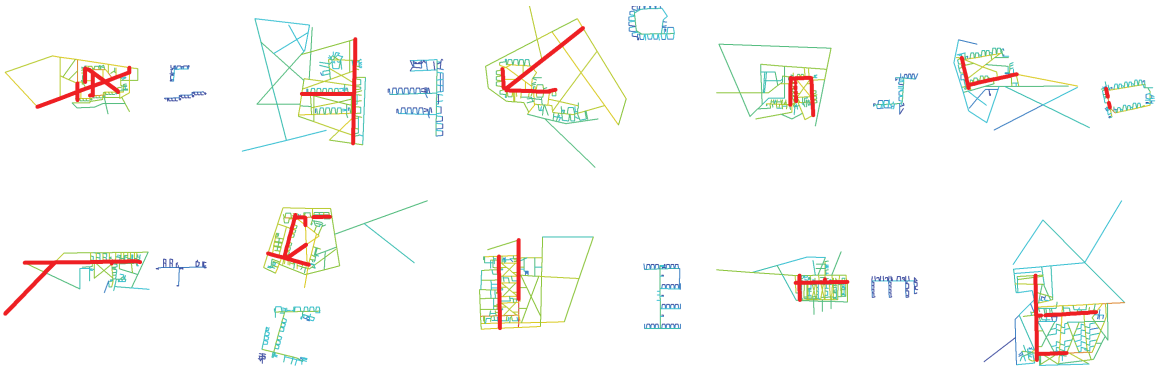


# CHRYSTALA PSATHITI

## LECTURE

ARCHITECTURE LECTURE SERIES  
2021, UNIVERSITY OF CYPRUS

### ASSESSING EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENTS: A TEMPORAL SOCIO-SPATIAL APPROACH TO LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOL BUILDINGS IN CYPRUS



**MONDAY 22 NOVEMBER 2021**  
**12:00 - 13:00**

ROOM 305  
DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE  
LEDRAS 68, 1010, NICOSIA

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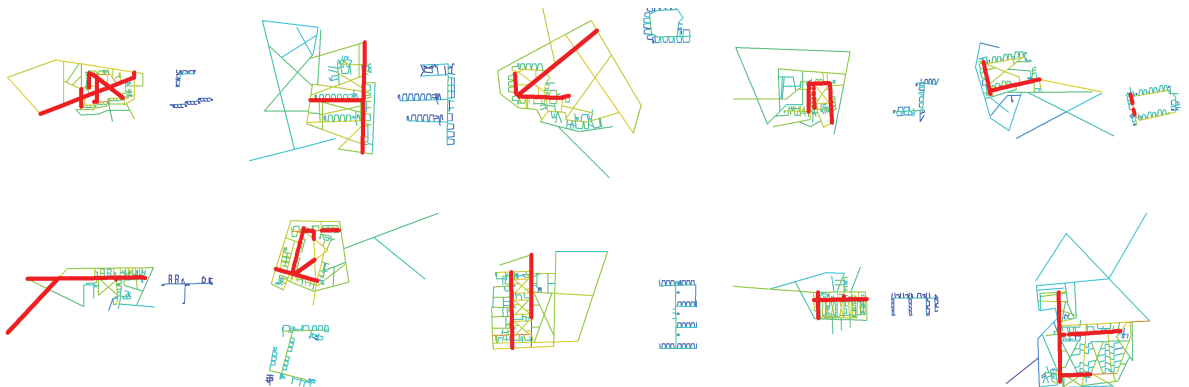
This research is concerned with the interplay between the school environment and school practices. At its core, it seeks to understand and analyse school environments and to identify the role of spatial layout and agency in socio-educational practices, with the main research questions being: How do the spatial layout and agency of lower secondary school buildings built in Cyprus after 2000 impact the socio-educational school life? And to what extent do lower secondary school buildings constructed in Cyprus after 2000 illustrate spatial, functional, and morphological consistencies?

The ten(10) most recent lower secondary schools in Cyprus are selected as case studies. The selection stems from the fact that open-air secondary schools are remarkably under-investigated in the existing scholarly work. At the same time, Cyprus is selected as the appropriate context of study since there is an overall lack of research exploring the relationship between school environment and school practices. The methodology of this study combines a cross-case comparative approach (top-down) that examines all ten (10) schools of the sample with an in-depth approach (bottom-up) that inspects two (2) schools of the sample so as to achieve a more holistic understanding of space usage patterns and social agency in schools.

Results show that genotypical patterns can be found among schools due to the design guidelines given by the authorities. In that sense, the role of agency in school buildings through the guidelines issued and social actions is revealed. In addition, the empirical validation of the framework proposed by Bernstein's and used by various scholars in architectural research suggests that this model can be used to map the relationship between school buildings, pedagogical practices, and school community. Lastly, this thesis presents various spatial factors influencing users' perceptions of their school and space usage patterns. Results point to the importance of the school's density on the ground, school's porosity, school's configuration, school's overall integration, school's fragmentation, classrooms' axial centrality, and classrooms' visual mean depth.

This research's innovative aspect lies in combining different theoretical and methodological approaches through a holistic framework by articulating a crosswalk between research depths and data types. At the same time, it contributes to the current lack of knowledge about open-air schools and through an evidence-based approach, it provides a critical evaluation of the existing design guidelines for the design of lower secondary school buildings in Cyprus.

## CHRYSTALA PSATHITI



Chrystala Psathiti is a researcher and practitioner exploring the relationship between architecture and human behaviour. She is currently a PhD Candidate at the University of Cyprus, funded by the National Scholarship Foundation and Youth Board Cyprus, the founder of Splace Architecture and visiting academic staff at Neapolis University Paphos. Trained as an architect, holds a Diploma in Architecture from the University of Cyprus and an MSc in Spatial Design: Architecture & Cities from the Bartlett, UCL London. She was also a visiting researcher at the Bartlett School of Architecture and has been involved in European Research Projects such as EPUM, KAEBUP and Innovaroom. Chrystala's work has been published in international journals, conferences, electronic magazines and exhibitions such as the 13th International Exhibition La Biennale De Venezia, 1st Architecture Biennale of Thessaloniki, Space Syntax Journal etc. As a practitioner architect, she worked on residential, commercial, industrial, and educational projects and has received an honourable mention at the Architectural Competition for the Cultural Village of Lempa and the School of Fine Arts in Florina, Greece.