

RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Claiming the Countryside: Ekistics, Socio-Political Conflicts, and Emerging Cold-War Geopolitics During Greek Reconstruction

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This article investigates the complex ties between planning, socio-political conflicts, and emerging Cold War geopolitics during the post-war reconstruction period in Greece, by focusing on the years between 1944 and 1947. In these crucial transitional years, transnational flows of expertise, interwar legacies, and political, scientific, and ideological contestations gave rise to novel planning ideas and antagonistic visions for the country's reconstruction and its future development path. The article sheds light on how the architect-planner Constantinos Doxiadis formulated Ekistics as a spatial vision, a mode of central planning, and a technical guide, examining how Ekistics affected the shaping of reconstruction policies, particularly in the countryside. This analysis further exposes the way the Greek countryside became the locus of competing visions of spatial development, as well as contradictory state responses: from long-term housing policies and self-help practices all the way to ideological repression and population resettlement strategies, British interventionism, and Civil War conflicts (1946–49) that paved the ground to Greece's subsequent US-led recovery programs under the Truman Doctrine (1947) and the Marshal Plan (1948–1952). By focusing on the paradigmatic case of Greece, this article advances an understanding of European reconstruction as an uneven, contested, and transitional process and highlights the implications of architecture and planning discourses and practices amid ideological, territorial, and geopolitical contestations.

## Introduction

As part of the Greek delegation at the United Nations Conference on International Organization, held in San Francisco in June 1945, the 32-year-old architect-planner Constantinos Doxiadis portrayed himself, in front of an international audience, not only as a technocrat but also as an agent of anti-Nazi resistance in Greece. He talked about the leadership role he played in 'an underground service that kept trace of everything the invaders were doing and for carrying on research work for the reconstruction of the country' ('Εισαγωγή για Press Conference', 1945). Radio broadcasts and press releases referred to his work and the group under his guidance as an 'underground ministry of reconstruction' ('Architects' Underground', 1945). It was soon made apparent that the UN meeting was not going to lead to the outcomes Doxiadis, or Greece, had expected from it at the time; Greece's much-needed recovery would benefit from neither international collaboration on the country's reconstruction nor substantial war reparations and allied aid. In the months that followed, the Greek government assigned Doxiadis to lead Greece's newly formed Ministry for Reconstruction, for whose establishment he also played an instrumental role.<sup>1</sup> At this critical

stage, the efforts of war-torn Greece toward reconstruction faced financial challenges, institutional fragmentation, and socio-political contestations amidst emerging geopolitical polarities.

Greece's post-war reconstruction is a paradigmatic case study for investigating the ways architecture and planning intersect with and inform socio-political conflicts, geopolitics, and socio-spatial transformations. In the aftermath of the war, the country had to deal with not only the extensive destruction of technical, social, and economic infrastructures across urban and rural areas but also the even more pressing humanitarian crisis of a war-stricken, displaced rural population. In particular, the destruction of rural settlements created an urgent need for housing, a further challenge to the recovery of the country's mainly rural-based economy.

A second crucial feature in the case of Greece was its position in the emerging Cold War divide between the Western Bloc and the Eastern Bloc. While assigned to the British sphere of influence in the Western Bloc, the country's territorial and state sovereignty was contested from within and without. During the occupation, the country was divided into zones ruled by the German, Italian, and Bulgarian military forces, while certain mountainous areas were under the control of the Greek People's Liberation Army (ELAS), the volunteer partisan arm of the Left (Liakos 2019).<sup>2</sup> Soon after the liberation from the Axis troops in October 1944, social unrest began in

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Athens, the capital city, against British intervention. The socio-political conflicts escalated with the outburst of the Civil War (1946–1949),<sup>3</sup> which led Greece, after 1947, to become attached to the US sphere of influence under the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan, while an anti-communist state apparatus was established (Mazower 2000; Bournazos 2009; Voglis 2014; Voglis 2015).

Recent studies have investigated the history of the closely tied politics and economics in Greece within the context of the US intervention after 1947 (Stathakis 2004; Kakridis 2009; Hadjiiosif 2009; Zachariou 2009; Psalidopoulos 2013; Politakis 2018). This article, however, focuses on the years, from the liberation in 1944 to the arrival of the US aid in 1947, that constituted a ‘fluid’ and dynamic condition that played a crucial role in subsequent developments. In that brief and under-studied period, the persistent effects from the war and occupation, the entanglements of domestic and foreign actors and subsequent discontinuities and overturns in power, along with institutional fragmentation and social instability and intense antagonistic ideologies, all informed planning discourses and practices. Those early years of the Greek reconstruction, in which inter-war planning legacies persisted along with contradicting claims on the country’s future development path, led to the articulation of new planning and developmental visions, planning institutions, and the emergence of planners-technocrats as key political actors (Vaiou, Mantouvalou, and Mavridou 2000; Deladetsimas 2000; Karadimou-Yerolympos 2015; Kotsaki 2016).

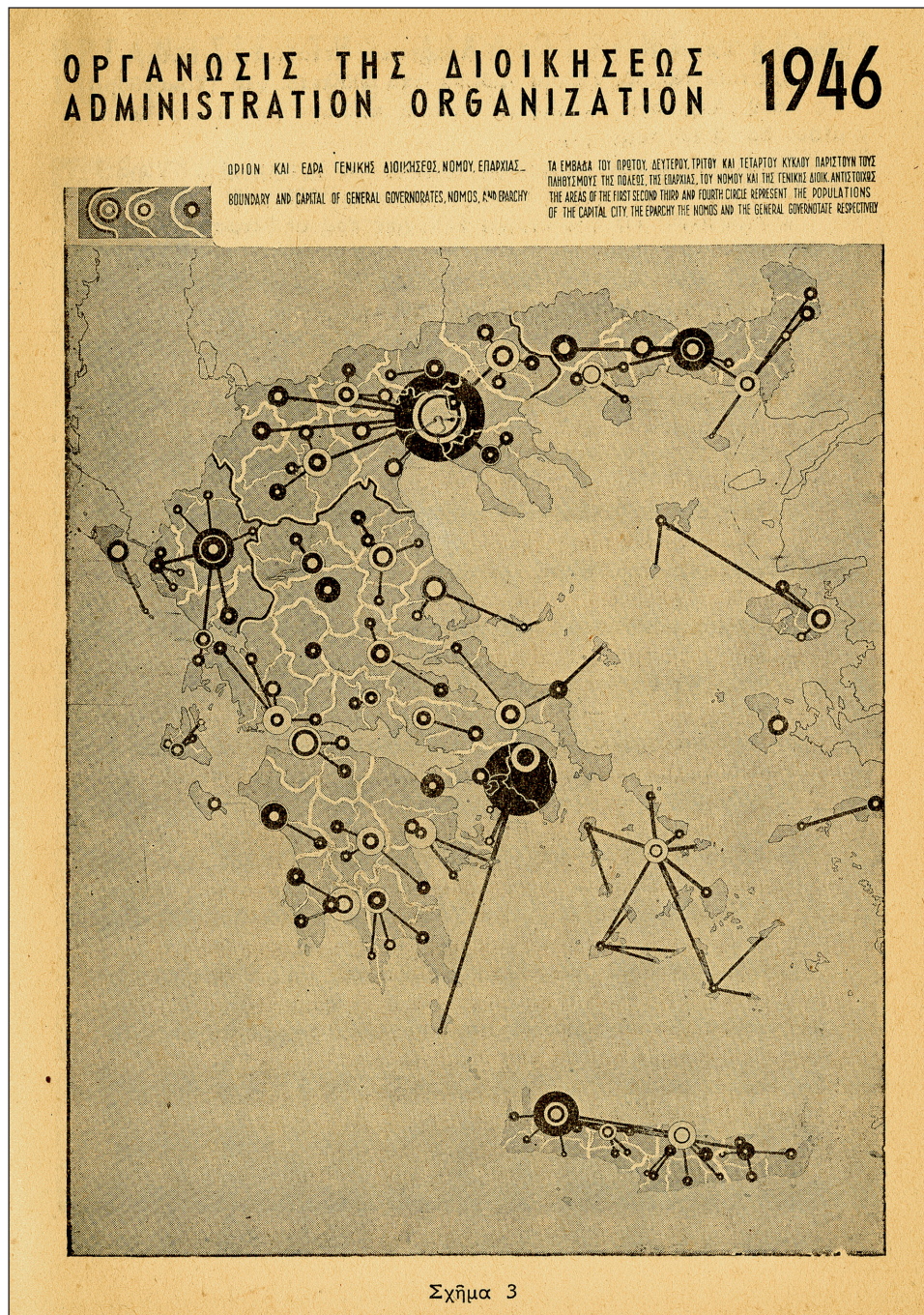
In mapping the crucial period from 1944 to 1947, this article further explores the key role played by Doxiadis, one of the prominent figures of the Greek reconstruction. Introducing a closer and extensive reading of archival material, this article traces transnational flows of ideas and emerging international agendas on technical aid, along with domestic inter-war planning legacies and political, scientific, and ideological contestations to highlight the circumstances that led to the formulation of ‘Ekistics’, Doxiadis’ most important contribution to 20th-century planning, well before it was communicated internationally as ‘the science of the human settlements’ (see, for example, d’Auria 2015; Pyla 2019). This concept was, in fact, formulated during the occupation as a planning framework to be employed in the reconstruction of Greek settlements, particularly in response to the challenges of the countryside – a history that has only recently begun to be more closely examined (Kyrtis 2006; Kakridis 2013; Philippides, 2015; Theodosis 2016; Theocharopoulou 2017: 85–109). However, the rebuilding of rural settlements was not only crucial to the programs led by Doxiadis at the Ministry for Reconstruction but also clearly reflected in the work of radicalized scientists associated with the Left, who elaborated ideas about the country’s deeper social(ist) transformation. As the article demonstrates, the Greek countryside became the locus of antagonistic ideologies and socio-political visions, while figuring prominently in Civil War conflicts and anti-communist propaganda well before, and after, the arrival of American missions in 1947.

This article interrogates architectural and planning histories of reconstruction in connection to the divisive climate that followed the Second World War, during a crucial moment when the ‘continent [was] still on a kind of war footing’, as Mark Mazower reminds us (2011: 28), and when different societies faced the uneven impact of the war and persistent legacies of the occupation, while Cold War bipolarity gradually divided Europe and the rest of the world. By further advancing the understanding of post-war reconstruction, as a contested and antagonistic process – as arguably all reconstruction projects are – the article, ultimately, highlights the implications of architecture and planning discourses and practices amid ideological, territorial, and geopolitical contestations.

### ‘Underground’ Ekistics

During the war and the German occupation of Greece, the discourses on reconstruction, at least within the Greek technical world, largely continued inter-war debates among engineers and planners that had aimed to introduce technocratic perspectives to planning and enhancing the role of the state. These initiatives drew on the interactions of Greek engineers with international, novel ideas about town and regional planning. Among these were the debates of the fourth international CIAM conference, which was hosted in Athens in 1933, and sporadic references on planning institutions and infrastructure projects in Europe and the US, as expressed in the official journal, *Technica Chronica*, of the Technical Chamber of Greece. These discourses also built on the experiences of the inter-war modernization processes in Greece, particularly agrarian reform and the extensive resettlement of over a million refugees after the Greek-Turkish War in the 1920s (Leontidou 1989; Yerolympos 2003; Mantouvalou and Kalantzopoulou 2005).

With the end of the Greek-Italian War, in April 1941, these debates took another turn. While no one could imagine the final ruinous effect the occupation of the Axis forces would have in the coming years, at that moment several groups within the technical world turned their attention to the future (Karadimou-Yerolympos 2009: 140). In 1942, the Ministry of Transportation established the Office of Regional and Town Planning Studies and Research which was formed by a close-knit group of associates directed by Doxiadis who were committed to the ‘national revival’ (Doxiadis 1942a: 1).<sup>4</sup> Operating in partly official and partly covert fashion, this group advanced the collection of information on war-caused destructions and even on the occupation forces. Not only was this information fed to the British allies and the Greek government in exile in Cairo, but, as soon as the war was over, it formed valuable records for mapping the impact of the war on the country on a national level (Doxiadis 1946c; 1946d; 1947b). These documentation activities reflected a planning approach that crossed local surveys with large-scale spatial and statistical analyses that were without precedent in Greece. It led to the development, for the first time, of background maps at the scale of the country and urban and settlement levels and planning studies on both regional and national scales (**Figure 1**).



**Figure 1:** Map of the organization of the public administration in 1946 (Doxiadis 1948: 13). Constantin A. Doxiadis Archives © Constantinos and Emma Doxiadis Foundation.

The knowledge amassed about the country's settlement patterns and their levels of destruction decisively framed the approach of Doxiadis and his colleagues toward planning and the country's post-war recovery needs (Papaioannou 1976).

This experience was particularly instrumental in forming Doxiadis' conviction that planning should 'reside locally within the frame of the state, appearing as a most important national problem' ('Πόλεις της Ελλάδας 1940', n.d.). By the end of the war, he would merge two understandings of state-led planning approaches. The first drew on transnational technocratic perspectives on spatial planning, which according to Doxiadis, 'corresponded to the German "Landesplanung" or "Raumordnung" as

well as the notion of "Planning" as practiced in England and America' (Doxiadis 1942b: 1). He called this planning approach *Χωροταξία* (Chorotaxia), from the Greek words *χώρος* (choros), meaning space, and *τάξη* (taxi), meaning order, arrangement, or distribution. Chorotaxia thus signified planning as the 'ordering of various projects, technical or not, in space' (Doxiadis 1943: 5). The second approach to planning expressed both the significance of large-scale planning activities and the technical challenges of reshaping the country's settlements after the war. Called *Οικιστική* (Oikistike), from the Greek word *Οικισμός* (settlement), and understood initially as the branch of Chorotaxia dealing with settlements, this new notion gradually came to represent an autonomous

field of planning focused ‘on settlements in general and especially with their distribution in space, their location and size and their interaction’ (‘Εκθεσις προς Γεν. Διευθυντήν’, 1944). The focus on settlements seemed to move beyond the binaries of city–countryside, acknowledging the significance of interrelations and local dynamics, principles which featured in what Doxiadis eventually called, in English, ‘Ekistics: the science of the human settlements’ (1969).<sup>5</sup> Compared to Chorotaxia, which referred to space and spatial order abstractly – mainly at regional and country levels – Ekistics was envisioned as a multi-scale field of technical and cross-disciplinary expertise that studied settlements on regional scales, all the way down to the level of buildings. Crossing science and theory with policy, the planning office, and the field, Ekistics was conceptualized to offer a framework more compatible with the country’s patterns of destruction caused by war and its economic and geographic particularities.

The formulation of Ekistics, Doxiadis’ own intellectual endeavour, incorporated certain theoretical sources, along with his own, as well as broader, cultural mindsets. Personal notes from his readings at the time show that his primary influence were German location theories, and more importantly, the 1933 study on ‘central places’ by the geographer Walter Christaller, which prioritized geographic and economic factors in the spatial distribution and organization of settlements. Moreover, the social and cultural value of the small and medium-sized rural settlements were also dominant in inter-war Germany, both before and under the Nazi regime (Schenk and Bromley 2003), with which Doxiadis came in contact in 1936 while completing his doctoral thesis in Berlin (Tsiambaos 2017). Another complementary pool of sources included British regional planning ideas, such as those found in Patrick Abercrombie’s *Town and Country Planning* of 1943, which reinforced his conviction of the necessity of shaping a centralized planning approach that advocated the control of urban growth and a balance between urban centres and the countryside.

Ekistics was formulated also in conversation with international debates in which Doxiadis aimed to contribute, and in which he afterwards actively participated, starting with the UN meeting in San Francisco in 1945. As part of these deliberations, Doxiadis encountered state agencies in the United States and Europe and worked with such like-minded experts as Jacob Crane, who was envisioning the creation of a ‘World Institute of Urbanism and Housing’ (‘Possible Functions of the World Institute of Urbanism and Housing,’ 1945). These early transnational exchanges and emerging international agendas on housing and technical cooperation informed the consolidation of Ekistics as expertise on housing and settlement planning.

From these theoretical, cultural, and epistemological foundations, Ekistics gradually expanded into an attempt to form an elaborate, meticulous set of guidelines for the empirical analyses of Greek settlements, which were incorporated into a 1946 publication with the title, *Οικιστικές Μελέτες Οικιστική Ανάλυση: Οδηγίες για τη Μελέτη των Χωροταξικών, των Οικιστικών και Πολεοδομικών Προβλημάτων και για την Ανοικοδόμηση της Χώρας* [Ekistic Studies – Ekistic

Analysis: Guidelines for the Study of Regional, Ekistics, and Urban Problems for the Country’s Reconstruction]. These guidelines included the classification and analysis of spatial dimensions of settlements, an assessment of their changes over time, and their role in regional networks that aspired to capture a detailed picture of a specific place, while allowing ‘comparisons and the synthesis of the broader picture’ (Doxiadis 1946a: 1). This publication further formulated the principles of a planning approach based on Doxiadis’ early attempt to translate the geo-economic studies of Christaller into a tool for analyzing small and medium-sized settlements by considering their interrelations (**Figures 2 and 3**). Overall, it was intended as a technical manual to be used by Greek reconstruction experts in the field to produce knowledge on various scales, from the country’s settlement patterns all the way (allegedly) down to where people ‘sleep, where they eat, and where they have fun’ (Doxiadis 1946a: 215).

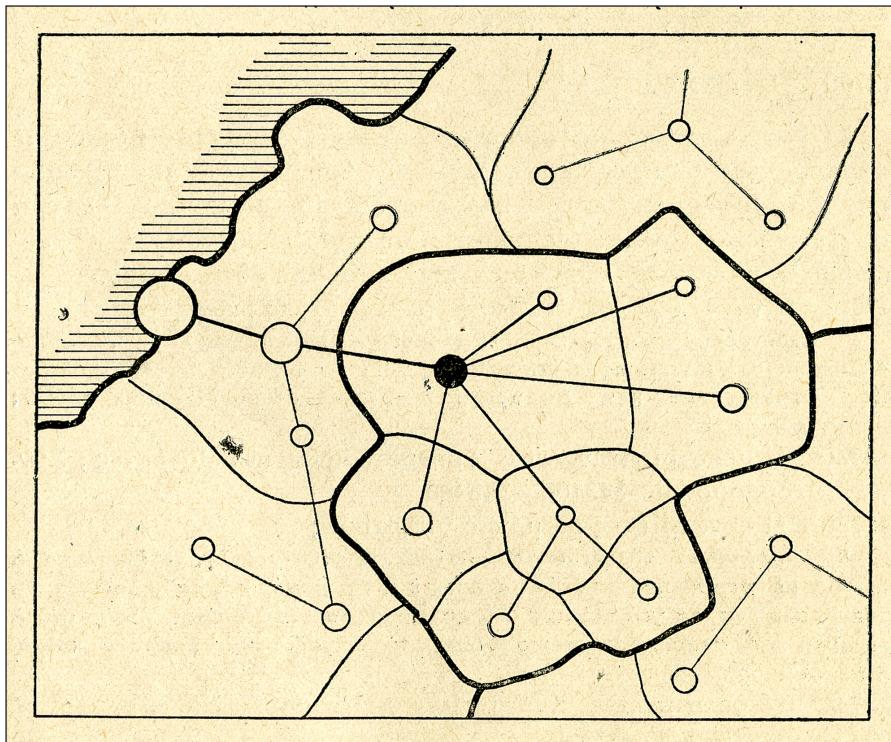
In December 1945, a year after the country’s liberation, the Ministry for Reconstruction was established with Doxiadis as the head. The ministry was an administrative upgrade of the Office of Regional and Town Planning Studies and Research, signalling an attempt to mobilize the country’s scarce resources, both material and human.<sup>6</sup> Its foundational law, authored by Doxiadis, introduced the principles of Ekistics as state policy, with a broad mandate that encompassed ‘the formulation and implementation of the entire state ekistics policy; in combination with the broader economic and social reconstruction policy’ (Ministry for Reconstruction 1946b: 17).<sup>7</sup>

However, the entire country was in fact facing immense challenges: limited resources, a collapsed economy, social turmoil, uncertain territorial and state sovereignty, and lack of political legitimacy. In this context, antagonistic ideologies contemplated the country’s reconstruction as a historic opportunity for socio-economic restructuring and long-term recovery, also with implications in reshaping settlement patterns.

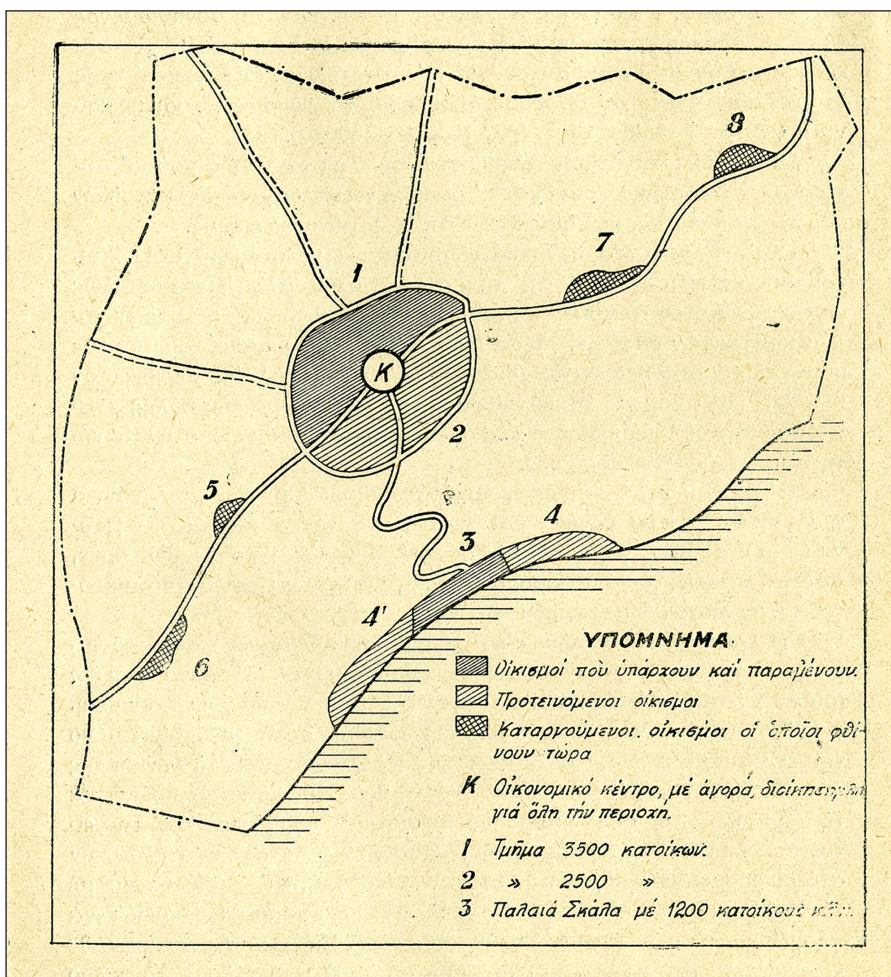
### Antagonistic Visions of Reconstruction

At the end of 1944, the celebration of the country’s liberation from the Axis powers and the prospects for the country’s speedy recovery both soon faded in the confluence of the power vacuum, the lack of state sovereignty, and a volatile social and political climate. Under the sphere of British influence, top priorities were the demobilization of partisan groups, the creation of a national army, and the establishment of control over the territory. Social aspirations for the country’s future were confronted by state repression in the form of police and military forces, supported by British troops, and resulted in armed conflict, mainly in the center of Athens, the capital city; this was known as ‘the December events’ (‘Δεκεμβριανά’) (Haralampidis 2014) (**Figure 4**). British intervention on a political and military level was intertwined with processes of building anti-communist state apparatus, all factors that incited the Civil War (Gerolymatos 2016; Liakos 2019).

In addition to the dramatic loss of thousands of people due to warfare and famine, the economy of the country had collapsed, involving destruction in all areas of life:



**Figure 2:** A diagrammatic settlement analysis inspired by Walter Christaller's study on 'central places' (Doxiadis 1946a: 152). Constantinos A. Doxiadis Archives © Constantinos and Emma Doxiadis Foundation.



**Figure 3:** Doxiadis' abstract planning model for reshaping rural settlement patterns in Greece (Doxiadis 1946a: 168). Constantinos A. Doxiadis Archives © Constantinos and Emma Doxiadis Foundation.



**Figure 4:** The centre of Athens was turned into a battlefield during the events of December 1944. S-0800-0035-0003, United Nations Archives.

key infrastructures, such as ports and railways; housing in rural and urban areas; agricultural and productive facilities; and so on. Between 1944 and 1946, the country depended on early relief from the US-supported UNRRA and the British Military Liaison (ML), while a 1946 agreement for British aid took the form of loans and measures for economic stabilization. At the same time, attempts by the state to impose more tight control over the economy were opposed by politicians and powerful traditional economic elites, such as the industrialists (Politakis 2018: 67–93), as well as the new elites formed by the redistribution of wealth during the occupation.

The visions for the country's reconstruction that unfolded in this shifting socio-political context were aligned with a deepening ideological divide. On the one hand, the political and economic elites aspired to the restoration of the pre-war status quo, with the country attached to the West. On the other hand, those on the Left were socially and morally empowered as the leading actors of the National Resistance during the occupation; inspired by communist ideologies, they envisioned a socialist transformation. Both sides expressed opposing views on how to restructure the social and economic fabric of society. For traditional,

mainstream political and economic elites, reconstruction was an opportunity to shape alliances with the West, and moreover, foreign aid would maintain or restore pre-war hierarchies. These centrist and liberal political forces saw the Greek economy as part of the capitalist world, and the established political and economic model and its particularities (e.g. domestic monopolies, clientelism) aligned with traditional economic sectors of agriculture, trading, and shipping. For the Left, which included not just the Greek Communist Party (KKE) but also broader radicalized social classes and part of the scientific community, the reconstruction was associated with aspirations for a socialist transformation, perhaps even the establishment of a socialist regime similar to those emerging in the countries of Eastern Europe at that time. Contrary to the mainstream approach, the Left wanted to avoid the dependencies of foreign aid by initiating a self-generated development process, mainly by drawing on the Soviet model of heavy industrialization (Hadjiosif 2009: 28–29).

More specifically, the Left's vision for future development through industrialization was elaborated systematically within the group called 'Science-Reconstruction' (Επιστήμη-Ανοικοδόμηση, hereafter, EP-AN), founded

by prominent intellectuals, economists, engineers, and architects. This group used the bimonthly journal *Antaios* to disseminate its ideas. The economist Dimitris Batsis, the journal's editor, was the author of *The Heavy Industry in Greece*, published in 1947, in which he presented an elaborate analysis of industrialization in Greece, which he saw as the key vehicle by which to achieve the country's independence from foreign interventionism and as the main force to promote socialist transformation (Batsis 2004 [1967]).

The mainstream vision for a model of future development was, arguably, more dispersed. Several multidisciplinary groups contemplated alternative visions for the country's reconstruction (Hadjijsif 2009: 31). Among these was the group of engineers, scientists, and economists that formed around Doxiadis during the occupation, and after 1945, worked according to the agendas of the Ministry for Reconstruction (Kakridis 2009). These various groups, expressing what they assumed were broader social aspirations, advocated for an improvement of living standards, socio-economic development, and the restoration of areas destroyed by war. Conceiving this historical juncture as an opportunity to advance technocratic and scientific ideas, they drew on the debates within the technical world, before and during the war, that called for enhancing the role of the state through not only the centralized control of the economy and the development of technical infrastructure but also industrialization. They presented reconstruction as a national effort and a field of expertise, presumably beyond ideological and political preferences and polarities.

This form of post-war ideological antagonism in the technical and scientific community extended also into the field of architecture and planning. The mainstream pole was expressed *par excellence* in the work of the Ministry for Reconstruction and the team of architects and engineers, with Doxiadis their spokesman, who proclaimed its technocratic and apolitical role to domestic and international audiences: '[W]e are what is called apolitical, that is, we have no defined political character. We function as an advisory group for the solving of *internal* Greek problems' ('Radio broadcast by Mr. Doxiadis', 1945; emphasis by Doxiadis). In this light, and following the Ekistics framework, the ministry's work emphasized the crucial role of central planning and the spatial reorganization of settlements for the country's reconstruction. This approach avoided implying extensive changes to existing social hierarchies

and the country's productive model. If there was to be a rupture with the country's past to allow new spatial patterns, the argument was, it should come primarily through institutional reforms, administrative coordination, and the formulation of long-term state policies on housing and settlement planning. Under Doxiadis' leadership, the reconstruction was approached from a technocratic perspective and primarily as an attempt to address the lack of any central policy as well the institutional fragmentation among various authorities and conflicting interests that affected 'the proper distribution and development of settlements in space' ('Πρόχειρο σημείωμα', 1944).

The Left's planning visions, however, saw the reconstruction as a catalyst for large-scale transformation. For Ioannis Despotopoulos, an architect and academic and a founding member of EP-AN, the post-war era was marked by a 'revolutionary leap which was accelerated by the evolution caused by the war' (1945a: 52). The greatest task of the reconstruction, he continued, was to 'bring together working classes into new productive-social organisms' (Despotopoulos 1945b: 14). Similar to Doxiadis' Ekistics, Despotopoulos also envisioned planning as a multi-scale endeavour with the goal to shape settlements in relation to their production areas and fulfil the supreme goal to bring 'the happiness of man ... to secure food, investment and housing for all people' (Despotopoulos 1946: 329). However, against Doxiadis' technocratic preference for Chorotaxia (space-ordering), Despotopoulos used another term, Chorodomia (space-structuring), to convey an understanding of planning as an organic component of the social and productive restructuring promoted by the state and experts while engaging the working classes and the broader population (Figure 5). The key vehicles for this socialist transformation were new forms of settlements where 'socialism will become a reality and everyday life' (Despotopoulos 1946: 333). This socialist, centralized vision of EP-AN would mobilize large-scale transformations, not only on the level of the country but for the broader vision of 'the socialist self-constitution of the people of Europe' (1945a: 52).<sup>8</sup>

Opposition over the ideologies of reconstruction, and the spatial model to follow, was not the only issue at stake. A crucial concern was the governing of the reconstruction: a national-scale project that involved the extensive management of capital, expertise, and social resources.

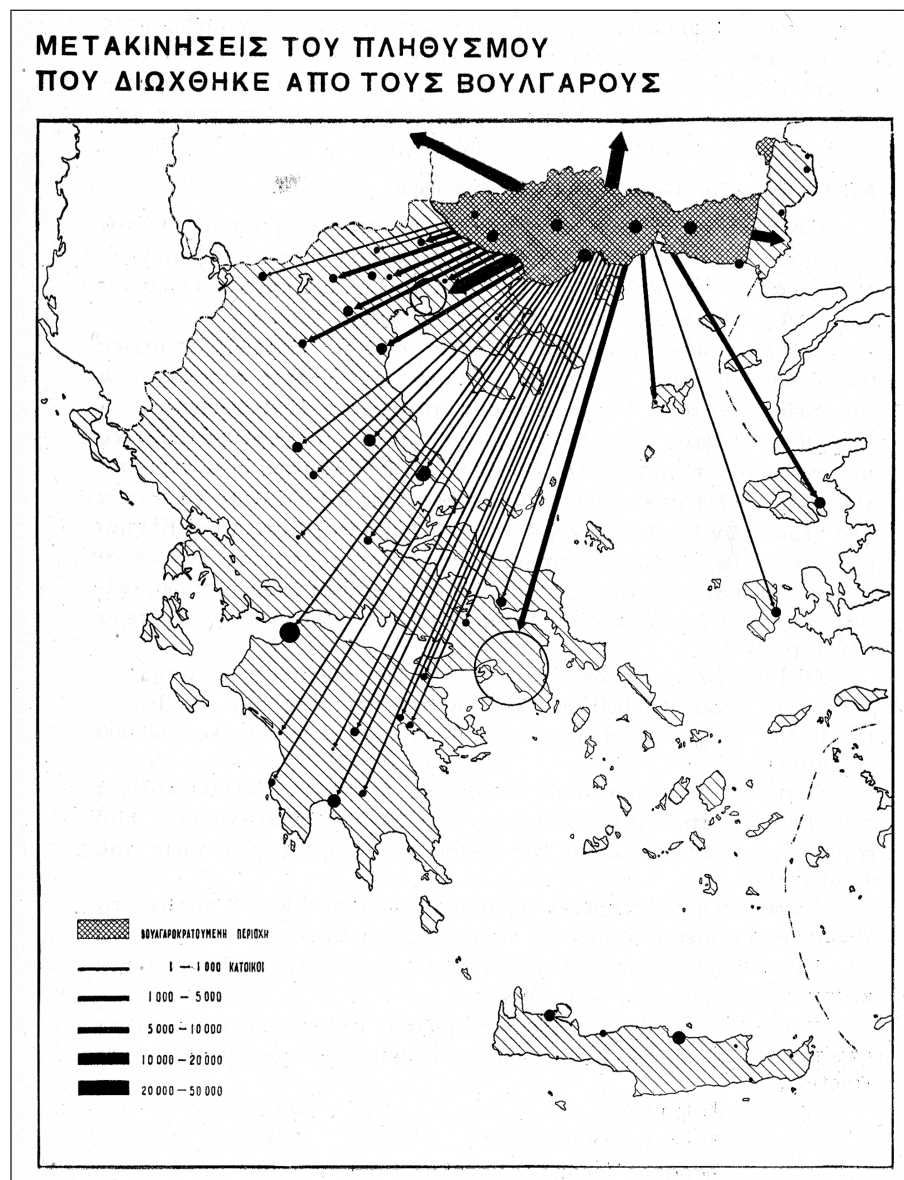


**Figure 5:** Image on the cover of *Antaios* which captures the Left's vision for the country's reconstruction based on heavy industrialization, as part of a broader social mobilization and economic transformation (*Antaios*, 1945).

In a time of political and ‘institutional fluidity’ (Hadjiosif 2009: 39), deliberations around forming central planning bodies focused on how to respond better to the urgency of the post-war crisis, with limited state funding, and still achieve the levels of coordination required – at least according to many engineers and parliament members at the time (Ministry for Reconstruction 1946c). Doxiadis’ managerial vision, well expressed in 1944 as the necessity to ‘consolidate all powers under a single authority with experts,’ (‘Πρόχειρο σημείωμα’, 1944) nearly materialized in 1946 with the establishment of the so-called Organization for Reconstruction, an independent body of extensive powers, with him as the head (Doxiadis 1946b). This attempt to ‘consolidate’ more power among experts was contested; the organization never functioned, and Doxiadis continued to serve in the Ministry for Reconstruction. The challenges of shaping and enforcing coherent state policies were exemplified in the response to the urgent need for shelter, primarily for the war-stricken rural population in the countryside.

### Reconstructing Rural Settlements: Between Long-term Housing Policies and Self-help Practices

The country’s earliest reconstruction efforts focused on addressing the dire consequences of the war and the occupation in the countryside, which had involved intensive mobility of war refugees, somewhere between 300,000 and 350,000, including approximately 126,000 homeless rural families (Ministry for Reconstruction 1946b:1). These realities were mainly the outcome of cleansing operations conducted by the German occupation forces as mass reprisals across the countryside, along with attempts to resettle Bulgarian populations in the northern regions that led to the eviction of approximately 150,000 people (Voglis 2009: 331). Captured vividly in publications by the Ministry for Reconstruction, these dynamics of forced migration intensified the urbanization trends of the inter-war period, raising further concerns over the social, economic, and political effects of the countryside’s potential depopulation (Figure 6). All in all, these demographic



**Figure 6:** Map recording intense population movements from northern Greece under the Bulgarian occupation (Doxiadis 1947c: 62). Constantinos A. Doxiadis Archives © Constantinos and Emma Doxiadis Foundation.



shifts, combined with the extensive population decline and material destruction left behind by the war and the occupation, further aggravated the already precarious everyday life in the countryside. The survival of rural populations depended somewhat on a limited agricultural income but primarily on the aid distributed by UNRRA in the form of food, clothing, and medical supplies, as well as seeds, animals, fertilizer, and machinery (Voglis 2009).

Against these realities, the Greek government attempted to offer relief to the deprived rural population by providing temporary shelters. The program, mainly supported through state funds, was coordinated by the Agricultural Bank of Greece, while UNRRA provided the construction materials, and the program followed self-help practices, encouraging the 'participation of the population in labor' (Karadimou-Yerolympos 2009: 146). The goal was to provide 30,000 temporary shelters for homeless families, 20 square meters each, constructed from mud bricks, wood, iron parts, and roof tiles. However, only 13,000 of these shelters were finally erected, while another 17,000 had just a roof. The half-completed program soon received heavy criticism from different sides (Ministry for Reconstruction 1946c). These debates revealed the political and financial stakes in the provision of shelter to the war-stricken population as well as the need to consider such programs in more systematic modes. In this light, the Ministry for Reconstruction received further political support to lead the country's shelter provision policy.

The provision of shelter for the countryside, as Doxiadis envisioned it, required not just a quick response to a pressing humanitarian crisis, whose importance was widely

accepted in the socio-political sphere, but the shaping of broader policies in connection to the country's long-term recovery. It was soon linked to goals on a national scale and informed long-term housing policies, along the lines of the Ekistics spatial framework. In recognition of the crucial role settlements could play in ongoing social and spatial transformations, and following a managerial and technocratic approach, the policy framework drew on spatial parameters, economic concerns, population statistics, and various forms of quantifications (Doxiadis 1946b, 1947a; Delendas and Maggioros 1946). The ministry linked the shaping of a coordinated technical and architectural expertise with a broader social agenda, which, according to Doxiadis, offered 'a colossal opportunity to transform settlements and create better living conditions, and therefore, better people' (1946b: 31). On these principles, the Ministry for Reconstruction defined the country's long-term needs for housing as a 20-year construction program. It also revealed its priority for meeting an annual goal for rural settlements of 60,000 units in 1,200 settlements, compared to 10,000 in urban areas (Doxiadis 1947a: 55) (Figure 7).

The focus on the countryside was supported by theoretical, typological, urban, and architectural studies. It echoed Doxiadis' views on decentralization, expressed even before the war, that advocated 'avoiding concentrations', 'decreasing the number of big cities', 'dissolving existing big cities', and 'resettling population in rural areas' (Doxiadis 1939: 490–552). His vision of decentralization was also informed by ethnocentric discourses that identified rural areas as sources of a national identity. He

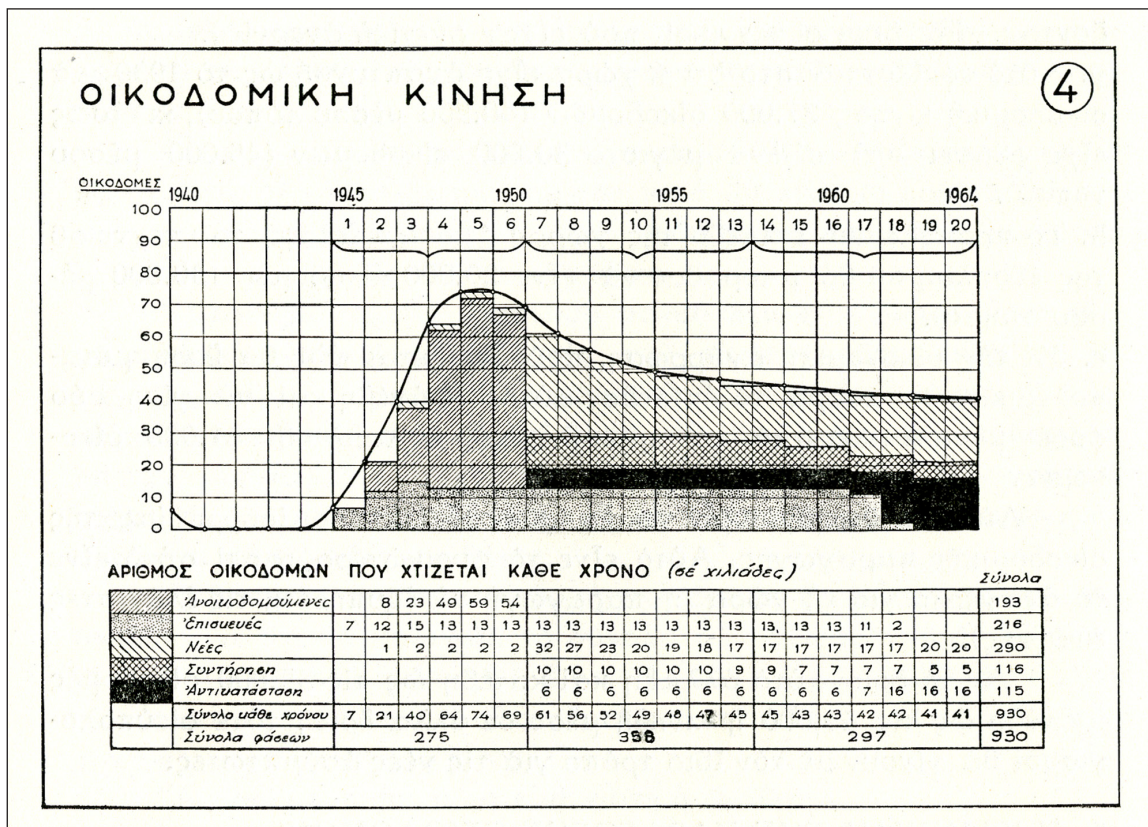


Figure 7: Projections for housing construction as part of a state-led 20-year program (Doxiadis 1947a: 92). Constantin A. Doxiadis Archives © Constantin and Emma Doxiadis Foundation.

also revealed an anti-urban bias, by which he saw small and middle-level rural settlements as crucial hubs for the shaping of a Greek local culture distinct from the ‘pseudo-internationalism’ found in the urban centres (‘Πόλεις της Ελλάδας 1940’, n.d.). In line with Doxiadis’ views, several studies conceptualized rural settlements as distinct architectural, anthropological, and ecological patterns, and, presumably, as the ‘backbone’ of the country (Megas 1946; Megas 1949; Kydoniatis 1947; Valaoras 1947; Ministry for Reconstruction 1947) (Figure 8).<sup>9</sup> Their upgrade was understood as fundamental for ‘a new Greece to be reborn, with stronger, healthier and happier people than before’ (Valaoras 1947: 83). These ideas were further elaborated in architectural and typological design studies of rural settlements and housing units that served also as construction manuals for not only architects and engineers operating in the field but also the rural population (Ministry for Reconstruction 1949) (Figure 9).

These approaches reflected the aforementioned ideological beliefs and antagonisms. Contrary to Doxiadis’ vision, for Despotopoulos and EPAN, the reconstruction offered an opportunity for ‘educating the backward, idle and skeptical villagers’ and reshaping the ‘anti-economic and anti-social’ villages to bridge, eventually, the social, economic, and cultural gap between the countryside and the city (1945a: 47). Expressing the Left’s bias against villages and rural life, EPAN criticized the ministry’s policies for preserving the traditional order of things, thereby limiting the potential to explore ‘evolutionary link[s] between

the old village and villager, which must be abolished, and the new that comes’ (Despotopoulos 1945a: 48, 49).

For the ministry, however, the provision of housing for the countryside was considered a top priority in an urgent national goal: to facilitate the return of the displaced population – comprising mostly peasants and farmers – to their villages and the recovery of the agricultural economy, at least to pre-war levels. The upgrading of rural settlements, according to Doxiadis, could have positive social and economic effects, such as a ‘the rise of income, the decrease in mortality rates and illnesses, the rise of productivity, better organization of the country, and the control of rural-urban migration’ (1946b: 29). From these assumptions emerged a vision of Greek villages as micro-productive units that could, allegedly, turn peasants into ‘optimistic workers’ (Kydoniatis 1946: 256) by upgrading living conditions, agricultural productivity, and transportation networks, and developing small-scale industries for processing agricultural products. These localized forms of development were seen as appropriate not only to the existing rural patterns but also to the transitional post-war state of the country, whose ‘economic role in the rising new world’, according to Doxiadis, had yet to be determined (1947a: 57). In this respect, he advocated for policies that were ‘very plastic’ and ‘adaptable’ (1947a: 56), thus leaving an open perspective on complementary development goals, such as industrialization, which was after all the widely accepted model at the time (Kakridis 2013: 135–160).

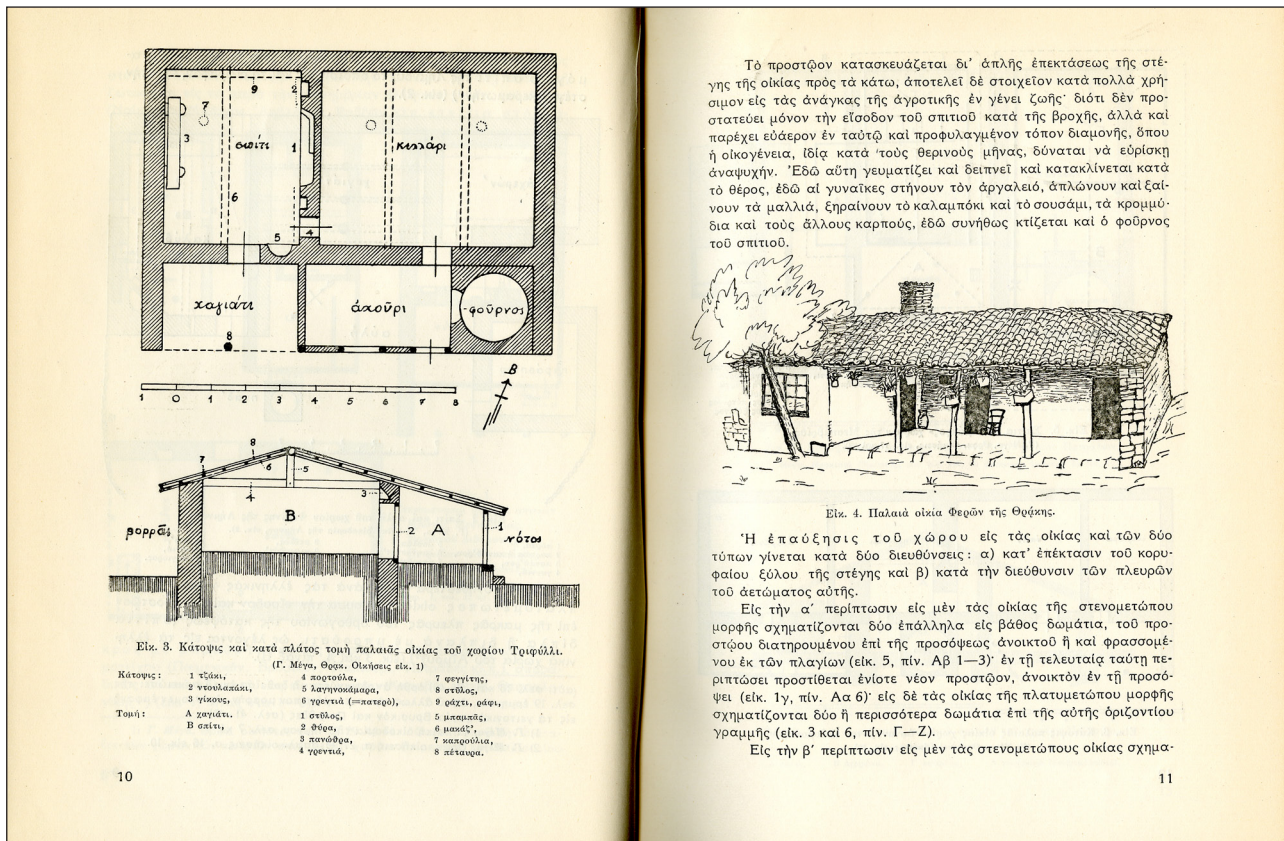
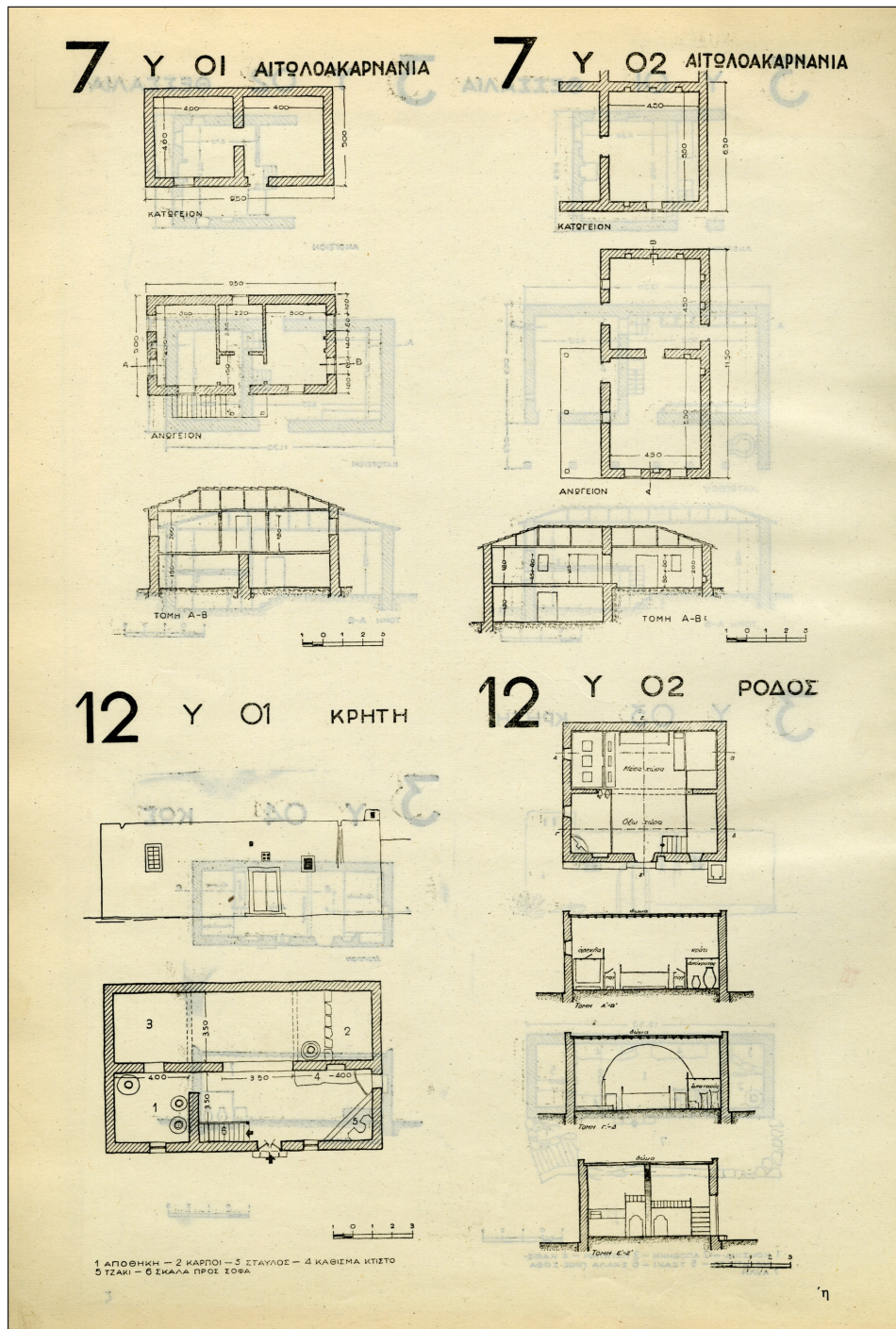


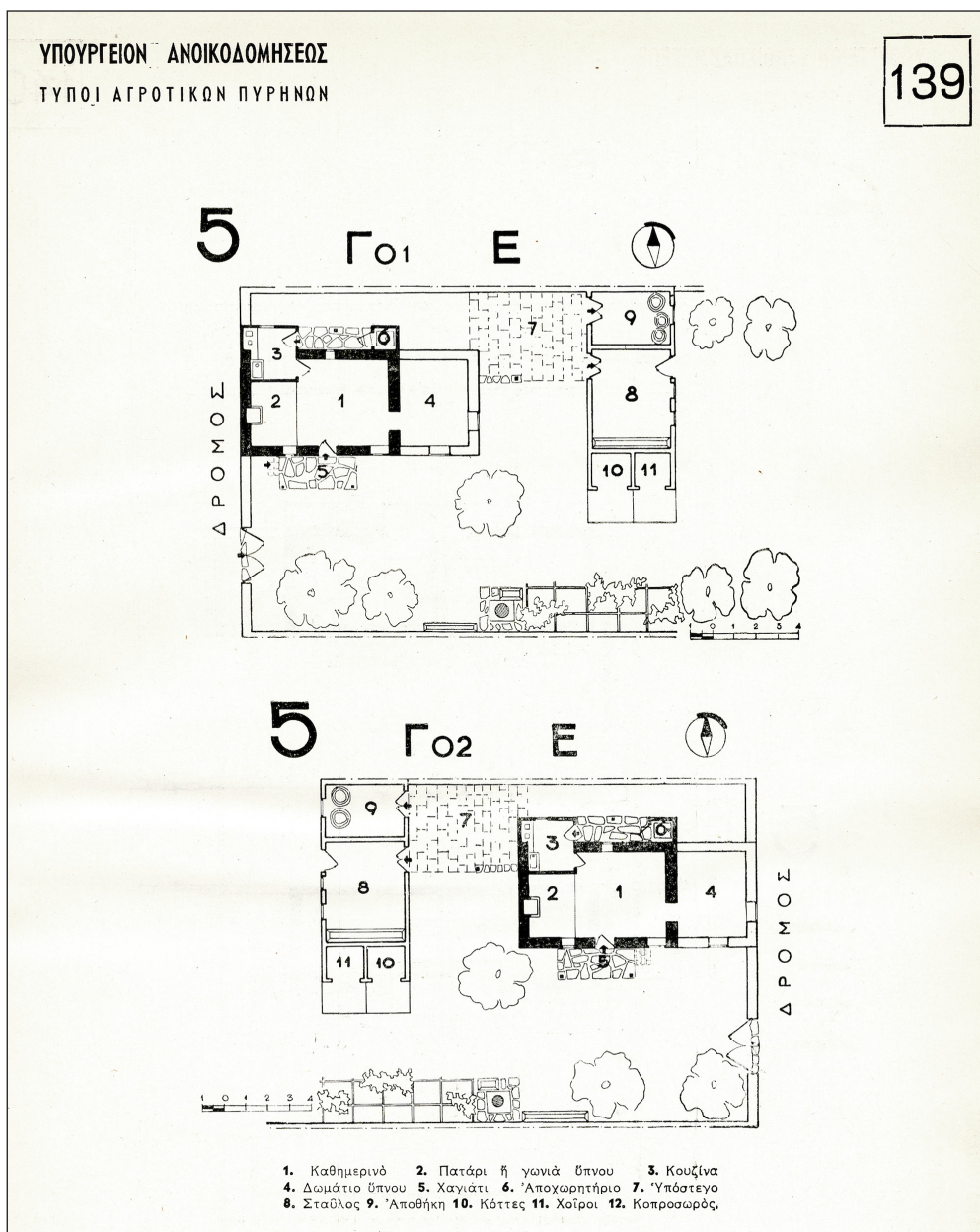
Figure 8: Studies documenting diverse architectural and living patterns across the countryside (Megas, AG. 1949: 10–11) Constantinos A. Doxiadis Archives © Constantinos and Emma Doxiadis Foundation.



**Figure 9:** Typological design studies of houses that served also as construction manuals to be employed in different regions and conditions across the country (Ministry for Reconstruction 1949: η). Constantinou A. Doxiadis Archives © Constantinou and Emma Doxiadis Foundation.

While temporary shelters were thought to offer no incentive for permanent settlement, and long-term policies seemed uncertain, another strategy was promoted: that of 'semi-permanent' housing. The goal, according to Doxiadis, was not experimentation with 'ideal houses' but the creation of the 'maximum possible number of houses corresponding to the economic condition of the country' ('Κείμενο Απολογισμού', 1948). Social and economic goals merged into a broader program for low-cost housing, local-based construction patterns, and standardization. 'Semi-permanent' housing, 'nuclei', or 'cores', became the

ministry's main strategy throughout the country. Using local materials (stone or brick) and wooden or concrete roofs, these 'nuclei' initially followed the standard typology of two-room structures of a total size of 42.5 square meters (5 × 8.5 metres), forming the basis for future expansion and adaptation (Ministry for Reconstruction 1946b: 219–243). Over the years, the ministry continued to experiment with housing typologies aspiring to reconcile the requirement of standardization with the country's regional diversification and user needs (Ministry for Reconstruction 1949) (Figure 10). Both single-family



**Figure 10:** One of the twelve variations of the designed housing ‘nuclei’ or ‘cores’ (shown in black), anticipating additional spaces to be constructed gradually as the economy improved (Ministry for Reconstruction 1949: Plate 139). Constantin A. Doxiadis Archives © Constantin and Emma Doxiadis Foundation.

houses and the settlement were expected to develop in the future through extensions, at the initiative of either the state or individual families. According to an official account, between 1945 to 1947, the ministry had designed, constructed, or restored rural dwellings for 8,200 families across the country. In addition, building materials were also offered to 14,600 families in rural areas – compared to 3,000 families in urban areas – for constructing their own houses through self-help practices.<sup>10</sup>

‘Self-help’ practices were familiar both to the ministry’s experts and the population in the countryside. In fact, the reconstruction strategies reflected continuities with the inter-war legacies of refugee relief programs. Rural resettlement, standardized houses, and self-help housing practices were key strategies to accommodate the greater part of more than one million refugees who arrived

before and after the 1923 treaty on population exchange between Greece and Turkey (Clark 2006). With the support from the League of Nations and international philanthropic bodies, nearly half a million people were settled in the countryside, mainly northern Greece, in formerly abandoned settlements or planned expansions of existing settlements, and in entirely new settlements (Allen 1943; Hirschon 2003; Kontogiorgi 2006; Karadimou-Yerolympos 2009).<sup>11</sup> Forming an embedded, recent experience of extensive impact, these inter-war legacies crucially informed post-war reconstruction, in terms of ideas, policies, and settlement patterns, and especially the central strategy of providing standardized rural family houses, which the refugees would be able to extend over time.

The introduction of self-help programs for the reconstruction of the Greek countryside stemmed from the

conceptual framework of Doxiadis' Ekistics as well as the particularities of economy and geography, the patterns of war destruction, and inter-war legacies. The programs were also in line with concurrent architectural experimentation in different parts of the world, as cost-effective strategies 'adapted' to the cultural and socio-economic patterns in rural contexts employed under various geopolitical regimes (Pyla 2009: 717–721; Nolan 2018; Levin and Feniger 2018). In the emerging international debates on mass housing provided by the state, self-help housing was also widely prescribed by planners as a key solution for 'Third World' development from the 1950s onward (Ward 1982; Muzaffar 2007; Karim 2019b: 67–121; Gyger 2019: 25–37). However, in the case of Greece, these ideas became more and more intertwined with the process of the restitution of state sovereignty, and state-building as a social conflict escalated into an armed conflict in the countryside amid emerging Cold War polarities.

### The Greek Countryside as a 'Cold War Site'

Beginning in 1945, the restitution of state and territorial sovereignty, under British intervention, involved the establishment of military corps and political organizations loyal to the state in local urban centers throughout the country, along with the extinction of partisan groups and social organizations attached to the Left (Voglis 2009; Liakos 2019). The year 1946 was marked by the first post-war elections (with the abstention of the Greek Communist Party), a referendum that led to the restitution of the monarchy, and the beginning of the state's official ideological repression and legal persecution of the Left – a period called 'White Terror' (Panourgia 2009: 78–81). Soon, the ideological and socio-political tensions escalated into armed conflict between the newly formed Democratic Army of Greece (adjacent to the Greek Communist Party) and the National Army (supported by the British). The Civil War developed into a 'war of the countryside' (Voglis 2009: 331); the control of the population and the territory became one of the war's main objects of contestation and contradictory practices (Voglis 2014; Voglis 2015).

From this perspective, both the reconstruction of the countryside and Ekistics as an official state policy are also connected, to a certain extent, to the intense processes of state-building and the efforts to establish state and territorial sovereignty. As soon as the reconstruction projects commenced, they offered an opportunity to reach the most remote areas of the country, following Doxiadis' statement that provision of housing was an act 'of social policy ... comparable to the distribution of food and other needed goods, whose utility and justification was unquestioned' (Ministry for Reconstruction 1947: κβ). However, responding to the urgent need for housing was more than just a form of compensation for the human and material losses the rural population had experienced during the war. These reconstruction projects were also part of a broader effort to restore territorial unity after the partition of the country in German, Bulgarian, and Italian zones of control during the occupation.<sup>12</sup> They also helped to restore cohesion in the countryside in terms of economy,

demography, and transportation. At the same time, reconstruction was seen as a reaction against the fear of social and political disintegration. Already in 1945, Doxiadis, pointing at the Left and its experts, wrote in the press that the villagers 'are taught to react based on a promise that *another social regime will build them better homes*' (Doxiadis 1945; emphasis by Doxiadis). In other words, providing shelter and upgrading rural settlements was far from simply a humanitarian and technocratic problem. It was also employed as a form of nation-building and a tool for establishing state and territorial sovereignty and ideological domination over a contested countryside.

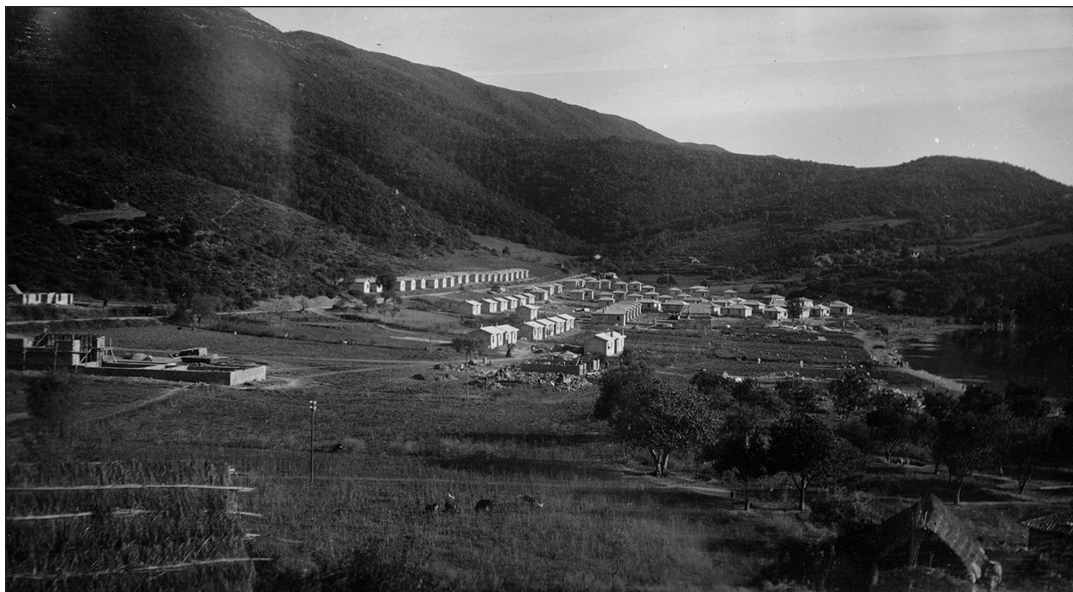
It was not just economic and administrative concerns that made the countryside, and especially the northern regions, 'a national risk', as Doxiadis further warned (1946b: 13). Not only were these areas the base, and the contested territory, of the Democratic Army; its border was also easily penetrable, a zone between Greece and the new socialist regimes of Bulgaria, Albania, and Yugoslavia, which provided support, such as supplies, to the insurgent forces.<sup>13</sup> The northern regions' geopolitical relevance became crucial for the emerging divide between what would soon be known as the 'First' World and the 'Second' World. As a region instrumental to the Civil War, these parts of the countryside became the locus of nationalist propaganda (Karakasidou 2000; Bournazos 2009) and contradictory practices that involved processes of reconstruction, resettlement, and military evacuations, all promoted by different actors at the same time.

Among the Ministry's policies was the relocation of some rural settlements, presumably only in agreement with the local inhabitants (Ministry for Reconstruction 1946b: 191–207). According to Doxiadis' data, during these years, multidisciplinary teams of scientists examined 380 settlements, most of them in northern Greece, and proposed the relocation of 230 of them, of which a final number of 115 settlements were identified for relocation while 42 were under construction ('Κείμενο Απολογισμού', 1948) (Figure 11). These relocation projects were justified on the premise of *location* as a crucial spatial and developmental parameter that was in line with Ekistics framework. Moreover, these state-led provisions and modernization policies were visibly manifested through the ministry's experts who were sent out into the field to engage the local population and through the newly built settlements that arose within the landscape (Figure 12). Exposing the political implications of the ministry's work during the Civil War, Doxiadis further argued that the reconstruction project was also 'a way to encourage the fighting population in the dangerous zones of the country' ('Κείμενο Απολογισμού', 1948).

In parallel to these state policies, the Technical Chamber of Greece announced a fundraising program for reconstruction projects in the crucial border zones. This was based on the claim that 'the drama that has taken place for some time in the Greek countryside and especially in the Northern Regions is the outcome of an organized external intervention' ('Πρόνοια Βορείου Ελλάδος', 1947: 64) (Figure 13). This program unfolded under the auspices of Queen Frederica, a fervent promoter of propagandistic



**Figure 11:** Section of a large-scale map depicting reconstruction projects (black pins) and the relocation of rural settlements (blue arrows) in northern Greece (c. 1948). Photograph by Babis Louizidis, 2019 © Laboratory of History/Theory of Architecture, National Technical University of Athens.



**Figure 12:** Photograph of a newly constructed rural settlement in Menidi, Valtos, western Greece (c. 1950) Kardamitsis archive © Modern Greek Architecture Archives, Benaki Museum.

mechanisms, and formed part of wider state projects of social engineering, including children's camps and vocational youth camps (Vervenioti 2009; Hasiotis 2013) as well as exile camps for political dissidents (Panourgιά 2009).

The Civil War triggered new waves of population movement. Hundreds of thousands of people moved through evacuation strategies; some joined the Democratic Army (by will or by force) and many more were forced to relocate by the National Army. Since the beginning of armed conflicts in 1946, villages in mountainous areas that were considered supporters of the Democratic Army were cut off from UNRRA aid. This was followed in 1947 by the systematic evacuation of mountainous settlements, mainly in central and northern Greece, as part of a military strategy

that appeared to have the approval of the British forces, while villages were classified as 'friendly', 'secure', or 'hostile' (Voglis 2014: 288). Following the military conflicts, these evacuations were conducted to prevent the Democratic Army from any new recruitment and to cut off the supply of food and goods and networks of information. These strategies of evacuation were at first limited, but they intensified after the US mission in 1947 and escalated in 1948 and 1949, especially in Epirus, eastern Macedonia, and Thrace. According to estimates, Civil War refugees rose from 20,000 in 1947 to approximately 685,000 in 1949, half of them in northern Greece (Voglis 2014: 314).

The year 1947 was a turning point for the Greek reconstruction. The US took over from Britain the provision of the



**Figure 13:** Cover of a 1954 booklet promoting the work of the Kings of Greece during the Civil War, 1946–1949 (Skazikis 1954).

financial and military support and the management of the country's recovery. Under the Truman Doctrine (announced on March 12, 1947), and following an initial investigation of the Greek situation, undertaken by Paul Porter, leading to his report of 1947, the US missions imposed strict controls on the implementation of the recovery program. Meanwhile, Greece signed an agreement in June 1947 that gave these missions almost absolute control over the country's economy, as well as significant political power within an already volatile socio-political landscape, in which the Civil War was underway (Stathakis 2004: 165).

Within this context, the policies and debates on reconstruction – with their contradictions and controversies – from 1944 to 1947 set the foundation, including many of the priorities, for the evolution of the recovery programs under both the Truman Doctrine, from 1947 to 1948, and the Marshall Plan, from 1948 to 1954. Among these were the settlement evacuation strategies in the countryside that intensified as the Civil War escalated, fuelling urbanization trends. US missions also embraced the agendas of the Ministry for Reconstruction, particularly its focus on self-help practices in the countryside, both as a strategy

aligned to the goal of minimizing economic aid but also as a form of engaging the local population in the recovery program. Porter's report of 1947 commented on the work of the ministry:

There is much to be commended in the way in which the Ministry [for Reconstruction] has proceeded ... It has recognized the necessity of limiting government aid to a minimum and has developed a plan whereby government funds are used to construct a nucleus housing unit which will provide minimum shelter and which can later be expanded through the individual efforts of the homeowner. (1947: 41)

Not only was self-help seen as an economic strategy to address the country's serious lack of funds, but it was also promoted as a tactic for turning aid recipients into active contributors to the aid process, as another mission report, by the United Nation Food and Agricultural Organisation, underlined (1947: 149). Self-help programs in the countryside continued to be promoted by Greek and US experts

as the ideal vehicle by which to ‘win over’ the peasants and propagate the achievements of American aid for the entire Greek society, turning Greek villages into ‘Cold War Site[s]’ (Sackley 2011). Blurring the boundaries between documentation and propaganda, photos and films from this period represent the local population as a presumably consensual partner in the country’s reconstruction, while obscuring the implications of an architectural and planning expertise conditioned by the traumas of the Civil War and Cold War geopolitics (Figure 14).

### Conclusions

The Greek countryside was the locus of not only extensive documentation and mapping during the war and the occupation but also antagonistic visions for the country’s reconstruction. It was a key field of state intervention after the war, when shelter and housing policies attempted to respond to war destructions, intense mobilities, and deprived populations, dynamics that challenged the country’s socio-economic recovery. The aspirations of Doxiadis and the Ministry for Reconstruction for resettling the rural population and restoring state and territorial sovereignty drew on the conceptual and spatial framework of Ekistics. Within the escalating social and military conflicts of the Civil War, incited by processes of anti-communist state-building and British interventionism, the reconstruction policies overlapped with village evacuation strategies, which further triggered the movement of populations and undermined the recovery of the countryside. From 1944 to 1947, these contradictory state responses to reclaim the countryside, this article argues, set the ground for the reconstruction and recovery programs under US intervention and beyond.

These crucial years of the Greek reconstruction formed a critical ground that shaped planning cultures. The transnational flows of ideas and knowledge, inter-war legacies, war destructions, ideological and socio-political tensions, state and administrative limitations all led to the emergence of novel planning concepts, in particular the formulation of Doxiadis’ Ekistics, whose focus on settlements and housing developed in dialogue with the growing field of international planning expertise in the post-war era (Mehos and Moon 2011; Pyla 2013; Lagae and De Raedt 2014). By focusing on rural settlements and the Greek countryside, this article goes beyond the prevailing focus on town planning and the rebuilding of urban centers, thereby offering another perspective from which to revisit European reconstruction and its various policy-making legacies and planning trajectories (Lampland 2011; Clapson and Larkham 2013; Pendlebury, Erdem, and Larkham 2014; Diefendorf 2015; Moravánszky and Hopfengärtner 2016; Wampuszyc 2018; Kohlrausch 2019). Moreover, it highlights a crucial episode in the post-war architectural and planning histories, which became intricately tied to the geopolitics of the Cold War, the international and national agendas for the socio-economic development of rural-based societies that spread across the non-western world from the 1950s onward (see, for example, Muzaffar 2012; Phokaides 2018; Karim 2019a).

The Greek reconstruction was a transitional process and a historical turning point. This transitional process brought the reconfiguration of how space is planned, in terms of epistemology, concepts, policies, practices, and discourses, under the direction of state-led technocratic planning. At the same time, the reconstruction was an extensive and contested spatial project that aimed to establish state and



**Figure 14:** The construction of housing ‘cores’ through ‘self-help’ practices (c. 1949). Kardamitsis archive, Modern Greek Architecture Archives, Benaki Museum.



territorial sovereignty and guide wider social transformations while adjusting to and contributing to socio-political and military conflicts. Under these circumstances, the Greek countryside emerged as a contested socio-spatial field partly reconfigured by various claims and dynamics: from Doxiadis' Ekistics to socio-political antagonisms and conflicts and emerging Cold War geopolitics.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> This body was called, in Greek, 'Υφυπουργείο Ανυκοδόμησης', and in official publications is translated as Undersecretary's Office for Reconstruction. Initially it was established within the Ministry for Public Works and became an autonomous ministry in 1947. For reasons of clarity and convenience, we adopt the term Ministry for Reconstruction throughout the article and avoid frequent changes to the names and Doxiadis' posts: He was politically appointed as the deputy minister for Reconstruction from December 28, 1945, to April 4, 1945. On April 5, 1946, he received the permanent post of general director, a position he maintained after October 1947 when the Ministry for Reconstruction became autonomous. In May 1948, Doxiadis became the head of the Greek Recovery Program Coordinating Office (GRPCO) at the Ministry of Coordination, responsible for the implementation of the country's recovery program under the Marshall Plan. His post, along with the Ministry for Reconstruction, was abolished in 1951.
- <sup>2</sup> The National Liberation Front (EAM) was the resistance movement influenced by the Greek Communist Party.
- <sup>3</sup> The scholarly discussion over the periodization of the Greek Civil War is extensive. We employ a narrow periodization of the Civil War, extending from 1946 to 1949; however, other studies insist on an earlier date, starting from 1943.
- <sup>4</sup> Some of the closest collaborators of Doxiadis were also part of the so called Κύκλος Τεχνικών (Circle of Technicians), which published its own journal, Χωροταξία-Πολοδομία-Αρχιτεκτονική 'Δελτίον Κύκλου Τεχνικών'.
- <sup>5</sup> We use the international term Ekistics instead of the Greek term Οικιστική [Oikistike] precisely to highlight the crucial role of the Greek post-war context in shaping Doxiadis' subsequent planning endeavors and the various activities he initiated dedicated to the production of knowledge on human settlements, including the international journal *Ekistics*, published by the Athens Center of Ekistics from 1957 to 2006.
- <sup>6</sup> The country's hopes for substantial war reparations and international aid were dashed at the end of 1945, during the Paris Conference, leading to efforts to procure international loans (Politakis 2018: 101) and to a domestic mobilization of country's own resources.
- <sup>7</sup> Over the next couple of years, and relying on the same group of collaborators, the Ministry for Reconstruction revealed and disseminated a significant part of the work produced during and after the war through an extended series of over thirty publications. These publications remain invaluable records, espe-

cially since an extensive body of source material was destroyed by fire toward the end of the occupation (Papaioannou 1976: 315).

- <sup>8</sup> According to Karadimou-Yerolympos, the spatial vision of EP-AN was shaped and partly presented in the Technical Chamber during the occupation, while a publication on settlement planning never got published, since promoting the vision for heavy industrialization received priority (2009: 146).
- <sup>9</sup> For a more extensive presentation of these studies and their role in the work of Doxiadis, see Theocharopoulou (2017: 85–109).
- <sup>10</sup> According to its own estimates, and complementary to the housing construction, the ministry had overseen the logging of 200,000 m<sup>3</sup> of wood from burnt areas; the establishment of 20 new factories for processing wood; 14 new factories for tiles; construction of forest roads; construction of local roads; rural construction; studies for the reorganization of cities; and provision of materials for the construction of facilities of the UNRRA and for churches, schools, police, healthcare, administration, social organizations, municipalities, and communes (Doxiadis 1947d: 23–24).
- <sup>11</sup> The resettlement of inter-war refugees was supported by international organizations, such as the American Rockefeller Foundation, the Phelps–Stokes Fund and Near East Relief.
- <sup>12</sup> German military forces controlled the major urban centres, Athens, Thessaloniki, central Macedonia, most of Crete and major islands. Italian forces controlled most of the Greek territory and the islands, while Bulgarian forces controlled Eastern Macedonia and Thrace along with some of the major food production areas.
- <sup>13</sup> The support was lifted in 1948, when the Greek communist leaders sided with Stalin than the Yugoslavian leader Tito, during the so-called "Stalin-Tito split" even though it was Yugoslavia who had been the main supporter of the Democratic Army. In July 1949, Yugoslavia closed the border to Greece and soon after the Civil War was over (Gerolymatos 2016: 178–211).

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