

Alonissos Island – (Re)thinking Smart

Workshop in Chora Alonissos Island

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ΤΜΗΜΑ ΑΡΧΙΤΕΚΤΟΝΩΝ ΜΗΧΑΝΙΚΩΝ



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In urbanism and architecture the future seems to be „smart“. But what is really smart? We understand smart development as an instrument to make the world, the city, the street a better place for people. Smart is sustainable, smart is intelligent, smart is fair. In urbanism we shall not do whatever is possible, but everything that is reasonable. It is not necessarily the technologically equipped city that is the smartest, we can rather learn from long proved, self-organizing systems like Greek islands. It is not for nothing that all Europeans admire the simple and positive Greek island life that seems to be unimpressed of the pressure to permanent growth.

In analysis and design we will explore how sustainable Alonissos Island works (of course we will find things to be improved), we will test if, how and to what extend the principles of a smart city are applicable in the context of a small Greek island (of course we will find out that not everything works everywhere) and we will propose urbanistic and architectonic interventions for the island.

The workshop addresses two scales: the analysis will be done on the scale of the whole island while the intervention can take place in a specific location on the island, we identified as crucial for the entire system.

In the first phase we will learn how the ecosystem of a Greek island works.

The island is a topological system which is not absolutely isolated, but has only few, well defined communication points to the outside world. Society and economy of islands adopted to this special situation on all scales of organization and everyday life. As a basically introverted community which is, however, always openly oriented to the whole world, islands form the basis for the high number of economically very successful people originally coming from Islands.

Natural islands are the prototype for various island-typed spatial phenomena – archipelagos – in cities. For instance, areas separated by rigid transport infrastructure like railroad tracks or inner city highways, social and ethnic enclaves like Banlieues, arrival cities or refugee camps, but also gated communities or mono functional areas of different kinds. Consequently, due to their specific topology, islands are well suited as laboratories for both analysis and interventions.

During the analysis we will have a close look at Alonissos Island considering the topics mobility, society, energy, ecology, economy and supply. We will try to match the local context with the smart city criteria

developed for the City of Graz at the Institute of Urbanism. Are they applicable in this rural, small scale context? What can we learn from the place to improve them and to rethink what we understand as „smart“?

Based on the research, in the second phase we develop projects corresponding to these topics and that will contribute to a good (better) life on Alonissos Island. We identify the places where these design proposals, as punctuations in their physical extend, can have a positive impact on the whole island in a functional, social and sustainable perspective.

Important questions for the design are:

- How is it connected the the existing? Does it create new connections?
- How is it situated in the natural and artificial structure?
- How does it contribute to public space?
- How appropriate is its architecture on different scales?
- How does it effect the metabolism of the island?

Deliverables:

- Analysis of Alonissos Island with a special focus on one of the topics mobility, society, energy, ecology, economy or supply.
- Concept for urbanistic and architectural interventions on the island.
- Representation of the interventions relation to and effect on the whole island.

In the workshop the Austrian and Greek students have the possibility to exchange their knowledge and learn from each other: while in Austria their exists comprehensive research on smart and sustainable cities, the Greek education covers knowledge of the way, systems like islands work (besides the personal experience of the Greek students and teachers).

The merging of these different bases of knowledge and experience gives us the chance to question and rethink the understanding of smartness and its application to both city quarters and rural settlements in Austria.

