



**H.F.R.I.**  
Hellenic Foundation for  
Research & Innovation

**Description of the funded research project**  
**1st Call for H.F.R.I. Research Projects to Support Faculty**  
**Members & Researchers and Procure High-Value**  
**Research Equipment**

**Title of the research project: Apartment blocks in Athens—The structure of the housing stock and its impact on the city's social geography**

**Principal Investigator: Thomas Maloutas**

**Reader-friendly title: The Apartment Blocks of Athens**

**Scientific Area: Social Sciences**

**Institution and Country: Dept of geography, Harokopio University, Greece**

**Host Institution: Dept of geography, Harokopio University, Greece**

**Collaborating Institution(s): École française d'Athènes, Bartlett School of Planning (UCL)**

**Project webpage (if applicable): under preparation**



**Budget: 121.500**

**Duration: 24 months**

This research project (ISTOPOL) investigates apartment blocks in Athens as locales of social cohabitation, but also of segregation among the different social and ethnic groups of their residents. In ISTOPOL we use in-depth interviews to map life trajectories of individuals and households actually living, having lived or holding properties in these apartment blocks. Through these interviews we can also link residents' life trajectories with the trajectories of real estate properties. Properties are changing hands and/or users, are maintained or refurbished and, mainly, are used as important elements in family strategies of social reproduction. Eventually, the main object of this project is to explore the role of this important part of the city's housing stock in the social reproduction process.

The originality of ISTOPOL is twofold. This first aspect is that it introduces a new approach for the investigation of segregation within the apartment blocks of Athens. This investigation has exclusively relied up to now on macroscopic analyses of data originating from censuses and large surveys. In ISTOPOL we enhance existing analyses through qualitative analysis and by focusing on the constitutive logic of particular cases. We expect this input to help us create a typology of social trajectories in respect of forms, micro-positions and locations (neighborhood level) of apartment units. This is something that macroscopic analysis was unable to provide. The second original aspect of ISTOPOL is related to its contribution to the international literature on urban segregation. Urban Sociology and Urban Social Geography have traditionally given almost exclusive emphasis on neighborhood segregation and understudied or even neglected segregation at the microscale. Members of this team have produced research work during the last 20 years on microsegregation in the apartment blocks of Athens, and this work has inspired other researchers to produce similar work in other cities. The use of new approaches and parameters to investigate this topic will further reinforce the leading role of this team in the effort to investigate urban microsegregation.

The expected outcome of ISTOPOL can be summarized in two parts. The first is about its impact on research in this field. This impact is expected to be important because the project will complement the analysis of microsegregation in a city where social separation in close spatial proximity is particularly extensive. Moreover, this project will encourage several similar research efforts in different urban contexts. A very positive indication in this direction is that there is already an agreement with a publishing house in the UK for a volume edited by two members of this team. The chapters will be dealing with microsegregation processes in 20 European, Latin American, East Asian and Middle Eastern cities. Other members of this team will provide the chapter on Athens, and this chapter will mainly rely on work realized in this project. The second part is related to the social impact and, in particular, to providing insight for policy planning. ISTOPOL will contribute to a better grasp of the ways access to housing has been changing in a large part of the city where the most vulnerable groups are mainly concentrated. At the same time, a special report is a deliverable of this project addressing the analysis of segregation and housing policies and providing suggested directions to confront actual and potential problems in this field.

ISTOPOL is part of research areas that were either under-financed or not financed at all until the foundation of HFRI. On the other hand, this project had very small chances to be funded by international institutions since it is exclusively targeted to the study of a local process. Moreover, the fact that HFRI provides research funding on the basis of evaluation provides a positive starting mark to the projects receiving funding, which of course has to be confirmed by their results. For all these reasons we hope HFRI will continue to fund research projects in the long run, and to act as an institution of the academic community in the way specified in its founding declaration.



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