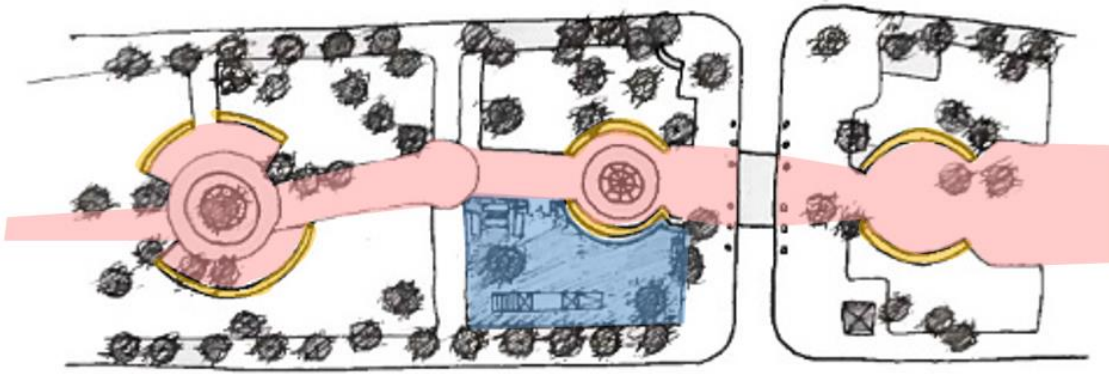


Figure 9-4: Vyronas – main piazza and sitting areas

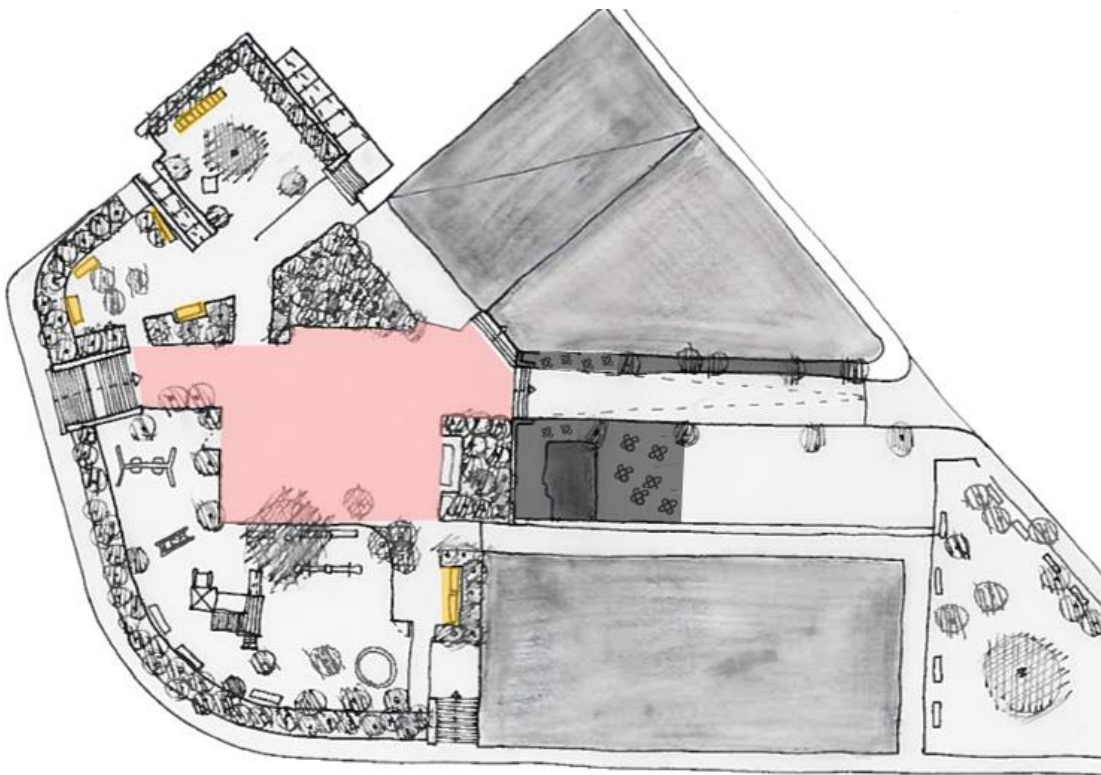


Figure 9-5: Dexameni – main piazza and sitting areas

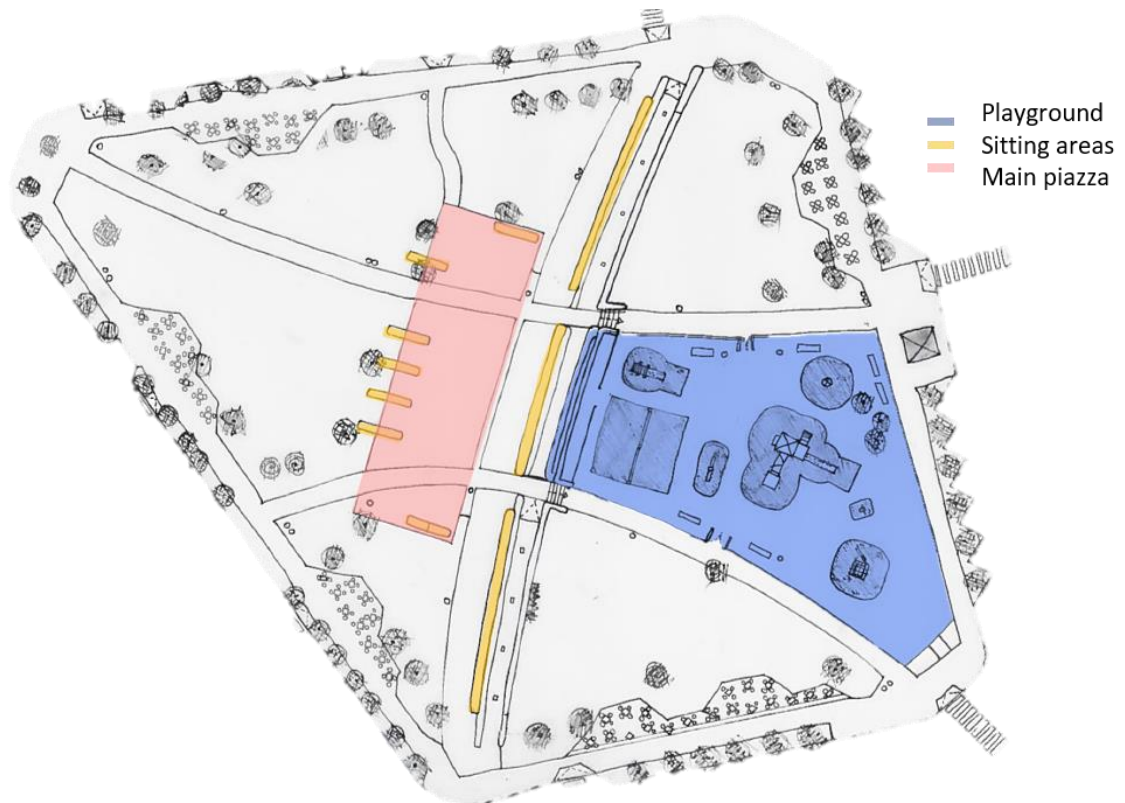


Figure 9-6: Ilioupolis – main piazza and sitting areas

The socio-economic differentiations (See: Appendix B) between the three cases affected the social relations and interactions in each case. Similarly with Vermeulen's (2011) study everyday ordering practices on playgrounds enact and contest established social relations and social categories. At the same time, my findings agree with Lareau (2000) exploring social class in the everyday lives of children. He argues that middle-class children usually spend time in organised activities, while working-class children spend more time in hanging out and in unstructured play in the street. This was the case in this research. However, one should keep in mind that Athenian areas do not have a clear class-differentiation. In the lower income Vyronas' case, where some of the local research participants were unemployed, people spent more time in the playground. The locals visited more often, and sustained a community often kept closed to other users. I will mention again the woman who contrasted the act of going out to socialize with staying at home worrying and getting depressed (See: 5.4.1). In this and other similar cases, the "suffocating" situation austerity created was alleviated by coming together in the public space and sharing one's worries. Similar claims were made in the middle income case of Ilioupolis. There, however, possibly because of its bigger size, people were dispersed in multiple smaller groups as opposed to Vyronas' community. In Dexameni (the upper-income case) however, people often commented on visiting other playgrounds or leisure facilities, while many

of the participants would come from other neighbourhoods. Similar to Ilioupolis, people socialised in groups and interacting with other people.

#### **9.4.5 Co-authoring a New Everyday**

Although Foucault (2018) identified heterotopias as conditions that disrupt a subject's everyday, I approached the playground space as an 'everyday heterotopia' drawing on McLeod's paper (1996) examining the everyday and the other in architecture. The findings suggest that the alternate orderings of the Heterotopia of Resistance informed a new everyday in the field, proposing a different way to co-exist with each other and converse with space. Human bodies in public space matter; as Horton & Kraftl (2014) argue:

If bodily practices are central to all human geographies, they must also be at the heart of all geographies of social-cultural power and resistance (p.255).

In the Heterotopia of Resistance, bodies were not regulated, players reclaimed a certain amount of agency redefining and reproducing the 'self' (Borden, 2001, p.12).

Although these orderings had a temporal character – as is often attributed to heterotopias: Cenzatti, 2008; Dehaene & De Cauter, 2008 –<sup>49</sup>, they had ascribed a new identity to the urban landscape. Returning to Borden's study (2001):

While skaters [...] treated space as if it were 'natural', as something to be seized and used as a pre-existing thing, it is in fact a social product. What they thought to have found; was really not only a production as first created but also a production of themselves seeking to use it for skateboarding. And in doing so, skateboarders' reproduction of the architecture and the urban space of the city conflicted with the reproduction of that same space by others (p. 54).

In this case, my research findings demonstrate that children's claims had created a stable condition which people accepted and guardians assisted. Whilst in Borden's (2001) study only temporal appropriation of space by skaters was tolerated, my study suggests that Heterotopia of Resistance, although temporal, emerged as a frequent condition informing a new everyday. A similar study<sup>50</sup> (Ferré et al., 2006), stressed the importance of playgrounds as spaces for children's social growth (Loukaitou-Sideris, 2003) in a very similar Mediterranean context.

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<sup>49</sup> Ceasing when play stopped

<sup>50</sup> Similar to the context and everyday observations but with different objectives

Literature has approached visibility broadly, not only as a form of reformation in the public space (Gagen, 2000a, 2000b; Loxham, 2013) but also as internal in the process of claiming one's right to the city (Lefebvre, 1991; Valentine, 1996; Christopoulos, 2014; Sotirakopoulos & Sotiropoulos, 2013; Mantanika & Kouki, 2011; Fraser, 2011; Lefebvre, 1991; Frank & Stevens, 2006; Harvey, 2012). As Hetherington (1997) argues, the acts of resistance make the space visible. This study turns this argument around, suggesting that visibility is a form of resistance. My stance agrees with literature revolving around children's and teenagers' practices in order to become visible and claim their place in the public space and is highly connected with the studies that examine carved out spaces (Jones, 2000; Matthew et al., 2000a, 2000b; Beazley, 2000). However, I counteract the notion of hidden appearance (Dehaene & De Cauter, 2008) arguing that the Heterotopia of Resistance did not hide, but placed in the centre the subjects which the playground was created to segregate. To return to Christopoulos' (2014) argument about the importance of visibility of the vulnerable subject in the context of crisis, children did not just carve out space from the adult world, but brought themselves into the centre of the public realm, negotiating their position in public space.

There is an ongoing debate about the central or marginal status of the heterotopia (McLeod, 1996; Johnson, 2006; Dehaene & De Cauter, 2008; Sohn, 2008; Hetherington, 1997; Mendel, 2011; Hetherington, 1996; Gallan, 2015; Tamboukou, 2004). This study is not aligned with literature examining alternative spatialities (Doron, 2008, 2000; Edensor, 2006; Frank & Stevens, 2006) or liminal places (Thomassen, 2014; Matthews, 2003). Rather it suggests reclaiming the very heart of public space, the central piazza. At the same time, however, a second paradox has emerged, according to which, the hidden spaces, inaccessible to adults, supported children's visibility in public space. Agreeing with previous studies, my findings suggest that children take advantage of inaccessible spaces to perform their own orderings (Brown & Burger, 1984; Blackford, 2004). The very formation of the Heterotopia of Resistance threatened the taxonomies of the 'city of enclaves' (Stavrides, 2014) and potentially transformed it into a 'city of thresholds' (Stavrides, 2006).

#### **9.4.6 Familiarising the Public with Children: Reclaiming the Intergenerational**

'Society tolerates more under the banner of play' (Stenros, 2014, p.213).

Literature on othering of the different (Atkinson & Blandy, 2005; Koutrolidou, 2015; Shirlow & Pain, 2003; Valentine & Harris, 2014; Wacquant 2008;) and stranger danger (Adam et al., 2000; Allin et al., 2014; Beck, 1992; Douglas, 1992; Furedi, 2002; Gill, 2007; Lupton, 2000; Pain, 2006; Pain & Townshend, 2002; Potter, 1997; Shirlow & Pain, 2003; Scott et al., 1998; Slovic, 2000; Valentine, 1997) is vast. Subjects that are considered dangerous or that do not ascribe to specific criteria are excluded from public space. Although the playground is often argued as a space for socialisation (Galani, 2011; Jansson, 2008; Cole-Hamilton & Gill, 2002; Bennet et al., 2012; Sutton-Smith, 1990; Bunnell et al., 2012, Allin et al. 2014), its specialised use excluded adults restricting their Public Value and specialised their use. Moreover, however, this study's findings suggest that the playground space, manifesting as a spatial enclave, often compensated for the lack of sitting spaces in the public piazza. When play stopped and the children's heterotopia ceased, a variety of other users occupied the playground.

Drawing on Olwig & Gulløv's (2003) argument characterising children's spaces as 'entry points' (p.15) for society, I reflect on the idea of children being socialised into the existing norms of society. This study reconceptualises the playgrounds' function as transforming the existing norms so that children and adults enter an alternate society. I set the question: Why only question the playground's Public Value? Does not the Public Value of public space diminish when children are excluded? I suggest that the debate should not revolve only around ways to familiarise children with the public realm – focusing on the playground's Public Value – but also familiarising the public realm with children's presence, practices and play. As emerging from the findings about how conflict manifested in the Heterotopia of Resistance, the public realm in all three cases emerged as highly tolerant of children and their play. I consider this finding an important contribution in the debate about children's right to the city as children claimed space interacting with the adult world instead of creating segregated play bubbles. Children acquired agency to organise play in the public space, including or excluding adults and choosing the succession of their practices. The Heterotopia of Resistance bore the potential not only enter the 'porous' adult world (Jones, 2000, p.26) but also to open up the restricted children's world to the public.

At the same time, literature focuses on the playground space as a site of social and intergenerational interaction (Allin et al. 2014; Bennet et al., 2012; Bunnell, 2012; Cole-Hamilton & Gill, 2002; Galani, 2011; Jansson, 2008; Sutton-Smith, 1990; Solomon, 2005; Tovey, 2007). The benefits of intergenerationality have long been stressed. From intergenerational learning, literacy, socialisation and cognitive development (Davis et al., 2002; Gadsden & Hall, 1996; Rosebrook, 2002; Sutton-Smith, 1997; Spence & Radunovich, 2012; Tovey, 2007; Vandermaas-Peeler et al.,

2009; Williams & Nussbaum, 2001), to play (Corbeil, 1999; Davis et al., 2002; Edmiston, 2010; Siyahhan, 2010; Vandermaas-Peeler et al., 2009; Vanden-Abeelee & De Shutter, 2009) and communication (Aitken, 2001b; Williams & Nussbaum, 2001) the literature on the benefits of intergenerational contact for both children and adults is vast. Some studies go as far as to propose specific activities (Hakkarainen et al., 2013; Kennedy, 2012; Vanden-Abeelee & De Schutter, 2009) to enhance intergenerational contact. My findings agree with literature around the benefits of intergenerational play but do not approach it as a mere performing of specific tasks with people of different ages. Rather this study is mainly interested in the ways intergenerational interaction facilitated resistance.

The very concept of intergenerationality is based on the difference between ages:

Viewing intergenerationality as an aspect of social identity suggests that individuals' and groups' sense of themselves and others is partly on the basis of generational difference or sameness. These identities are not fixed but dynamic, affected by the relations between different age groups or generations which may vary (Hopkins & Pain, 2007, p.288-289).

This study re-approaches intergenerationality, not as a way to bridge difference but as a way to co-author identities focusing on similarities. I stress the importance of the spaces where childhood and adulthood meet not just as a condition of co-existence, but as a co-authoring of both social and spatial identities.

Intergenerationality emerged in the Heterotopia of Resistance as a co-authoring of the childhood-adulthood dipole, transforming it into a continuum and emplacing it in the city-scape. I draw on Edmiston (2010, 2008) in order to position play in the centre of this argument. Play ascribing people with new identities, negotiating the existing ones, changed the established hierarchies (Edmiston, 2010, 2008; Gordon, 2009; Siyahhan, 2010). It introduced “playful beings” rather than child or adult players. These “playful beings” were not characterised by their age, but by their co-authored actions and playful behaviour. Identities did not emerge only as a social construction but also as a spatial distribution (Horton & Kraftl, 2014). Intergenerational interactions in the Heterotopia of Resistance emerged as actions that actively restructured the adult world, proposing new spatialities bearing an increased Public Value and civic connotations.

It is important to note that this study does not draw connections with the notion of multigenerational playgrounds (Blümel & Amort, 2016). Multigenerational

playgrounds do not question the established classification of space or the adult-child conceptualisation. They provide in the same area different equipment for various ages, often those aimed to adults are not play but fitness equipment. What this study adds to this debate is that the children's playground supports multigenerational play in the public, blurring rather than drawing on the age differences.

## 9.5 Summary

In this chapter, I examined my findings in relation to the current literature. Heterotopia, play in the city and claiming one's right to the city were the three main categories informing this study's discussion. Play, Public Value and the right to the city cut across all these three sub-sections, proposing an alternative conceptualisation of both the playground space and the surrounding piazza.

The notion of the Sequential Heterotopia emerged. I explored the expressions of heterotopia in the playground space as manifested in three different ways, each one informed the one following. The concept of Heterotopic Affordances was introduced connecting heterotopia to physical space.

Moreover, I examined play in the city, challenging the notion of play as a child's right and proposed the "play complex" as an approach to facilitate intergenerational play in the public realm. The main finding of this study, emerging as a paradox, was discussed. The playground space, a space barring people from interacting with it, acted as the essential catalyst for the emergence of the Heterotopia of Resistance. As such, the playground space emerged as important for the success of the proposed "play complex".

Placing my findings in the field of architectural theory, I examined people's practices as "making of architecture". The right to the city was examined in relation to the crisis context. Practices and interactions informed by this context, affected the piazza's Public Value. Public space acquired a variety of meanings, while bearing different physical characteristics. At the same time, Heterotopia of Resistance did not emerge as a special, disruptive event, but as a condition taking place in the everyday without, however, acquiring normative characteristics. Not only appropriating but also making and claiming space, questioned the "normality" of public space, sustaining an increased Public Value in the everyday use of the space.



# 10. Conclusion

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## 10.1 Overview

In this concluding chapter I revisit the findings and the themes that emerged from this study. I summarise them according to the three heterotopias. I explore the study's aims and objectives. Then I state the contribution to knowledge in the fields of Heterotopia Theory, Architectural Theory, Childhood and Play Studies. I reflect not only on my experience, but also on the limitations of this PhD Thesis. Further research suggestions emerge from the limitations of this study.

## 10.2 Reviewing the Findings

Neither marginal nor central, playgrounds are dispersed in the urban fabric, segregating, but at the same time engaging children with the public realm. In our supervising society (Foucault, 2000) playgrounds function as institutionalised heterotopias:

Steam-releasing' sites, deflecting the forces of change by locating them outside society, in specially designated spaces where [they] can be filtered and contained (Allweil & Kallus, 2008, p.191).

This research approached the playground space taking into account its character as a Heterotopia of Deviance without, however, dismissing its potential as a space for play. The findings support the idea that spaces of change are unsettling and contested (Krafft, 2007). This study reconceptualised both the piazza and the playground, not as opposites, but as parts of the same dipole, challenging both the clear dichotomies between the spaces and their "othering mechanisms". I avoided conceptualising the playground as a space of hope. On the contrary, the playground space itself emerged through this study as a space of restrictions, a Heterotopia of Deviance with highly elaborate and vigilant mechanisms. At the same time, the adjacent public space, although classified and monitored, emerged as a space of possibility; a kind of possibility usually ascribed to the playground. Play was the force that materialised this possibility.

Classification of space (See: 6.2) categorised, valued and segregated different areas of the public space, accordingly suggesting particular behaviours. Children's

presence in the public space was informed by this classification as well (See: 6.2.2). Children's movement ascribed to boundaries and limitations. Similarly, adults felt the need to adjust their behaviours to meet expectations about good parenting or "proper" use of public space.

### **10.2.1 The Playground as a Heterotopia of Deviance**

The Heterotopia of Deviance was characterized both by its physical elements and members' behaviors. Its spatial characteristics structured it as different: an easily identified "other" space in the normality of the public realm, with proposed specific behaviors and ways to use it.

The playground spaces examined in this study were created by the official state (top to bottom) as purpose-centred and clearly-defined spatialities; children's spaces (See: 6.2.3). Their spatial otherness complemented the "otherness" of their users. The playground was regulated by rules and norms indicated by a larger framework of societal perceptions about childhood and adulthood as well as "good parenting" and risk. As such, it emerged as a space closely connected to broader cultural and social conceptions and norms. It was created in response to the perception of children as vulnerable beings, in need of special play structures, and was classified as a safe space in the dangerous public realm (See: 6.3.1). The playground's function was preoccupied with protection and control, expressed both through the physical elements of the fence (See: 6.3.2) and the norms preoccupied with avoiding conflict and injury (See: 6.3.3). At the same time, it functioned as a space for the perpetuation of societal norms (See: 6.3.66.3.6 A School for Norms) and a space for everyday socialising (See: 6.3.4).

Control and safeguarding regulated the playground's function and guided users' behaviours. Specific mechanisms regulated the playground's function and its users' interactions. Profiling (See: 6.4.2), Supervision (See: 6.4.3), Segregation (See: 6.4.4), Assistance (See: 6.4.6), Normalisation (See: 6.4.5) and Self-regulation practices (See: 6.4.7) characterised the playground as a Heterotopia of Deviance. Although placed in the public space, the playground was not perceived as public by the participants in this study. Access to the playground was restricted, while profiling mechanisms (See: 6.4.2) constructed a "dangerous other" stereotype that excluded people. Perceptions of playgrounds as solely children's spaces excluded adults, while their child-centred design and scale intensified the children's space classification. Supervision (See: 6.4.3) and segregation of the vulnerable (See: 6.4.4) became the cornerstone of a protecting culture. Assistance (See: 6.4.6), normalisation (See: 6.4.5) and self-regulation of behaviours (See: 6.4.7) were used to restore balance and discipline the unruly. What is

interesting in these findings is that the classification of space as a “children’s space” was not only sustained by the guardians but also by the rest of the broader population using the adjacent space (See: 6.4.2). This reveals deep-rooted perceptions about the places of childhood in the Athenian landscape.

At the same time, the different orderings emerging in the playground space when the children were absent (See: 6.5) confirmed that the Heterotopia of Deviance was child-focused. When the Heterotopia of Deviance norms were absent, this allowed other groups to appropriate the playground space. The after-hours use of the playground revealed that the playground space could accommodate a variety of orderings and different users.

### **10.2.2 The Playground as a Heterotopia of Transgression**

Vigilant to explore the potential of play in the playground, I was able to identify its transgressional characteristics and examine how they were manifested in and outside the playground space, whereas the Heterotopia of Deviance emerged as quite a “defined” and purpose-centred, socio-spatial formation, the Heterotopia of Transgression on the other hand was framed as a “process”. It was a child-initiated, but collective experience of interpretation and negotiation. The limitations of the Heterotopia of Deviance were transformed into opportunities for transgression (See: 7.2.1). The classification of the playground as a children’s space and the emphasis upon accommodating “valuable” play – despite lacking the proper infrastructure – gave children the leeway to negotiate their use and position in the space. While the Heterotopia of Deviance regulated both adults’ and children’s behaviours, the Heterotopia of Transgression – user-initiated and sustained – referred only to children’s actions; while the playground’s Heterotopia of Deviance was regulated by specific norms – often imposed by a common socio-cultural understanding shared between the users – the Heterotopia of Transgression was created and evolved as a set of spatial practices with reference to the playground fence. The Heterotopia of Transgression, although still situated in the playground space, ceased to be space-centred and became action-instigated.

Inside the playground fence (See: 7.2.2), play and affordances emerged, through observation, as the two main elements structuring the Heterotopia of Transgression. Children’s play was the activity that created alternate orderings, negotiated norms and reinvented the space, changing both the hierarchies between players and the classification of space. My observations suggest that children’s spatial practices and transgressive play challenged the norms, ignoring the institutionalised “proper” way to play, proposed by the playground’s design. The play structures, being

age specific, immobile and prescriptive concerning their “proper” use, were intended to control play and guide behaviours. Play, however, interpreted these characteristics to offer affordances proposing a variety of uses. At the same time, the play-structures were inaccessible to adults, allowing children to distance themselves from the Heterotopia of Deviance mechanisms.

Play also took place on the playground fence (See: 7.2.2). The fence, not being prescriptive or age specific, offered its own affordances bearing a variety of interpretations. Its immobility encouraged both play and its physical transgression. At the same time, the fence’s porosity encouraged interaction between inside-outside and allowed play to extend into the adjacent space. The limits of the Heterotopia of Transgression were not prescribed by the playground fence. Although situated in the playground space, this heterotopic space constantly transgressed the playground boundary. The fence’s inaccessibility to adults gave it a double advantage: it allowed children, once again, to use it in order to get away from the playground’s normalising mechanisms, while at the same time making the playground a safe place from which to gradually introduce children into the public realm.

The playground emerged as a space physically segregated, but not isolated from the public realm (See: 7.2.3). Transgressive play manipulated space and challenged its classifications. The physicality of the fence itself allowed games to transgress the playground boundary, while the piazza’s infrastructure, and the affordances that the empty areas offered, allowed play to extend beyond the playground space. At the same time, transient affordances encouraged flows inside-out extending the playspace from the playground.

Finally, the chapter draws connections between transgressive practices and the existing classification of space informed by the Heterotopia of Deviance. The metaphor of a tug-of-war game (See: 7.3) was used to describe the interactions of the two heterotopias. The Heterotopia of Transgression did not abolish the previously strictly regulated situation; rather it challenged it, using it as the reference point around which the new transgressing practices revolved. Transgression emerged as interconnected with that which it transgresses; in this case the Heterotopia of Deviance norms. The Heterotopia of Transgression was characterised by a dialectic process between the pre-defined and the spontaneous, the top-down regulation and the bottom-up created orderings, the societal norms and children’s play. The Heterotopia of Deviance mechanisms were still present: while assisting bore different connotations (See: 7.3.3), self-regulating (See: 7.3.27.3.2 Self-regulation) and normalisation (See: 7.3.4) interacted with the new orderings, constantly trying to restore the balance. Challenging the existing rules, or negotiating the extent to which one will follow them, was an act of

play in itself. The playground space emerged as a contested space, not fully under the grasp of societal norms, but at the same time, not free to set its own rules. The Heterotopia of Deviance, was created by the state and regulated by societal perceptions, while the Heterotopia of Transgression was created by its users and revolved around their liberation.

### **10.2.3 The Playground as a Heterotopia of Resistance**

The playground space emerged as a catalyst for play in the public piazza (See: 8.2.1). The playground, acting as a “landmark”, legitimised playful behaviour in public space; it supported play in the piazza, which brought families and other people to the public space. The children, playing in and around the playground, claimed the playground’s adjacent space extending and emplacing constantly alternating orderings into the public space. The Heterotopia of Resistance was distinguished by the fact that its alternate orderings in the public piazzas were not normalised. This heterotopia was action-orientated rather than being defined by specific boundaries (See: 8.2.2); it constantly proposed new classifications and interpretations of space (See: 8.2.3). It is interesting to focus on the design intention of each area. The playground space, created in order to segregate children but at the same time a space of play, failed to fulfil its purpose. This was either due to practical<sup>51</sup> or societal reasons<sup>52</sup>. On the contrary, the public space, although characterised and divided by specific classifications, was found to accommodate a variety of play expressions.

Play emerged as the force building resistance (See: 8.3), emplacing its alternate orderings and engaging with the piazzas’ affordances. When people moved from the playground they were free to interpret, test and experiment with social orderings. Indeterminate spaces bestowed adults with a freedom to play, moving away from the “good parenting” norms that manifested in use-specific areas. Although not being part of its design intentions, the piazzas emerged as spaces supporting adults’ play. Intergenerational play supported alternate orderings, occupying and manipulating space, proposing new ways to co-exist.

Although not emerging as a defined spatiality, the Heterotopia of Resistance was highly connected to space engaging with and appropriating the available infrastructure (See: 8.4.2). The island, the spatial footprint of the Heterotopia of Deviance constantly changed along with people’s actions and appropriations. At the same time, inaccessible spaces in the piazza (See: 8.2.4) acted as places of children’s

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<sup>51</sup> Infrequent maintenance, lack of play structures

<sup>52</sup> The “proper” way to play was too boring and norms didn’t allow intergenerational play

empowerment, accommodating alternate orderings, allowing children to exist in the public space away from adults' control.

The Heterotopia of Resistance, in contrast with the Heterotopia of Transgression that referred to children's spatial practices, was inclusive and intergenerational. Appropriation of space emerged both as making community (See: 8.4.1) and making space (See: 8.4.2). Society's hierarchies and norms were inscribed in the playground space itself and regulated its function, while the presence of outsiders was hindered in the Heterotopia of Deviance, the Heterotopia of Resistance, moving away from the playground space allowed intergenerational interactions to take place. The playground, characterised as a child's rightful space, discouraged adults from interacting with it. Extending the playground space to the island, play bore the freedom to enact alternate orderings without being restricted by the playground's expected behaviours. The area surrounding the playground accommodated expressions of play and spontaneity, tolerating a situation that does not take place in other public spaces.

The Heterotopia of Resistance did not emerge as a condition of exception. Rather it manifested as a new everyday. The lack of normalisation of the alternate orderings taking place was the major characteristic of the Heterotopia of Resistance (See: 8.4.3). The heterotopia's alternate orderings proposed new hierarchies in the public realm, giving children not only an extended space of play, but also a space of agency. Agency is not here understood as an attribute one can bestow upon someone. Rather it is approached as the sum of each individual's actions, in order to lay claims and participate in the public realm.

In the Heterotopia of Resistance, adults and children co-authored a new everyday, not accepting their pre-defined positions in society and space. Conflict and territoriality (See: 8.6) were observed to guide the claims of the different groups. Conflict emerged as the product of a "healthy" public space defining its publicness; the result of the appropriation of the same physical space by different groups of users. At the same time, self-regulation of one's behaviours was used by the subjects of heterotopia to solve disputes and conflict as they emerged (See: 8.6.2). The ways in which conflict was expressed and almost always resolved, informed the character of the Heterotopia of Resistance as a collective condition of co-authoring alternate orderings in the public space.

## 10.3 Aims and Objectives

This study's aim was to explore the playground's Public Value in contemporary Athens.

“**Public Value**” has been defined in this study (See: 2.3.2) as relating to the concepts of access and interaction informed by co-existence of various age and social groups. It is not used to refer merely to sociability. Rather it bears civic engagement connotations and relates to the arguments of claiming one's right to the city (Harvey, 2012; Lefebvre, 1991, 1984, 1977; Soja, 1980) (See: 2.3).

I explored the playground's Public Value by examining its connection to the public realm. By conceptualising the public playground as heterotopia, the Public Value of the playground space was examined through the playground's physical and socio-cultural 'opening and closing mechanisms' (De Cauter & Dehaene, 2008b, p.6) and their porosity. This mechanism affected the playground's Public Value, while simultaneously allowing the playground to interact with its adjacent surroundings.

### 10.3.1 Objectives

In order to address this study's aim I will describe how the objectives have been met, relating these to the playground's opening and closing mechanisms.

A characteristic defined by Foucault in the first appearance of the concept of heterotopia as emplacement was that of the opening and closing mechanism. These mechanisms have been described either as specific procedures (Mendel, 2011), rituals (Allweil & Kallus, 2008) or criteria to which one has to conform (Bartling, 2008). My findings confirmed that there is a system regulating access to the playground. This was both physical, composed of the fence and its door, but also social, referring to people's actions and perceptions. This study suggests that the opening and closing mechanisms for each expression of the playground as a heterotopia varied, affecting its Public Value.

The objectives were:

**-To describe the expression of “access”, “use” and “interaction” in the playground.**

The notions of access, use and interaction were highly connected with the aforementioned opening and closing mechanism. The opening and closing mechanisms of the Heterotopia of Deviance intended to identify risk and dangerous outsiders restricting access. My findings on the othering practices in the playground agreed with previous studies (Weck, 2017; Allin et al., 2014). The construction of the



outsider was informed by broader societal perceptions and stereotypes and regulated both the use of the playground and the interactions taking place there. People that fell into the category of the dangerous “other”, regulated their behaviours to avoid raising suspicions. Societal norms were the main opening and closing mechanism regulating access and guardians its enforcers. The notion of an outsider emerged as ascribing to specific characteristics (male, alone). However, outsiders that did not fall into this category (female, old) were often overlooked by the opening and closing mechanisms (the guardians) and entered the space. The “other” was not constructed as someone about whom we do not know anything about, but on the contrary one that we have adequate knowledge about, in order to recognize him/her as different (Lafazani, 2015).

**– To describe the porosity of the playground’s social and physical boundaries.**

The porosity of the playground’s boundaries allowed both interactions between inside-outside and flows from inside-out, supporting the extension of play into the piazzas. Porosity emerged as both referring to the fence’s materiality and to practices and behaviours transgressing it. It was not only a physical attribute, rather it was also structured as a group of practices conversing with space.

In the Heterotopia of Transgression and the Heterotopia of Resistance the opening and closing mechanism became porous. “Rituals” similar to those examined in other studies (Corsaro, 1979) still regulated access to the play activity and as a result access to the Heterotopia of Transgression and Resistance. In the cases of transgression and resistance, play acted as the opening and closing mechanism. Anyone engaging in transgressive play became part of the Heterotopia of Transgression. However, while this condition constantly negotiated the previous one, adults still regulated access to the physical playground space. As societal perceptions and classification of space were still active in the playground space, adult play was still restrained. As a result, adults, not participating in transgressive play, were self-excluded from the Heterotopia of Transgression. By contrast, the Heterotopia of Resistance’s opening and closing mechanisms were flexible and not spatially defined. Children acted as opening or closing mechanisms, engaging or excluding other people from their games.

**-To examine the playground’s socio-spatial connection and interaction with its adjacent public space.**

The playground, defined by its fence and constantly closed door, emerged in this study as not completely isolated or segregated from the public realm, but at the same time, not as an equal part of it. In order to explore the playground’s

communication, I focused not only on the physical characteristics of space but also on the social interactions this accommodated. I examined the playground through Foucault's claim that heterotopias accommodate multiple incompatible worlds in a single space and explored its connections with the surrounding space. Its interaction with the adjacent spaces and their orderings defined its heterotopic characteristics. Its difference was constantly negotiated, informing its subjects' behaviours and practices and as a result the heterotopic orderings.

While the Heterotopia of Deviance was defined by socio-spatial boundaries, the other two heterotopias emerged as the result of the subjects' practices and interactions with the surrounding space. In the Heterotopia of Transgression the playground retained its boundary, however, children's spatial practices constantly transgressed it. In the Heterotopia of Resistance, the question about the interaction of the two spaces became obsolete as both the playground and the public space assimilated in the play-island. Play was the force mediating the playgrounds' interaction with its adjacent space, engaging with the spatial affordances. Public space affordances emerged as necessary for the playground's interaction with the public realm. In this study, when the heterotopia was defined by a bounded physical space, it became self-centred and closed, creating an enclave<sup>53</sup>. When, however, the physical space engaged with, but did not define the heterotopia<sup>54</sup>, it opened-up to include its users and their practices. While in the playground space access was controlled, excluding the outsiders from the space, in the island these mechanisms did not prohibit people from using the piazza space. As a result, the co-existence of different users was made feasible, welcoming a variety of users.

### 10.3.2 The Playground's Public Value

This study's main aim was to explore the Athenian the playground's Public Value.

**Public Value** was used in this study in relation to the concepts of access and interaction, framed in relation to co-existence and interaction. The term Public Value was purposely chosen in order to contradict the extensively used term 'play value', when referring to the playground space. Although it refers to the playground space, the chosen term draws on the public realm's characteristics of inclusivity and access (See: 2.3.1). Open access and public use by a variety of subjects were thought to underpin the notion of the playground's Public Value. The playground's orderings were influenced by and influenced in return the space's Public Value. This study framed the

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<sup>53</sup> The Heterotopia of Deviance matching the playground space

<sup>54</sup> As in the case of Heterotopia of Resistance

playground's Public Value through its interaction with the adjacent space. In the crisis context the use of the playground as an affordable space for socialising and playing emerged as a factor supporting the playground's Public Value. The findings suggest that although there is a potential for an enhanced Public Value, in the playground space, the playground retaining its deviant identity, did not allow this to be expressed.

As the playground's physical space emerged as being associated with all three expressions of Heterotopia – Deviance, Transgression and Resistance – examining the playground's Public Value is no longer a straight-forward process. Drawing on the notions of Access, Use and Interaction I explored the playground's Public Value through the three states of the playground space.

### Access

When first approaching the playground space as a defined spatiality, its Public Value is limited and is regulated by the strict opening and closing mechanisms of the Heterotopia of Deviance. Although placed in the public space, the playground was not perceived or did not function as a part of it. It did not support spontaneous public interactions, while access was regulated. The Heterotopia of Deviance emerged as a strictly controlled space, regulated by mechanisms such as profiling and normalisation practices, informed by broader societal perceptions about children and childhood. The character of the playground as a Heterotopia of Deviance remained solid, strictly delineated by its physical boundary (the fence), loaded with societal perceptions and norms deterring people from entering or excluding outsiders who did not belong. The Heterotopia of Deviance was correlated to physical space to such an extent that even in the instances when children socialised in the piazza, the playground space itself – highly correlated with control – was not open to other people and did not support intergenerational interactions between strangers.

Although this study recorded other people in the playground – both when it was occupied and empty – this cannot substantiate inward flows. The Heterotopia of Deviance, preoccupied with children's safety and revolving around control, did not support unrestricted, spontaneous interactions with an extended public in its premises.

### Use

However, as play transgressed rules and boundaries, these mechanisms opened, allowing flows from the inside to the outside retaining, however, the playground's solid spatialisation as its core. My findings suggest that the playground communicated with the surrounding public space in an organic way. On the one hand, the boundary's porosity allowed the playground to interact and communicate, being a

segregated but active part of the piazza milieu. On the other hand, as a Heterotopia of Transgression, it was observed to interact through a test and proceed practice, transgressing boundaries and norms, extending and integrating its surroundings in a new situation. This increased interactions, without, however, turning the playground's fenced physical space into an accessible area. The Heterotopia of Transgression, transgressed the Heterotopia of Deviance norms and boundaries, but did not acquire public space characteristics (See: 2.3.1). The play flows were taking place from the inside out and not the other way.

### Interaction

Although the playground's conceptualisation as a play enclave limited its Public Value, the surrounding piazza accommodated extended interactions. The playground space ceased being an enclave in the public space and was rather transformed into a catalyst of play and socialising. The Public Value definition (see X.X) was preoccupied with an inward flow of the public realm into the playground. The findings, however, suggest that the playground's Public Value had an outward character, engaging children with the public realm. As a result, I situate the playground's Public Value outside the playground fence and explore it in the adjacent public space. Employing a broader conceptualisation of the playground space, moving away from its strict boundaries to include the play island beyond it, I argue that the playground space bore an enhanced Public Value. Approaching the notion of the playground's Public Value as not being contained within the physical space itself, but rather, associated with the interactions that this space supported, the playground space informed an increased Public Value for its surrounding space.

Moreover, the very placement of this playground-initiated public milieu – the Heterotopia of Resistance – in the city's public realm is more important for children's civic lives than the presence of other people in the playground (See: 9.4.6). Although the presence of other people in the playground brought children into contact with the public realm, they still remained spatially confined and ideologically segregated. Transgressing the playground's physical space, however, children not only interacted with the public realm, but also actively claimed their space in it. I move away from the ideal of an intergenerational playground, towards a more straight-forward engagement of children with the city's civic life. I suggest that if architects want to support the creation of an inclusive, intergenerational playground we should direct our focus towards its surrounding space and its possibilities. A reconceptualization of the playground's spatiality is needed when discussing its Public Value. If the playground space remains a child-centred, child-friendly space emerging from children's

vulnerability, then the potential of design to support such a reconceptualization will be severely undermined. If, however, the designer approaches the playground not as a space-centred, but as play-centred entity – a Heterotopia of Resistance – and enhances its connections with the surrounding public, then a first step towards children's agency in the civic realm will have been made.

### **10.3.3 Oppressive or Liberating?**

Drawing upon the brothel paradigm (Heynen, 2008) and the different interpretations emerging from the literature review which describe the relative nature of heterotopia (See: 3.3.2), the question that emerged was:

Can a heterotopic space support both the oppression and liberation of the same subject?

Can the playground heterotopia be conceptualised as a space of both oppression and liberation for children?

Literature tends to approach the concept of heterotopia as either a situation of oppression (Venkatesan, 2009; Annist, 2013; Bristow, 2015; De Meulder, 1998; Cowherd, 2008) or liberation (McNamee, 2000; Lees, 1997; 2001; Allweil & Kallus, 2008; Genocchio, 1995; Soja 1996; Dehaene & De Cauter, 2008; Heynen, 2008). The playground space emerged in this study as being both. Although the Heterotopia of Deviance followed Foucault's definition of a purpose-created, institutionalised space, the other two expressions of heterotopia were the product of people's initiative, often supporting their subjects' agency in the public realm, and as such they were transgressive and liberating.

The playground was not defined merely by its difference (Foucault, 1998a) to adult public space and its classifications, but also by its potential to offer liberation and empowerment. The playground's difference and its protective character informed its function as a Heterotopia of Deviance; a top-down created spatiality. However, as I have already discussed, the concept of heterotopia is highly related to orderings of resistance and bottom-up processes. In this study, the framework of heterotopia was informed by the current literature, taking into account, but moving away from Foucault's' space-centred definition. Heterotopia emerged in this study as transgressing, negotiating and abolishing the existing orderings thereby enabling resistance to oppression by dominant power structures. Liberation here was not connected with an atomized understanding or an individual's experience but as a collective bottom-up action (See: 3.3.2).

To make this claim clear I discuss those studies which approach themed or gated communities as heterotopias based merely on their difference, while also making claims about their potential to support liberation (Hook & Vrdoljak 2002; Bartling, 2008; Low, 2008). The understanding of heterotopia developed here challenges this definition. Liberation or oppression may lie with the subject's experience (See: brothel paradigm (Heynen, 2008)), but both notions should be examined taking into account the wider dynamics they are placed within and affected by. Gated communities are a matter of choice for those who can afford them, and are for those usually involved in establishing the dominant structure. By contrast, heterotopia, as liberating emplaced practices, emerged in this study as in-between spaces that enabled subjects to claim their rights in the urban space, to exist in space and be visible. Resistance emerged in this study as a sum of social practices interacting with space and supporting agency. Heterotopias are therefore framed here as milieus supporting their subjects' agency and claims, rather than implementing the fantasies of the already empowered.

This study confirmed the playground's potential, expressed and realised through the act of play and went further to describe the ways this was realised through the playground as a heterotopia transformations. Play emerged as the activity that created alternate orderings, negotiating rules and practices. Similarly, intergenerational play created the possibility of changing the hierarchies between players (Edmiston, 2010, 2008; Gordon, 2009; Siyahhan, 2010; Zinsser, 1987) creating the conditions for the subjects' liberation from societal constraints. My findings suggest that children used unauthorized play in order to place themselves in roles with more power than the adults (Sutton-Smith, 1997; Richards, 2012). By doing so, the players experimented with reality and a variety of orderings (Larsen, 2015), rather than merely accepting what was considered "normal". Play reversed the symbols and meanings of spaces creating a variety of representational spaces (Lefebvre, 1991). Extending from the playground space, play engaged anyone it encountered who was willing to play, supporting publicness. It emerged as the force, discussed previously (See: 10.3.2), related to Public Value, as this emerged in both the Heterotopias of Transgression and Resistance.

However, it would be wrong to idealise play and handle it as a *deus ex machine*. A question emerges: what force could support a similar transformation to other types of heterotopic spaces of deviance? Loxham's (2013) study is informative. Loxham draws on the concept of heterotopia in order to examine the ways a public park was used during the nineteenth century in Preston to discipline the slum population through visibility and self-regulation. He argues that the park was used both as a site of oppression and liberation for its users:

Despite an intended discipline, the ordering here differed from that of normal society and paradoxically an unintended freedom to indulge in otherwise forbidden acts was provided (p.566).

Although Loxham does not use my terminology of deviance, transgression and resistance, in both studies, the subjects' heterotopia, intended to discipline, was also appropriated and transformed into a site of resistance. In both studies, the alternate orderings of the purpose-centred, oppressive heterotopia, coming in contrast with society's normative practices, fostered alternate orderings that empowered their subjects.

An answer to this question could be structured around space. Although I have examined the playground's relations with the surrounding public, this public's spatial characteristics were not foreseen as a factor regulating these relations. It was not only play's expressions, transgressions and interpretations that created the alternate orderings: it was play's interaction with the physical space that made the implementation of these orderings feasible. Play's interpretation of space and the new semantics it proposed in the city's public space, structured it as a liberating force. Play emerged as the result of perceived possibilities in the physical space. It manipulated space and orderings, disturbing the everyday rather than just proposing a series of imaginary – and as such unthreatening – places. Affordances have already been discussed for their ability to propose new classifications and uses of the physical space (See: 9.2.3). Affordances in the urban space, and more specifically in the three piazzas, acted as an extension of the playgrounds' play-equipment, supporting playful behaviour and extending play to the public space. At the same time, indeterminate spaces were open to a variety of interpretations. As a result, although play acted as a transgressing force, forming inclusive and liberating milieus in all three cases, each case's spatialities informed different socio-spatial situations in the piazza.

## **10.4 Contribution to Knowledge**

### **10.4.1 Key Finding**

This study drew from the fields of heterotopia theory, architectural theory, human geography, childhood studies and play studies in order to cut across the literature, examine its subject holistically and contribute to both theory and practice. Most specifically it contributes to the fields of Heterotopia studies, Architectural theory



and Social Studies of Childhood, while it has practical implications for play practice and urban design.

The central contribution of this study is the finding that the playground space catalyses unrestricted, intergenerational play outside its limits, bearing a Public Value that is not dependent on its fenced spatiality. Issues raised through this research contribute to the broader debate about how to support play and interaction in public space, as well as how to support socialising and public interaction in the playground space. The majority of existing literature reads the playground space as a play-accommodating, self-contained structure. Within this study, I unravelled relations, interactions and connections with the playground's socio-spatial surroundings. I was not interested in the playground's design, as such, but more interested in how space converses with people's actions; how people's actions make architecture and create reality. Rather than focusing on the types of play that the playground supported, I approached play through its potential to structure orderings and inform resistance.

#### **10.4.2 Play, Public space, Architecture and the Playground**

Identifying a gap in the literature, engaging either with play in the playground or with play in public space, this study brought together play, public space and the playground. The finding that the playground space itself supported the extension of play and playful behaviour outside its limits offers an important contribution in the field of play theory and can inform play practice. The playground did not emerge as a segregated space, but as part of a network including different uses and spatialities. As research on playgrounds' connections with their surroundings is limited, this study contributes by building understanding of the nature of those connections. Moreover, it adds to the literature about children's experiences in public space, suggesting that play is a central element in relevant interactions.

This study sets the question, what constitutes a play-space? It challenges the ideal of "child-friendly" spaces and proposes "all-ages friendly" play-complexes, characterised by their relations with their surroundings. The design of a play-space is therefore understood to regulate connections with other spaces and the adjacent space, rather than merely revolving around the play structures and materials. It is not within the intentions of this research to provide practitioners and urban designers with a set of guidelines to design and construct "play complexes". This action would reduce the richness of the argument to a mere list of actions contrasting with my understanding of heterotopias as collective, subject-initiated experiences. However, the argument is intended to prompt everyone interested in play in the urban landscape to reflect on play, space and the city as an assimilation and not as distinct elements

interacting with each other. The concept of Heterotopic Affordances therefore emerges as a way to frame the potential of physical propositions in the urban landscape.

### **10.4.3 Play, Making Architecture and Claiming One's Right to Space**

In the field of architectural theory this study contributes the concept of a space of resistance as an everyday practice; essentially inscribing continual and consistent reproduction of the space of resistance as a new everyday. It goes back to critical spatial practice theory/architectural theory where architecture is understood as everyday practice (See: 2.3.1). Play was the necessary element in reproducing space, while spatial affordances allowed it to extend towards the public space. The making of architecture informed a collective re-appropriation of space. The new situation that was created, informed relations with the space, co-authoring a new everyday without acquiring new normative characteristics.

Drawing on children's geographies, this study argues for the need to familiarize the public with children as much as introducing children to the public. In the field, the spatial and the social alternate orderings were sustained where children's play and other practices were tolerated and accepted. As such, this study proposes a reconceptualization of the intergenerational, not as a condition of co-existence, but as a condition of shared agency: a co-authoring of both social and spatial identities that cannot be examined without taking space into account. It suggests a combination of both intergenerational and more-than-human approaches (Allin et al. 2014; Bennet et al., 2012; Bunnell, 2012; Cole-Hamilton & Gill, 2002; Galani, 2011; Ingold, 2017; Jansson, 2008; Sutton-Smith, 1990; Solomon, 2005; Tovey, 2007) to better understand the socio-spatial reality of the everyday.

### **10.4.4 Heterotopia, Public Space and the Playground**

The initial readings suggested that there is a substantial gap in existing literature in both engaging with heterotopia's relative status<sup>55</sup> and in placing heterotopia in the playground space. Studies on children's heterotopias are limited and often do not engage with space. This study used the concept of heterotopia as a lens to approach space and, more specifically, public play-spaces. It examined playground as a heterotopia, not only through its difference and alternate orderings, as is the case with existing studies, but also focusing on its opening and closing mechanisms, connection and interactions with its surroundings.

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<sup>55</sup> or interaction with its surroundings

A key contribution is the notion of the Sequential Heterotopia. The playground as a heterotopia manifested in three different ways, each characterised by its own orderings. These three did not emerge independently from one another, rather each one informed and facilitated the following, succeeding or co-existing and interacting with the rest.

In this study, directed by my architectural background, I reconceptualised heterotopia as always emplaced. Recognising some extreme exception paradigms used in the literature (Miller, 2015; Hjorth, 2005; Eaton, 2003; Sumara and Davis, 1999; McNamee, 2000; Bryant-Bertail, 2000; Meerzon, 2007; Somay, 1984; Gordon, 2003; Chung, 2012), I proposed heterotopias as spatial entities and introduced the concept of Heterotopic Affordances in order to connect heterotopia to physical space. This study adds to the field of heterotopia studies the finding that heterotopia converses with physical space rather than taking place *in* it. As such, it always interacts with space but is not always defined and bounded by it. I introduced the notion of Heterotopic Affordances, spatial elements and characteristics that support the formation of alternate orderings. Approaching space as part of heterotopia's interaction with space, rather than its context, I draw connections between heterotopia and architectural theory.

I also introduced the notion of "everyday heterotopias", heterotopias taking place in the everyday, informing people's lives rather than one-time events. Everyday heterotopias include the element of the familiar and the repeated, rather than the exception and the festival.

Finally, this study contributes to the discussion around the liberating or oppressive nature of heterotopias. It suggests that the same heterotopia has the potential to be both when referring to the same subject and recognises the force of play as an important factor in realising this possibility.

#### **10.4.5 Public Space, Childhood and the Playground Space in Athens**

Playground spaces in Greece are very important for families' everyday lives, but have nevertheless been under-researched. This study does not fill the large existing gap but is a solid first step towards examining and discussing children's play and children's presence in Greek public space, as well as children's everyday lives in Greece. This examination of the Athenian public playground as a heterotopic space and of its connections to surrounding public space offers a unique contribution to the field, including relevant Greek literature.

At the same time, this study challenged the existing notions of intergenerational interaction in the public realm and proposed intergenerationality, not as a way to bridge difference, but as a way to co-author identities focusing on similarities.

## **10.5 Reflection**

Ethnography was adopted in this study for its relevance and appropriateness in exploring practices, processes, social meaning and interactions. As a context-sensitive methodology, it allowed me to limit the potential intrusiveness of the research formalities in a children's public space, while managing the power relations that emerged, informing both the data and the data collection process. As a result, I consider it successful and appropriate for this study. However, the methods used, often created new anxieties in an already loaded field. I have explored the challenges I faced during fieldwork in the methodology chapter (See: 4.4). These were focused on the obstacles created in the research process and how they affected my methodology. Recognising that the researcher is the main tool for data collection in ethnographic fieldwork – often affecting the data collected through his/her decisions and positionality – I consider it important to focus on myself during the research process.

### **10.5.1 The Researcher Me**

The “researcher me” was flexible, trying to keep everything in balance and the research process going. I was negotiating with the participants, dealing with the problems that occurred. As the sole person leading this research, I often got overwhelmed with the volume of data in the field at each given time. Trying to capture the plurality of the field, I found myself filing notebooks and papers, which made analysis complex and time-consuming. By the end of fieldwork, I returned to focus on the research questions (See: 4.5.2) engaging with the different themes that emerged.

A common question from my friends during these three years was: ‘So do you actually play?’ Well, I wanted to play and participate in play. However, it was made very clear from the very first visits in the field that this would not be possible. Both practical and social reasons (See: Chapter 6) prevented me from engaging in any playful behaviour. My researcher self was trying to accommodate tensions and be professional and effective. As time passed, I became so sensitive and ethics-obsessed in my

involvement with the playground space and its dynamics that I would not<sup>56</sup> photograph or play in a playground space.

The obstacles and the ways I overcame them were an integral part of this research. They affected my data, my position in the field, the interactions and relations I formed with the participants, the analysis, even the writing of this thesis. At the same time, however, they allowed me to reflect on the various issues occurring during ethnographic research and place myself as an integral part of this process structuring a better understanding of the field.

Moreover, I often found myself in the middle of tension between the participants when someone commented negatively about the other. On the one hand, this provided me with interesting and valuable insights in the everyday tensions and perceptions about participants. On the other hand, however, it made it difficult for me to negotiate my positionality in the field. I had to manage these “friendships” so as to not be seen as “taking sides”. At the same time, I was really conscious of and critical about these opinions, ready to discern if they revealed just the tensions between unfriendly neighbours, or broader socio-cultural dynamics in the playground space. Furthermore, my research and personal morals did not allow me to ask for further explanation of these instances. Although curious, I avoided addressing the participants’ personal lives in all instances.

I often struggled with my position in the field, but not in terms of my positionality. Ethical dilemmas emerged constantly. Should I intervene to prevent an accident about to take place? Should I bring children playing near the street to a safer space? What is my stance when a guardian beats a child? Should I show my disapproval when participants made racist comments? In the end, what was my responsibility as a person and as an academic when in the field? I still do not have definitive answers for these questions. I am confident, however, about the way I handled such incidents: intervening and helping guardians and children when it was needed, but not disrupting play. Reflecting on my reactions and my approach on notions such as safe, proper, dangerous. Finally, I always uttered my opinion to counteract racist comments, but was careful not to create conflict. This is a conscious decision I have made with myself over the last years. In a public realm where austerity and racism is rising, people uttering sexist and racist comments is a common occurrence. Often, other people overhearing such conversations step in to agree and support these opinions. I believe that my position as a woman academic demands that I present a different narrative so that the offensive narrative will not be the only one heard in the public realm. Once again, the

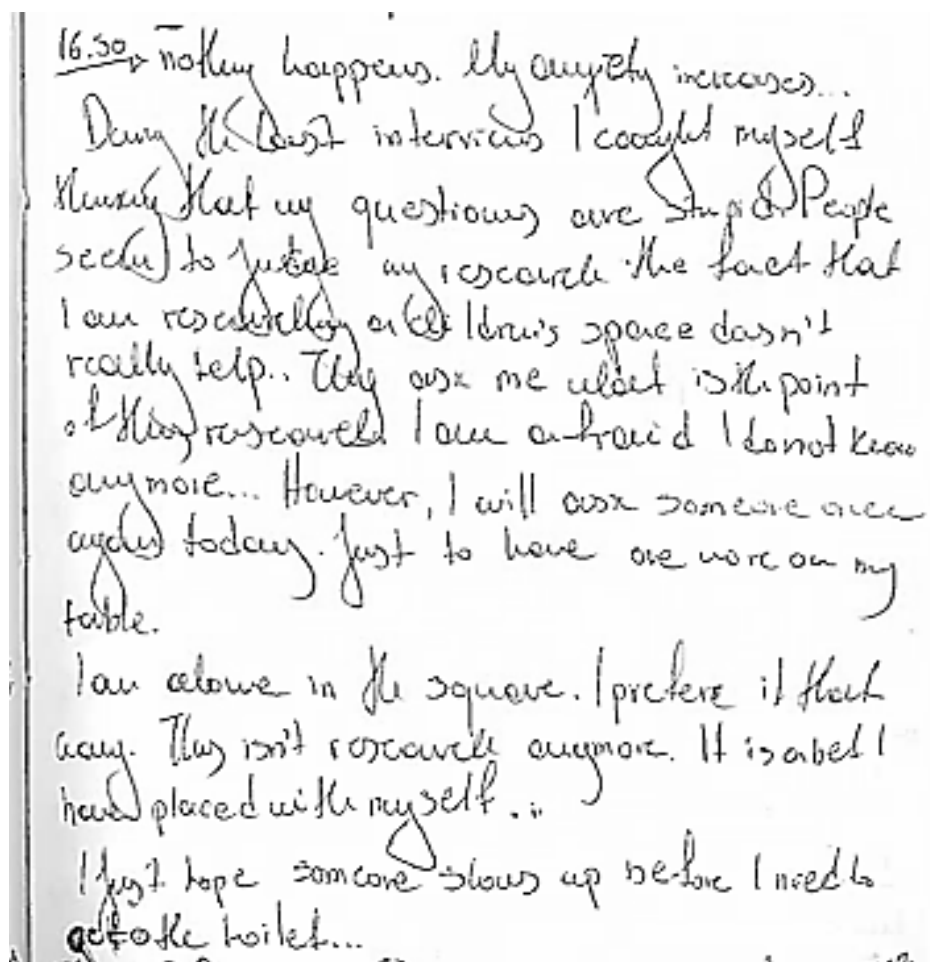
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<sup>56</sup> and even many months after completing the fieldwork

concept of visibility, as examined previously, emerges as a way to claim ones rights. Reflecting on this, this decision may have informed my interactions with some participants but did not affect or hinder my findings.

### 10.5.2 The Anxious Me

Positionality cannot frame all the challenges I had to deal with in the field. Apparently clear social categories the researcher is categorised into did not reflect the messy process of the research reality, nor the relative status of my positionality. Many scholars have argued that emotions play an important role in the research process (Ball, 1990; Punch, 2012; Hubbard et al., 2001; Widdowfield, 2000; Moser, 2008; Wilkins, 1993; Blackman, 2007; England, 1994; Bondi, 2005). As a person with generalised anxiety, I could not omit from this reflection how this trait affected my research.



16.30 → nothing happens. My anxiety increases...  
During the last interview I caught myself  
thinking that my questions are stupid. People  
seem to judge my research. The fact that  
I am researching in this space doesn't  
really help. They ask me what is the point  
of this research. I am afraid I do not know  
anymore... However, I will ask someone once  
again today. Just to have one more on my  
table.  
I am alone in the square. I prefer it that  
way. They don't research anymore. It is a bit  
hard placed with myself...  
I just hope someone shows up before I need to  
go to the toilet...

Figure 10-1: Field-notes – Self-reflecting abstract

Literature has characterised fieldwork as 'solitary agony' (Ball, 1990p.169), 'intense emotional process' (Punch, 2012, p.87). Many researchers have proposed

possible solutions to 'endure the fieldwork' (Punch, 2012, p.91). The use of a field diary (Punch, 2012) that would include the researcher's fears and concerns, informal support by friends (Widdowfield, 2000), cooling-off periods in the middle of the fieldwork periods, formal counselling, or just sharing the research concerns with the participants themselves (Punch, 2012) were some of the tactics I used.

On the one hand, my emotions often led to ethical dilemmas, paralysis, demoralisation and even the abrupt interruption of the research (Figure 10-1). The feelings of dread never ended, while feelings of achievement were short-lived. Any indication of possible conflict of interests with the participants, even their disparaging remarks about my research and me, filled me with stress and fear.

On the other hand, acknowledging that my personal limitations and emotions affected, if not informed, my research, I managed to overcome them, recognising my limits and often pushing myself further. The anxious me struggled with all the different stimuli, but was ready to engage with what was taking place in the field. I was out there, engaging with and interpreting behaviours, observations and feelings at many different levels. At the same time, going through a professional psychotherapy process, I was aware of my limitations and managed to limit any biases; reflecting and refraining from characterising and personalising incidents and interactions allowed me a clear gaze through which I could approach the field. Iterative reflexivity was an important ingredient in informing the methodology and methods throughout. Reflecting on my feelings of anxiety when entering the playground space, allowed me not only to interpret but also to experience the field. I was highly sensitive to any stimuli, to the participants' glances and body language, to their intentions before they even were expressed. I was able to distinguish the fine, covert dynamics between people and had an increased level of empathy to their feelings and reactions. This allowed me to structure a clear understanding of the dynamics and unspoken tensions in the field. In this regard, the question 'What have I gained as an individual from this research?' (Skelton, 2001, p.95) bears quite an extended answer and could not be possibly be explored in the limited space of this chapter.

### **10.5.3 Me as Other**

Finally, I place my experience back in the field of the playground space as a Heterotopia of Deviance. The playground is structured as a space with strictly prescribed use and safety standards, intended for a specific group of users. I, not ascribing to this group, had to constantly negotiate and justify my presence in the space. I have already examined how I managed the issues of positionality, access and consent. The reluctance of people to engage with a stranger and the need to justify and



monitor my presence in the playground was itself part of the data collected. Here I just want to focus to the fact that my status as “other”, affected my research process, while at the same time informed my data, intermingling process and product, researcher and participants.

I used my own positionality in order to test the field, intentionally or unexpectedly. Being an adult who was not accompanying children in the playground space, instigated behaviours and discussions that revealed the patterns that regulated the playgrounds’ Public Value. I often wondered, when researching access to the playground space, who plays the role of the gatekeeper in this space? There did not seem to be an individual gatekeeper, but more of a group of perceptions considered as self-evident. Guardians were vigilant to exclude or welcome outsiders, but they acted more on a self-directed initiative.

The unusual aspect that emerged in this study was that the researcher was not just part of the field, rather was one of the subjects she was called to research. On the one hand, I was interested in how “othering” is constructed in the playground space and the ways the other interacts with the space and the participants. On the other hand, I was this “other” myself and had the chance to experience “first hand” these processes. Balancing on a line between “other” and professional, I experienced the othering mechanisms described in the findings (See: 6.4.2). This situation supported an iterative process of reflection – an important tool throughout this research.

## **10.6 Limitations and Further Research**

### **10.6.1 The Public Space Field**

Along with the limitations and difficulties encountered during fieldwork (See: 4.5) I am going to focus a little more on the broader difficulties and limitations I encountered, while conducting this study.

This study, taking place in a public space, was complicated by the various tensions, conflicts and hierarchies weaving the public realm. Urban public spaces were a challenging field in which to work. The public space context accommodated a ‘shifting, heterogeneous, ill-defined population’ (Angrosino, 2007, p.61) that did not allow strong relations to form between the researcher and the participants, while affecting the length of time participants were willing to engage with the research process. The fact that the, in many cases, fragmentary interaction with the participants did not allow long-lasting relations to form, has certainly affected the research process

and the data collected. Moreover, valuable time was lost by having to negotiate access and inform the participants about the research repeatedly.

Lack of privacy should also be stressed as a factor affecting people's responses. People often repeated the opinions they felt were expected of them, conscious that they were overheard, in some cases even contradicting themselves. In these cases I was ready to point out the contradiction and asked for further clarification. This tactic allowed me to further explore what participants believed and to distinguish this from the easily uttered, commonly accepted stances.

At the same time, the lack of archival material on the specific case studies and the broader lack of research in similar contexts in Athens and in Greece in general, did not allow me to draw connecting lines to broader structures and similar cases. This research aspires to be one of the first that will expand knowledge of children's play in the urban landscape of Athens. Therefore, further research could be carried out in further playgrounds from different areas of the city or in other cities.

Moreover, my research focused only on the playground space and described its function and interaction with the adjacent spaces. I did not address the subject of play and play-spaces in the crisis landscape. Further studies could revolve around play in the city rather than the playground. What other spaces accommodate play in the context of the crisis and what kind of dynamics do they foster?

### **10.6.2 Sample**

My findings are not population-specific, rather my sample was constantly changing. This research did not examine specific participants' behaviours in the field according to age, culture, gender etc., but rather tried to examine the social practices and dynamics as they emerged from everyday interactions. Although I was able to distinguish broad patterns<sup>57</sup>, I cannot claim clear correlations between participants' characteristics and the conditions in the field. Further research is needed in order to focus on how each of these characteristics structured the experiences of public space for each participant and the public realm. Does a participant's gender or minority group affect the ways they claimed space and engaged with the affordances? Was there any difference between the normative practices and the transgressive ones according to user group?

Although I observed and talked to adults using the playground space when it was empty of children, I could not examine the playground's manifestations during its

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<sup>57</sup> For example it appeared that unemployed people stayed longer in the field; mostly young fathers played with the children

after-hours use. Health and safety reasons limited this research to examining the field only during the daytime and early night-time. Further research could revolve around the playground space and examine all its different identities without focusing only on its use by children.

### **10.6.3 Unaccompanied Children**

Children commuting to and from the playground, as well as those using the playground space alone were of special interest. Their behaviours and perceptions could contribute in shaping clearer understandings of behaviour and social interaction in the playground and piazza when parental control was absent. In this research, the children were perceived as capable social actors able to make their own decisions and negotiate claims and power. However, as the Northumbria University ethics committee did not allow me to approach unaccompanied children, I had to exclude them from my sample. I could only observe their actions in the playground space without initiating any interaction. Although I agree that every precaution should be taken to protect specific groups of subjects during the research process, I argue against academia's tendency to marginalise people, excluding their voices from the research. As Skelton argues, 'sometimes the protection is more about protecting the researcher and the research institution than protecting the child, and in the process may exclude children from expressing their views' (2008, in Aitken & Herman, 2009, p.21). It would be informative if future research was to include the accounts of these children to offer a more complete picture of the field.

### **10.6.4 Reflections on Theoretical Framework**

The concept of heterotopia, framing and informing this study proved to be a valuable tool to talk through conditions and expressions of the field that are not fixed, but are constantly changing. It allowed me to describe different socio-cultural formulations manifesting as different co-existent realities in the same physical space. Moreover, heterotopia supported approaching the playground as a central space for marginal subjects, empowered rather than restricted by this contradictory status. The concept of heterotopia, fluid and vastly interpreted in the literature, engaged with the complexity of possibility in the playground space and allowed me to examine the interplay of different orderings and expectations, while drawing connections between spaces of representation and their representational identities. A process rather than a structure itself, heterotopia, framed each case study as an individual, although placed in a broader context, bearing its own characteristics and affected by social forces. The

framing of heterotopia allowed the interrelation of scales, physical space and social practices. Further research could be conducted under different theoretical frameworks in the same socio-economical context, such as Feminist theory in the context of crisis.

#### **10.6.5 Method Flexibility**

My experience suggests that flexibility, critical assessment of the field, reflexivity and self-knowledge are the four tools for a successful ethnographic research. There is potential for further research engaging with a variety of methods engaging even more with flexibility and experimentation through a variety of means.

#### **10.6.6 The One-Person Study**

Time constraints informed a great part of this study. The time available for conducting ethnographic fieldwork as a PhD student is very limited, in some cases inadequate. My three-year course combined with the playgrounds in Greece being used only during the spring and summer months did not allow me more extended fieldwork periods. I believe that a more extended engagement with the field could overcome some of the limitations the public character of the field caused, through constant interaction over the years, with the participants.

Moreover, I was already self-conscious and uncomfortable and I did not feel I could organise and execute a workshop on my own. Future approaches could include a more hand's-on approach to the methods. Participatory research was not employed in this study as it was considered intrusive to the field being observed. However, this could potentially bring to light different dynamics and tensions.

Reflecting back on my case studies, I believe that they were chosen wisely. Although it is difficult to differentiate socio-economic areas in Athens, their identities emerged as expected, confirming both my previous experience of them and the broader stereotypes. Although the initial plan was to research more case studies, the lack of resources and the time constraints limited them to three. This smaller sample was thought to allow a more comprehensive and trustworthy view of the playground phenomenon. I suggest, however, that a more extended number of cases could help verify my findings and possibly propose a generalisation, taking into account the peculiarities and the uniqueness of each case study.

#### **10.6.7 The Crisis**

Although the crisis context in this research has been approached so far as bearing positive connotations affecting people's presence and claims in the public

space, it may have also posed limitations. As some of the participants noted, when someone is in a dire financial state, there is the chance that they will refrain from even visiting the piazza to avoid spending money in the kiosk or the other shops surrounding the piazzas. They often stressed children as a pressure factor, not being able to control them when they wanted to buy something, or feeling embarrassed in relation to the other guardians. Although there is no way to measure this phenomenon, I am aware that my research has left it unexplored.

At the same time, the ages of the participants rarely allow comparisons with the past and with the period before the crisis. As Austerity has become the reality for a decade now, 'a new everyday' (Athanasίου, 2014, p.73; Christopoulos, 2014, p.65; Makrygianni, 2015, p.161), people that are currently parents of young children did not have any experience of the conditions in the playgrounds before 2008. I collected this kind of data from older guardians like relatives or grandparents or other people in the field. Further research could focus on recruiting older participants from the neighbourhood – rather than from the playgrounds – or those who frequented the playgrounds prior to 2008, either as guardians or as children.

#### **10.6.8 Ag. Panteleimonas**

When structuring this research, the selected case studies included a playground in an area with harsh economic conditions and constant cultural tensions - Ag. Panteleimonas. The tensions between far-right groups and citizens attempting to claim the playground made this playground an interesting example of the dynamics in the public space of austerity. However, the resurgence of turbulence in the area during my fieldwork periods made me uneasy and scared to be in the area after dark. This condition along with practical difficulties, such as commuting, made me replace this case study. Although my case studies were not characterised by a homogenous population, the majority of participants were white and the immigrants had been in Greece for many years. In Ag. Panteleimonas, the population is by contrast mostly newly arrived, low income immigrants. It would be interesting to examine the dynamics of heterotopia in similar contexts. Is there a Heterotopia of Resistance formed there and if so, how does it interact with the contested public space? How do race and culture affect the tensions I encountered and structure the heterotopia's everyday life?

#### **10.6.9 Comparative**

This study did not intend to compare the Greek situation with the UK or other countries. Further research could include comparative studies, not only with other cities

in Greece but also other countries that suffer the results of economic austerity or conflict arising from other variables. Further research in the global north countries could also draw lines between different cultural contexts, austerity or conflict arising from other variables. Further research in the northern countries could also draw lines between different cultural contexts.

## **10.7 Summary**

The playground's Public Value emerged as a transferable quality, not confined by space. Whereas the Public Value in the playground enclave was limited, restricted by the physical and social opening and closing mechanisms, the Public Value of the Heterotopia of Resistance was increased, informing an intergenerational public realm. As the playground enclave and its alternate orderings were what informed the Heterotopia of Resistance, we cannot examine the play island's Public Value separately from the playground space. Rather, what this study has argued is that the playground space has the potential to support a public realm with increased Public Value, while retaining the playground's enclave character. The opening and closing mechanisms were different in each heterotopia, informing the interactions and access in each one. Play emerged as the force creating the alternate orderings, which created the Heterotopia of Transgression and the Heterotopia of Resistance space and its affordances allowed the extension of play's orderings to the public realm. The playground emerged as a complex space: it was created as an institutionalised enclave but evolved into an empowering milieu, making architecture and supporting both children's and adults' claims to the city.





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# Appendix A

## 1. Consent Form

### Consent Form – Greek

<p><b>Δήλωση συνειδητής συμμετοχής/συμ- μετοχής στην έρευνα</b></p> <p>Βεβαιώνω ότι: Έχω ενημερωθεί σχετικά με αυτό το ερευνητικό έργο και το σκοπό του και συμφωνώ να συμμετάσχω <input type="checkbox"/> ναι <input type="checkbox"/> όχι</p> <p>Έχω ενόψει το ερευνητικό έργο με το παρόν μου και έχω δώσει την άδω- ση μου να χρησιμοποιηθεί <input type="checkbox"/> ναι <input type="checkbox"/> όχι</p> <p>Έχω ενόψει απαιτήσεις απώλειας σχετικά με την ανωνυμία ή το απόρρητο με την ερευνητική <input type="checkbox"/> ναι <input type="checkbox"/> όχι</p> <p>Συμφωνώ να υπογράψω κατά τη διάρκεια της έρευνας <input type="checkbox"/> ναι <input type="checkbox"/> όχι</p>	 	<p>Υπογραφή..... Ημερομηνία.....</p>	<p>Όνομα συμμετέχοντος/συμ- μετοχής Email συμμετέχοντος/συμ- μετοχής</p>	<p><b>Δήλωση της ερευνητικής</b></p> <p>Έχω ενημερώσει τον/την συμμετέχοντα/ουσα σχετικά με την έρευνα και πιστεύω ότι καταλαβαίνει ή ζητείται από αυτόν/αυτή.</p> <p>Υπογραφή..... Ημερομηνία.....</p>	<p>Πανεπιστήμιο Άλντερνι <a href="mailto:ethos@northumbria.ac.uk">ethos@northumbria.ac.uk</a></p> <p>Το όραμα της ερευνητικής σε ένα τοπίο κρίσης: Μελετώντας το αγγλικό χαρακτήρα της παλαιάς χώρας στην Αθήνα. [The limits of heterotopia in a landscape of crisis: Examining the playground's 'public value' in contemporary Athens.]</p> <p>Διδακτορικό Διπλωμα Αρχιτεκτονικής Dr Rosie Parnell Dr Lesley McIntyre <a href="mailto:rosie.parnell@northumbria.ac.uk">rosie.parnell@northumbria.ac.uk</a> <a href="mailto:lesley.mcintyre@northumbria.ac.uk">lesley.mcintyre@northumbria.ac.uk</a></p>		
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#### Σύντομη περιγραφή της φύσης της έρευνας:

Η παιδική χαρά έχει μεγάλη σημασία όχι μόνο για τα παιδιά αλλά και για την κάθε μερική ζωή των γονιών. Η κοινωνική κρίση έχει επηρεάσει όχι μόνο το ίδιο το χώρα, αλλά και τη χρήση του και τις κοινωνικές σχέσεις που λαμβάνουν χώρα εκεί. Η έρευνα αυτή έχει ως στόχο να βοηθήσει στη καλύτερη κατανόηση του «δημόσιου χαρακτήρα» της Αθηνών παιδικής χαράς στο πλαίσιο της οικονομικής και κοινωνικής κρίσης, εξετάζοντας τους διαφορετικούς τρόπους που αυτή χρησιμοποιείται. Σε αυτό το πλαίσιο, ειδικού ενδιαφέροντος είναι η χρήση όσο και η κοινωνική υπόσταση της παιδικής χαράς καθώς και οι διαφορές παράγοντες που πιθανόν να επηρεάζουν τη λειτουργία της.

#### Η συμμετοχή σας:

Ενδιαφέρονται τόσο για τις δικές σας δράσεις, αλλά και πληροφορίες και ανέψεις στο χώρο της παιδικής χαράς και της πολιτικής όσο και του παιδιού σας. Θα ήθελα να συζητήσω μαζί σας για τις απόψεις αλλά και τις εμπειρίες σας σε αυτό το χώρο. Θα σας εγνώσω την έρευνά μου και θα απαντήσω σε οποιαδήποτε ερωτήσεις μπορεί να έχετε. Θα ήθελα να βεβαιωθείτε ότι έχετε συζητήσει την παρουσία έρευνα με το παιδί /α σας και ότι έχουν κατανοήσει πλήρως περί τίνος πρόκειται και έχουν συμφωνήσει και αυτά να συμμετάσχουν οικειοθελώς.

Αν συμφωνείτε, θα ηχογραφώ κάποιες από τις συζητήσεις μας για να θυμάμαι τι είπαμε αργότερα, όταν θα γράφω την εργασία μου. Μερικά αποσπάσματα μπορεί να χρησιμοποιηθούν στην τελική μου διατριβή ή σε άρθρα σχετικά με αυτή χωρίς να αναφέρεται το όνομά σας. Αυτές οι ηχογραφήσεις δεν θα χρησιμοποιηθούν για απονομή ποτα άλλο σκοπό.

Παρακαλώ να έχετε υπήλπιν σας πως η υπογραφή αυτής της δήλωσης ΔΕΝ υπονομεύει εσάς ή το παιδί σας να συνεχίσετε να συμμετέχετε στην έρευνα, αν αλλάξετε τη γνώμη σας για οποιοδήποτε λόγο κατά τη διάρκεια της. Μπορείτε να αποσυρθείτε από την έρευνα ανά πάσα στιγμή, χωρίς μόνο να μου το πείτε!



#### Αν συμφωνείτε να θέσετε να συμμετέχετε παρακαλώ υπογράψτε παρακάτω.

Το email μου μπορείτε να το βρείτε στην αρχή αυτής της σελίδας και πολύ ευχαρίστως θα απαντήσω σε οποιαδήποτε ερωτήσεις μπορεί να έχετε. Αν θέλετε να σας ενημερώσω για την πορεία αυτής της έρευνας, τυχόν άρθρα που θα δημοσιευτούν ή την τελική διατριβή παρακαλώ ζητήστε το μου χρησιμοποιώντας τη διεύθυνση email μου.

#### Ανώνυμία και απόρρητο:

Η ταυτότητα των συμμετεχόντων δεν θα προσδιορίζεται με οποιοδήποτε τρόπο. Η ανωνυμία θα εξασφαλιστεί με τη χρήση κωδικών ονομάτων. Δεν θα χρησιμοποιηθεί κανένα μέσο καταγραφής τυχόν, όπως φωτογραφίες ή βίντεο. Για την τήρηση του απορρήτου, καμία πληροφορία σχετικά με την έρευνα δεν θα δοθεί (τόσο προς τρίτους) και με ταξί των συμμετεχόντων της έρευνας αυτής.

#### Πώς θα χρησιμοποιηθούν οι πληροφορίες που παρέχετε;

Αυτή είναι μια έρευνα που οδηγεί σε διδακτορική διατριβή. Όλα τα αντίγραφα των ανώνυμων δεδομένων που θα συλλεχθούν θα διαστρεφθούν από την επιβλέπουσα καθηγήτριά μου, Δρ. Rosie Parnell, για μελλοντική έρευνα και δεν θα δοθούν σε οποιοδήποτε τρίτο εκτός του Πανεπιστημίου Northumbria. Τα δεδομένα που συλλέγονται θα χρησιμοποιηθούν μόνο σε ανώνυμη μορφή για τη συγγραφή της διατριβής μου και σε άλλα έγγραφα σχετικά με το ανανεώσιμο αυτής της εργασίας.



## Consent Form – English Translation



Faculty of Engineering and Environment

### RESEARCH PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Name of participant (Parent/Carer)	
Name of participant (child)	
Researcher's name	<i>Pitsikali Alkistis</i>
Researcher's email	<i>alkistis.pitsikali@northumbria.ac.uk</i>
Title of research project/dissertation	<i>The limits of heterotopia in a landscape of crisis. Examining the playground's 'public value' in contemporary Athens.</i>
Programme of study	<i>PhD in Architecture</i>
Supervisor's name	<i>Dr Rosie Parnell</i>
Supervisor's email	<i>rosie.parnell@northumbria.ac.uk</i>

#### Brief description of nature of research:

The public playground is of great importance not only for children but also for parents' everyday life. The economic crisis has affected not only the space itself but also its use and the social relations taking place there. This research aims to understand the Athenian playground's 'public value' in the context of crisis by examining the playground and the various ways this is used. Both the social and the spatial context that influence the playground's function will be examined.

#### Involvement of participant:

I am interested on your and your child's actions, interactions and perceptions on the playground and in the surrounding public space. I will chat with you about your perceptions and experiences of the Athenian playgrounds and public space.

I will explain the research and answer any questions you may have. You should make sure that you have discussed the research project with your child/ren and that they have completely understood and have agreed to participate. I will not involve in the research any children for whom there are doubts about their willingness to participate although they may have given their consent when asked.

If you agree, I will record some conversations to help me remember these later in the analysis. These recordings will not be used for any other purpose. Some quotes may be used in my final thesis.

**However if, for any reason, you feel uneasy by my presence at any time you should immediately let me know. You can withdraw at any given time by just informing me.** If you wish the already collected data that affect you to not be included in the research or to be destroyed I will do so. **Please note that signing this form doesn't oblige you or your child to continue participating if you or your child don't want to do so for any reason.**

If you agree to be recorded please sign below.

My email is included in this form and I would be happy to answer any questions. If you wish to stay informed for the process of this research any papers published concerning this research, the final thesis or just to receive feedback please let me know using the email provided.

*I will be happy to answer all your questions about this project at any given time!*

**Anonymity and confidentiality**

Participants will not be identified in any way. Anonymity will be ensured by using code names. No visual recordings, such as photos, of participants are going to be used. Confidentiality will be ensured by not disseminating any information to third parties or between the participants of this research.

**What will happen to the information you provide?**

This is a research leading to a PhD thesis.

Any copies of the anonymized data collected will be kept by my principal supervisor, Dr Rosie Parnell, for future research and will not be given to any third party outside Northumbria University. The data collected will be used only in anonymised form in the writing of my thesis and other papers relative to this research's subject.

For any complaints please contact my supervisors

Dr Rosie Parnell ([rosie.parnell@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:rosie.parnell@northumbria.ac.uk))

Dr Lesley McIntyre ([lesley.mcintyre@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:lesley.mcintyre@northumbria.ac.uk))

Standard statement of participant consent (please tick as appropriate)

I confirm that:	Yes	No
I have been briefed about this research project and its purpose and agree to participate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have discussed the research project with my child/ren and they have agreed to participate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have discussed any requirement for anonymity or confidentiality with the researcher*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I agree to be audio recorded	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**\*Specific requirements for anonymity, confidentiality, data storage, retention and destruction**

Signed ..... Date .....

**Standard statement by researcher**

I have provided information about the research to the research participant and believe that he/she understands what is involved.



Researcher's signature .....  
Date .....



## 2. Information Sheet

### Information Sheet – Greek



	<p><b>ΔΙΔΑΚΤΗΡΙΟ ΤΗΣ ΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΗΣ</b></p> <p>Εγώ υπογράφω, να μην αποκαταγράψω, να μην αντιγράψω με την ηλεκτρονική μορφή          ή να κοινοποιήσω ή να διανείμω την διδασκαλία</p> <p>Υπογραφή.....Ημερομηνία.....</p>	<p>Όνομα επωνυμία          Email επωνυμία</p> <p>Τίτλος διδασκαλίας          διαγλώσσας</p> <p>Επίθετο αποστολέα          Email αποστολέα          Email επικοινωνίας          Email επιμέλειας</p>	<p>Πανεπιστήμιο Αλμάνιας  <a href="mailto:almanias@northumbria.ac.uk">almanias@northumbria.ac.uk</a></p> <p>Το όνομα της επωνυμίας σε ένα κομμάτι κλειστής          Μελάνης, το αλφάβητο χρησιμοποιεί τις          κοινές γλώσσες στην Αγγλία. (The letter of          alphabet is a language of signs. Examining the          alphabet's "public value" in contemporary Britain.)</p> <p>Διδασκαλία διδασκαλίας Αγγλίστικων          Dr Rosie Pymmet          Dr Lesley McIntyre  <a href="mailto:rosie.pymmet@northumbria.ac.uk">rosie.pymmet@northumbria.ac.uk</a>  <a href="mailto:lesley.mcintyre@northumbria.ac.uk">lesley.mcintyre@northumbria.ac.uk</a></p>
	<p></p> <p></p> <p>Όνομα          επωνυμίας/τομέας</p>		



### Σύντομη περιγραφή της φύσης της έρευνας:

Η παιδική χαρά θα αποτελέσει σημαντικό όχημα για τα παιδιά αλλά και για την οικογένειά τους. Η παιδική χαρά είναι ένας χώρος όπου οι γονείς μπορούν να περάσουν χρόνο με τα παιδιά τους και να τους βοηθήσουν να αναπτύξουν τις δεξιότητές τους. Η έρευνα αυτή είναι ως στόχος να βοηθήσει στη καλύτερη κατανόηση του παιδικού παιχνιδιού και της λειτουργίας της παιδικής χαράς στο πλαίσιο της κοινωνικής και κοινωνικής ανάπτυξης. Εξετάζοντας τους διαφορετικούς τρόπους που οι γονείς χρησιμοποιούν σε αυτό το πλαίσιο, καθώς και να βοηθήσουν στην ανάπτυξη της παιδικής χαράς καθώς και να βοηθήσουν στην ανάπτυξη της παιδικής χαράς.

### Μεθοδολογία

Ενδεικτικά, τόσο για τις δικές σας έρευνες, όσο και για την παιδική χαρά, η έρευνα αυτή θα είναι η πρώτη έρευνα. Τα αποτελέσματα της έρευνας θα βοηθήσουν στην κατανόηση της παιδικής χαράς αλλά και το πόσο σημαντικό είναι να βοηθήσουν στην ανάπτυξη της παιδικής χαράς. Η έρευνα αυτή είναι ως στόχος να βοηθήσει στην κατανόηση της παιδικής χαράς και να βοηθήσουν στην ανάπτυξη της παιδικής χαράς.

Μην διστάσετε να μου μιλήσετε! Η συνεισφορά σας, οι απόψεις σας και οι εμπειρίες σας θα είναι πολύτιμες για την έρευνά μου.



Το email μου μπορεί να τη βρείτε στην αρχή αυτής της φόρμας και ποσό επιπλέον θα απαντήσω σε οποιαδήποτε ερωτήσεις μπορεί να έχετε. Αν θέλετε να με ενημερώσετε για την κυρία μου, την έρευνά μου, ή την έρευνά μου θα δημοσιεύσω ή την πλάτη διατηρείται αποκλειστικά (ήδη) το μου χρησιμοποιώ όπως θέλω.

Με μεγάλη μου χαρά θα απαντήσω σε όλες τις ερωτήσεις σας σχετικά με αυτήν την έρευνά!

### Αντικείμενο και στόχοι:

Η παιδική χαρά είναι σημαντικό όχημα για την ανάπτυξη των παιδιών. Η έρευνα αυτή θα είναι η πρώτη έρευνα. Τα αποτελέσματα της έρευνας θα βοηθήσουν στην κατανόηση της παιδικής χαράς αλλά και το πόσο σημαντικό είναι να βοηθήσουν στην ανάπτυξη της παιδικής χαράς. Η έρευνα αυτή είναι ως στόχος να βοηθήσει στην κατανόηση της παιδικής χαράς και να βοηθήσουν στην ανάπτυξη της παιδικής χαράς.

### Πώς θα χρησιμοποιηθούν οι πληροφορίες που συλλέγονται;

Αυτή είναι μια έρευνα που οδηγεί σε όλα τα αποτελέσματα. Τα αποτελέσματα της έρευνας θα χρησιμοποιηθούν για να βοηθήσουν στην κατανόηση της παιδικής χαράς. Τα αποτελέσματα της έρευνας θα χρησιμοποιηθούν για να βοηθήσουν στην κατανόηση της παιδικής χαράς. Τα αποτελέσματα της έρευνας θα χρησιμοποιηθούν για να βοηθήσουν στην κατανόηση της παιδικής χαράς.



## Information Sheet – English Translation



Faculty of Engineering and Environment

### Information Sheet

Researcher's name	<i>Pitsikali Alkistis</i>
Researcher's email	<i>alkistis.pitsikali@northumbria.ac.uk</i>
Title of research project/dissertation	<i>The boundaries of heterotopia in a landscape of crisis. Examining the playground's 'public value' in contemporary Athens.</i>
Programme of study	<i>PhD in Architecture</i>
Supervisor's name	<i>Dr Rosie Parnell</i>
Supervisor's email	<i>rosie.parnell@northumbria.ac.uk</i>

#### Brief description of nature of research:

The public playground is of great importance not only for children but also for parents' everyday life. The economic crisis has affected not only the space itself but also its use and the social relations taking place there. This research aims to understand the Athenian playground's 'public value' in the context of crisis by examining the playground, the various ways this is used and its connection to the public space. Both the social and the spatial context that influence the playground's function will be examined.

#### Involvement of participant:

I am interested on playground's user's actions, interactions and perceptions on the playground and in the surrounding public space. I discreetly observe the space and keep notes about people's use of space and interactions with others without intervening.

My email is included in this form and I would be happy to answer any questions. If you wish to stay informed for the process of this research any papers published concerning this research, the final thesis or just to receive feedback please let me know using the email provided.

*I would be happy to answer all your questions about this project at any given time!*

#### Anonymity and confidentiality

Participants will not be identified in any way. Anonymity is ensured by using code names. No visual recordings, such as photos, of participants are going to be used. Confidentiality will be ensured by not disseminating any information to third parties or between the participants of this research.

#### What will happen to the information you provide?

This is a research leading to a PhD thesis.

Any copies of the anonymized data collected will be kept by my principal supervisor, Dr Rosie Parnell, for future research and will not be given to any third party outside Northumbria University. The data collected will be used only in anonymised form in the writing of my thesis and other papers relative to this research's subject.

For any complaints please contact my supervisors

Dr Rosie Parnell ([rosie.parnell@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:rosie.parnell@northumbria.ac.uk))

Dr Lesley McIntyre ([lesley.mcintyre@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:lesley.mcintyre@northumbria.ac.uk))

I will be again on the playground..... on.....  
at.....



Please feel free to meet me if you have any questions.

**Standard statement by researcher**

I have provided information about the research to the research participant and believe that he/she understands what is involved.

**Researcher's signature** .....

**Date** .....

### 3. Questionnaire

#### Questionnaire – Greek

→ General

- 1) Έρχεστε από μακριά εδώ?  
Μένετε στην ευρύτερη γεωτονιά? → πείτε μου γιατί το παιδικό χαρά, εφημέριο, μένει  
τέσσερις

- 2) Έρχεστε συχνά εδώ?  
Κάθε πότε έρχεστε?

- 3) Γιατί έρχεστε σε αυτή τη παιδική χαρά? Είναι η πρώτη σας επιλογή ή έρχεστε για  
πρακτικούς λόγους?  
Τι σας αρέσει εδώ? (ασφάλεια, κοινωνικοποίηση)

- 4) Ποια είναι η γνώμη σας γι' αυτήν την πλατεία? → στην παιδική χαρά?  
4b Γιατί δεν πάτε σε άλλη παιδική χαρά?

- 5) Πώς διαλέγετε το πού θα παίξουν τα παιδιά?  
Πού αλλού παίζουν εκτός από εδώ?

- 6) Πόση ώρα κάθεστε συνήθως?  
Γιατί/ πότε φεύγετε?

- 7) Γνωρίζετε τον κόσμο εδώ? (γείτονες, φίλους)  
Γνωρίζετε καινούριο κόσμο εδώ? Κάνετε νέους φίλους? → συχνά σε συνδυασμό; Πότε είναι οι  
9 → οι γείτονες που έρχονται στο χώρο;  
→ Play → οι γείτονες που έρχονται να παίξουν μαζί τους γι' αυτό εδώ? → χαίρεται

- 10) Παίζετε καθόλου? Γιατί όχι? / Πού? Πότε? Τι? → 26  
Θα θέλατε να παίξετε?

- 11) [Θα παίζατε] αν ήταν αλλιώς ο χώρος? Πώς θα θέλατε να ήταν?  
12 Τι πιστεύετε για το χώρο και τα παιχνίδια?  
13 Υπάρχουν ευκαιρίες για τους ενήλικες να παίξουν στην Αθήνα? )  
14 Παίζετε με τα παιδιά? Πού? Γιατί?

32) Πού σου αρέσει / θα σου άρεσε να παίζεις? Γιατί? → 33) Οι γείτονες που έρχονται να παίξουν μαζί τους  
Με ποιόν παίζεις? Με ποιόν θα ήθελες να παίζεις?  
Τι παίζεις? → τους ενήλικες όταν παίζετε;

33) Έρχεστε εδώ... το παιδί...  
15) Τι κάνετε όσο παίζουν τα παιδιά?  
Τα βοηθάτε? Επεμβαίνετε καθόλου?

→ 16) Που κάθεστε συνήθως? Γιατί?

17) → γιατί προτιμάτε να κάθεται εδώ, αφού τα παιδιά κάνουν αόριστα;  
(Θα μπορούσατε να πάτε στα υπόλοιπα σημεία της πλατείας, αν δεν βρισκόμασταν  
παιδική χαρά)  
Others

18) → Έρχεται κόσμος χωρίς παιδιά μέσα στη παιδική χαρά?  
Γιατί πιστεύετε ότι προτιμάνε αυτόν τον χώρο? Τι κάνουν συνήθως?  
Ποια είναι η γνώμη σας γι' αυτό?  
Πώς αισθάνεστε; Τι κάνουν;

19) α) Νιώθετε ευπρόσδεκτοι στο χώρο αυτό? Οι γονείς πώς σας αντιμετωπίζουν?  
β) Γιατί προτιμάτε αυτόν τον χώρο? Γιατί όχι την πλατεία?  
19b παίζετε  
19c αν δεν υπήρχε η παιδική χαρά εδώ?

Παίζετε?

Boundaries

20 → Μέχρι πού αφήνεται τα παιδιά σας να πάνε σε αυτόν το χώρο? Γιατί?

21

Πώς επηρεάζει ο χώρος αυτήν την απόφαση?

22

Θα αφήνατε το παιδί σας να έρθει μόνο του?

22 → Τι πιστεύετε για το φράκτη της παιδικής χαράς? Είναι απαραίτητος? Θα μπορούσε να λείπει?

23

Ποια είναι η γνώμη σας για την ασφάλεια της παιδικής χαράς?

παιδική χαρά που φαίνεται να είναι επικίνδυνη σε αυτό το χώρο + 23

Crisis

Σχετικά με την κρίση...

24

Πιστεύετε ότι επηρεάζει τον κόσμο που έχει παιδιά?

-πώς διαλέγει τους χώρους που θα παίξουν

-κάθε πότε θα τα πάει να παίξουν

-πόσο μένουν στην πλατεία

Ήσασταν εδώ όταν έλθισε πριν κάτι χρόνια? Που παίζανε τα παιδιά τότε?

25

Έχετε δει αλλαγές στον κόσμο, στη παιδική χαρά, στη γειτονιά ή στην πλατεία πριν και μετά την κρίση?

Rules

26

Τι κάνουν οι γονείς συνήθως εδώ?

→

Έχετε δει κανένα γονιό να παίζει στα παιχνίδια? Είναι συχνό αυτό?

→

Υπάρχουν κάποιοι κανόνες σε αυτόν το χώρο? Στην πλατεία?

27

Ποιος πιστεύεται επιτρέπεται να χρησιμοποιεί την παιδική χαρά? Γιατί?

28

Πρέπει κανείς να κλείνει την πόρτα όταν μπαίνει? Γιατί? Αν δεν το κάνει?

Τα παιδιά παίζουν διαφορετικά στην παιδική χαρά απ' ότι στη πλατεία? Στο σπίτι?

Space

Ποια είναι η γνώμη σας για τις παιδικές χαρές?

29

Πώς σας φαίνεται που η παιδική χαρά είναι πάνω στην πλατεία? (καλό. Κακό?)

30

Πού σου αρέσει περισσότερο, στην παιδική χαρά ή στην πλατεία? Γιατί?

31

Παρά θα ήμουν η ίδια με τη χαρά μου είναι? Δώσε λεπτομέρειες

→

Ουκείναι ευχάριστη η κατάσταση

## Questionnaire – English Translation

### GENERAL

1A. Do you come here from far away?

1B. Do you live in the neighbourhood?

2A. Do you come here often?

2B. How often do you come here?

3A. Why do you come to this playground? Is it your first choice or do you prefer it due to practical reasons?

3B. What do you like here?

4A. What do you think about this piazza and this playground?

4B. Why don't you go to another playground?

5A. Where else do you go with children to play?

5B. Which are your criteria for choosing a play-space?

6A. How long does your visit last?

6B. Why / when are you leaving?

7. Do you know the people here?

8. Do you make new friends / get to know other parents?

9A. Is the weather affecting your visit? In what ways?

9B. Do you plan in advance to meet your friends here?

### PLAY

10A. Do you play? Why not? Where? When? What?

10B. Do you play in the square?

11. Would you play if the space were different? How do you like it to be in order for you to play?

12. What do you think about the space and the structures?

13. Are there opportunities for adults to play in Athens?

14. Do you play with the children? Where? Why?

32A. Where do/ would you like to play? Why?

32B. who do you play with?

Questions asked to  
children

33. Did you use to come here before you had children?

35. Do the adults play with you? Do you mind when this happens?

Questions asked to  
children

15. What do you do, while the children are playing?

Do you intervene/ help them?

16. Where do you usually sit?

17. Why do you sit here, while the children are cycling? You could go anywhere in the square..

#### Outsiders

18A. Do people that do not accompany any child come in the playground?

Why? Why not?

18B. Why do you believe they prefer this space

18C. How do/would you react? What do you think?

19A. Do you feel welcomed in the playground? How do parents react?

19B. Why do you prefer this space and not the square?

19C. Would you come here if it wasn't for this playground?

19D. Do you play?

Questions  
asked to  
outsiders

#### BOUNDARIES

20. Up to where do you let your children go inside this space? Why?

21. How does space affects this decision?

31. Do you allow the children to visit the space on their own?

22. What do you think about the playground's fence? Is it necessary? Could it be omitted from the design?

22B. what do you think of the playground's safety?

How do you define safety in the playground?

23. Would you like it if the square's and the playground's space were connected?

## CRISIS

24. Do you think the crisis affects people with children and in what ways?

– How do they choose play-spaces?

– How often they visit them

-How long does each visit last?

25. Have you noticed any changes in the people visiting, the piazza or the playground before and after the crisis?

## RULES

26B. what do parents usually do here?

26A. Have you seen anyone play?

27. Who do you think should be allowed to use the playground space? Why?

28. Are there any rules concerning access? Should people close the door upon entering? If they don't?

Do children play differently here than they do in the house? In what ways?

## Space

29. What do you think of the fact that the playground is in the public square? Do you consider it a positive or a negative relation and why?

30. Where do you like it more? In the playground or the square? Why?

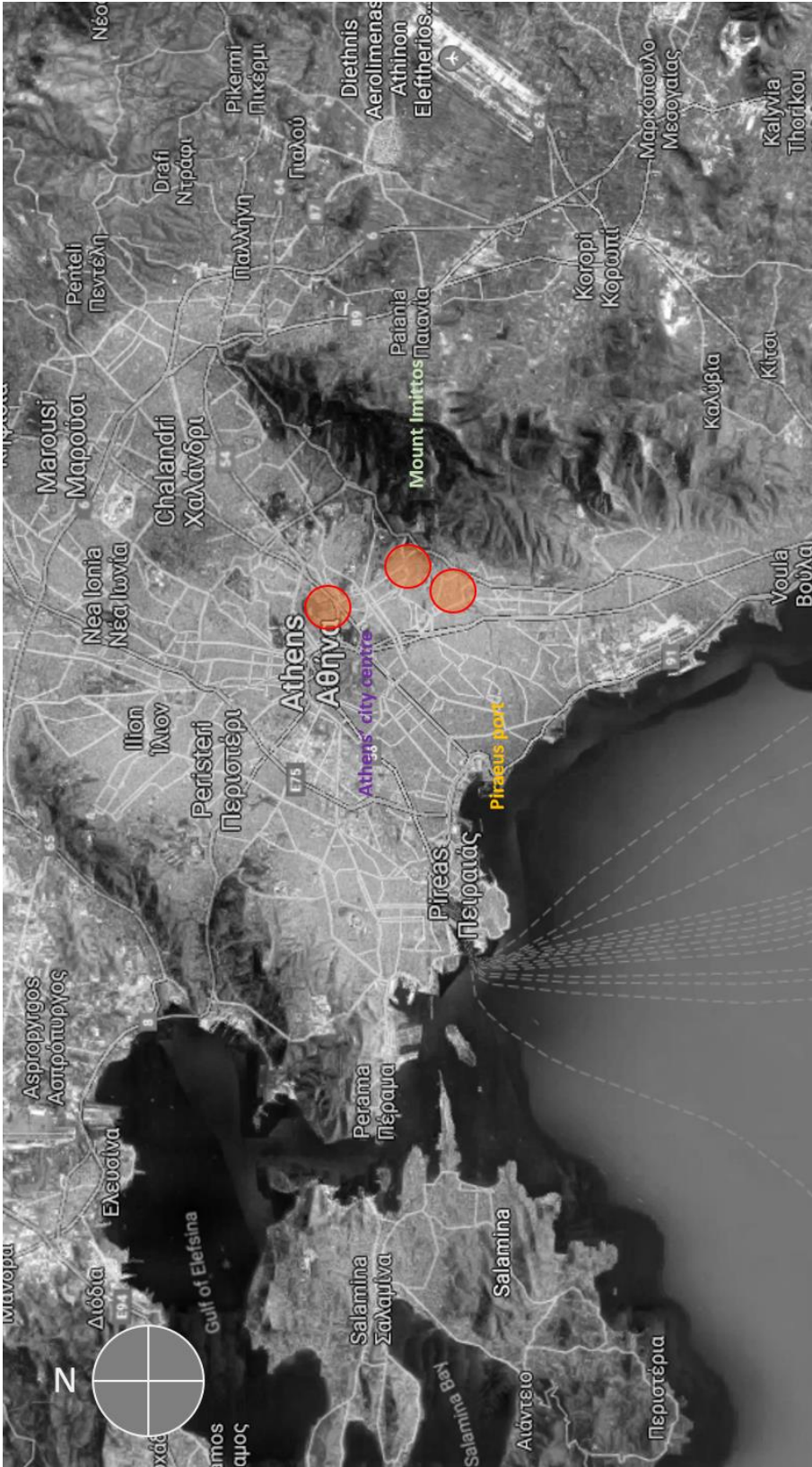
Questions asked to  
children

34. Describe the ideal playground



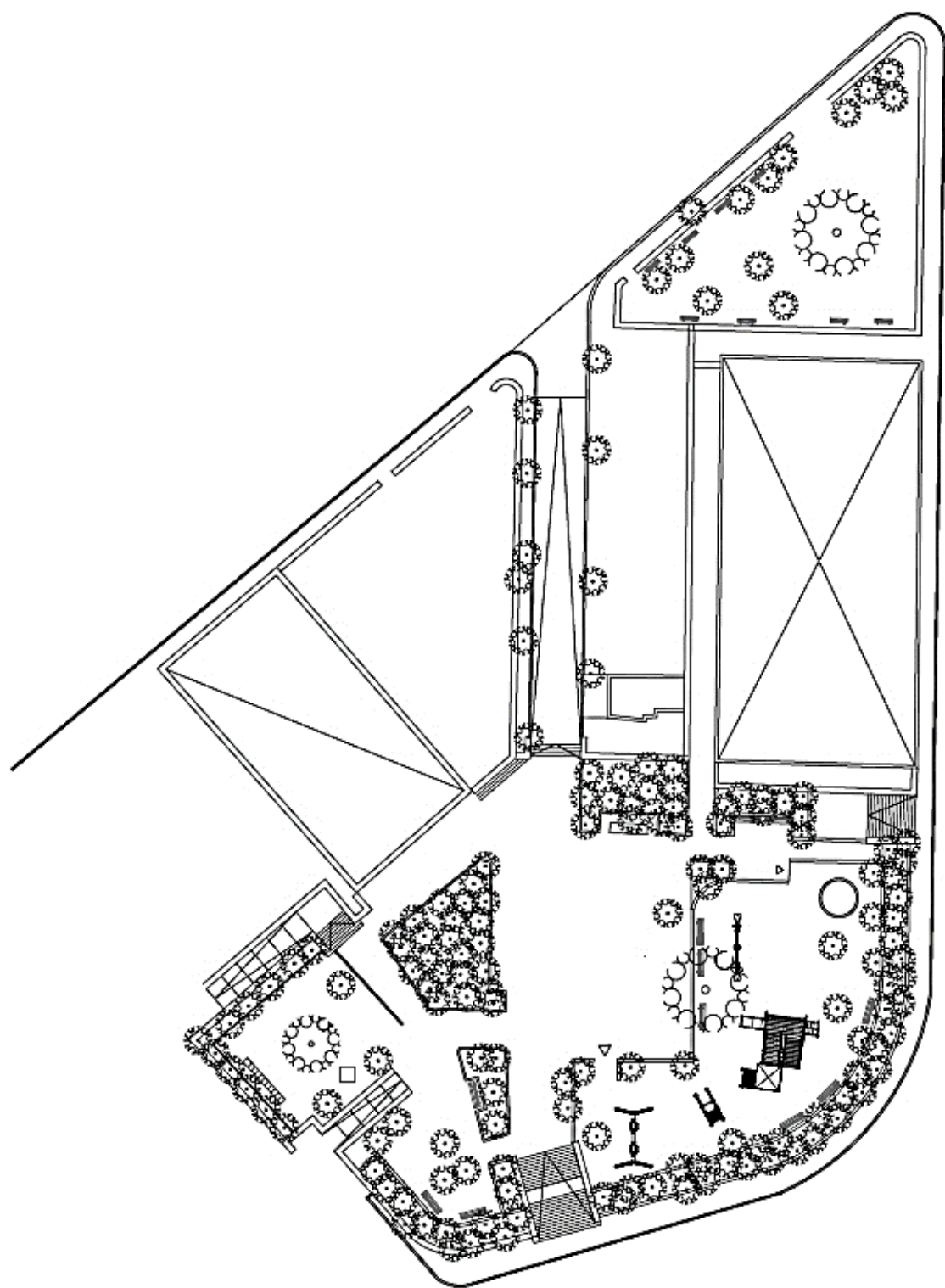
# Appendix B

## 1. Athens Map



## 2. Case Studies' Plans

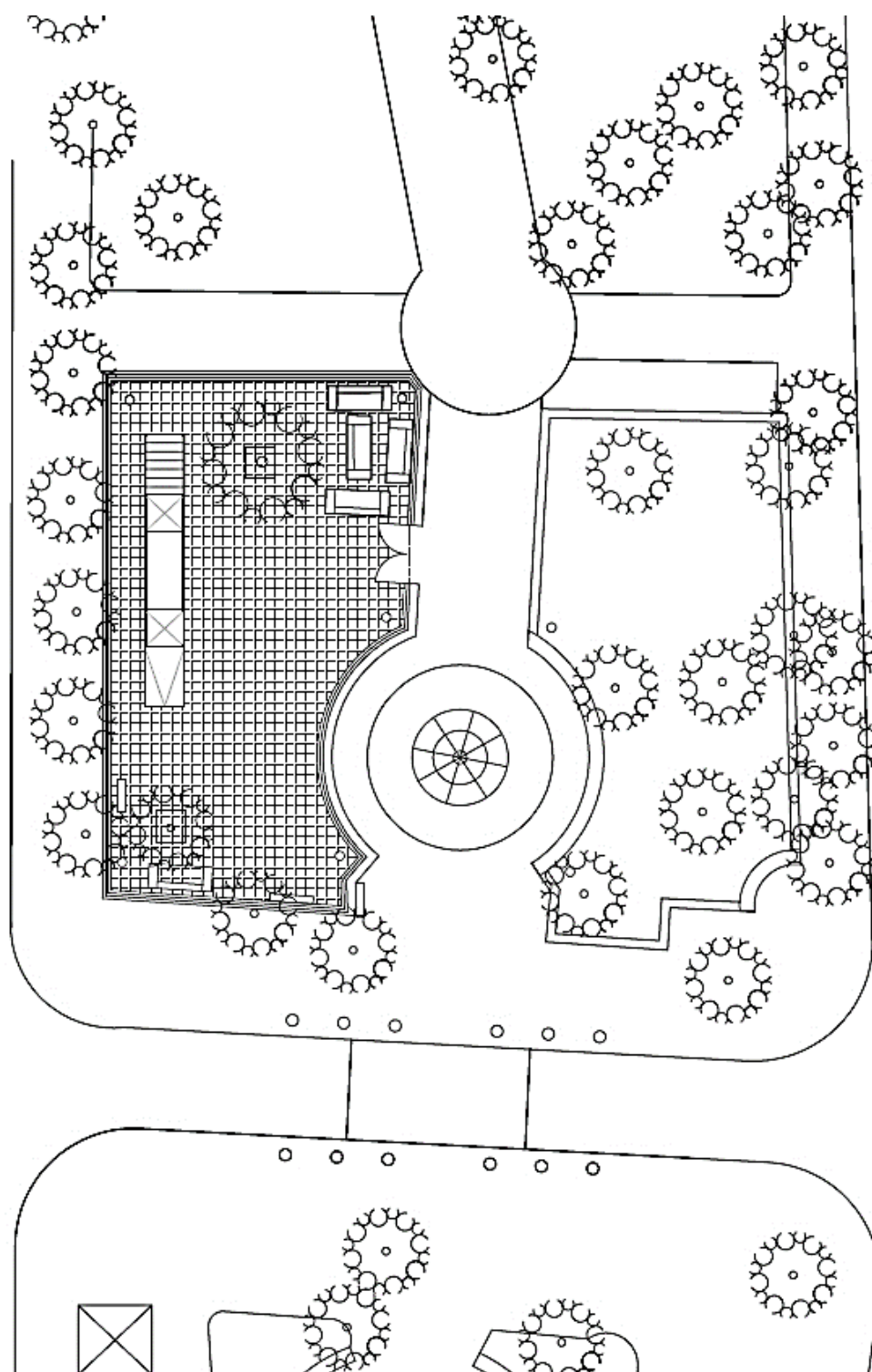
Dexameni







## Vyronas



### 3. Three Case Studies Statistics

[Downloaded from the Hellenic Statistical Authority's website:

<http://www.statistics.gr/en/home/> ]

Table B07. Population Census 2011. Employed by occupation (one-digit)  
Δήμοι

Geographic level	Geographical code	Place of permanent residence	Σύνολο	Profession								
				1. Senior managers and executives	2. Professionals	3. Technical and related trades	4. Office Employees	5. Employees in service and vendors	6. Qualified farmers, breeders, foresters and fishermen	7. Specialized craftsmen and related professions	8. Operators of industrial installations, machinery and equipment and assemblers	9. Unskilled workers, handlers and small professionals
0 000	COUNTRY'S TOTAL		3,727,633	218,437	678,794	330,187	293,288	844,702	316,390	458,183	234,843	352,809
			4.4%	21%	10%	9.6%	22%	0.67%	12%			13%
5 3514501	Athens Municipality		260,658	11528	56531	26791	25281	58724	1770	31993	4.6%	12192
			5.3%	22.3%	0.12%	0.12%	0.24%	0.004%	0.10%			0.06%
5 3514502	Vyron Municipality		23,679	1265	5293	2986	2939	5742	114	2548	0.04%	1154
			6%	0.23%	0.13%	0.11%	0.22%	0.006%	0.10%			0.05%
5 3514506	Ilioupolis Municipality		30,527	1853	7175	4086	3618	6774	203	3345	0.05%	1755
												1718

Πίνακας Β06. Απογραφή Πληθυσμού 2011. Μόνιμος Πληθυσμός κατά φύλο και επίπεδο εκπαίδευσης Περιφερειακές Ενότητες, Δήμοι												
Geographical level	Geographical Code	Place of permanent residence	Total	Και των δύο φύλων								
				Doctoral or postgraduate degree holders / Graduate students - Polytechnic, ATEI, ASPAITE, higher professional and equivalent schools	Graduates of Post-Secondary Education (IEK, Colleges, etc.)	High School Graduates (General, Ecclesiastical, Professional, etc.)	Graduates of third grade High School and graduates of vocational schools	Graduates of Primary School	They abandoned Primary, but they know writing and reading / They completed preschool education / Do not know writing and reading	Non-classified (individuals born after 1/1/2005)		
0 000	COUNTRY'S TOTAL		10,816,286	1,808,087	502,079	2,532,396	1,428,490	2,524,345	1,343,534	676,355		
				6.09%				15.1%	7.81%	4.88%		
5 3514501	municipality of Athens		664,046	24.3%	161997	40460	29.6%	196705	12.0%	79860	100672	51890
				6.76%				15.5%				32462
5 3514502	municipality of Vironas		61,308	23.1%	14196	4146	29.52%	18101	11.53%	7071	9505	7.9%
				6.79%				16.29%				4861
5 3514506	municipality of Ilioupolis		78,153	23.3%	18273	5314	27.8%	21780	11.11%	8688	12732	8.54%
												6676
												6%
												4690



# Appendix C

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## 1. Policies –The Playground

The very first official reference to children's play-spaces (Ministry of internal affairs, 2009a, 2009b) included only the commercial playgrounds [‘παιδότοποι’ (play-spaces)]. It was six years later that legislation about the public play-spaces [‘παιδικές χαρές’ (playgrounds)] was established (Ministry of internal affairs, 2014a, 2014b). Before 2009 there were not official guidelines regarding the design of playground spaces. The playgrounds’ were designed by the municipalities employed engineer’s and were dependent to their experience and intuition. The same applied for the equipment used: it was not obligatory for the municipality engineer to choose from pre-constructed ones, rather he/she was free to design his/her own (Karagianni & Karioti, 2003) and experiment with a variety of materials.

From time to time, certain semi-official studies proposed radical approaches, driven by contemporary pedagogical and psychological theories. One of them was the Ministry of Environment, Planning and Public Works (Υ.Π.Ε.Χ.Ω.Δ.Ε.) 1988 conference’s proposal about play-streets and open public spaces for intergenerational action (Vlantou et al., 1988). However, these proposals not only were not implemented but also did not inform the official legislation on a long-term basis. The legislation of playgrounds is preoccupied with technical details rather than the playground’s connection to the city’s public life. A study by the Technical Chamber of Greece (TEE) (Karagianni & Karioti, 2003) argued that approaching the playground space in a fragmentary way affected not only the quality of the space but also children’s safety. According to Karagianni and Karioti (2003), the playground design is missing interdisciplinarity and collaboration. Karagianni & Karioti (2003) categorized Greek children’s play-spaces as a) open spaces, including playgrounds, and sports fields and b) parks. Moreover they differentiated playgrounds between “children’s nooks” for children 1-6 years old with a maximum area of 300m<sup>2</sup> (in order to exclude other uses and older children) and “playgrounds” intended for children 6-12 years old with a maximum area of 600-800m<sup>2</sup>. They argued that defining an ‘appropriate age’ for each playground could support age specific design making the playground more beneficial for the children. At the same time, they stated that the playground should be open to a variety of ages (like parents, elderly, and adolescents).

At the same time, Karagianni & Karioti's paper (2003) focused on safety. The authors used the statistics of 1996 to support their argument. According to these 1109 (5.8%) of the 19.214 children's accidents reported in four Athens's hospitals, took place in the Athenian playgrounds (Karagianni & Karioti, 2003). At the same time, the study drew connections with a workshop for the safety of playgrounds that took place in Athens on April 2003 and stressed the need to create formal legislation concerning the construction and use of the playgrounds (Karagianni & Karioti, 2003). At the time, ELOT's (Greek Organization of Standardisation) safety standards<sup>58</sup> – based on the standards established by the European Union since 1998 – were not respected by the vast majority of municipalities as they did not have the potency of a well-grounded law (Karagianni & Karioti, 2003). Both in the workshop for the safety of playgrounds in Athens but also in the ELOT's EN1176.07 Part 7: Guidance on installation, inspection, maintenance and function (Karagianni & Karioti, 2003) were identified three types of formal inspections following the given guidelines. Equipment and accessories should be inspected at regular intervals in order to prevent both injuries and the equipment's malfunction. First, visual inspection should be done daily by the manager or the guard of the playground. Second, inspection concerning the equipment's functionality should be carried out every 1 to 3 months. Finally, an inspection of the equipment and playground space on an annual basis.

The first official law about play-spaces (παιδότοποι) was legislated in 2003 (Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2003). Law N.1354/2003 defined the terms, conditions, processes, and applications, as well as any other necessary detail for the granting and revocation of the establishment and operation licenses of commercial, indoor play-spaces. The 2003 law, referred only to commercial indoor play-spaces, and defined the play-space as a closed space intended for the entertainment of children up to 10 years old. All children should be accompanied by a guardian at all times (Article 1), while the

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<sup>58</sup> The security requirements that the playground equipment and the installation practices, maintenance and operation should meet should abide to the EN 1176.01 to 07 standards (ELOT, 2008):

EN 1176.01 / A1 and EN 1176.01: Playground Equipment:

EN1176.-1+ A1 Part 1 General Safety requirements and testing methods

EN1176.-2+ A1 with additional safety requirements and testing methods for swings

EN1176.-3+ A1, with additional safety requirements and testing methods for slides

EN1176.-4+ A1 with additional safety requirements and testing methods for bridges

EN1176.-5+ A1 with additional safety requirements and testing methods for mills

EN1176.-6+ A1 with additional safety requirements and testing methods for swinging Mechanisms

EN1176.07 Part 7: Guidance on installation, inspection, maintenance and function (for the playground equipment)

EN 1177 and EN 1177 / A1 Floors of the playground by percussion absorbance - safety requirements and testing methods

EN 14960 'inflatable toy safety requirements and testing methods'

need for one supervisor per 25 children is stressed. Moreover, the document defined all the requirements he materials used, the design of the space, maintenance and other requirements in order to ensure the safety of the children<sup>59</sup>.

The 2003 law was extended by a new one in 2007 (Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2007). The 2007 law was based on the previous regulations and extended them to compensate for more cases of commercial play-spaces. The common Ministerial Decision of 2007 (1364/2007 B´1364) argues that this extension was necessary as the previous law did not include the outdoor or semi-outdoor commercial play-spaces. At the same time, the law stated (clearly this time) that it did not apply to any public, free or school playgrounds. The play-space was again approached as a well-defined, non-public space, intended exclusively for the entertainment of infants and children up to ten years old. The presence of children’s guardians and trained staff was once again compulsory. For the first time it is clearly stated that the play-space should be segregated from the parent’s waiting room.

What is interesting in the 2007 law is the official recognition of the outdoor (commercial) play-spaces for the first time; this acted as a harbinger of the legislation about public playgrounds. These are defined as well fenced spaces, in order to ensure the children’s safety, and once again intended for the entertainment of children until the age of 10. The outdoor commercial play-spaces should include adequate lighting, seating areas, drinking water fountain, WC and fire extinguishers. The terrain should have a sufficient drainage system and the routes towards the playground should be adequately illuminated and protected. Finally, the law prohibited the neighbouring of the play-spaces with areas of loading or areas where dangerous materials were stored, highways or other spaces that produce intense noise.

It was not until 2009 that an extended state law defining the public playgrounds’ function, construction and maintenance was established. According to the Ministry of internal affairs (2009c), public playgrounds were lacking institutional framework and, as a result, operating rules. Data from the Child Accidents Research and Prevention Centre indicate that on a year’s period 777 cases of child injuries, aged up to 14 years, during playing on the playgrounds of Attica, were recorded (Ministry of internal affairs, 2009c). In order for this situation to be best dealt with, the Ministry issued the 931/2009 Law. The program ‘re-configuration of playgrounds’ launched in May 2009 (Ministry of internal affairs, 2009b) had as a main objective the design and building of completely safe, functional and artistic environments that aimed to support the optimal physical and mental development and socialization of the child, while at the same time

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<sup>59</sup> These abide by EL0T’s EN 1176.01 to 07 safety standards.

increasing the safe, public resting and recreational areas. At the same time, the given guidelines were intended to upgrade not only the new but also the existing playgrounds through multiple interventions and the replacement of damaged equipment. The ones, existing or new, that would not abide to these regulations would be closed down.

The 2009 law defined the playground space as following: a playground is a defined public space intended for the entertainment of infants and children up to the age of 14 years without the supervision of trained staff (Ministry of internal affairs, 2009a). The playground should be installed in municipality/community properties classified in the relevant town plan as playground areas or public spaces. The playground should consist of equipment and installations specifically designed for individual or team play. Moreover, playgrounds were categorized according to their size into three different types. First the ones up to 400m<sup>2</sup>, intended for use by one or two age groups. These should include at least three different kinds of equipment. Secondly, the ones up to 800m<sup>2</sup>, accommodating two or more age groups that should include at least five different kinds of equipment. Finally, the playgrounds that are larger than 800m<sup>2</sup> were allowed to include distinct areas suitable for bicycles and team games (Ministry of internal affairs, 2009b).

Drawing connections with the 2007 law, about commercial outdoor play-spaces, the 2009 law states that public playgrounds must be sited and designed so as not to endanger the safety and health of all children. A special article (Article 2) refers to the site of the playground in connection to children's physical and mental health. This should not be near areas where noise and air pollution is increased, areas of increased chances of landslides, collisions etc., near highways or crossings of heavy duty vehicles, in areas less than 300m from sources of electromagnetic radiation and finally near infrastructure that could affect children's mental health such as prisons or graveyards. Other requirements concerning drainage, lighting etc. are similar to the 2007 law about outdoors commercial playgrounds. The area should be equipped with drinking water fountain, adequate lighting, and clean pathways, seating area, sheds for sunlight and rain protection, access for people with disabilities, greenery and garbage bins. Of special interest in this study is that access of pets or anyone not accompanying children was prohibited. Specific regulations about the standards of the equipment and their maintenance were also mentioned. Particular attention was paid to the fencing of the playground area stating that it should be effective but to not visually isolate the area, while the main entrance should be at least 1m wide. A sign in the entrance of the playground should clearly state the ages of children each playground is suitable for, as well as the emergency contacts and opening hours. The law also required a Playground Operating Officer to be set. This officer would be responsible for



the maintenance and the proper functioning of the playground, while keeping files with all the necessary information such as the type of equipment, the dates and kind of maintenance taking place.

By 2014, deep into the Crisis years, a new law was legislated. As the ministry's official announcement (07/08/2014, num. 44) (Ministry of internal affairs, 2014b) stated, the implementation of the previous framework encountered many obstacles, mainly because it sought to introduce new standards to existing playgrounds as well as because of the special conditions that characterised the five years between the two laws (2009-2014). These conditions refer to the economic crisis that deprived the municipalities from the essential resources in order to not only upgrade the playgrounds but also to maintain the already existing facilities and equipment. In this context, a new document, N. 2029/2014 (Ministry of internal affairs, 2014a) was established in an attempt to resolve these problems and to further develop the legislative framework. The N. 2029/2014 is divided in two parts. The first one takes into consideration the general provisions related to the design and organisation of a new playground, while the second one refers to the existing playground spaces. The playground space for the first time takes into account the adolescents. It is stated (Ministry of internal affairs, 2014a) that the need for entertainment is common for all ages and should not exclude children over the age of 14 years old, as was the case until then. At the same time the playground user's group extends to include adolescents up to the age of 18 years old as well as adults that do not accompany a child. Moreover, other articles concerning the location of the playground or its sustainability were loosened, taking into account the existing difficulties and the limited resources of the municipalities. They offered alternatives without undermining the safety requirements. An example of this was that in the case of a playground located near a highway – a case prohibited by the previous law-, measures should be taken in order to ensure the users' completely safe access as well as their protection from the noise and pollution. Similarly, equipment should once again abide to ELOT's EN 1176. 01 to 07 standards, however, it is possible to follow other (European or other) standards as long as these are equivalent to the ELOT's ones. The Playground Operating Officer position is recalled and his/her responsibilities are transferred to the local municipality that is responsible for keeping the playgrounds' files concerning its use, maintenance and equipment.

We can easily deduce that for the first time the law intended to adjust to the existing conditions and make the most out of them instead of following a solid, externally imposed framework. The municipalities continue to have the sole responsibility of the playgrounds function, design, construction and maintenance.

However, a general, official framework defines the guidelines for all playgrounds across Greece. In a Ministerial Decision (circular 22/05/2015, num.15) (Ministry of internal affairs, 2015) it is clearly stated that the local authorities are wholly responsible for the safety of the playground's users. It is also evident, that the new conditions created by austerity led to a reconceptualization of the playground space not only in terms of safety but also as a place for entertainment and socializing welcoming more users and age groups.

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