CONSTANTINOS A. DOXIADIS AND ADRIANO OLIVETTI’S CONCEPTION OF URBANISM AND URBAN PUBLIC SPACE: THE ROLE OF MARSHALL PLAN IN THE POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION IN GREECE AND ITALY

MARIANNA CHARITONIDOU

Abstract

This paper aims to shed light on the complex relationship between the Cold War policies including the European Recovery Program (ERP), known as Marshall Plan, and urban public space. Its main objective is to provide a precise and deep understanding of how the Marshall plan politics, contributed to the formation of national identity in Greece and Italy. Particular emphasis is placed on how the post-war formation of national identity in Greece and Italy was related to collective and public spaces. The paper focuses on two key players regarding the connection between the politics of the Marshall Plan and agendas for urban planning and urban public spaces: the Greek town planner Constantinos A. Doxiadis and the Italian industrialist Adriano Olivetti. It is developed around the following four axes: firstly, it focuses on the examination of Doxiadis and Olivetti’s respective understanding of democracy and urban public spaces; secondly, it presents their respective reconstruction models; thirdly, it analyses their respective stance vis-à-vis centralized and decentralized models of governing; finally, it examines their respective involvement in the European Recovery Program (ERP).

Keywords


Introduction

The paper is developed around the following axes: firstly, it focuses on the examination of Constantinos A. Doxiadis and Adriano Olivetti’s respective
understanding of democracy; secondly, it presents their respective reconstruction models; thirdly, it analyses their respective stance vis-à-vis centralized and decentralized models of governing; finally, it examines their respective involvement in the European Recovery Program (ERP). The objective of the paper is to shed light on how Doxiadis and Olivetti contributed to societal transformation, on the one hand, and the formation of national identity within the Greek and Italian post-war context respectively, on the other hand.

Important for grasping the Marshall Plan’s impact on Greece’s post-war reconstruction is Doxiadis’s role as undersecretary and director-general of the Ministry of Housing and Reconstruction between 1945 and 1948, as coordinator of the Greek Recovery Program and as undersecretary of the Ministry of Coordination between 1948 and 1950. Pivotal for understanding the Marshall Plan’s impact on Italy’s post-war reconstruction is Olivetti’s role within the study center of the UNRRA-CASAS housing committee, which was responsible for the development settlement schemes based on the model of the communitarian aggregation. In many cases, renowned architects, who worked outside the agency’s technical staff, were invited to design these settlement schemes.

The main objective of this article is to provide a terrain of investigation situated at their intersection with architectural design and town planning, taking into account the interaction between social history, political history, economic history and transnational studies. Despite the fact that it mainly examines Doxiadis and Olivetti’s agendas, the way it is developed aims to provide an understanding of the dominant models of urban design and town planning, during the post-war years, both in Greece and in Italy, thus challenging the monographic interest for the above-mentioned figures. The fact that both Doxiadis and Olivetti were important public figures and held significant political positions provides two case-studies allowing us to decipher what was at stake in the political sphere in relation to the impact of the European Recovery Program (ERP) in Greece and Italy.

Constantinos A. Doxiadis and Adriano Olivetti and the formation of national identity in post-war Greece and Italy

To better grasp the differences and similarities between the political approach of the Greek architect town planner Constantinos A. Doxiadis and that of the Italian industrialist Adriano Olivetti, one should compare the directions that the reconstruction projects took after WWII in Italy and Greece. Greece was one of the countries most devastated by WWII, while Italy was selected because, in order to counter the debates on communism, America was very much interested in influencing the fictions and agendas that accompanied the Italian post-WWII reconstruction. For these reasons, the formation of national identity in post-war Greece and Italy was a significant issue in various domains including architecture,
urban design and cinema. For the aforementioned reasons the question of the formation of national identity in the post-war years in Greece and Italy was very present in various domains including architecture, urban design and cinema. The former exemplifies the post-war Greek technocratic élite, while the latter encapsulates the spirit of the post-war Italian entrepreneurial bourgeoisie. According to Andreas Kakridis, Doxiadis’ stance should be understood within the context of the post-war apolitical technocratic élite.

To better grasp Doxiadis and Olivetti’s visions, it is useful to examine Doxiadis’s five-year mandate at the Ministry of Reconstruction, on the one hand, and on Olivetti’s role as president of the Istituto Nazionale di Urbanistica (INU) from 1950 and vice-president of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA)-CASAS program from 1959, on the other. The UNRRA-CASAS program, developed under the aegis of the United Nations, was a bi-national agency whose mission was to make use of funds from the European Recovery Program (ERP).

Adriano Olivetti’s political agenda and the UNRRA-CASAS program

Adriano Olivetti’s political agenda was based on his intention to think beyond the schism between the Social Democrats and the Communists, which dominated the post-war Italian political context. At the center of Olivetti’s vision was the search for the elaboration of new models of civil cohabitation. Of great significance for understanding Olivetti’s political agenda is the way he conceived the relationship between democracy and community. Olivetti gave much importance to the relationship of citizens to institutions. Four seminal works for understanding Olivetti’s vision are L’ordine politico delle comunità, Per un’economia e politica comunitaria, Città dell’uomo, and Società, Stato, Comunità. As Franco Ferrarotti has underscored, in La concreta utopia di Adriano Olivetti, Olivetti’s utopian vision could be characterized as “concrete utopia” in the sense that his understanding of communities as concrete goes hand in hand with his conviction that communities are determined by geography and history.

Adriano Olivetti played an important role in Italo-American exchanges as a member of the UNRRA-CASAS program’s housing committee from 1951. His ideas had a significant impact on urbanistic approaches within the post-war Italian context. For him, urban planning was part of a broader political project. Since 1933, Olivetti was general manager of the typewriter factory founded by his father outside the Italian town of Ivrea. In 1947, he founded “Movimento

Comunità”. Giovanni Astengo, a graduate architect of the Politecnico di Torino, who was associated with the “Movimento Comunità”, helped Olivetti reorganize Urbanistica (fig. 1) and became vice-president of the Istituto Nazionale di Urbanistica (INU) in 1950. In early 1952, Olivetti formed the Gruppo Tecnico Coordinamento Urbanistico del Canavese, which included the architects Ludovico Quarone, Nello Renacco, and Annibale Fiocchi and the engineer Enrico Ranieri. Due to the projects initiated by Olivetti, Ivrea’s population roughly doubled between the 1930s and 1960s. Olivetti was elected mayor of Ivrea in 1956 and became a member of parliament in the national government in 1958. member of the UNRRA-CASAS program’s housing committee from 1951. His ideas

1: The cover of the third issue of Urbanistica.
In April 1948, the Marshall Plan was authorized to offer economic assistance to reconstruction efforts in Western European economies decimated by WWII. UNRRA-CASAS operated from 1947 through 1963, when it became ISES, Istituto per lo Sviluppo dell’Edilizia Sociale [Institute for the Development of Social Housing]. For the Italian context, three programs that are related to the large-scale transformations of the post-war period are the European Recovery Program and especially the UNRRA-CASAS program and the two Ina-Casa programs (1949–1956 and 1956–1963). The UNRRA-CASAS program was responsible for the construction of more than a thousand villages all over Italy. The mythologies that accompanied the conception of these villages are significant for unfolding the transformations of architecture’s scope within the post-war Italian context. The European Recovery Program (ERP) gave funds to UNRRA-CASAS for SVIMEZ (Associazione per lo Sviluppo dell’Industria nel Mezzogiorno) and then for the Casa per il Mezzogiorno, the Italian state agency for the development of the south, founded in 1950. Significant for understanding the aesthetics related to post-war Southern Italy or “Mezzogiorno” are the photographs by American photojournalist Marjory Collins, especially those accompanying the “Viaggio ai ‘Sassi’ di Matera”, published in 1950 in Comunità, the journal that Adriano Olivetti founded in 1946 and which was published until 1960. Matera, which is in the Basilicata region, is related to the concept of “meridionalismo”, which was elaborated to refer to the study of social, economic and cultural problems in the South. A large part of its population still lived in the “sassi”, which are a type of primitive houses. Olivetti’s involvement in a detailed study of Matera will thus be carefully scrutinized. It included proposals for the requalification of its “sassi” and the new town of La Martella, directed by a group of American-based scholars, such as Federico G. Friedmann. The team that worked on the requalification of Matera’s “sassi” and La Martella consisted of Quaroni, Federico Gorio, Michele Valori, Piero Maria Lugli and Luigi Agati thanks to funding granted by Olivetti.

The Marshall Plan and the transatlantic exchanges in architecture, urban planning and the arts

Between 1948 and 1952, as Michael Holm remarks, in *The Marshall Plan: A New Deal for Europe*, due to the European Recovery Program (ERP), the United States were the principal benefactor of Western Europe’s post-WWII recovery. Some studies exist on the relationship of the Marshall Plan, with cinema, but there are no comprehensive analyses of the impact of the Marshall Plan on architectural and urban design methods in Europe. Regarding the studies on cinema, important are Maria Fritsche’s *The American Marshall Plan Film Campaign and the Europeans: A Captivated Audience?* and *Homemade Men in Postwar Austrian Cinema: Nationhood, Genre and Masculinity*. Among the studies that have been centered on the analysis of the impact of the Marshall plan on Italian cinema are

A number of studies address the role of design, painting, music and the media during the Cold War, but the domain of architecture has led to far fewer publications. However, some aspects related to architecture are addressed in *Cold War Modern: Design 1945-1970* edited by David Crowley and Jane Pavitt. Creg Castillo, in *Cold War on the Home Front: The Soft Power of Midcentury Design*, examines how domestic environments were exploited to promote the superiority of either capitalism or socialism on both sides of the Iron Curtain, during the Cold War years, while *Music, Art and Diplomacy: East-West Cultural Interactions and the Cold War*, edited by Simo Mikkonen and Pekka Suutari, covers episodes involving art, classical music, theatre, dance and film during the decades following WWII.

At the center of Olivetti’s vision was the search for an elaboration of a new civil cohabitation, on the one hand, and of models promoting democracy beyond political parties, on the other hand. More specifically, he intended to bring into being ways that would permit to overcome both Marxism and capitalism. For this purpose, he established the political and cultural movement “Movimento Comunità” in 1947 in Ivrea, which dissolved in 1961, after his death (fig. 2, fig. 3).

Five years before its dissolution, in 1956, Olivetti was elected mayor of Ivrea, while in 1958 he became a member of parliament in the national government. Adriano Olivetti’s *Movimento di Comunità* was trying to shape new tools intending to enhance social awareness and to promote the interaction between technology, sociology and political sciences.

To understand his political vision, one should take into account Olivetti’s activities during the fall of 1957, when the Italian Republic was in the midst of its “economic boom” (“miracolo economico”) and was part of a newly developed European economic community. Informative for understanding the magnitude of the Italian economic boom is Paolo Scrivano’s remark that “[i]n the 15 years following the end of the war, Italy underwent dramatic social and economic change”.

Following Scrivano’s approach in *Building Transatlantic Italy: Architectural Dialogues with Postwar America*, the role of Olivetti in the Italo-American exchanges should be situated within the larger realm of studies on Americanization. Antonio Gramsci’s “Americanism and Fordism” is useful in order to decipher the mechanisms involved in the “economic boom” of the 1960s in Italy and the way in which the process of Americanization is linked to the process of modernization during post-war reconstruction within the Italian context. Another question that is worth mentioning is the extent to which the reinvention of the

---

concept of the city by post-war Italian architects, and especially in relation to Olivetti’s role as president of the Istituto Nazionale di Urbanistica (INU) and vice-president of the UNRRA-CASAS program, is linked to the hybridization of imported American models to Italy. Worth-mentioning is the impact of The Joint Center for Urban Studies for the Italo-American exchanges concerning urban planning strategies during the post-war period. The Joint Center for Urban Studies was a combined research center between Harvard and MIT established in Boston in 1959 in conjunction with the conference “The Historian and the City” and was supported by the Ford Foundation. It played an important role in the Italo-American exchanges, addressing intellectual and policy issues confronting a nation experiencing widespread demographic, economic and social changes, with dramatic and far-reaching effects on cities in particular.

Constantinos A. Doxiadis’s political agenda and The Plan for the Survival of the Greek Nation

Important for understanding Doxiadis’s political agenda is his role as undersecretary and director-general of the Ministry of Housing and Reconstruction between 1945 and 1948, as coordinator of the Greek Recovery Program and as undersecretary of the Ministry of Coordination between 1948 and 1950. In order to grasp the amplitude of the research that was led during the period when Doxiadis served as director-general of the Ministry of housing and
Reconstruction, one must consider that 30 different research monographs on issues of rural housing, urban design, economic development and administrative reform were developed under Doxiadis’s supervision. In parallel, around 35,000 new houses were constructed and 153,000 buildings were repaired. Amongst the tables included in a Report of the Ministry of Reconstruction published in 1948 is an estimate of the number of rooms repaired or built for Civil War refugees by 30 June 1948, which totaled 36,272⁴. These numbers cover the period between 1948 and 1951 omitting data from the first years of the ministry’s operation. Only completed houses are counted. Another 12,000 new houses and 32,000 repairs were in progress when the report was drafted in 1952.

In order to better grasp the significance of Doxiadis’s reconstruction efforts, one should bear in mind that Greece was among the most devastated countries to emerge from WWII. Doxiadis’s efforts during the post-war years constitute an important component of development theory and planning in post-war Greece. According to Doxiadis’s claims in “Ekistic Policy for the Reconstruction of Greece and a Twenty-year Plan”, Greece lost 23 per cent of its buildings during WWII, a higher percentage than any other European country⁵.

In 1947, Doxiadis mounted a statistical exhibition entitled “Such Was the War in Greece” (fig. 4, fig. 5, fig. 6). This exhibition displayed Greece’s wartime depredations with thorough maps and photographs a few weeks after the Nazi withdrawal from Athens. Doxiadis was appointed undersecretary and director-general of the Ministry of Housing and Reconstruction between 1945 and 1948, coordinator of the Greek Recovery Program and undersecretary of the Ministry of Coordination between 1948 and 1950. During the first three years he directed the Ministry of Housing and Reconstruction, 561 settlements were surveyed and 230 new urban plans were drafted.

⁴ Doxiadis, Κείμενον απολογισμού του Υπουργείου Ανοικοδομής [Report of the Ministry of Reconstruction], Doxiadis Archives 8509.
Maps that were included in the exhibition “Such Was the War in Greece” curated by Constantinos A. Doxiadis
© Constantinos and Emma Doxiadis Foundation
5: Map that shows the destructions of the railway network in Greece during WW II. This map was included in the exhibition “Such Was the War in Greece” curated by Constantinos A. Doxiadis © Constantinos and Emma Doxiadis Foundation
Of great interest for understanding Doxiadis’s post-war reconstruction agenda is his Survival Plan, which is the product of a collaboration between Doxiadis and other specialists. Its official name was Plan for the Survival of the Greek Nation. The Plan for the Survival of the Greek Nation, which was drafted by Doxiadis and his colleagues between 1946 and 1947, is important for understanding Doxiadis’s positions in relation to the Marshall Plan in Greece. The close reading of this document offers an understanding of the drive for modernization during the post-war years in Greece. What lies behind this plan is Doxiadis’s own theory of social
evolution, which is based on a biological analogy between nations and living organisms. Characteristically, Doxiadis remarked somewhere between 1946 and 1947, in the Plan for the Survival of the Greek Nation: “nations are living organisms, evolving from primary and rudimentary forms to more integrated ones. As all living organisms, peoples go through various stages of development.”

Of great importance for understanding the relationship between urban planning and politics in Doxiadis’s thought is Architecture in Transition. The holistic and interdisciplinary view behind a handwritten sketch of an organization chart for the New Greek Recovery Programme by Doxiadis (fig. 7) and an internal organization chart of the Greek Recovery Program Coordinating office (ΥΣΕΣΑ) at the Ministry of Coordination (fig. 8) should be understood in relation to Doxiadis’s concept of “ekistics”, which Doxiadis coined in Ekistic Analysis, and was further developed in Ekistics: An Introduction to the Science of Human Settlements, “Ekistics, the Science of Human Settlements” and Ekistic policy for the reconstruction of Greece and a twenty-year plan. In Doxiadis’s thought, ekistics operated at three levels: firstly, general ekistics; secondly, urban planning, and thirdly, building design and construction. Both holism and interdisciplinarity lie at the heart of Doxiadis’ approach to the understanding of human progress. Doxiadis also drew a distinction between interdisciplinary and condisciplinary science. In “Ekistics, the Science of Human Settlements”, Doxiadis underscored: “To achieve the needed knowledge and develop the science of human settlements we must move from an interdisciplinary to a condisciplinary science.”

---

12 Doxiadis, “Ekistics, the Science of Human Settlements”.
7: Handwritten sketch of an organisation chart of the Greek Recovery Programme Coordinating office (ΥΣΕΑ) at the Ministry of Coordination. © Constantinos and Emma Doxiadis Foundation
Towards a conclusion or juxtaposing centralized and decentralized political apparatuses

Constantinos A. Doxiadis believed in the necessity of centralized state coordination. On the contrary, Olivetti considered a government of decentralized authority as the true expression of democracy, as becomes evident in *L’ordine politico delle comunità*, first published in 1945. The objective of the article was to shed light on the tension between Doxiadis’s preference for a centralized political apparatus and Olivetti’s predilection for a decentralized one. More specifically, in 1945, Doxiadis, upon invitation by Prime Minister Nikolaos Plastiras, worked on the creation of a centralized state agency in charge of reconstruction. Doxiadis’s belief in centralized models of governing reflects his desire for complete control, which becomes evident in the following words, written during his first years of service at the Ministry of Reconstruction: “for such a colossal project to work, there can be only one competent Authority. This...

---

Authority was named the State Ekistic Authority because: (a) its power must emanate from the state, (b) the concept of ekistics, as a broader term of the science and policy of all housing problems, embraces all its competences, not just those of city-planning and building”\textsuperscript{14}.

What I tried to render explicit in this article is that centralized control and planning had for Constantinos A. Doxiadis a theoretical justification, which can also be found in \textit{Η πορεία των λαών} [\textit{The March of the Peoples}]\textsuperscript{15}. Adriano Olivetti, on the other hand, as becomes evident in \textit{L’ordine politico delle comunità}, supported political decentralization, which, for him, referred to the implementation of urban and economic plans by the territorial communities and their organic coordination\textsuperscript{16}. He believed that political decentralization could prevent both elitism and bureaucratism, which he understood as inherent to the two types of rationalization most discussed during post-war years, namely the scientific rationalization of industrial processes and the centralized planning favored by socialist countries. Their vision of politics is related to their agendas regarding urban planning strategies within the context of the post-war reconstruction.

Doxiadis had an image of scientific and economic progress as capable of rendering class and ideology irrelevant, while Olivetti was persuaded that the establishment of conditions that would provide the citizens with the sense of community relied on “expert technicians, politicians and scientists, who would work principally for the good of the people in the communities”\textsuperscript{17}. For Olivetti, the communitarian dimension was the antidote against problems between citizens and governmental institutions. His strategy aimed to help men overcome the effects of depersonalization and alienation related to modernization and bureaucratization. On the one hand, at the center of Olivetti’s thought was his intention to reconcile men with technology. On the other hand, Doxiadis’s vision was characterized by an image of science and economic progress as capable of rendering class and ideology irrelevant. Despite the fact that the vision of each was characterized by the so-called “technocratic fundamentalism”\textsuperscript{18}, their way of incorporating managerial and technocratic thought in the political apparatus differs a lot. More specifically, Doxiadis’s vision regarding post-war reconstruction was characterized by top-down interventionism par excellence, while at the heart of

\textsuperscript{14} Doxiadis, \textit{Οικιστική πολιτική για την ανοικοδόμηση της χώρας με ένα εικοσάχρονο σχέδιο} [\textit{Ekistic Policy for the Reconstruction of the Country on a Twenty-year Programme}], 169.

\textsuperscript{15} Doxiadis, \textit{Η πορεία των λαών} [\textit{The March of the Peoples}]. Athens: Ikaros, 1949.

\textsuperscript{16} Olivetti, \textit{L’ordine politico delle comunità: dello stato secondo le leggi dello spirito}.


Olivetti’s humanistic socialism as the search for socialization without nationalization.

**Bibliography**


______. (2021) "Gender and Migrant Roles in Italian Neorealist and New Migrant Films: Cinema as an Apparatus of Reconfiguration of National Identity and ‘Otherness’," *Humanities*, 10(2). DOI: https://doi.org/10.3390/h10020071

______. (2021) "Constantinos A. Doxiadis’ Concept of ‘Ecumenopolis’ vis-à-vis Eurafrica: Revisiting the Masterplan for Festac Town and the Role of Transport Infrastructure”, 18th Annual International Architectural Humanities Research Association Conference (AHRA), Loughborough, United Kingdom, November 11–13, 2021. DOI: https://doi.org/10.3929/ethz-b-000494181

______. (2020) "The immediacy of urban reality in post-war Italy: Between neorealism’s and Tendenza’s instrumentalization of ugliness," in Thomas Mical Wouter Van Acker, eds. *Architecture and Ugliness. Anti-Aesthetics in...*
Postmodern Architecture. London; New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 223-244. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.5040/9781350068261.ch-013


______. Homemade Men in Postwar Austrian Cinema: Nationhood, Genre and Masculinity


