

Urban resilience and urban transformations in the face of refugee crisis; the case of Greek Islands.

Authors

1. Konstantinos Lalenis, Associate Professor, DPRD, University of Thessaly, Volos, Greece, email: klalenis@prd.uth.gr
2. Balkiz Yapicioglou, Assistant Professor, Girne American University, Kyrenia, Cyprus, email: kaylabalkiz@yahoo.com

In approaching resilience –and in particular urban resilience- we usually refer to the ability of a city to absorb disturbances/disasters of natural, geophysical, and technological events, mostly within the general frame of climate change. Recent events, though, of great magnitude and grave social repercussions, have underlined the significance of urban resilience to social or human behavior events.

Faced with emergency situation of unprecedented waves of asylum-seekers and migrants, many of whom drown or narrowly escaped drowning on the way, European cities are challenged for their adequacy to provide acceptable living conditions to the newcomers, and test, thus, their resilience by means of the vulnerability of the existing refugee policies. The question of resilience is posed in the most alarming way, especially to the immediate acceptors of refugees, which are the Aegean islands in Greece, and the south part of Italy. These places have faced a serious crisis hosting the recent influx of refugees, which has raised serious doubts about their capacity to form and implement relevant policies, and whether they can absorb this stress without change (transformations). In other words “how **resilient** these places are under the stress of the refugee crisis?”

As the extant literature on resilience suggests, the stability of a system is maintained as long as disturbances are absorbed by that system. However, there exists a threshold in terms of how much of disturbance can be absorbed. Hosting of the refugees can be seen as a complex system with its relationships to the non-linear pattern of refugees and policies, the host, and etc. Therefore, complex adaptive systems offer a theoretical framework for this research to examine this dynamic coupled network of systems to identify how these hosts, particularly the Greek Islands, manage this crisis with the existing refugee policies and how they seek to create resilience.

Keywords: Refugees, Greek Islands, resilience, complex adaptive systems

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