Beyond the Informal City:
Athens and the Possibility of an Urban Common

Proefschrift

ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor
aan de Technische Universiteit Delft,
op gezag van de Rector Magnificus prof. ir. K.C.A.M. Luyben,
voorzitter van het College voor Promoties,
in het openbaar te verdedigen op vrijdag, 23 mei 2014 om 12:30 uur

door
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geboren te Athene, Griekenland
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ISBN 9789461863034
Vincenzo Castella, *Athens 1998*
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PROPOSITIONS

01 “Beyond the Informal City” attempts to relate a particular form of domestic ethos, habits and practices of occupation and construction of the typical household in Greece with administrative and managerial processes that introduced all of the above as abstract, regulatory “possibilities”.

02 This legal framework constructed a body of tools and design procedures that administered social relations, forms and organization of labour, rendered the economy of construction as the main productive capital, and set space at the epicentre of political and social antagonism.

03 The thesis understands conflict as the generator of spatial and societal transformations in the city, and production as the space where this antagonistic relationship primarily occurs.

04 Conflict and struggle are the two instrumental categories to confront the notion of “crisis” as an ongoing, never ending project of capitalism, not as a “malfunction” of the capitalist economy and its cities.

05 There is no cause and effect relationship between space, architecture, the economy or the political itself. The strategy should be to problematize the strategic link between production in general – and production of space in particular – with the city and its machines of administration.

06 The thesis confronts the distinction between “formal” and “informal” urbanization by theorizing both as projects that attest specific power relations and forms of governance, through spatial and physical design, of a territory and its population.
07 The “presence” or “absence” of formal properties in the design of cities is an evidence of violence and conflict regarding the division of labour, forms and accumulation of property and wealth, method of production and the very function of the state and its administrative infrastructure.

08 The concept of the “Urban Common” stands antagonistically to the actual conditions of the “informal”, and consists of a political project in opposition to free-market economic and spatial planning. The common as a category allows us to consider the transformation of the multitude to productive labour, and therefore the way it could be organized against capital in the space of production. In the Greek case, any possible alternative of that kind can only occur within the dominant productive sector of the building industry.

09 Le Corbusier’s Maison Dom-ino uncovers genericness and structural rigidity as the fundamental attributes of capitalist production. In the Dom-ino, it is the organization of the domestic space as standardized and generic, adaptable, where any infill is possible, which, apart from formulating its productive potential as an economic machine, allows for the management of society-at-large through the space of its own reproduction.

10 The study of the city today should not be a quest for any kind of “re-invention” but a project that aims on strategies of re-appropriation.

These propositions are regarded as opposable and defendable, and have been approved as such by the supervisors:

Prof.ir. M. Riedijk  Prof.ir. S.U. Barbieri
“Beyond the Informal City” streeft ernaar een relatie te leggen tussen een bepaald soort bouw- en bewonings ethos, -gewoontes en -praktijken van een typisch Grieks huishouden en de bestuurlijke beheerprocessen die al het bovenstaande omschreven hebben als abstracte, wettelijke ‘mogelijkheden’.

Dit juridische raamwerk formuleerde een groot aantal hulpmiddelen en ontwerpprocedures waarmee het beheer van sociale relaties, werkvormen en de organisatie ervan uitgevoerd kon worden. Ook stelde het de bouwsector in staat om zich te ontwikkelen als belangrijkste productieve kapitaal en werd ruimte opeens het epicentrum van politieke en sociale conflicten.

Het proefschrift beschrijft conflicten als de aanstichter van ruimtelijke en maatschappelijke transformaties in de stad, en productie als de ruimte waar deze conflictueuze relatie zich voornamelijk afspeelt.

Conflict en strijd zijn twee instrumentele categorieën om het begrip “crisis” te benaderen als een voortgaand, eindeloos project van het kapitalisme, en niet als een ‘storing’ in de kapitalistische economie en haar steden.

Er bestaat geen causaal verband tussen ruimte, architectuur, de economie of de politiek zelf. De strategie zou moeten gaan om het problematiseren van de strategische link tussen productie in het algemeen – en productie van ruimte in het bijzonder – met de stad en zijn bureaucratische organisatie.

Het proefschrift benadert het onderscheid tussen “formele” en “informele” verstedelijking door beide te beschouwen als projecten die specifieke machtsrelaties en bestuursvormen bevestigen door het ruimtelijk en fysiek ontwerp van een gebied en zijn bevolking.
07 De “aanwezigheid” of “afwezigheid” van formele eigenschappen in het ontwerp van steden is een bewijs van geweld en conflict inzake de arbeidsverdeling, vormen en accumulatie van eigendom en welvaart, productiemethodes en de functie bij uitstek van de staat en zijn bestuurlijke infrastructuur.

08 Het concept van de “Urban Common” staat haaks op de huidige situatie van het “informele”, en bestaat uit een politiek project dat lijnrecht staat tegenover een economische en ruimtelijke planning op basis van vrije marktprincipes. Door de “common” als categorie te beschouwen, kunnen we zien hoe de massa getransformeerd wordt in een productieve arbeidskracht en hoe deze georganiseerd zou kunnen worden ten opzichte van kapitaal in de ruimte van productie. In het geval van Griekenland kan ieder mogelijk alternatief alleen voorkomen binnen de dominante productieve bouwsector.

09 Het “Maison Dom-ino” van Le Corbusier toont universaliteit en structurele soliditeit als de fundamentele kenmerken van kapitalistische productie. In de Dom-ino is de organisatie van de interne ruimte standaard, universeel en aanpasbaar, een ruimte die naar eigen wens gevuld kan worden, die zich als productief potentieel van een economische machine zou ontwikkelen en de controle over de samenleving als geheel mogelijk maakt door middel van de ruimte van haar eigen reproductie.

10 Het bestuderen van de stad van vandaag zou geen zoektocht moeten zijn naar een of andere ‘heruitvinding’, maar een project dat zich richt op herverdelingsstrategieën.

Deze stellingen worden opponeerbaar en verdedigbaar geacht en zijn als zodanig goedgekeurd door de promotoren:

Prof.ir. M. Riedijk                     Prof.ir. S.U. Barbieri
ABSTRACT

The thesis attempts to discuss the “informal” urbanization that characterizes the contemporary Greek cities as an immediate derivative of a complex political project, displayed primarily by architectural and urban typologies and protocols. As a case study, the Greek cities and particularly Athens, offer a possible critique on the recent conceptions regarding the distinction between “informal” and “formal” urbanism. These two dialectically opposite categories wish to distinguish two types of planning, which supposedly represent equally opposing political processes in the establishment, the formation and the development of cities. Nevertheless, the argument of the thesis is that in the Greek case, what appears to be a spontaneous and un-planned urban typology is the result of a precise institutional and regulatory framework, a particular technology of governance and administration.

The consecutive failures or absence of conventional planning mechanisms, like zoning regulations, or the lack of large scale planning proposals, marked what could be seen as a gradual retreat of public institutions from a comprehensive project for the city. Instead, the state and its administrative authorities produced a legislative frame, consisting of complex laws and decrees of various exceptions and particularities, which addressed instant and immediate issues. These were meant to control the small scale of the urban environment, i.e. the architecture and the building construction rather than the physical and urban form of the city in a larger scale, eventually promoting and formulating distinctive building practices.

These practices established a condition of uneven development within the urban territories of the country, where the smallest scale of the city, the housing unit itself, built and formed the city with an apparently accidental and fragmented pattern. Most importantly, the small-scale construction industry was gradually conceived and institutionalized as the motor of capitalist
development, becoming eventually the platform upon which class struggle, and the aftermaths of the various conflicts, social desires and antagonisms could be read.

The ambition of the thesis is to trace the evolution of this pattern of urban development, within various historic events and political decisions. Ultimately, the research addresses the latter in an effort to discuss how the promoted architectural objects and machineries replaced conventional planning as devices of bio-political control and management of city and its population. The thesis focuses on the characteristics of this peculiar architecture, as this evolved strategically through time.

The originally urban and bourgeois “polykatoikia” residential type and the self-building practices for both the high classes and the poor represented initially alternative methods to fulfill the housing needs of different social subjects. Eventually, these two systems merged and established a common architectural language, a unified and unifying building knowledge and technique. In the case of Athens, the result of the above is a rather continuous urban horizon, where the monad, the pixel of the city prevails. This homogeneous space of urbanization spreads throughout the landscape, overcoming occasionally the historic, physical and administrative boundaries of the city.

The research investigates a specific historic period, all along which the Modern Greek cities were formed and developed with an unprecedented fashion, while it also attempts to establish a genealogy of this project since the very foundation of the Modern Greek State in the mid-19th century. The thesis focuses on the last sixty years of urban development in Athens, when the city acquired a paradigmatic role in the post-WW II reconstruction policies deployed in the country. Along this period, fundamental elements of the regulatory framework and the political/ideological mechanisms reached their higher sophistication. The thesis aims to problematize the structure of the contemporary Greek city, especially within this era of economic and social collapse.
Het proefschrift tracht een discussie op gang te brengen over de ‘informele’ verstedelijking, die zo karakteristiek is voor de moderne Griekse steden, en die het directe gevolg is van een complex politiek project, dat hoofdzakelijk tot uiting komt in architectonische en stedelijke typologieën en protocollen. Als casestudie bieden de Griekse steden – in het bijzonder Athene – een mogelijk oordeel over de recente ideeën over het onderscheid tussen ‘informele’ en ‘formele’ stedenbouw. Deze twee dialectisch tegengestelde categorieën willen graag uitgaan van twee soorten planning, die symbool zouden moeten staan voor politieke processen in de vestiging, de vorming en de ontwikkeling van steden, die op dezelfde manier elkaars tegenovergestelde zijn. Desondanks is de stelling van het proefschrift dat in het Griekse geval, een ogenschijnlijk spontane en ongeplande stedelijke typologie in feite het resultaat is van een zorgvuldig institutioneel en wettelijk raamwerk, een specifieke technologie van beheer en bestuur.

De elkaar opvolgende debacles of de afwezigheid van conventionele planningsmechanismen zoals bestemmingsplannen, of het gebrek aan grootschalige planningsvoorstellen waren de zichtbare tekens aan de wand van een beweging die gezien kon worden als de langzame terugtrekking van openbare instellingen uit een totaalproject voor de stad. In plaats daarvan kwamen de staat en de bestuurlijke autoriteiten met een wettelijk raamwerk dat bestaat uit ingewikkelde wetten en verordeningen, uitzonderingsgevallen en bijzonderheden, als antwoord op onmiddellijke en directe problemen. Dit raamwerk was in het leven geroepen om op kleine schaal controle uit te oefenen op de stedelijke omgeving. Er werd gelet op architectuur en bouwconstructies maar niet op de fysieke en stedelijke vorm van de stad op grote schaal, en het stimuleerde en specificeerde uiteindelijk de verschillende bouwpraktijken.

Deze praktijken zorgden voor een ongelijke ontwikkeling binnen de stedelijke gebieden van het land, en de kleinste eenheid van de stad, de woning zelf, werd gebouwd en gaf de stad zijn ogenschijnlijk toevallige en
gefragmenteerde patroon. Maar wat nog belangrijker was, de kleinschalige bouwindustrie werd langzamerhand gezien en geïnstitutionaliseerd als de motor van de kapitalistische ontwikkeling en werd uiteindelijk het platform waarop de klassenstrijd en de nasleepen van verschillende conflicten, maatschappelijke wensen en onenigheden zich konden afspelen. Het proefschrift streeft ernaar om de evolutie van dit patroon van stedelijke ontwikkeling te volgen in de context van verschillende historische gebeurtenissen en politieke beslissingen. Uiteindelijk zal het onderzoek zich toespitsen op het laatstgenoemde en zal het proberen om aan de kaak te stellen hoe de gesteunde architectonische objecten en mechanismen een vervanging vormden voor conventionele planning als bio-politieke controle- en bestuursmiddelen over de stad en haar bevolking. Het proefschrift richt zich op de typische kenmerken van deze eigenaardige architectuur en hoe deze zich strategisch heeft ontwikkeld in de tijd.

Het oorspronkelijk stedelijke en burgerlijke woontype, de “polykatoikia” en de zelfbouwpraktijken van zowel de hogere als de lagere klasse konden in eerste instantie gezien worden als alternatieve methodes om te voldoen aan de woonwensen van verschillende maatschappelijke groepen. Uiteindelijk smolten deze twee systemen samen en ontwikkelden zij een gezamenlijke architectonische taal, en een uniforme en unificerende bouwtechniek en – kennis. In het geval van Athene resulteerde dit in een doorlopende stedelijke horizon, waar de monade, de pixel van de stad, de boventoon voert. Deze homogene stedelijke ruimte spreidt zich uit over het landschap en let daarbij niet altijd op de historische, fysieke en bestuurlijke grenzen van de stad.

Het onderzoek beslaat een specifieke historische periode, waarin de moderne Griekse steden op ongekende wijze werden gevormd en ontwikkeld. Daarnaast wil het ook de genealogie van dit project volgen sinds de stichting van de moderne Griekse staat halverwege de 19e eeuw. Het proefschrift richt zich op de laatste zestig jaar van stedelijke ontwikkeling in Athene, toen de stad een paradigmatische rol toebedeeld kreeg in de wederopbouw, die na de Tweede Wereldoorlog in het hele land plaatsvond. In deze periode werden fundamentele elementen van het wettelijke raamwerk en de politieke/ideologische mechanismen steeds complexer. Het proefschrift streeft ernaar de structuur van de moderne Griekse stad te problematiseren, met name binnen de tijdsperiode van economisch en sociaal verval.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The research of this PhD was made possible by the generous support of the Alexander S. Onassis Public Benefit Foundation in Greece, who awarded me a scholarship at the Berlage Institute/TU Delft “The City as a Project” Doctorate Program (2010-2012). Without the foundation’s support, this thesis would not have been possible. I would like to express my gratitude to the Board of Directors and the Management Board, the scientific committee that selected my dissertation proposal and the people at Ariona Hellas S.A. - representative of the Foundation in Greece - especially Stella Tatsi for her constant assistance.

The following people have been important in the development of this thesis. Primarily, Pier Vittorio Aureli, whose constant supervision, intellectual guidance, personal influence and friendship were fundamental in every part of the research. I would like to thank Prof. Ir. Michiel Riedijk and Prof. Umberto Barbieri, who contributed with valuable comments and suggestions all along the development of the thesis. The beloved friends and colleagues at “The City as a Project” Bernardina Borra, Amir Djalali, Maria S. Giudici, Hamed Khosravi and Francesco Marullo, with whom we shared countless hours of work, discussions, intense debates, presentations, seminars and life in every form during the last four years. As someone once wrote, “for us, the classic political friend/enemy distinction was not just a concept of the enemy, but a theory and a practice of the friend as well”. To them, I express my deep love and gratitude for their constant influence and support. Special mention deserves to Elia Zenghelis, who, apart from a mentor and a fundamental reference, he honors us with his friendship and systematic advice. Elia has been reading and following the development of this thesis since its earliest resolution and his views and opinions on the subject matter were always taken very seriously. Teaching next to him was one of the most precious experiences of my life, which shaped my position on what architectural education is about and how it should be practiced.
I would like to thank Yannis Aesopos, Maria Mavridou and Lila Leontidou, the first people I contacted at the beginning of this research and whose work was a constant reference for my own project. Dear friends Thanassis Manis and Giorgos Mitrogiorgis, who influenced the research consciously or not since its very beginning. Recently, all the colleagues at the Master in Urban Design at the Bartlett School of Architecture-UCL, and especially Adrian Lahoud, Ross Exo Adams and Sam Jacoby, whose friendship, advice and systematic discussions were fundamental in the development of the final manuscript. I would like to thank Tom Weaver and Sarah Handelman, who read and edited the manuscript in various stages and in various occasions during the recent years. Moreover, special thanks deserve to Tom for his countless tutorials and valuable ideas for the structure and the form of the text. Douglas Spencer who read parts of the thesis and advised me in many occasions. Thanos Zartaloudis, a very good friend and exceptional intellectual, who patiently read and commented on the final manuscript. Special thanks to architect and filmmaker Aristotelis Maragkos, whose help in the fourth chapter was more than valuable.

Within the framework of “The City as a Project” PhD Program, a series of assessments and open seminars had been organized. Apart from Tom Weaver, who was present in most of these sessions, I would like to thank professors Charles Rice (School of Art and Design History, Kingston University London), Tahl Kaminer (University of Edinburgh), Marina Lathouri (AA, London), Michiel Dehaene (Department of Architecture and Urban Planning, University of Gent) and Tom Avermaete, Nicola Marzot and Lara Schrijver from TU Delft for the valuable comments and suggestions. The Berlage Institute in Rotterdam and the Bartlett School of Architecture in London have been welcoming platforms for the development of the ideas expressed in the thesis. Especially the students of the Labour, City, Architecture Unit in 2010-2011 and the students at the Master in Urban Design in 2012-2013 were the patient audience that this research was initially
tested. Their comments, questions and projects were extremely influential for the clarification of many of the thesis’ ideas and concepts. Apart from seminars in both schools, parts of the research had been presented and essays that depart from its finds had been published in other occasions. In particular, mention should be made of the conferences on Urbanism and Urbanization “The Next Urban Question” at IUAV (October 2011), where the paper “The Absence of Plan as a Project” was presented in its early form, the Symposium on Athens organized by the Master in Urban Design at the Bartlett (May 2013), where the paper “Two buildings and a movie: alienation, conflict and architectural form” was discussed, and the “Plenitude and Emptiness” symposium on Architectural Design organized by the University of Edinburgh (October 2013), where the paper “Domestic Nightmares: Social Conflict and the production of residential space in interwar Athens, 1922-1936” was presented. Special mention should be also made to the two articles I co-authored with Pier Vittorio Aureli and Maria S. Giudici. The first, “Labour, City, Architecture: Athens as a Case Study” was published in the catalogue of the Greek pavilion in the 13th International Architecture Exhibition-La Biennale di Venezia (2012), and the second, “From Dom-ino to Polykatoikia”, published in Domus, issue 962 in October 2012. The book The City as a Project, a collective effort of the whole team of the program under the guidance of Pier Vittorio Aureli, which will be published by Ruby Press, Berlin in the following months, will include a chapter with the title “The Absence of Plan as a Project” that departs from the finds of this thesis. Finally, the series of seminars organized by “THE PUBLIC SCHOOL in Athens” in the 2011 Athens Biennale MONODROME was another occasion that the thesis was presented and discussed. For that occasion, I would like to thank friends Theodoros Giannakis, Petros Moris and Peggy Zali, who organized the Public School and the curatorial project Word of Mouth, to which my seminar series was included.
For the visual material used in the thesis, I would like to thank the British Library, the Orestis Doumanis and The Architecture in Greece Archive, the Benaki Museum and the Neo-Hellenic Architecture Archive and the many architects that generously provided material for this volume: the late Orestis Doumanis, Dimitris Philippides, Tasos Biris, Nikos Valsamakis, Dimitris and Suzana Antonakakis, Yannis Aesopos and Sofia Tsiraki. Many thanks also to the photographer Manolis Baboussis, who allowed me to publish his images.

Finally, I would like to thank Aristide Antonas, who apart from a dearest friend and a close collaborator in many instances, guided the research significantly and with whom we share the same anxiety for architecture in general and Athens in particular.

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my parents, Demetris and Maria, my brother Theodossis and Alexandra.
Le Corbusier's Maison Dom-ino, 1914
INTRODUCTION

The thesis proposes a study of the distinctive urbanization that characterizes the contemporary Greek city, aiming to classify this method of urban planning and spatial design as an indispensable branch of a complex political project. The research objective of the thesis is to demonstrate the way social transformation in Greece has been primarily achieved by – and occurred within – the development of architectural and urban types and planning protocols. This body of tools and design procedures administered social relationships and set space at the epicentre of political and social antagonism. As a sophisticated institutional framework and within a process of subjectification, it framed forms of life and corresponding practices and conditions of occupation. Simultaneously, the method of production of its architecture composed a characteristic economic, material and spatial entity. The aim of the thesis is to unveil how this form of domesticity constitutes the concrete materialization of a set of relations that governed the city, managing and controlling its territory and population from within the economy of the typical household and the sphere of its social reproduction, the housing unit itself.

In the Greek city, the domestic monad as a managerial, bio-political device acquired its highest and most complex resolution in a particular type of architecture, the “polykatoikia”. The term stands for the small-scale, multi-storey apartment building and ultimately consists of a method of constructing and disposing multiple housing units and apartments from a singular plot. This architectural object defines in its singularity the urban horizon of Greece, a condition that becomes apparent even empirically when someone briefly experiences or even sees an image of Athens or of any other Greek city and town. The thesis follows the evolution of this architectural object from its first appearance in the Greek capital in the late 1920s to
its very recent variations, relating its history with pre-existing and parallel developments in the political field and the complex network of economic and social relations that produced it in the first place.

As a case study, the Greek city allows us to re-think the distinction between “formal” and “informal” urbanization, which constitutes the premise of the thesis. These two dialectically opposite categories wish to distinguish two types of planning, which supposedly represent equally opposing managerial processes that formulate the contemporary urban environments. If the first echoes the tradition of central decision-making on planning, which implies the strong involvement of the state in space management, the second assumes a process where the lack of governmental control has been replaced by a type of city development based on seemingly autonomous and impromptu popular practices. However, in the Greek case, what appears to be a spontaneous and un-planned urban typology constitutes the result of a meticulously detailed, regulatory structure that evolved strategically through time. This legislative frame produced not only the characteristic urban space and the “polykatoikia” building, but eventually established a common architectural language, a unified and unifying building knowledge and technique that built a sporadic and highly fragmented city.

The city of Athens constitutes the centre of investigation and it is presented as an emblematic operation, a paradigm capable of reflecting on these themes of city development and form, which have a broader intellectual interest and go beyond the particularities of this case study. The ambition of the thesis is to demonstrate the way political reasons and the necessity for a social consensus in Greece, established this particular pattern of economic growth in the country and the city respectively. Unpacking and presenting the resolution of this “social contract” in the space of the city becomes therefore the analytical challenge of the research.

In that respect, categories of political economy are deployed to analyze conditions and phenomena of the urban. The research presents the process of
city management through a specific methodological lens, which understands conflict as the generator of spatial and societal transformations in the city, and production as the space where this antagonistic relationship primarily occurs. These two categories are instrumental to confront the notion of “crisis” as a political project, which constitutes the counter-program to the exact possibility of social struggle. In this particular moment, the collapse of the neoliberal paradigm and the intense political conflicts in Europe and elsewhere, together with the acute problems of contemporary cities, make this encounter a historic urgency, especially to tackle the impossible rationale of free-market urbanism. By using these categories, the research aims to go beyond a cause and effect relationship between space, architecture, the economy or the political itself, but to speculate on the strategic link between production in general – and production of space in particular – with the city and its machines of administration. The understanding of the politics of labour in relation to space production and occupation, as well as the transformation of the social and economic organization of labour itself consist the central methodological operation to confront the notion of the “informal” and the particularities of the Greek city.

In his essay “The rationality of Capitalism”, Cornelius Castoriadis describes capitalism as a regime that “precisely, and above all, [...] was born and developed in a society in which conflict, and more specifically the questioning of the established order, was present from the outset”,2 stressing the fact that its core social imaginary signification is “the thrust towards the unlimited extension of rational mastery”.3 This is presented as an inevitable process of human progress, a common ground to maximize welfare, specifically developed to neutralize class antagonism and obviate social conflict. The fundamental feature is what Max Weber described as the “rationalization” process, under which capitalism tends to take over every aspect of life, “expanding the realm of calculability”.4 According to Marx, the accumulation of productive forces are just one part of the capitalist process, which is always combined with the continuous transformation of production and labour as conditions that pre-exist the one of accumulation of goods and
value. The rational mastery applies precisely to the moment where the realm of calculus extends to the sphere of production, the moment where the body and the mind of the producer becomes the subject to be mastered. Thus, rationalization constructs the totality of Capital without an outside.

Castoriadis provides us with the following remark; “rationalization”, as the true trend of the historical creation of capitalism, is the concept that allows it to survive as a true “mastery”, as it cannot be produced or deduced by anything else. This mastery is primarily internal, and tends to conquer the totality of bios and zoe; “[...] this thrust towards mastery is not oriented towards “foreign” conquest, but is aimed just as much, or more, at society as a whole. It must be achieved not only in production, but in consumption as well, and not only in economy, but also in education, law, politics, and so on.” The success of capitalism is based precisely to its capability to extend this rationality beyond profit and economic expansion to an ontological condition. As Castoriadis declares “the means are no longer magic or winning battles, but [...] maximization/minimization, that is, extremization” and, he continues, “this unlimited extension of rational mastery goes hand in hand with, as is embodied in, several other social-historical trends [...] such as urbanization and the changing nature of cities.”

It is this the lens through which we could understand urbanization as an episteme, a device and “a set of acts” born by a historic process to define the essentials of the modern concept of governmentality within capitalist economy. As Ross Exo Adams had argued in various occasions, it is the potentially limitless and homogeneous space of circulation that constructs the urban as a total environment. The economic reason, “the realm of calculability”, characteristically manifested in the very origins of the epistemic paradigm of urbanization, in Cerdà’s General Theory of Urbanization of 1867, is not about production per se. It is essentially about the organization and control of the space where the productive activity could best occur, which expands to the realm of social reproduction, the domestic space itself. The true object of Capital, and therefore, the true objective of urbanization, is the management of the potential – the life and welfare of the producers, which
implies a philosophical paradox. The true essence of capitalist rationale and its practice of spatial control is the management of something that does not exist – it is the potential of production and both time and possibility of development.

As Maurizio Lazzarato pointed out in the Making of the Indebted Man, this issue of future development and the management of its uncertainties become even more critical today, especially within the mechanisms of exploitation and domination produced in contemporary financial capitalism in the debtor-creditor relation. This dialectic scheme lies in the very core of the neoliberal project and, far from being a pathogenesis or a “malfuction” of monetary capitalism, constitutes the very process that destroys the past distinctions of the welfare state between workers and the unemployed, consumers and producers, working and non-working populations, between retirees and welfare recipients. As Lazzarato explains, Capital initiates an ontological guilt and dept becomes a political construction, which cannot be reduced to an economic mechanism, but constitutes a device of governance and control. By a technique where the honor of a private or public debt and the minimization of uncertainty are placed in the centre of contemporary economic policies and political debates, the exchange of time and money in the future pushes for the reconfiguration of the entire material and existential horizon of the debtor. David Graeber from the field of anthropology, in his book Debt: The First 5,000 Years, had expanded significantly this position, arguing the much longer historic instrumentality of debt in relation to the organization of human societies. From the virtual transactions of early agrarian societies to primitive accumulation based on gold and silver, i.e. real money, to contemporary financial capitalism, the process of constructing the debtor is crucially bonded with the construction of the oppressed. The “slaves of debt” have nothing more to valorize but their future, i.e. their own existence as producers that owe every time anew their own productive capability.
The sovereign dept “crisis” of the Greek State, coincides with a colossal restructuring of the model of its economic development, a “crisis” of the economy of the city and a violent transformation of the productive basis in Greece. Elements and traces of this violence preceded the IMF/EU agreements, and could be detected even in the late 1990s. As it will be discussed in the following chapters, the organization of labour in the construction industry and the evolution and the diffusion of the polykatoikia model, created a condition where this productive activity became central to the Greek economy and investment in land and property became a popular practice for the working and the middle class. This process was severely challenged by neo-liberal economic reforms of the real estate market at the time when Greece was entering the Eurozone in 2001, a project that continued after the 2004 Olympic Games of Athens. Today, what seemed a form of investment and wealth, due to the systemic modification of land and taxation policies, has become a device of extreme exploitation through the institution of debt. The collapse of this model has to be therefore discussed in light of Lazzarato’s and Graeber’s concepts. In a process of further “rationalization” of economic transactions related to real estate, the urban space in Greece is “de-valorized” to be acquired and accumulated by large corporations and the private banking system from the indebted, the class that was paradoxically the original producers and owners of this very space, the device of their own subjectification.

This relation between the urban, economic management and administration of production becomes central for the thesis, especially due to the significance of the production of space in the Greek economy and the foundation of the Modern Greek State. As Castoriadis further explained, urbanization is not the only historic process deployed to construct the almost transcendental extension of the managerial rationale of capitalism. One should add the enormous acceleration of technological change, the birth and consolidation of the modern State and the establishment of nations and the
national sphere in economic and juridical terms. Still there is the “considerable anthropological transformation”, the birth of *Homo oeconomicus*, which could be traced back to the evolution of modern governmentality. This is the point where the management of the city through the episteme of urbanization established its critical bond with economy and the process of subjectivation. The critical point therefore is to understand how economy becomes not only the paradigm of the praxis of administration, but also the process through which produces its own subject.

Giorgio Agamben, while discussing and extending Foucault’s thought, offers a radical understanding on the relationship between economy and the term *dispositif*, or apparatus in English. In his seminal essay “What is an apparatus?”, he defines that this technical term is central to Foucault’s understanding of governmentality, which, according to Foucault, consists of an “heterogeneous set of elements of the said as much as the unsaid”. The apparatus stands as “the network established between these elements”, always located in a power relation and as such appears at the intersection of these relations and relations of knowledge. As Agamben further explains, the central philosophical and political problem for Foucault is “the relation between individuals as living beings to the historical element”. This takes the discussion from Hegel’s and Hyppolite’s concepts of historical element and positivity – the general categories such as State, Sovereignty, Law and Power – to the structure and network of relations among them, where “the set of institutions, of processes of subjectification, and of rules in which power relations become concrete”. For Agamben, it is precisely the origin of the term apparatus that corresponds to the set of machines of control and practices of governmentality, which uncovers this ontological shift within the modern project and the true essence of capitalist rationale and its managerial attributes. It’s this that he relates with the adaptation of an ancient Greek concept inherited to Christian theology.

*Oikonomia* in Greek means literally the administration of the home (*oikos*, in Greek), its resources and management in the long run. As Aristotle pointed
out in Politics, it consists of a “practical activity”, a praxis that deals with issues and situations, “each and every time” different, and thus forces the subjects to adapt, to manage the unexpected for their benefit, well-being and happiness, or *eudaimonia*.\(^{16}\) As Agamben points out, it is the concept of *oikonomia* that is used in a critical moment in the history of Christian theology to theorize “*an extremely delicate and vital problem*”, the decisive question of the Trinity, “*the threshold nature of the divine figure*”.\(^{17}\) The term determines the praxis of administration of human history by Christ, an “activity” entrusted to him by God, becoming the process that signifies “*the incarnation of the Son, together with the economy of redemption and salvation*”.\(^{18}\) Western culture inherits this concept, which constitutes the scheme through which the action of governance is executed, but at the same time introduces a crucial problem. That is the schism between “being and action”, between “ontology and praxis”, present in theology in the conceptual differentiation of the two discourses on theology and economy. It’s this dual appearance of God as “*being and praxis, the nature or essence, on the one hand, and the operation through which He administers and governs the created world, on the other*” that creates this condition. Within this, someone grasps the activity of administration and management as a “pure activity” that is not related to an actual being, but is founded on the power relation between elements and always necessitates the production of its own subject.\(^{19}\)

Agamben unveils how the concept of economy, together with this immanent problem, could be traced in the western philosophical discourse and specifically to Foucault’s own thought. This thread exists even in linguistic terms; the translation of *oikonomia* in Latin is *dispositio*, or *disposition* in French, *dispositif* or *apparatus*. Furthermore, apart from this theological genealogy, Foucault’s terminology is also related with a more secular paradigm, to the extent that oikonomia becomes a common ground to define “*a set of practices, bodies of knowledge, measures, and institutions that aim to manage, govern, control, and orient the behaviours, gestures, and thoughts of human beings*”.\(^{20}\) In that sense, the
term apparatus could be generalised to include all devices and mechanisms that capture the potential and direct the life of human beings. According to Agamben, between these two classes – apparatuses and beings – a third one, “subjects”, emerges, which should be understood as the product of the struggle between the previous two. The fact that modern capitalist development constructs a regime, which, as a totality, is based on the dissemination of an agglomerate of different apparatuses, explains it as a project that implies the “extreme proliferation in processes of subjectification”. This poses a structural political problem on the constant struggle between the individual and devices of control, since these construct multiple fragmented renditions of the being in different “sub/multi-subjectivities”. This process of destruction of the being achieves the even more efficient governance of society, disguising the main plane of antagonism that occurs in the space of production between the two elemental subjects, producers and holders of the means of production. The political challenge lies not in the denial or destruction of apparatuses, but on claiming the very processes of subjectification, the elementary of which is the one taking place the moment labour power, the potentiality of the worker, is captures and exploited in the productive process.

In the case of spatial administration and territorial management, the alternative could be based on an architectural paradigm that would claim space itself as an apparatus and re-appropriate it as a form of productive activity. This is particular necessary taking into account the profound transformation of the capitalist city in the last six decades, when production and the extraction of value has shifted from previous paradigms of spatial organization, such as the factory and the office, to the city a whole. Of course, this does not mean that these previous spatial paradigms had disappeared, but that the management of every aspect of life has been achieved by the diffusion of economic exploitation in any form of activity in the city. Contemporary labour occurs in any space of the city and aspect of life and it is not anymore
related strictly to the biological activity of the human species, as Hannah Arendt had argued in the Human Condition. As Paolo Virno had stressed, “things have gone in the opposite direction from what Arendt seems to believe: it is not that politics has conformed to labour; it is rather that labour has acquired the traditional features of political action”, constructing a continuous space of relations within the sphere of contemporary labour, which thus become the space where the political occurs. It is there “we find the “being in the presence of others,” the relationship with the presence of others, the beginning of new processes, and the constitutive familiarity with contingency, the unforeseen and the possible.”

Today, labour is the core of any form of production, absorbing sets of relationships in the continuum of the urban and expanding the real essence of economy – the nomos of the oikos, the administration of what belongs to the house – to the city as a whole. Nevertheless, there is a profound relationship between the nature of labour and architecture, which occurs in the space of production itself. That is the notion of the generic, which exists and defines both concepts, especially in the contemporary city. In the following chapters, the thesis would try to unveil this relationship, using the architectural characteristics of the polykatoikia as a paradigm of this condition.

The term generic comes from the Greek word genikos («γενικός»), the one that belongs to a specific “race” or “kind”, genos in Greek («γένος»). The actual activity implied by the term is the one of the verb ginomai («γίνομαι»), which describes the process of “coming-into-being”, “of one (a being) producing oneself” to become a subject. The term generic therefore refers to a condition or a property of a being that pre-exists the individual, the social subject and thus, as a category, is strongly linked with the category of labour. According to Marx, man as an entity becomes a social individual that consists of both singular determinations and generic faculties. In his “Economical and Philosophical Manuscripts” he merges pre-individual characteristics of human life and the generated life activity into one human essence through which human beings becomes aware of their own subjectivity. That is
production, which has to be understood as the generic activity of the human being par excellence, something that is irreducible to any specific form of labour, a pre-individual capability to produce, something of which labour power is its most concrete manifestation.

Labour power is thus something that exists in potential; it is not about production as a past thing – i.e. as work, the goods or things that have been produced – but production as possibility. To extract value from production consist precisely in controlling, addressing, capturing that possibility. The possibility of production includes not only production, but also the reproduction of the species, i.e. the domestic sphere and all the other schemes and devices that guarantee the welfare of the being. As Paolo Virno argued in the Grammar of the Multitude, it is the faculty, the potential of production – something that doesn’t exist yet – that Capital seeks to capture and therefore, constructs the apparatuses to administer the life and bios that contain it.  

The importance of production lies on the fact that the mastery of Capital appears in the rationality of the generic in the organization of the productive process as a whole. Above all, “production in general is an abstraction”; a definition by Marx that explains the status of labour within the capitalist control over mineral and social existence. Labour as a generic entity, constitutes a general category that describes a wealth-creating activity without any limiting specification whatsoever. In “Grundrisse”, Marx described that this abstraction becomes true and obvious only in modern societies, where labour in reality became the means of creating wealth in general, which linked all specific activities to one and impartible whole. “The point of departure of modern economics, namely the abstraction of the category of “labour”, “labour as such”, labour pure and simple, becomes true in practice”. The crucial point is how this activity enters the capitalist process; labour exists before production, before the stage where it could extract profit, i.e. before entering the category of value.
Mario Tronti, in his essay “The Strategy of Refusal” described the dialectic relation between labour and Capital in a sublime way, and it is in this relationship where the category of conflict arises.²⁹ It is the moment when the conditions of labour confront the form of capital. This is when productive labour is transformed into wage, the moment “labourers are transformed to workers”, i.e. the potential residing in labour power is captured by capital. According to Tronti, this is also the moment when the whole society confronts the rationale of capital as an apparatus of production, the aim of capitalist society in general.³⁰

Thus, conflict and struggle exist within the capitalist process as an indispensable part in the form of antagonism within production itself. As Tronti stated, “capitalist power seeks to use the workers’ antagonistic will-to-struggle as a motor of its own development”,³¹ which means that it is the workers’ organization and class that fuels development and not the opposite. “It is productive labour which produces capital”,³² as well as all the other forms of social organization, or the evolution and the expansion of capital as a regime. Tronti used the example of the Industrial Revolution to explain the concept of conflict as an entity that pre-exists any capitalist crisis or transformation. The suggestion is to establish a dialectic relation between class struggle and capitalist initiative, or in other words, to think which one precedes the other. As he describes, the conflicts and struggles of the working class determined the mechanisms of production, even the technological innovations and developments. Therefore, conflict and struggle exist within the structure of capital production and re-production as an antithesis since the beginning of the capitalist process. Labour defines the social condition of capital itself. As Tronti underlined “the truth of modern society is that it is the civilization of labour.”³³ The true cost that capital has to pay is the potentiality of struggle, as conflict always exists since the outset of its own organization. At the same time, the conflict from the side of the producer remains unresolved, since it rarely culminates or resolves to an actual re-appropriation of the activity and the outcome of production.
In regards to space, the exchange of wellbeing and material wealth is paid by the acceptance of the violence of administration in an array of social contracts and rationales.

These methodological tools and analytical categories allow the research to present the form of Greek urbanization as direct evidence of conflicts and struggles that occurred within the space of production, throughout the recent history of the country. As it has been described previously, conflict, as an indispensable part of capitalist organization, stands as the “motor”, as the device that produces capitalist transformation and evolution of specific forms of production in general and types/protocols of space in particular. Athens as a case study unveils how planning of any kind, i.e. administration of the city through managerial devices, directed and appropriated conflict over the territory of the city from within an economic regime that placed the production of architecture and the construction of domestic life at the centre of its machine of dominance.

In less than two centuries, from 1834 when it was chosen to become the capital of the newly independent Greek Kingdom, Athens grew from a small Ottoman town of 6,000 inhabitants to a dense metropolitan area of 4 million that covered the Attica Basin. This profound enlargement was the result of consecutive waves of human displacement, in respective periods of the city’s recent history.

From the first wave of public servants, military personnel, court officials and entrepreneurs of the early years of the capital, to the massive working class allocation in the city of the early 20th century, and from the 250,000 refugees from Asia Minor of 1922, to the colossal internal immigration inflow of the 1950s and 1960s, Athens had to be significantly densified and to expand in order to accommodate these fundamental transformations. These instances should be read as moments of interruption, of radical change of the city’s social consistency, within which the notion of “crisis”, the pressure of social conflict and the over-increasing housing needs instructed immediate political responses.
Since the city’s initial stages of development, the discourse on what type of city planning, what type of architecture, had been bonded unanimously with a particular mode of economic development, within which space and land ownership had been understood and instrumentalised as the most primordial and essential productive assets. It is the economy of construction, the building industry – *i oikonomía tis oikodomis* – as this appeared and developed in Athens first, and elsewhere in Greece respectively, which have become the epicentre of production in general and the subject of administration of space and the city as a whole. This has been achieved by the mechanisms of its own development and reproduction, fuelling capital accumulation and concentrating most of the monetary activities of the different social classes. Speculative, opportunistic, conscious or spontaneous, desperate acts or deliberate collective initiatives, urban or peripheral, these spatial and building practices defined a method of city planning where the state contented itself to provide just the platform, which, in the form of domestic archetypes, defined an environment, within which these popular praxes could flourish.

This function of the Greek state in regards of city planning could be read as the very definition of the role of the state and its various institutions, in the market economy. Contrary to the widespread rhetoric of free-market economics, the persistent presence of the state affirms the necessity of its very existence within this economic regime, which eagerly needs the latter to define the modus operandi that allows for its promotion and dominance. The state and its institutions do not only guarantee the sovereignty of a territory to be economically exploited, but primarily, provide the juridical and regulatory framework that institutionalizes capitalism’s very essential functions: private property, method of production and social division of labour. The neoliberal mantras of deregulation and “laissez-faire” disguise this almost existential precondition of capitalist development, which requires the more than dominant presence of state administration throughout the productive process. The qualitative difference of neoliberal governmentality is the replacement, the apparent absence of central planning with a network of managerial processes that private actors execute.
The research presents how Greek cities should be read as a clear manifestation of spatial management and capitalist planning. The historical circumstances and the particular geopolitical conditions of Greece were conducive to this mode of city planning, which has been often labeled as the aftermath of “informal” development. This approach neglects the local socio-economic structures and operations undertaken by public authorities, or misinterprets the political and social context that produced this type of urban management in the first place. The fact that the Greek economy was similarly based on small-scale businesses, sporadic self-employment and fragmented organization of the labour force added further to the classification of this urban landscape as a “self-made”, almost accidental development. In other instances, the architecture of the polykatoikia and the history of this typology were studied almost independently from the modes of production and the forms of labour and property in the Greek city and society. These studies approached the polykatoikia more as a local adaptation of postwar modernism, as an architectural style, or as a positive effect, an emblematic resolution of a metropolitan lifestyle that modernize Greece after the Second World War.

For the point of view of the thesis, the spatial and architectural characteristics of the polykatoikia were ultimately the media that captured and rendered profitable the productive potentialities residing within these existing forms of labour, transforming the labour power, the potential of producers to wealth, property and surplus capital in Greece. The advancement of this method of urbanization should be understood as preeminent device of a much broader agenda, aiming for the capitalist integration of Greece, an underdeveloped country of the European South. “Spontaneity” and “informality” are the attributes that disguise the very nature of this strategy, with its final goal being the establishment of a privately owned and controlled urban environment in extremis. This project took its most apparent resolution in the second half of the 20th century with the polykatoikia but, as the thesis argues, has its origins in the foundation of the Modern Greek
State in the 1830s. Since then, city planning was carried out primarily by the manipulation of singular architectural objects, by a small-scale, mainly private architecture, while large-scale masterplans became gradually obsolete and altogether ineffective. Instead of being tackled, the existing fragmentation of property was further intensified, in order to promote specific forms of production, capital accumulation and monetary circulation within a rather small-scale construction sector. The success of this project, especially in the last six decades, was based exactly on its capability to present itself as a self-originated, self-help mode of welfare, within which entering the realm of private property constituted the ultimate social imaginary and form of wealth for different social subjects in Greece.

The genealogy of events and projects investigated in the thesis exhibit the foundation of this political project in a spatial apparatus, developed historically on abstract planning norms and architectural forms. The “plan” in this case has been performing in its primordial configuration, being presented with its most essential qualities, as a normative, inherent framework. This governed not only the existing condition – the short-term present – but also the unforeseen possibilities of spatial development, especially the ones existing within the unexplored or marginal territories of the city. It has been a plan as a schema, inscribed in the administrative apparatus, which managed the city “informally” through this seemingly neutral series of building regulations.

The thesis is structured in five chapters, progressing a reading of Athens in various resolutions and through specific concepts. The thesis starts with the projects that formulated the origins of this peculiar method of urbanization in the very foundation of the Modern Greek State and Athens as a capital city in the 19th and the early 20th century (Chapter 1). Then, it moves from the scale of architecture and the particularities of the polykatoikia, which defined the landscape of Athens in the 20th century (Chapter 2), to planning strategies that attempted to control the city in a larger scale during the same period and especially after the Second World War (Chapter 3). The singular apartment
unit and the family house, these two archetypical forms of domesticity in Greece are examined at the end of the cycle (Chapter 4), in an effort to describe the very ethos, the patterns and the consequences of this urban milieu in the contemporary period. This chapter also proceeds with a critical overview of recent projects, publications and exhibitions that worked to theorize the space of the Greek city. An important element throughout the thesis is the production of original drawings, which aim to unveil the formal properties and characteristics of the city in various scales, from the territorial organization of the Attica region, to the metropolitan performativity of Athens, and from the dense, urban blocks to the residential buildings and the apartment units. The various plans, the existing urban fabric, as well as the architectural examples and the archetypical domestic spaces examined, are drawn in a consistent manner, eventually promoting a reading of the city and its spatial qualities through a medium that is supposedly absent and irrelevant from its evolution. Hence, the drawing and the techniques of architectural representation have an operative, conceptual dimension for the research. Additional material from public archives, books, articles and personal archives of many, well-known Greek architects – to whom I am grateful for their generosity – is also included in the illustrations.

The last chapter (Chapter 5) attempts to present the possibility for an alternative project for the city, based on a radical alternation of the existing forms of property in the urban environment, commenting particularly in the patterns of capital distribution and the prospect of the urban common as practice. The thesis proposes the category of the “Lump City” as an alternative concept that goes beyond the distinction of “formal” and “informal” urbanism, one that implies a different political organization of the city block and its elemental units. Within this thick, continuous urban agglomeration of the lump, the thesis suggests that the possibility for the urban common, as a spatial quality beyond private and public space, is capable to be envisioned and proposed in Athens and elsewhere.
Kleanthis & Schaubert Masterplan for Athens, 1833
I. Plans and Elements of a Greek Historiography

In his article “Town Planning in Greece”, the Greek urbanist and historian Dimitris Philippides makes a simple, yet profound remark on the importance and the actual impact of traditional planning in the Greek cities. He underlines that “the story of how Greek cities were designed is a lengthy list of initial layout plans, none of which were ever implemented-or at best were implemented sporadically, with infinite changes and revisions”. We could argue that, specifically in the case of Athens, this inconsistency and the partial implementation of official, authorized plans resulted in an equally fragmented city, visible in the form and the organization of the city’s urban space. All over the Athenian territory, registered in the urban agglomeration that expands within the Attica Basin, the various revisions and mutations of these layouts constructed a plethora of different grids that compose a rather discontinuous fabric. The apparent interruptions and gaps in the urban anatomy, the lack of open spaces, the inefficient infrastructure, the lack of a well-developed transportation network and the extended encroachment of public land and other undefined properties could suggest that town planning applications in Athens rather failed to address most of the issues that physical and spatial planning supposedly manages. As Philippides had argued, it seems that conventional planning projects were “more conspicuous by their absence than by their presence”.

Yet, how can we discuss, re-evaluate and eventually theorize this peculiar condition? Which was the social context, the political and economic reasons that historically produced this “fate” for planning in Greece and progressively constructed this urban environment? To take Philippides’ argument further, if this is an acknowledged reality from the side of the Greek state, the municipal authorities, or even the local community of architects, planners and city historians, which are the elements, the very ingredients of this method of
1. Peiraias
2. Kallithea / Nea Smyrni
3. Petroupoli
4. Exarhia / Kolonaki
5. Palaio Faliro
6. Voula
7. Alimos / Elliniko
8. Ilioupoli
9. Psychiko / Filothei

1.01 Grid Samples from Athens and Attica
drawings by the author

ATHENS AS A PARADIGM
town planning that made it significant for the Greek cities? How did this type of urban management, characterized as one of “consecutive amendments and failures” became a successful strategy to govern the Greek cities? Was this lack of visible, direct, central control a tactical move and by whom? Is it possible to claim specific agents or authors of this project, or the latter should be read as a process, a result of complex social and economic networks of relations? Finally, which was the historic role and the position of public institutions in the construction of this urban reality, and how architecture was, or was not, instrumental within this project?

In most acclaimed histories of the Greek cities and their architecture, there is a consensus on the characteristics of town planning in the country, which departs from a particular understanding of the role of the state within city design. In addition, in most of these studies, there is an agreement on the significance of the local architectural production in city development, which is perceived of being of minimal, or of no impact whatsoever. For specific reasons, the scale of architectural projects in Greece, commissioned from either the public or the private sector and especially the ones addressing housing, are of a much smaller scale than in most other European countries. Hardly ever an “architectural project” in Greece exceeds the size of a small apartment building of 10-15 apartments, and the majority of cases address even smaller, family-owned dwellings that accommodate the needs of an extended family. The size of dwelling units might vary according to the economic capabilities of a family or a property owner, but typological similarities and, especially, the mode of production of these different elements of the built environment unify neighborhoods and districts of different social classes. Designed by architects or engineers, built by local contractors and, more or less, unskilled construction workers, these units came to build the Greek cities, filling in the layout plans and their sporadic applications, to which Philippides was referring to. All along this process, an urban landscape took shape, in which elementary units prevail over masterplans or local planning arrangements. Architecture, in the form of this anonymous continuum of dwellings had impacted the organization of cities and the urban form of Greece.
The commonplace description, which undermines the impact of architecture and city design in Greece, cuts horizontally through the corpus of researchers, in most cases independently from ideological frameworks or their personal political beliefs. With very few exceptions, conservative or liberal thinkers and historians – not necessarily from the field of architecture or urban studies – seem to agree on most points with intellectuals that hold progressive and radical positions. Most of these positions had become widespread social beliefs, often difficult to challenge intellectually and methodologically. These very different lines of thought meet on a series of fundamental theses, which can be schematically outlined in the following statements:

– due to various circumstances, the state in Greece was historically weak, with limited economic capabilities, characterized by destructive political management and corruption,

– the state was unable to provide a regular framework or to exercise basic control in the private sector and the forms of employment,

– these forms of employment were based on limited agricultural production, small-scale manufacture, family-based self-employment; in few cases, foreign investments, international aid and compradorial capital of the Greek diaspora contributed to specific projects,

– in critical moments, the central administration and local authorities used the public sector for political and electoral corruption, offering life-long and secured employment to supporters and potential voters, or by providing benefits to landlords and land speculators at the local or the national scale,

– this group of public servants enjoyed a series of benefits with regards to wages, taxation and housing mortgages, especially in the period when the banking system of Greece was state-owned, significantly contributing to the development of the private housing market,

– the failures of public administration in Greece in economic management and especially in regards of physical and spatial planning is registered in the way large urban centers evolved, particularly after the Second World War,
– this lack of systematic economic and spatial planning caused significant waves of internal migration towards the cities, and especially Athens, causing uneven development in the country and the gradual decline of rural counties and peripheries,

– the organization and the construction of domestic space in Greece is characterized by the profound absence of public projects, a condition that was substituted by the establishment of a hyper-active, private construction industry, organized in a rather small-scale basis,

– the role of professional architects in the design of the city is highly questionable and rather absent,

– last, there is a particular admiration of the “unregulated”, self-built mode of production of residential space, what we can call schematically “informal” city development. Whenever the latter flourished, it is understood to be a successful, grassroots strategy that replaced the previously mentioned absence of public projects in the field of housing.

Moreover, this discussion on governance, spatial management and state institutions classifies the history of the Modern Greek State – from the 1830s, when the Modern Greek Kingdom was founded in the aftermath of the Greek War of Independence from the Ottoman Empire, until the end of the 20th century – in a series of disconnected sub-divisions. As in many other cases, these are defined by specific events or actions of influential political characters, in a problematic historiographic model. Rather than a political understanding of transitions and the constructions of historic continua, these studies persistently underline discontinuities and systemic differences between regimes that dominated each period. This might have had a ground in the past, if we consider the constant, often violent, struggles between rival social groups, particularly around constitutional and institutional reforms, such as the long battle between progressive bourgeois parties against royalists and other supporters of the Greek kings. In addition, intense internal conflicts, such
as the Civil War of 1944-1949, remained politically unresolved for decades, and are still ideologically charged for descendants of each oppositional camp. Nevertheless, all of the above imply a particular understanding of Modern Greek history that not only carves it into loosely related particles, but also fails to construct a coherent narrative. This could allow a much more conceptual, and eventually, politically operative knowledge of Greece’s recent past. Different ideological positions would then conclude with rather different historic narratives. Still, the possibility to understand the Modern Greek history through a series of diachronic projects and interconnected, continuous actions would expose the importance of constant struggles over specific institutional structures and administrative apparatuses, manifested in demands for societal and economic reforms from opposing political subjects and social classes. The notion of conflict and the essence of these integral political crises would unfold not as moments of interruption but as instances of a broader historic project.

However, the thesis attempts to put forward another understanding of historical narrative, one that has been articulated in a concrete form by Walter Benjamin in his Theses of Philosophy of History, in 1940. In this essay, which consolidates his knowledge on the writing of history, Benjamin establishes an epistemological distinction between Historicism, as the systemic presentation of the past, and Materialist Historiography, as a critical tool against traditional disciplinary practices. According to Benjamin, Historicism adopts the Kantian notion of homogeneous, empty time and establishes chronological order and qualitative categories, i.e. relevant / irrelevant, true / false etc. Historiography operates as a complete reversal of the above conditions. It understands the inherent epistemological difficulty of historical distance and acknowledges the impossibility of capturing any past event in its completeness and as the core of its practice pursues the overlapping of all time realms: past, present and future. The task of the historian, as Benjamin argues, requires a profound
insight of the present; only then, the writer of history can extract a fragment from the field of past events, instill the experience of the present time, and as such establish a “future-life” for the fragment that constitutes the political operativity of materialist historiography.

The consensus over a ruptured historical description makes it also a rather introverted, “regionalistic” narrative that fails to position Greece and its history in a much larger geopolitical context. Crucial issues – both politically and ideologically unresolved – are the relation of the Modern Greek history and identity to its ancient past, to the pre-classical times to the centuries of the Byzantine Empire. The foundation of the Greek state on the ruins of the Ottoman Empire and the relations of the newly founded kingdom with the dominant Western powers necessitated the invention of a contemporary historic narrative. This had to re-establish the ideological and cultural thread simultaneously in two opposite directions and to address to different spaces: the European, western “outside”, and the Greek “interior”, with its “glorious past” guaranteeing a similarly promising present. The invention of a contemporary “Greek tradition”, which included the construction of a completely invented language, was an indispensable part of the project to construct a new nation-state in the Balkan region and to produce a convincing nationalist narrative that could unite a rather diverse population.

This institutional history of Greece includes a crucial paradox: a historic continuum of Hellenism, from the ancient times until the mid-19th century, dissolves to a series of inconsistent, short periods. From one “crisis” to the next one, from one catastrophic policy to one that follows shortly after, from one civil war to a period of political instability and yet another confrontation. As a typical case of a story that supports a nation-state, its institutional ideology and its territorial dominance – no different from any other country – this narrative is severely challenged and ideologically dismiss by some Greek historians, not only in the past but also today.
Interestingly and in regards of our field of study, within these fragments of history, the effectiveness or not of the state to administer space is related with a particular notion of “modernization” and “progressiveness”, often coinciding with the rise of liberal, bourgeois governments and the dominance of corresponding parties and the groups and social classes that supported them. Specific periods are discussed and presented as more successful than others, in regards to the impact and the size of public projects. Often, these were bonded with specific political visions for Greece and the analogous ideological bias.\footnote{8} We can briefly mention two characteristic cases: the impact of Eleftherios Venizelos’ policies in the first half of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century and the 1990s Costas Simitis’ administration.\footnote{9} In a similar fashion, the periods of conservative governments are generally understood to be of minimal or of a “destructive” impact in regards of space management, the most characteristic being the years of Constantine Karamanlis in the 1950s and 1960s.\footnote{10} To a similar extent, the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, the period of dominance of the kings and the conservative royalists is classified as a period of “failure” and problematic management of space, architecture and the city.

Nevertheless, for the point of view of the thesis, the way planning was exercised in Modern Greece is rather continuous and, in all the different historic periods, attests a critical bond between the public authorities, in many different administrative levels, and the function of the private housing market. Historically, the Greek cities and Athens in particular, grew by the application of a series of mechanisms that favored the private development of the land, with specific interests determining the degree of the planning applications, the particular locations and the extent to which the building mass could expand. In most cases, the central administration or the municipal authorities were coming into line with a situation that was already taking place, applying or expanding the city plan with a “corrective” manner. As Philippides argued, “the city plan was made up of extensions section by section”, where, in order not to harm the landowners’ interests, “the street layouts were rudimentary, streets were narrow and city blocks as small as possible”.\footnote{11}
The aim of this chapter is to reverse the perception regarding the inadequacy of planning in the Greek cities, and especially in the case of Athens, which has a paradigmatic value for the history of city design in Greece. Instead of evaluating the city’s planning history as a process of constant failures, unresolved design gestures or unfinished projects, I argue that this very condition of absence consists of a project in itself, with a specific political instrumentality and historic operativity. This particular hypothesis could allow for a reconsideration of the very power of planning as a project for the city, its territorial management and population control. In this case, we should consider planning as a form of management that primarily operates as a framework, as a basic layout that allows other conditions to emerge. Often, the partial implementation of these layouts acquires specific resolutions, which are assumed to be somehow unexpected, spontaneous and accidental developments. This is a fundamental condition of the modern capitalist city, within which a “flexible layout” allows for the advancement of monetary circulation, capital accumulation and land speculation in the depth of time.

The research objective is to uncover the very rigidity of these seemingly flexible and inclusive forms of control. The value of Athens lies in the possibility to expose the difference between the plan as a project, as a constitutional norm of physical and spatial policies, and the applications, the actual resolution of the latter in the space of the city. If even partially implemented, this “lengthy list of initial layout plans”, to which Philippides was referring to, not only left many marks in the fabric of the city, but also unveils instances where the project of the contemporary Greek city was conceived in a precise way. In addition, this lack of success to implement projects in their full integrity should not be understood as instances of failure, as long as these were able to operate as layouts to direct the form and the organization of the city in the long term. The methodological challenge is therefore to unveil how this managerial frame was a successful strategy to govern the Greek cities.
Additionally, the history of Athens exposes a specific trend towards more abstract and regulative urban projects, which meant to control the city through small-scale interventions. These eventually allowed for the advancement of a specific form of urbanism to emerge, which is related with land property speculation and the construction of domestic space by the private sector. This was achieved through the establishment of highly efficient, speculative urban typologies and methods of “self-building” that directed the construction processed with the private housing market. The fragmented and opportunistic expansion of the city planning, upon the demand of private actors and interests, is the counterpart of the previous strategy, providing the layout upon which variations of domesticity became possible. Both allowed the rather fragmented land property to be economically profitable, for the evolution of an equally fragmented capital in the construction industry, the establishment of a middle class working and investing on this particular market and, finally, the organization of the labor force in rather smaller and controllable clusters within this industry.

The research uncovers this important element of planning policies in Greece, which is the gradual establishment of the land market and the small-scale building industry as the fundamental economic and productive activity. Although often analyzed independently, this form of management of the city through its small-scale is the reason for the progressive abandonment of large-scale planning projects. The chapter offers a reflection on the history of planning in the city of Athens, from 1834, when the city became the capital of the Modern Greek Kingdom, until the appearance of the polykatoikia typology in 1929. This chapter explores the “prehistory”, the social and political developments that initiated and eventually scripted this peculiar mode of urbanization, which acquired its advanced resolution in the form of the polykatoikia building type. The 19th century and the early decades of the 20th century constitute the period where the foundations of this mode of production of space were put in place, in the form of building regulations and protocols, i.e. the apparatuses of space management that transformed the city in a continuous productive landscape.
The chapter is divided into two historic cycles, within which different political and social conditions concluded to distinctive planning decisions and strategies for Athens and its immediate geographical periphery. Each of these different periods is analyzed according to a political category, which is inherited in the particular actions taken by the central and municipal authorities. These are the concepts of “city-colony”, for the early neoclassical city that emerged in the remnants of a small, Ottoman town, and the “bourgeois city”, for the interwar period, when the rise of a liberal bourgeoisie challenged the institutions and of the dominance of the royal aristocracy.

II. City-Colony (1834-1909)

The spatial and physical management of Greek cities was one of the many aspects of a comprehensive and multifaceted economic and administrative restructuring of the national space, initiated after the liberation from the Ottoman Empire and the foundation of the Greek Kingdom in 1830. The aim of this reform was to advance a modern, yet tributary state in a territory that was formerly a minor province of an archaic regime. The Modern Greek State was established in the midst of a major geopolitical transformation of Eastern Mediterranean, where the dissolution of Ottoman sovereignty became an essential strategy for the emerging capitalist states of Central Europe. Known as the “Eastern Question”, the historical decay and collapse of the Ottomans produced, due to the major economic significance of the respective territories of the empire, a period of continuous political conflicts and military confrontations during the 18th, 19th and the 20th century. Imperial Russia, Austro-Hungary and the United Kingdom engaged in a geopolitical struggle in order to best place their interests within these new emerging economies. This peculiar moment of inter-European colonization established most of the economic and political antitheses within the continent.
The Greek Kingdom was born during an uncommon moment of consensus between the three Great Powers, after the Congress of Vienna that followed the defeat of Napoleon in the Eastern front. Although they did not take action immediately and reject the demands of the Greek revolutionaries to support the War of Independence, the three dominant nations used the Greek revolt as a paradigmatic operation within this wider geopolitical rivalry, joining their power against the Ottoman Empire. The state that came into existence in the aftermath of the Greco-Ottoman conflict of 1821-1830 was meant to operate as a base and strategic reference for further operations in the region.

This first period, which lasts throughout the 19th century and expands until the outbreak of the bourgeois revolution in 1909, is marked by a continuous struggle between the emerging petit-bourgeois subjects, the first industrial proletariat and the social classes of the previous regime, that were attached to the new political power of the King. This contest between the elements that represented the feudal and pre-capitalist stage of the Greek society and the ones that were evolving parallel to the establishment of new forms of production was clearly illustrated in the planning decisions and the modifications of their applications in the space of the city.

Differently from the next historic cycles, this is a period were “conventional” town planning played a fundamental role in the development and the transformation of the Greek cities. Since the beginning of the reform, the organization of urban centres, as points of concentration and convergence of the economic, administrative and educational functions, became an essential strategy, not only for immediate, practical reasons, but as a part of a specific political project. Apart from representing the new political order, the fundamental intentions of the latter were the dismissal of the previous spatial and formal relations that referred to the Ottoman rule, the economic integration of the national territory, and the transformation of a feudal, pre-capitalist society to an advanced capitalist entity.
Since the establishment of the city as the capital of the Modern Greek State in 1834, Athens acquired a paradigmatic role within this political, social and economic transformation of Greece. At the early stages and through an ideological bias, the city was historically theorized as the emblem of an ideological program, which aimed to establish the Modern Greek State and the contemporary Greek identity as an almost self-evident continuation of the ancient past, over-passing and diminishing centuries of foreign sovereignty of the Balkan territories by the Ottoman Empire. Within this ideological structure, architecture and city planning were discussed as the exemplary operations through which this political/historical thread could be institutionalized and defended. In order to function as such, both operations had to be constructed tabula rasa, since the actuality of the cities couldn't fit any idealized interpretation, and by no means could function as such. These processes were extremely violent; cities had to be rebuilt and redesigned, a formal language had to be invented, architectural types, forms, elements and ornaments had to be dispersed, recomposing old fragments and eliminating traces of an almost obnoxious present.

Neoclassical planning and architecture were immediately conceived as the essential formal apparatuses for the transformation and the renewal of important cities and settlements. Orthogonal grids, straight streets and regular town squares in the tradition of the hippodamian system, were imposed on rather medieval and irregular Mediterranean towns of mid-19th century Greece.

Under the influence of German city planning principles, the plans did not intervene within the fabric of the historic centre, but were rather focused on connecting it with a proposed expansion of the settlement. One or two basic axes bridged the old part with the new, which surrounded the existing, irregular fabric. The new part was designed according to neoclassical formulas, with symmetric and monumental axes connecting points of interest, mainly new institutional buildings and public spaces. The expansion, apart from hosting and representing the new public institutions, was designed
1.02 Peiraias

1.03 Korinthos

1.02-1.03 Planning Applications in Greek Cities, 1830s
1.04-1.05 Planning Applications in Greek Cities, 1830-1900

1.06 Mesologi
1.06-1.08 Planning Applications in Greek Cities, 1830s
1.09 Neoclassical Trilogy of Athens - Library, University and Academy of Athens, 1859
Theophilus and Christian Hansen

as a residential area for the local bourgeoisie, whereas productive activities and residential quarters for the working class, if not yet organized within the existing settlement, were left to be located informally outside the official plan, on the outskirts of the city. This type of planning and management of the city was theorized not only as the potentially successful strategy to invent the cultural reference to Greek antiquity, but also as a method to reconnect the country with its western context. The achievement of a homogeneous national identity and consciousness was a precondition for the economic development and the political integration of the population, which, at that point in time, was composed of a variety of different tribes, ethnic minorities and rival regional communities.

This intellectual itinerary constituted a coherent narrative, where the material and physical manifestation of the neoclassical orders and forms undermined the colonial domination and the power relations imposed by the new political order. Cities and settlements were rebuilt violently and mostly by foreign officials of the king’s court. However, due to their seemingly familiar classical forms, the plans and the buildings were ‘naturalized’ by the inhabitants and somehow accepted and celebrated, although profoundly alien. On the level of the local societies, the legitimation of power was achieved precisely through the legitimation of this regular city planning and its respective formal implications. As the Greek planner and historian Lila Leontidou underlined, “the colonization of the Greek territory was achieved primarily via urban planning,” with this process being charged with an idealistic description, in order to impose these hierarchies and discriminations in a subtle manner. This reflection on neoclassicism described the latter as a norm and a layout, a project in itself capable of “achieving [its] initial political content: next to the remnants of the antiquity, representing the new republic that is being built on the ruins of the old order”. At the same time, it was capable of promoting “a new society that will be formed by the communities of the descendants of the ancient Greeks”. The city that could perform as the paradigm par excellence for these operations was the city of Athens, yet in 1832 just a small Ottoman town of about 6000 inhabitants.
The selection of the city as the capital of the new state was not a choice that could have been justified in pragmatic terms. Other important centres, like Argos, Ermoupolis, Korinthos, Nauplion and Tripolis, were more populated, economically and socially more advanced than Athens, with organized productive activities and with reference to their provincial peripheries. Apart from its ancient past, what distinguished the city from the other potential capitals of the newly formed state was the fact that planners, architects, artists and geographers, even before the liberation of the country, had extensively documented it. Furthermore, the city had an advanced and authorized layout plan – interestingly enough, already revised once – before the inauguration of the city as the capital on September 28, 1834. The authors of this plan were the architects Stamatis Kleanthis (1799-1862) and Eduard Schaubert (1804-1860), court officials and public servants, both graduates of the Berlin Architectural Academy and students of Karl Friedrich Schinkel (1781-1841). Schinkel's influence is highly significant for the development of Kleanthis’ and Schaubert’s layout, especially his *Bebauungsplan* (Master plan) of Berlin of 1817.

Schinkel’s particular admiration for Ancient Greek architecture and the preference towards the latter than Imperial Roman Architecture is well known and analyzed, a position that distinctively characterizes the Neoclassicism practiced by him and Friedrich and David Gilly in the Prussian context. However, it is primarily the planning principles applied in his strategic interventions for the Prussian Capital in the Post-Napoleonic Wars’ era that we can trace in the Masterplan for Athens of 1833. The “interconnection of individual parts of the city” and the “organic coordination of several sections of the central city into a unified and harmonious environment for commercial and civic life,” achieved by the manipulation of individual buildings and projects, is a condition that characterized both the Schinkel’s *Bebauungsplan* and his *Charlottenburg Palace*, as well as the Kleanthis’ and Schaubert’s *Shedion tis Neas Poleos ton Athinon* («Σχέδιον της Νέας Πόλεως των Αθηνών», in Greek). If in the case of Berlin
1.10 Karl Friedrich Schinkel, *Bebauungsplan*, 1817
Masterplan for Central Berlin
1.11-1.12 Karl Friedrich Schinkel, *Charlottenburg Palace-Berlin*, 1824
pavilion and aerial view of the park
1.13 Kleanthis & Schaubert Plan, 1833, reproduction of the original drawing
the architect’s goal was to “transform the nucleus of the capital” and to allow for “the vital relationship between the river, the island, the palace and Unter den Linden”; in Athens the major issue at stake was to relate the new settlement and the prominent emerging institutions with the ancient ruins of Acropolis Hill. The new political power and the respective subjectivities that supported it had to be contrasted and related with these “glorious monuments of the past”, in a symbolic, yet explicit manner.

Since 1830 and following Schinkel’s example, who was a prominent public servant of the Prussian King, Kleanthis and Schaubert settled in the island of Aegina, at the time the capital of the state, and they were hired as public officials and architects of the court. Immediately, they were advocating for the conveyance of the capital in Athens and proceeded with an extensive topographical and statistical survey of the city, a project that both elaborated on in the following decades. Finally, on May 1832, they were officially assigned by King Otto to submit a masterplan for Athens, which was authorized on July 11, 1833.

The city that Kleanthis and Schaubert were confronted with was a small town built in the north side Acropolis Hill, with defined land uses and social layering, very different and of a completely different scale of what constitutes Athens today. Native Athenians from the Byzantine era, Albanians, Turks and other ethnic minorities, like Roma, Ethiopians and Egyptians, constituted the rather multi-cultural social body of the city. The city had already been historically segregated, according to not only ethnic backgrounds, but also following social and class divisions. The northeast part of the settlement, situated in a small hill that provided better hygiene and ventilation, was the area of the rich families of Greek and Albanian origin. On the north-west part, closer to Kifissos River, the districts of the poor were located, together with the productive activities of the city, sometimes over-passing the city walls. The Acropolis hill housed the Turkish officials, the military guard and the poorer classes of Turkish origin. According to this spatial organization,
1.14 Population Distribution in pre-liberated Athens, 1820s

source: Ioannis Travlos, I Poleodomiki Ekekeu tou Athinon-Apo ton praeistorikon Chronon meliot ton urban ton 19ou aiwnou [The Evolution of the City of Athens- From Pre-historic Times to the early 19th Century], (Athens: Kapon, 2005), redrawn by the author
1.15 Urban Agglomeration of Attica Region today
drawing by the author
Kleanthis and Schaubert proposed the first masterplan for Athens, whose main principals were applied gradually to the city. It was a plan that was anticipating a growth in population, which the relocation of the capital to Athens would eventually provoke.

The new city embraced the old settlement from the north side of Acropolis Hill and contrasted the ancient ruins with the royal residence. The palace situated in the north peak of the plan, where today is Omonia Square in downtown Athens. Starting from the palace, three axes prevailed, stressing the relation of the new political power with the ancient past of the city. The first, from the Palace to Acropolis, today Athinas Street, had the Parthenon as a reference point. The second axis, from the Palace to Kerameikos, today Peiraios Avenue, connected physically and symbolically the new power with its most glorified ancestors: the ancient Kerameikos cemetery of important Athenian citizens was situated at the end of the avenue. Finally, the third, from the Palace to the Stadium, today Stadiou Street, connected the new royal residence with the ancient roman stadium. At the ends of the last two axes, two circular plazas were placed: Mouson on Stadiou Street and Kekropos on Peiraos Avenue, which were connected by a wide avenue, Ermou Street, planted with trees on both sides. Additionally, in the middle of the two axes, two other squares were organized symmetrically, Koumoundourou and Korai, which were also connected by a boulevard, 38 meters wide. This boulevard was one of the four of that kind, all of them together forming a rectangle that surrounded the royal residence, with the north edge being the limit of the royal garden.

All along the three axes (Athinas/Peiraios/Stadiou) and around the main squares, the institutional and public functions were located: ministries and military buildings around the palace, the central market along Athinas, the Academy, the Library on Mouson square, the stock market, the currency exchange, the cathedral and other commercial uses on Koumoundourou square on Peirais axis.
A. Royal Palace
B. Kekropos Square [Kerameikos Square]
C. Mouson Square [Syntagma Square]
D. Secondary Squares

1. Ministries
2. Market Square
3. Stock Market Building
4. Unknown building
5. Parliament
6. Baths
7. Cathedral
8. Academy of Athens

1.16 Kleanthis & Schaubert Plan, 1833
drawing by the author
A. Cathedral
B. Royal Palace and Gardens

1. Neoclassical Trilogy
   - Academy of Athens,
   - National University,
   - National Library

1.17 von Klenze’s modified Plan, 1834
drawing by the author
Another important element of the plan was the organization of a “productive centre” on the north-west end of the new city. Around a circular plaza, in the north side of the historic neighborhood of Kerameikos, the architects placed a number of rudimentary and marginal uses, like slaughterhouses, storages, olive oil processing centres, etc. This was a decision directed by the existing spatial organization of functions in the old settlement, where for historic and climatic reasons the productive activities were organized in the north-west of Acropolis Hill. However, this further intensified the class segregation in Athens, enhancing the spatial division between the west and the east part of the city.

The plan was never implemented in its entirety. Between its first authorization on July 11, 1833 and its final approval and public presentation on October 19, 1833, Kleanthis and Schaubert were forced to radically revise their proposal. Due to a severe reaction from the land owners and speculators, the architects reduced the width of all streets, eliminated the construction of the rectangular boulevard, and the central axis of Athinas changed completely, negating the idea of creating a central market square and a monumental axis with porticos on both sides of the street. Additionally, the surfaces of the plots, dedicated to public institutions and functions, dramatically decreased.

The implementation of the plan was on a complete deadlock; at that moment, the king assigned the Bavarian architect Leon von Klenze (1784-1864) to revise the existing masterplan. The basic decision was to keep the initial triangular form and the orientation of the plan. Apart from cancelling the provisions of the plan such as the extensive boulevards and the secondary squares, the proposal decreased the size of the new settlement, which reduced the cost of the necessary expropriations. Additionally, von Klenze changed the position of the royal residence, moving the complex to the west end of the central axis of Ermou, creating a large royal garden in the ancient cemetery of Kerameikos. The placement of the royal palace, fundamental for
the spatial organization of the city, changed one last time in 1835. That year, the king officially decided to situate the residence on exactly the opposite side, i.e. the east end of the central axis, assigning the design of the palace and a royal square in front of the complex to the architect Fr. Von Gaertner. With this decision, which followed the existing class segregation of Athens and created a further polarization in the city (the poor and productive areas in the west, the wealthy districts in the east), the plan took its final form and started being implemented accordingly.

Until the early 20th century, planning in Athens was executed by the city’s authorities based upon the provisions and the limitations of Kleanthis’ and Schaubert’s layout – as it was finalized and revised by von Klenze. Most constituted to limited expansions and opportunistic modifications of the latter, primarily consisting of openings and carvings of streets and squares, relocations of land uses and adjustments for the central neighbourhoods. Although the city witnessed a twentyfold increase of its population and expanded to a territory ten times bigger than the town of the 1830s, the city was lacking of an updated and comprehensive planning project.

Kleanthis’ and Schaubert’s plan was successful in fulfilling the political initiative to construct the exemplary city of a quasi-colonial state. Their project managed to do so by proposing a particular form in the space of the city, which was able to perform both as a symbolic representation of the emerging power and as a managerial, spatial framework. The triangular form of the plan, still traceable in the city today, organized accordingly with the placement and the organization of civic buildings, institutional clusters and commercial uses, reflected the status and the condition of the new political order. These individual parts managed to protect and to maintain the integrity of the initial form – the so-called Triangle – even during the extensive modifications of the planning layout that followed.
The plan managed to project a very specific spatial organization of the city where, similar to Schinkel’s Bebauungsplan, would be carried out by the manipulation of singular building archetypes. These framed the urban environment and constructed a particular spatial consciousness of the subject towards the city. As Fritz Neumeyer argued for Schinkel’s architecture, “the freestanding cube, diverging from the axial system of the Baroque and emancipating itself from traditional seigneurial claims, correspondingly stood for the modern self and the middle-class appropriation of space.” Following these guidelines, Kleanthis and Schaubert foresaw and anticipated the evolution of a middle-class capitalist city, which would have been primarily based on the development of a modern competitive bourgeoisie. These subjects would eventually take control of the city in the following historic periods, where the promotion and the establishment of bourgeois architecture and planning applications would use this exact strategy of controlling the urban space through singular architectural objects and fragmented, opportunistic planning applications. The generalization of these principles would define the urban space of Modern Athens. Kleanthis’ and Schaubert’s plan included traces and the “genetic code” of these developments, projecting them with a very concrete manner.

Besides the basic triangular organization of the city centre and its close relation with Acropolis Hill, the plan, operating in favour of the dominant classes, solidified and reinforced the social division and segregation of Athens on the West-East axis. The east part, around the royal residence and along Stadiou Street, became the residential neighborhood of the upper class, concentrating all the public institutions and functions. On the opposite side, the west fringe of the city centre was transformed to a working class district, gathering productive activities in rather unhealthy and unplanned settlements. The implementation of the railway network on the west border of the city, together with the extension of Peiraios Avenue all the way to the port, further intensified this social segregation. A continuous, linear “productive
1.18 Athens, aerial view of the Triangle
source: Ministry of the Environment, energy and Climate Change Archive
A. Omonoia Square  
B. Kerameikos Square  
C. Syntagma Square  
D. Koumoundourou Square  
E. Korai Square  

1. Neoclassical Trilogy  
2. Parliament  

1. Working-class Districts  
2. Middle-class Districts  
3. Productive Cluster  
4. Upper-class Districts  

1.19 The Triangle in contemporary Athens  

drawing by the author

1.20 Class Segregation in Athens, schematic diagram  

drawing by the author
cluster” was organized, starting from Monastiraki and Metaxourgeio districts, adjacent to Acropolis Hill, reaching the core of Peiraias Port. Until the end of the century, the working class population of Athens and Peiraias lived between industrial units, squatting in public or undefined land and building family units with a kind of “self-built” mechanism, seemingly unregulated and spontaneous. The petit bourgeois class occupied areas within the official layout plan, which had been left unexploited by the higher layers of the society. Gradually, this class of public servants and micro-merchants formed the middle class neighborhoods of the city, in the southeast side and the northern part of the city centre. The historic neighborhoods of Exarhia and Neapoli, at the northwest of Lykabettus Hill, Pangrati at the opposite side of the hill – a new district formed on the east side of river Ilissos – and, finally, Patisia, an area that was rapidly developed in the late 19th century, after the planning authorities proceeded with the opening of Patision Avenue, constituted the main areas of the city’s middle class for decades that followed.

Besides the plan’s success as a normative framework, its fate established a precedent for the city planning in Athens, and consequently, for the rest of the Greek cities. Within these specific economic and social structures, and within these particular forms of land property, the public authorities were unable to implement a masterplan in its entirety. Thus, it became a necessity to advance planning mechanisms capable to deal with the different scales of the city, a system that could allow for the control of the architecture, the small scale building construction and the respective singular objects of the speculative housing market. While the neoclassical city was evolving, it’s possible to argue that the city was witnessing the formation of a competitive land market and building industry, which constituted an already significant monetary activity and a form of investment for different social subjects. From the large capital of the Greek diaspora, the “donations” of various benefactors-speculators, to the extensive interference of public officers and military personnel in planning decisions and modifications, and from
1.21 aerial view of Athens in the late 19th century-early 20th century

1.22 view of Aiolou Street in Athens from the same period
the native Athenian landlords, to the emerging middle and petit bourgeois class of property owners, the urban fabric received a tremendous economic pressure. In these early decades in the history of the capital, a competitive, small-scale real estate market emerged in the city, eventually introduced a form of capitalist development that preceded other forms of production. Ruthless land speculation, large, but mainly small-scale transactions in the construction industry, rentals as a significant form of income, dowries and other forms of archaic agreements, with the state tolerating extensive tax evasion, negotiations of expropriations with illegal means etcetera, described the majority of the economic activities in Athens. Within this reality, planning the city with conventional means seemed impossible.

The establishment of an unrestricted laissez-faire system in land control and housing legislation constitutes the origin of most urban and social problems that still exist in the city. The public institutions and the dominant middle class would need more than a century to establish a planning mechanism capable of partially absorbing and re-appropriating the land speculation and taming the class antagonism within the city. The land allowance mechanism of the post-WW II era, a contractor’s *quid pro quo* system, provided a juridical framework and gave a specific form to the capital circulation and accumulation related to petit bourgeois land ownership. From the late 19th century and on, the history of conventional planning in Athens is a series of continuous revisions and failed applications of masterplans, whereas the particular regulations, which dealt with sectional applications, the building stock and the construction industry, controlled the actual form of the city and managed its population.
III. Bourgeois City (1909-1929)

In the dawn of the 20th century, while Athens was transforming to a vast metropolitan environment, historical urgencies rendered this process of spatial administration even more necessary and demanding. No more were power relations and dominant institutions symbolically represented in the city through architectural objects organized in hierarchical plans, instead the whole city would be treated as a continuous, un-interrupted productive landscape, animating and exposing the possibility of development. City planning ceded to the realm of economy, of management of this exact possibility of production. Within this project, and for various historic reasons, Athens became the “motor”, the area of concentration of economic activities, of capital accumulation and of labour force. Similarly to the 1830s, Athens constituted the city where all of the above were supposed to be represented and exhibited spatially in such a fashion so as to become exemplary for the rest of the country.

Within this period, major geopolitical events occurred. The Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 and the Greco-Turkish conflict of 1919-1922 – an aftermath of the Paris Peace Conference and the Versailles Treaty that ended the First World War – significantly transformed the expanse of the Greek sovereignty and the social and ethnic composition of the Greek society. Yet, this entire period is characterized by the political dominance of the bourgeois class, which initiated large-scale constitutional and economic reforms, marking a clear interruption with the previous regime. By no means was this a process without resistance, from not only the king and the loyal to his authority clusters of the high bourgeoisie, but primarily from the side of the working class. The rise of class-consciousness and the struggles of the working class that followed contemporary developments in Europe and elsewhere, challenged the power of the liberal bourgeoisie continuously within this historic context, especially after the arrival and the establishment of refugee communities in the Greek cities.
Athens witnessed two extensive immigration waves, highly significant for the city’s social consistency. The first, an internal migration inflow of the early 20th century, was stimulated by the rise of industrial centres in the wider metropolitan area. The second, when the city received 246,000 refugees from Turkey, raising its total population by one third. These two influxes established a large multitude of industrial and unskilled workers in the wider metropolitan area, forcing the city to expand beyond its previous limits. Contrary to the previous cycle, where the plan, the buildable land and the available residential spaces were able to absorb the population increase, this time the rapid and massive growth caused a severe housing crisis in Athens. This lack of residential space was not only affecting the poor, but also higher social layers of the population. The centralization of the state, which had already been initiated in the 19th century, concentrated most of the economic and institutional activities of the country in the city of Athens. A large number of wealthy bourgeois, alongside with officials and servants of the public sector, were supposed to organize their living in the city, eventually putting significant pressure on the housing market and the local building industry. The official masterplan for Athens, especially in regards of authorized expansions, was inconsistent with the increasing demand for new residential neighborhoods, unable to accommodate these significant pressures. This concluded to the rise of unregulated housing districts at the outskirts of the city, especially in Peiraios Avenue axis and around the industrial clusters of the wider metropolitan area of Athens and Peiraias Port.

Due to this intense and multi-layered social demand, it became necessary for the authorities to promote planning mechanisms capable of re-appropriating and controlling the densification and the expansion of the urban territory. For the high and middle bourgeoisie, the expansion of the city was promoted through the foundation of the “private suburbs”, forms of market-driven cooperatives that implemented plans on the outskirts of the city. A complementary strategy for the needs of the dominant classes was the
1. Kleanthis & Schaubert Plan  2. 1879 Plan Area  3. 1917 and 1923 Plans Area

1.23 City Planning Expansions of central Athens, 1930s

drawing by the author
1.24 Private and Co-op Suburbs in Athens, 1930s

drawing by the author
Refugee Settlements in Athens, 1930s

drawing by the author
densification of the central districts, a project carried out by the establishment of the high-rise apartment block, namely the “polykatoikia” building type. Both policies were introduced by liberal governments as abstract regulatory norms and were inscribed in three laws: the decree of July 27, 1923 about “Plans for Cities, Towns and Settlements of the State”, the one of April 3, 1929 defining “The General Building Regulation of the State” and the 3741/1929 law “On Horizontal Property Divisions and other provisions”. A protagonist of this period, the politician Eleftherios Venizelos, is often acclaimed for his role in the restructuring of the Greek city, which it is understood as indispensable part of the liberal bourgeois agenda. This chapter will deal with the first regulatory tool, while the polykatoikia type will be discussed in the following one. The evolution of this building type should be understood as the telos of a complex process to establish a sophisticated architectural mechanism, capable to absorb already existing dynamics and social practices, materializing in space an apparatus of control that interfered in the production process, the economy of the small-scale building industry. The focus of this part of the thesis is to present the foundations upon which the polykatoikia type became possible and successful.

A form of expansion, parallel to the method of the private and cooperative suburbs of the wealthy, was implemented as a part of a broader welfare agenda. This project was specifically designed and executed for the needs of the Refugees’ Settlement Committee (RSC) and the welfare program of the Ministry of Social Welfare (MSW). Until today, this project constitutes the largest - and one of the very few - public housing programs in Greece. The state, through systematic planning and economic programs, managed to organize settlement units and productive centres around Athens, drastically transforming the social composition of the city. Nevertheless, the working class’ needs and demands for housing were not satisfied by these policies, which were exclusively designed to tackle the urgencies of a particular
segment of the population, the refugees from Asia Minor. Even the refugees’ program was class oriented and diverse, appearing with significant variations and differences, resulting in the construction of class segregated communities and neighborhoods. The pattern followed the west-east social division and class segregation, already solidified in the city by planning decisions taken by the Kleanthis and Schaubert masterplan. The proletariat and petit bourgeois segments of the refugee population were placed in specific neighborhoods along and within the industrial cluster alongside the railway lines, whereas the wealthiest among them were settled in separated districts, such the one of Nea Smyrni in the south of the city centre. Another particular cluster, primarily consisting of skilled workers, builders and their families, was placed on the foot of Hymettus Mountain, forming the neighborhoods of Kaisariani, Byronas and Hymettus. The particularities of the refugee settlement program will be analyzed further in the chapter, but it crucial to underline that, in any case, the refugee settlement program remains a peculiar exception in the history of city planning in Greece, since never before or after such a systematic project appeared.

Within these early decades of the 20th century, the systemic economic and social transformations that occurred were followed by radical modifications of the planning policies. What remains common and unifies the different plans and regulations of the period is the effort of the bourgeoisie to establish its presence within the space of the city. This had been primarily achieved through the systematization of social segregation and control of the urban territory. By the gradual abandonment of large-scale masterplans, the dominant classes control the expansion of the city “section by section”, where new neighborhoods and districts were designed and placed accordingly, in a wild private, real estate market. For the city centre, the plans appeared to have a “corrective manner” and in most cases were unable to promote a complete project for Athens.
Already in the passage from the 19th to the 20th century, any idealistic views regarding its urban character have been dismissed. The neoclassical city of the 19th century has been absorbed by the rapid and uncontrollable growth of the metropolitan area of Athens and the port of Peiraias. A highly competitive “bourgeois city”, extensively segregated and socially divided, had been formed without any planning provisions. Athens at that time was passing from an early, pre-industrial, productive stage to a more advance capitalist development, where light industry and manufacturing clusters were evolving rapidly in the city. By 1920, the metropolitan area of Attica concentrated 12.65% of the Greek population, with 27.3% of total employment being organized in the secondary sector. In total, 1/3 of the industrial working class of the country lived within or just outside the borders of the city of Athens and the port of Peiraias. Within these early years of the 1900s, the city witnessed for the first time the presence of laborers and industrial workers, who, due to the state’s and the employers’ indifference for housing, settled outside the official, regulated plan, squattering undefined or public land and forming self-built, working class neighborhoods.

The housing crisis for the poor came as a result of the growth of a speculative market, thriving in the city since the mid-19th century, when the high and middle class subjects exhausted all the available land of the city that was fitted and authorized for residential development. Additionally, the lack of a new masterplan or an authorized expansion of any of the existing ones, not only provoked the illegal occupation of land, but created great pressure on rents and housing prices within the existing fabric and the building stock of the city’s central districts. Within this transitional stage, newcomers would have to compete for residential land by the terms defined by the capitalist market, primarily through the institution of rent. The working class population had been exploited both as a labor force and as a class of potential tenants of residential space of the worst possible configuration, one that simulated the industrial metropolises of Europe of the early 19th century.
Gradually and operating on the thin line between legality and illegality, a sub-market was formed in order to exclusively fulfill the proletariat’s needs for housing in the city. The main mode of this activity was to intensify the use of residential land within the already formed, self-built, working class neighborhoods, partially interrupting the continuous expansion of the city limits. The controlling groups of this operation were small landowners, petty, neighborhood-scale developers, and various groups and collectivities of builders, who, in close cooperation, built flimsy shacks for workers and their families. These activities thrived in close proximity to factories and other work places, primarily along Peiraios Avenue and the railway line that connected the port with the city. This particular area had been gradually transformed to the main industrial cluster of the metropolitan area. The pattern of segregation of the west-east axis had been further intensified. A continuous working class city emerged from the west foothill of Acropolis, down south to Peiraias, traces of which still exist today in areas like Botanikos, Metaxourgeio, Renti, Drapetsona and Keratsini.

Due to continuous military operations and conflicts, an economic crisis erupted in the 1910s, eventually establishing an acute housing problem in the city, which eventually affected all social classes. The building activity slowed down and building costs and rents increased dramatically throughout Athens. The state, with a number of laws in 1912, 1916 and 1919, tried to regulate and control the rental prices, an initiative which had a series of social and economic effects. First, the large capital that had been invested by the high and the comprador bourgeoisie in the building industry was averted from construction, especially with respect to the local housing market. The invested capital was directed to infrastructural projects of the state. The rent control created an economic environment that did not favour the construction of new housing buildings, but the occupation of existing built surfaces. The housing conditions for the poor worsened dramatically, mainly because the immigration wave from rural areas of Greece, or new territories that were gradually becoming part of the national sovereignty, continued to rise. The
Area for Urban Expansion for expensive mansions

Central densification Area

Proposed new squares and avenues

Proposed Urban Renewal

Working Class Cluster

Area for Urban Expansion for expensive mansions

Linear Axis: Central Railway Station

Proposed Urban Renewal

Administrative Cluster

Expansion/Densification

Proposed Green Areas

1.26 Hoffmann Plan, 1908, 1.27 Mawson Plan, 1914
re-drawn by the author
1.28 Stylianos Leloudas Masterplan for Attica Region, 1919

sub-market for the working class and the poor developed even further due to a peculiar effect of the rent control policies. The measure actually favored the existing forms of small land property and the micro-scale building industry, eventually promoting the outlawed activities of the poorest workers. By encumbering the possession of large pieces of land and by creating an economic environment that blocked large-scale developments, the state institutionalized “by default” these informal operations.

Within this transitional phase of the city’s development, three different plans were assigned and published - relatively different but equally unsuccessful - to intervene in the actual space of the city.\(^4^6\)

The first, an initiative of the Municipality of Athens and mayor Spyros Merkouris, was a planning proposal made by the German architect Ludwig Hoffmann (1852-1932) in 1908. Hoffmann, an admirer of the classical tradition, tried to reconstruct the urban fabric of the centre, in order to “update” the existing plans of Kleanthis-Schaubert and von Klenze. He proposed a number of new monumental avenues, circular squares and an extensive renewal of the building stock within the historic district of the city, planning decisions that implied large-scale demolitions and expensive expropriations. An interesting moment of his proposal is the carving of a linear axis that led to the central railway station of Athens, which in his plan was redesigned. In addition, he proposed three potential areas for urban expansion, one on the west of the city centre, in Patisia district, one to the south, behind Acropolis Hill, and one last, for expensive mansions further to the west, over-passing Kifissos River.

Between 1915 and 1918, a second plan was assigned by the municipality of Athens to the English landscape architect Thomas Hayton Mawson (1861-1933). Similarly to Hoffmann’s, Mawson’s proposal focused only in the centre of the city, where he advocated an extensive modification of the urban fabric and a rearrangement of the land uses and functions. Although he followed classical patterns in the plan’s composition, he proposed the organization of different functional clusters – administrative, educational, etc. – and he introduced a working class neighborhood around the central railway station, an area that he also redesigned.
A different case from the last two is the proposal of a self-trained planner, the lawyer Stilianos Leloudas. In 1919, Leloudas published a book entitled *The Broader Athens*, which was the first effort to research and to document the whole metropolitan area of Athens and Peiraias, moving beyond the historic centre of the city. Leloudas proceeded with an extended statistical and database survey of the entire Attica region, proposing a type of functional zoning on a metropolitan scale. In his masterplan, we can observe the following areas and clusters:

- **an agricultural land**, Elaionas, next to the city centre, historically defined as the productive olive garden of Athens,
- **a strictly defined military zone**, expanding from the west side of the railway to Eleusina Gulf,
- **a sea port**, Peiraias,
- **a city**, the existing urbanized area, expanding from Patisia to Faliraki on the north-south axis, and from Goudi to Elaionas in the east-west direction, and finally,
- **the environmentally protected region** of Hymettus Mountain.

Although Leloudas’ proposals were never implemented, his thorough analysis and investigation managed to diagnose tendencies and interesting dynamics in the spatial organization of the metropolitan area of Attica. It is interesting to observe how future investments and functions were actually located according to Leloudas pattern, and how influential it was to forthcoming projects, like the ones Constantinos A. Doxiadis and his team of collaborators proposed for Attica after the Second World War.47

Athens abruptly passed to a fundamentally different stage of urban development, after the events of 1922 and the massive population exchange that followed the Greek-Turkish conflict. Interwar Athens, during the 1920s and the early 1930s became a paradigmatic case of Mediterranean rapid urbanization, where the construction industry prevailed over other productive activities and economic cycles. Nevertheless, it is within this period that Athens was established as an increasingly productive agglomeration, leaving behind its previous character, which was rather parasitic towards other provinces and regions of the country.48
This different stage of economic development for Athens was a result of the systematic efforts made by the Ministry of Public Welfare and the Refugee Settlement Commission (RSC), which, in order to provide employment to the refugee population, organized industrial and manufacturing units around the city. The contribution of these two institutions was significant in the realm of planning, advancing the first and until today, most complete public housing project in the history of the country. In principal, the RSC was responsible for the establishment of agricultural and semi-agricultural communities in provincial and rural territories, whereas the Ministry controlled the refugee settlements in the already urbanized areas. During the next decade, the two authorities managed to provide housing and employment to the refugees in more than 40 cities and to build almost 1500 agricultural villages around the country, primarily in the northern regions of Macedonia and Thrace. In Athens, most of refugee settlements were placed in the west part of the city, close to industrial and other productive centres.

The first group, on the north part, was devoted to a population of average income, mainly consisting of the educated, former middle class of the Turkish coast. The labour force from these neighborhoods, such as Nea Ionia, Chalkidona, Nea Philadelphia, and Perissos, was primarily employed by the textile and the carpet industry, with which the refugees, especially the female population, were familiar with. In addition, because of their high level of education, many from these neighborhoods were hired in the private market and the public sector as scientists and skilled professionals, forming a mixed community white and blue-collar workers. In this group of settlements, the housing units were larger, the economic initiatives and agreements more advanced, and the plans were designed according to a garden city pattern. On the southern part of the west axis, closer to the port, the refugee neighborhoods were organized alongside the existing working class districts, establishing a proletarian ring around the industrial centre.
of Peiraias. The poor and unskilled workers inhabited neighborhoods like Koridallos, Kokkinia, Keratsini, Drapetsona and others. Within these districts, there was no advanced plan, but just an almost “informal” right, given by the authorities, to self-built family units, without further provisions. Gradually, these districts grew uncontrollably, when other migrants from rural Greece established their households next to the ones of the refugees. Another cluster was organized on the foot of Hymettus Mountain, forming the neighborhoods of Kaisariani, Hymettus, Byron, Zografou and Nea Kallikrateia. These areas stand somehow in the middle of the previous two cases, with the labour force primarily consisting of skilled, professional builders, many of which established building cooperatives that were active in the building industry. Many were also employed in the local quarries. Finally, the wealthiest among the refugee population lived in the settlement of Nea Smyrni, adjacent to the south-east of the city centre of Athens.

Planning applications, residential types, size of plots and domestic units, as well as the protocols of property ownership and finance of the real estate acquisitions differed significantly in the refugee population and their neighborhoods. The choices and decisions taken by the public authorities, namely the Ministry of Public Welfare and the Refugee Settlement Commission, were in accordance with a social and class differentiation solidified in space, which was coming into line with existing tendencies in the city. However, a common characteristic was the preference over small-scale, low-rise types, owned in most cases by no more than one or two families, who shared the property rights of the plot.

By becoming the main “planners” of Athens, the MSW and the RSC established an urban reality for the city rather different from the one of the 19th century, initiating the first scale shift and territorial treatment of Attica. Until the arrival of the refugee population, there was a clear distinction between the centre and the periphery of Athens, with the first being the subject of city
1.29 Perikleous (Asyrmatos) Refugee Settlement
source: IKA Archive, Ministry of Social Welfare, Refugee Settlement Program 1922

1.30 Refugee Settlement in Drapetsona
source: IKA Archive, Ministry of Social Welfare, Refugee Settlement Program 1922
Nicolas Mitzalis, Paragogi Katoikias kai Astikos Choros ton Mesopolemo [Production of Housing and Urban Space in the Interwar Period], (Athens: Futura, 2008), 139.
1.31 Central Street in Kokkinia neighborhood
source: IKA Archive, Ministry of Social Welfare, Refugee Settlement Program 1922

1.32-1.33 Housing Typologies for Nea Smyrni and Nea Kallipolis settlement
planning and the latter being left to be developed “informally” by the housing sub-market of the working class. With the implementation of the refugee settlements, the city acquired a network of satellite neighborhoods, formally organized and divided, provoking a peculiar pattern of suburbanization in Athens, reversing the conventional model of concentric class segregation in the urban areas.49

Provoked by the increasing demand for residential space, the high and middle bourgeoisie followed this first wave of systematic suburbanization, which, for their particular needs, had been institutionalized by the authorities in the form of a specific planning regulation, the decree of July 27, 1923 about “Plans for Cities, Towns and Settlements of the State”.50 With this planning mechanism, the higher layers of the Athenian society managed to authorize and to implement plans for the expansion of the city to the periphery, overpassing the working class ring and the productive clusters, which had evolved in proximity with the city centre.

There are two different kinds of these high and middle class bourgeois suburbs: the ones formed by private developers and companies, and the others that were proposed by private cooperatives and unions of high-income employees. In the first category, we find the high-class districts of Psihiko and Ekali, which were the first to be proposed immediately after the declaration of the 228A Law in 1923. Both were designed as garden cities and they were addressed to high-class bourgeois families. The success of these two cases provoked the expansion of the first, with the inauguration of the district of Neo Psihiko – translated as “New Psihiko”, in Greek – for public servants and officials, as well as the foundation of thirteen additional suburbs in the periphery of the city. Neighborhoods like Ilioupolis, Glyfada, Alimos, Voula, Cholargos, Dionysos and others, still important upper-middle class districts in Athens, had been established in the 1920s. Although many were not fully completed before the end of the Second World War, these initiatives solidified the systematic suburban expansion of Athens, as it concerned the high-income population. Additionally, they had a paradigmatic value throughout the social spectrum, with the middle class and petit bourgeois subjects taking
advantage of the same planning mechanisms, while establishing the second category of cooperative residential settlements.

In this second group, public servants, military personnel and state officials formed market-driven cooperatives, taking advantage of the legislation that provided economic benefits and tax releases to state employees. Following the example of the private suburbs, large pieces of land were bought collectively and were then divided into singular plots for each family, according to an agreed planning scheme. The official authorization of the plan by the municipalities and the central state was acquired in a second phase. These new neighborhoods were founded primarily next to existing private suburbs, like for example Philothei, which is placed next to Psihiko. In some other cases, this mechanism was used to implement a systematic planning within central areas of the city, like Kipriadou District in the neighborhood of Patisia, north of the central core of Athens.

The rise of the private and cooperative suburbs for the upper-middle and the high class of the city would add a secondary network of wealthy neighborhoods in the periphery of Athens, establishing a highly fragmented urban fabric. This type of sectional suburbanization is extremely important for the city's urban development. The mechanism remained active for more than fifty years and institutionalized a pattern of development where private interests decided upon the location, the fabric and the density of city growth. Various collectives and enterprises, especially petit-bourgeois and working class groups would use this exact planning apparatus in the post-war decades to impose specific expansions and modifications of the city plan, in social practices that blended outlaw activities like squatting, political pressure and forms of spatial activism. Looking today the actual city fabric of Athens and the wider metropolitan area of Attica, the city looks like if it's composed by a patchwork of different grids, independent neighborhood-scale islands, separated by large pieces of infrastructure, topography and physical obstacles. These are the very traces, the spatial, social and even ecological consequences of this opportunistic, fractional expansion and modification of the city plan, decided on local scale and without clear, centralized decision making.
1.34 Refugee Settlement of Nea Philadelphia, 1933
Aerial photo
source: Municipality of Nea Philadelphia Archives
1.35 Psihiko

1.36 Cholargos

1.37 Ilioupoli

1.38 Philothei

1.35-1.38 Private and Cooperative Suburbs, Plans: Advertisements on local newspapers and magazines

This pattern of urban development initiated and prescribed the foundation of a particular mode of production of residential space, very similar to the partially outlawed sub-market of the poor. In both private and cooperative suburbs, the public interference ended with the building regulations and the authorization of the proposed plan, which it was introduced by a group of individuals, a private enterprise or a specific professional union. The collective initiative always ended with the implementation of the street network. Each individual piece of land was meant to be developed autonomously by its owner. The building stock was not built at once, or by one large building corporation, but evolved unit by unit, according to the particular needs of each landowner. This method of “self-building” is the mechanism with which, from this moment on, the Greek cities expanded. It fitted the particular form of landownership and the organization of labour within the building industry. Small groups of builders, local-scale developers, and a large petit bourgeois class of technicians, engineers and architects are the ones that actually built the modern Greek city, “piece by piece and section by section”, as argued by Dimitris Philippides.51

However, there is an additional consequence of this “informal” method of urban growth. In all the different variations that appeared, from the refugee settlements, to the working class satellite neighborhoods, to the high-bourgeois “private suburbs”, this mode of production of residential space institutionalized private property in the Greek social context. From the two-storey, family-owned types for the refugees of Nea Philadelphia, to the poorly built shacks for the proletarians of Drapetsona, to the large villas for the high bourgeoisie in Pseiriko, the different housing units were private assets of the inhabitants, which possessed both the land and the building on top of it. The particularities of each case, like the different ways each land piece or housing type had been acquired or assembled, did not contradict the essence of the strategy, which directed simultaneously all social classes to the realm of private property.
Since the 1920s, Athens, and consequently the rest of the Greek cities have been overwhelmingly owned by the social subjects that inhabit them. It’s not rent that defined the polarization and the antagonism for residential space in the city, but the fragmented private interests of the socially diverse body of owners/inhabitants of urban land. The Athenian “method of urbanization”, as firstly defined in this pre-WW II era, is one that administers the city and the society as a whole by defining space as property and by dividing it to the smallest possible monad, the housing unit itself.

The mechanism that represents this tendency even more clearly is the one of the “multi-storey apartment building”, the polykatoikia residential type. Although further developed in the after the Second World War, this archetype was born in the 1920s, exclusively to deal with the necessary densification of central districts in Athens, formulating and promoting the establishment of a speculative housing market for the high bourgeoisie of the city centre. The next chapter will discuss the appearance and the evolution of this distinctive building model, which brought major changes in the urban form of Athens first and the rest of the Greek cities consequently. Within this process of urban renewal that the polykatoikia type provoked, the infrastructure of the centre was updated and the municipality implemented a new network of electricity, clean water and sewerage.

In addition, the authorities proceeded with two new masterplans for Athens, which were less successful than the mechanisms and planning legislations mentioned before. The first plan was the result of a lengthy process that lasted from 1919 until 1925, known as the “Kalligas Committee” project, taking its name from the president of the board, the engineer and politician Petros Kalligas (1856-1940). Even before the arrival of the refugees, the committee was assigned to submit an updated masterplan for the metropolitan area and was mainly focused to the re-organization of the linear spine that connected the centre of Athens with the port of Peiraias, including the heavily urbanized central districts of both cities.
1.39 Kalligas Plan, 1924
re-drawn by the author

1.40 Karantinos Plan, 1940
re-drawn by the author
The main principal of Kalligas plan was to control land uses, density and building regulations within an area that was growing rapidly and un-programmatically. It was thus the first project to propose the “spatial management” of the city as an administrative project, moving beyond and rejecting the idea of a “morphological plan”. The committee promoted the extensive zoning of the metropolitan area, which was proposed to be organized into six specialized centres, around which the residential areas would be located, achieving different densities according to the different needs. None of these centres was actually new; in all cases, the functions defined by the plan were those already existing in the city. The plan considered the possibility of potential expansions of these uses in the surrounding fabric, promoting as a main gesture the control of residential density around the six clusters. Land speculators and property owners, especially the ones of Patisia district and of Plaka, the historic neighborhood situated on the north side of Acropolis Hill, forcefully attacked the masterplan. The plan was abandoned altogether a year after its public presentation, in 1926.

The architect Patroclos Karantinos (1903-1976) and his associates submitted the second and final systematic project for a new plan for the city before the Second World War, under the format of a new planning authority, the “Superior Planning Authority of the Capital”. This organization was founded in 1937 by the Metaxas dictatorship, in the regime’s effort to surpass the planning services of the municipality of Athens, as well as the other divisions scattered in different ministries and institutions. The first scientific supervisor of this organization was Constantinos A. Doxiadis (1913-1975), who appeared for the first time in the planning bureaucracy of the city, and who was involved in the preparation of Karantinos Plan. When it was finally submitted, Doxiadis had already left the organization to work as the Head of the Department of Regional and Town Planning in the Ministry of Public Works, a position that he kept even during the Nazi occupation (1940-1944). The Karantinos masterplan consisted of a long statistical survey and analysis of the existing condition within the metropolitan area of Athens. None of its provisions was ever implemented. Nevertheless, Doxiadis and others adapted the specific spatial organization of the proposed industrial clusters the plan proposed in projects of the early post-WW II period.
IV. Mechanisms of a small-scale Architecture

Before moving to the next chapter and the history of the “polykatoikia” type, a number of final conclusional points should be made for this second period of planning in Athens, which roughly covers the first three decades of the 20th century. In the previous cycle, the neoclassical organization of the plan and the architectural forms that represented the emerging political powers of the newly founded Greek kingdom, constructed a specific spatial hierarchy and awareness in Athens, which respected – if not celebrated – the realm of private property. In this period that followed, we observe the evolution of a systematic, regulatory framework that captured the potentiality of the real estate market and rendered it even more profitable than before. This layout addressed not only a multi-layered social demand for housing and the various social urgencies that occurred, such as the arrival of the refugee population, but primarily institutionalized and significantly extended the right to property ownership, not only as an asset, but also as a form of investment for different social subjects. The importance of the interwar period is that it inherited most of the town planning design operations and essential mechanisms, providing the basic “toolbox” for future applications. The plans, the regulations and the pattern of bureaucratic control of the city remained throughout the following decades, although they meant to confront a rather different political and social environment.

What the dominance of the liberal bourgeoisie over the city of Athens achieved in the early 20th century was the systematization of planning for the smaller scale of the city, where the absence of a masterplan was compensated by a fragmented and relatively occasional expansion of the city. Additionally, the control of the city fabric was carried out by building regulations, which allowed for an extensive densification and commodification of the urban land. In other instances, provoked by the state’s tolerance to illegal practices or the conscious empowerment of the residential market of the poor, settlements and neighborhoods preceded their inclusion to the official masterplan of
the city. The planning mechanisms eventually established a peculiar mode of production of residential buildings and quarters, where small scale development prevailed over large capital investments. In the interwar period, the planning mechanisms were implemented in order to benefit the dominant middle class and the high bourgeoisie of the city, whereas the poor, apart from the refugee population, were left to establish their living through an extensive sub-market. In the following decades, the major adjustments would occur when the state, in order to tame the possibility of social conflict and political unrest, avoiding a political transformation of the Greek society after the Second World War, would be forced to generalize the planning provisions and mechanisms formalized in the 1920s. This would include all different social classes to a unified economic activity, one that would eventually produce the homogeneous domestic landscape of Athens and elsewhere in Greece. This landscape was constructed by the proliferation and mutation of the polykatoikia model.
I. The birth of the Polykatoikia

The term polykatoikia, which can be translated in English as “multi-dwelling”, is a neologism, a new, constructed word introduced in Modern Greek by the architect Kyprianos Biris in 1932. In his article with the title “I Astiki Polykatoikia” (“The Urban Polykatoikia”), he discussed the method of construction, the organization of the units in this new type of housing and the potential benefits and new developments this typology could bring to Greek architecture in general and the city of Athens in particular. Biris wrote this piece after he completed possibly the first building of that kind, the “Logothetopoulos Polykatoikia” in 20-22 Bouboulinas Street, in the middle class neighborhood of Exarhia. For him, the middle class subject was the “client”, the producer, the financer and ultimately, the targeted user of this new form of urban dwelling. As he underlined in his text, the polykatoikia “should aim to service the needs of the bourgeois class”, not the “wealthiest and higher class of tenants and landlords”. For him, the premises of this type of architecture were not based on any commercial success and its possible profitable diffusion in the city, but on its capability to “solve the acute housing shortage in Athens”, especially for “public servants, military officers and wealthy bourgeois refugees”.

The history of the polykatoikia proved Biris simultaneously accurate and mistaken in his approach on the type’s instrumental architecture and urban performance. In the decades that followed, the polykatoikia would serve not only the housing needs of the middle class, but of the poorest segments of the population as well, providing decent living conditions in a kind of homogeneous way throughout the city and the social field. Nevertheless, an overwhelming commercialization of the urban and peripheral land would be the aftermath of the type’s diffusion, eventually becoming something more
2.01-2.03 Apartment Building in 20-22 Bouboulinas Str., Exarhia-Athens, 1931
Architect: Kyprianos Biris
source: Kyprianos Biris Archive, courtesy of Tasos Biris
that a mere residential type. This chapter discusses the various stages of the polykatoikia’s development, in an effort to classify this architectural type as a peculiar method of city management, with profound political, spatial, formal and even environmental consequences. Public institutions put forward the polykatoikia not as a finite object or an architectural model, but more as a “possibility”. An architectural form and economic scheme embedded in building codes and regulations, carried out by a fragmented, small-scale construction industry and its various agents. It formulated – historically and materially – specific forms of occupation, building techniques and spatial habits of the Greek population. The chapter relates a selection of architectural examples with the historic and political conditions of their respective time, in order to expose the way important Greek architects responded to the given regulations, how they moved beyond this framework and the way they managed to render popular demands and social transformations of Athens in their architectural propositions.

II. Definitions of the Polykatoikia as a Residential Model

There are two points that we have to stress in regards to the appearance and the early existence of this housing typology. First, the polykatoikia is an object that belongs exclusively to the activities and the realm of the private sector. As Manolis Marmaras had underlined, this exclusivity is registered not only in its method of production, but also in the way the polykatoikia and its apartments were, and still are, disposed in the housing market. Hence, when we are referring to a “polykatoikia”, we are discussing a residential building that is produced by and within as speculative economic mechanism, where its main characteristic is the commercialization of the urban land. The initiative of construction belongs entirely to private capital. It is a form of investment exclusively of private actors and the use of space requires monetary transaction, either in the form of rent deposits or acts of purchase.
of the final, buildable product. As Marmaras had shown, this definition differentiates this building type, or at least used to separate this method of production of residential space from other cases of “high rise, apartment buildings”, which existed in Greece and were built simultaneously or in future periods.

Interestingly, in the common language and popular perception, the term itself is used in a much more inclusive way, literally for every building of more than two floors, with balconies in the façade that follows an interior organization in independent apartments serviced by one staircase, with or without an elevator. Most importantly, it seems that the use of the word by the Greek society does not necessarily follow Marmaras’ scientific definition, in regards to its economic and structural model of production. If in the early appearance of the polykatoikia model, the commodification of the land and the presence of many individuals as owners and tenants was a unique characteristic of the type, the subsequent mutations of this residential unit transformed it to a rather different architectural object. In the last four decades, a small, family-owned plot, in a rather unregulated, unplanned part of the city, could be built in almost self-made, low cost techniques of intense manual labour, often without formal building permission, following the “polykatoikia” formula. Members of the same family, or a small number of associated households, who shared the open space and the small garden on the ground floor, owned the two, three or four apartments of these small residential buildings. This method of self-building did not necessarily imply a commercial, economic activity or additional income from rentals for the group of property owners, but more a social condition, where low income, petit bourgeois subjects were able to construct their own house, outside and independently of a public, subsidized program, or the banking system. It is precisely this method of production of residential space, the one where the formal and structural simplicity of the polykatoikia met with the “self-building” practices of the poor, where the critique on the distinction between “formal” and “informal” urbanism could be raised.
In his work, Marmaras gives two other examples that in his view should be researched as different cases, since they do not fit in his previously outlined definition of the polykatoikia. The first category is the apartment buildings produced for the refugee population, mainly in the 1930s, when the Refugee Settlement Commission closed and other initiatives took over.\(^5\) As Foteini Georgakopoulou pointed out, there are specific typologies that emerged, different from the typically one or two-storey-high residential types that the RSC was building and providing to refugee families in Athens and elsewhere.\(^6\) In the magazine *Technika Chronika* of 1936, an extensive presentation of these peculiar “polykatoikias” in Alexandras Avenue, Kokkinia, Drapetsona and Dourgouti, former unregulated self-built settlements of the refugees,\(^7\) presented them as an alternative to both the low-rise development of the refugee settlements and the speculative housing typology of the commercial polykatoikias. Between 1934 and 1936, as Foteini Georgakopoulou found out “in Athens and Peiraias,” and as a part of the refugee welfare program, “2218 houses and 1057 apartments had been built in high-rise types, following more or less the following principles: the plan is a basic hippodamian grid, of Π or L shape, the buildings are of three to four storeys without elevators, each staircase service between 2 and 12 apartments, which are of one to two rooms, with average surface of 30m\(^2\), with common laundries on the roof or the basement.”\(^8\) Although these buildings became possible in the 1930s because of the new building codes that allowed also for the polykatoikia type to emerge, they represented a radically different form of housing development. The government built these small neighborhoods of modest, low-cost, modernistic buildings outside of the real estate market and without any profit intention. They consisted of a subsidized form of dwelling, given to the refugee beneficiaries within this larger welfare project. Therefore, they cannot be related with the building type of the urban, high-rise, apartment building and should be studied independently from the polykatoikia and its evolution.
The other example, according to Marmaras, are the high-rise, apartment buildings built in the postwar period by the Working Class Housing Organization, a public enterprise with, unfortunately, minimal impact to the development of Athens and any other Greek city. This specific condition is a fundamental component of the diffusion of the polykatoikia type in the postwar period. As Dimitris Emmanuel pointed out in his research, public housing projects in Greece represent less than 3% of the total surface of residential space in the country. This condition should be theorized as a particular, almost unique case worldwide, where the strategic absence of public housing made these projects almost irrelevant for the form and the organization of the Greek urban environment. Political reasons after the Second World War promoted the speculative activities of a private housing market to substitute the responsibility of the state to provide housing within a welfare agenda, with major social and economic implications.

If the above defined what we can and what we cannot name a “polykatoikia building”, there is a second point that has to do with the history of the type itself. Apart from the method of production, i.e. the strictly private nature of this type of residential development, the polykatoikia was deployed to address and to somehow solve the housing needs of specific social classes, in specific urban conditions and in different historic moments. In each period, these variables initiated radical modifications of the ingredients of the polykatoikia architecture, transformations that occurred primarily within the framework of the available building codes, planning regulations and other laws that mainly dealt with property ownership and relevant taxation. Critical components of the polykatoikia, these elements contributed to the object’s profound effectiveness to deal with the city as a whole, moving beyond its initial, somehow limited social and spatial instrumentality.

In the early interwar period, as Kyprianos Biris pointed out, the polykatoikia typology, fitted in the property divisions of central Athens, allowed for the necessary densification and tackled the housing needs of the
upper middle class that inhabited these neighborhoods in the first place. It was never introduced as such, but it constituted the amalgam of two laws that directly or not, prescribed some of the building’s characteristics. These two texts, the April 3, 1929 “General Building Regulation of the State” and the 3741/1929 law “On Horizontal Property Divisions and other provisions”, dealt with two different issues, which, each one by itself, had a colossal impact in the planning and architectural history in Greece.

The first building regulation in the country introduced the radical modification of the allowed building heights and numerous provisions that dealt with the three-dimensional, permissible object, mainly the ways adjacent structures approach or make contact, the organization of the interior of the block and the mandatory setbacks in the façades. Additionally, the General Building Regulation, Genikos Oikodomikos Kanonismos (GOK) in Greek, included many hygienic and organizational requirements, such as minimum openings, size and location of light wells, design directives and minimums for entrances, staircases and the like. The late Christoforos Sakellaropoulos, in his unfinished yet exceptional research on the 1929 and the 1955 building codes, showed how these two texts were influenced by architectural concepts and propositions about urban organization and architectural form from their contemporary time. Advanced European regulations and the influence of Modern Movement’s principals, as Christoforos very well exhibited, are registered and incorporated in GOK’s principal articles. He also pointed out the crucial modifications between the two texts, the 1929 and 1955 GOK respectively, which defined the mutation of the polykatoikia type to accommodate the reconstruction of Athens in the postwar era. In his book, he proceeded with another very interesting task: following the text actual in the two laws, he drew most of their written provisions and requirements in a consistent manner. These sketches, a very short selection of which is included in this volume, unveil with a comprehensive way the subtle forms of biopolitical control achieved through these seemingly neutral series of design and organizational propositions.
If the General building Regulation allowed for this new architectural form to emerge, the second legal text, the law on property divisions, provided the framework that radically modified the private ownership status quo in Greece, achieving the “transition from the institution of freehold ownership to the one of horizontal property”. In this new system, a group of individuals co-owns a single property in predefined percentages. Gradually, the residential buildings in Greece were not anymore singular, undivided estates, but complex, highly fragmented equities, with multiple owners per property. The formation of this new property regime allowed the polykatoikia type to acquire a crucial role in the introduction of a particular form of residential space and property in Greece, i.e. the rented apartment. Understanding the introduction and the evolution of this regulatory apparatus, allows us to relate the historic success of this housing typology with the critical, yet always strategically hidden, interference of the state and its institutions in the private, housing market. If in the interwar period, these two texts opened the possibility for high-rise, luxurious, modern apartment buildings to appear in the Athenian city centre and to eventually present an alternative architectural and urban model for mass housing in Greece, it would be in the aftermath of the Second World War where the full potential of this typology would be exploited. This capacity is not only based on the type ability to introduce the apartment as a form of dwelling, but mainly on the way it registered specific economic activities, monetary transactions related with property acquisition, within the space of the city. Additionally, as a technical, building apparatus absorbed the self-building practices of lower income population, eventually introducing methods of construction and particular spatial organizations in the domestic sphere of different social classes, expanding simultaneously monetary circulation and achieving the accumulation of substantial capital within the construction industry.

In the 1930s, the introduction of the polykatoikia model got an enthusiastic reception, not only from the Athenian bourgeoisie and practicing architects,
2.04 Cover, Modern Architecture and Politics of the Urban Reconstruction, Athens
2.05-2.09 three-dimensional requirements and other provisions of the 1929 General Building Regulation
drawings by Christofores Sakellaropoulos
but also from prominent intellectuals, who saw in this model the possibility for a significant improvement of the living conditions within the capital. In my point of view, the most interesting case is Ilias Iliou, a lawyer, poet, writer, art critic and distinguished politician of the Left, MP and leader of the United Democratic Left (ΕΔΑ, in Greek), a substitute and political front for the Greek left and the Greek Communist Party in the first, postwar decades. In 1937, Iliou wrote a series of articles under the intriguing title “In Praise of the Boxes”. The “boxes” were in this case the early polykatoikia examples of the 1930s. For him, as well for many of his contemporaries, the architectural beauty of this typology was not only a stylistic or aesthetic matter, but primarily a built proof of social and economic improvement and modernization. Kyprianos Biris, a young practicing architect of that time was one of the first ones to be called to “design”, to give form to the two abstract legal texts previously mentioned, and to somehow express this bourgeois dynamics and progressive ideology. In an almost historic irony, the author of the inaugural text of the polykatoikia typology would be one of his most severe critics in the 1970s, when the consequences of this type of development were more than apparent. Biris, as a deputy Minister of Public Works (1974-76), tried to establish a public authority, DEPOS, in order to control the urban and environmental consequences of the rather uncontrollable expansion of the private housing market. When Biris somehow revisited the type, forty years after the completion of his acclaimed project, it had been transformed, from a high-rise typology for the middle class of the city centre to a generic, all-inclusive architectural object.
III. *Thirteen Polykatoikia Examples*

The analysis of the selected projects is divided in five historic cycles, within which it is possible to trace essential transformations and mutations of the polykatoikia, results of social conditions and political objectives. These are clearly exhibited in the plans, the façades, the architectural parties and the organization of the interior space, the programmatic alterations and adaptations, even the materiality of the structures and the applied building technology and construction methods. The thirteen polykatoikia variations, built from the 1930s until four years ago, offer a possible reading of the history of the Greek society through domestic space and its methods and strategies of production. The research put forward an atlas of characteristic polykatoikia case studies, buildings that are important not only for the evolution of this type, but also for the history of Greek architecture in the last century. The selection of well-known examples of high architectural quality is a conscious decision that stands in opposition to many recent research proposals and studies of the polykatoikia typology and the Athenian urban space. Very often, the theorization of the polykatoikia through coincidentally selected paradigms, adds further to the widespread understanding of this architectural type and this mode of production of space as a local, informal adaptation of modernistic compositional principals and building techniques. This iconographic analysis of the polykatoikia as a “modern vernacular” type fails to confront its appearance and evolution as an advanced, complex urban project.

In that respect, the selection of examples should be one that allows to overcome the above, popular misinterpretation and instead progress with an analysis of the architectural precision and the intellectual intentions of the respective cases. Using important architectural proposals allow reflecting on two other crucial aspects: the limits and the effectiveness of building codes in defining and formulating projects and the way the architectural discipline in Greece conceptualize, spatially and materially, the given apparatus. The constant struggle with the small scale, the constraints of the available technology and the various stereotypes the housing market and the society imposed are some of the issues the research will try to outline.
The corpus of building regulations produced in specific historic moments as institutional response to intense and conflictual social and political conditions are related with the selected propositions. In that way, instead of presenting them just as abstract legal norms, the use of specific architectural proposals allows the research to speculate on the impact of this apparatus to architectural form and the projects in question. The framework put forward by the state and its institutions formulated the rigid components of the architecture and the urban performance of the type, always in relation to the forms of property, the access to private assets and the diffusion of initiatives throughout the Greek society. The numerous versions, exemptions, mutations and “irregularities” that appeared should be therefore understood as the very proofs of the power of the abstract and generic character of this particular type of architecture. The formal simplicity of the polykatoikia, the generic structural framework and its open-ended spatial qualities are the elements upon which variations could be built.

All projects expose alternative architectural strategies, different stages of economic development and corresponding social practices and desires. In many proposals, illegalities and interpretations of the building codes are clearly visible and they will be discussed in each case. The negation of the generic object that has been simultaneously produced by the housing market and inhabited in the city by different social subjects, or the anticipation of specific forms or building elements, is also apparent in some of the buildings. The grouping of the projects in five categories follows not only a chronological sequence but also a conceptual and formal understanding of their architectural characteristics. The thirteen examples selected are also drawn and presented in the same way and scale, in an effort to reduce any external difference and to acknowledge the genericness of their architecture. The case studies are from different neighborhoods of Athens, are, or were, inhabited by different social subjects, complementing and exposing their respective social realities in the space of the city. Some of the projects have extremely fascinating histories. For example, the “Logothetopoulos Polykatoikia” by Kyprianos Biris, has
been modified from a high-end apartment block of downtown Athens to a notorious interrogation facility of the military police (EAT/ESA) during the military dictatorship of 1967-1974, to the headquarters of the Greek Communist Party after the fall of the regime. Today, it constitutes the central building of the Ministry of Culture. The same rooms have been transformed from bourgeois salons of wealthy Athenians, to torture chambers for political prisoners of the junta, before becoming conference halls and banal office spaces for state bureaucrats.

**a. Modern adaptations, the fragmented plan and the foundations of a construction knowledge**

Polykatoikia brought the first major change in the architectural forms and the image of the city centre, since the inauguration of Athens as the capital in the 1830s. Adjusted to the very small land property divisions of Athens, the early examples can be understood as an adaptation of Berlin’s *Mietskasernen* in the local Greek bourgeois market. Made of concrete frames and filled with brick walls, plastered, with large openings and generous terraces, the polykatoikia introduced modern architecture and living standards in a city that was at the time still occupied by a vernacular, late-neoclassical typology. These new modernistic buildings rapidly replaced the former neoclassical residential units, which were no longer capable of absorbing the population growth and accommodating the necessary densification. Moreover, Greek architects of that period managed to exploit the very ingredients of the regulatory apparatus, systematizing architectural knowledge and formulating building techniques, materials, details and structural schemes that combined advanced industrial solutions, available in the local market, with low-skilled manual labour. From 1929 until the late 1930s, around 450 buildings of this kind were built in the central neighborhoods of Athens, in an area that included the prominent axes of the historic triangle, the districts of Kolonaki and Exarchia and finally, the neighborhood of Patisia, the expansion of the city centre to the north, around the axis of Patision Avenue.
2.10 Areas of Multi-storey Apartment Building Sprawl in Athens, 1920s - 1930s

drawing by the author
2.11-2.12 Multi-storey Apartment Building Sprawl in Athens, 1919-1927 and 1928-1931

2.13 Multi-storey Apartment Building Sprawl in Athens, 1932-1941
The first three examples, the apartment building in Bouboulina Street in Exarhia by Kyprianos Biris (1931), the “Blue Polykatoikia” in Exarhia Square by Kyriakos Panagiotakos (1933), and the apartment building in Zaimi and Stournari streets in the same neighborhood of Athens, by Thoukididis Valentis and Polvios Michailidis (1934) expose the modification of the typical floor plan, from a pre-modern, fragmented configuration to a more generic, open-plan spatial arrangement. Between these three cases, there are significant differences that had to do with the organization of the interior space, the treatment of the exterior façade and the applied technological solutions, such as the development of characteristic structural details for window frames and other structural elements of the building. All three cases are considered exceptional paradigms of the early, pre-WW II Greek Modernism and are rather praised and exhibited in many occasions.20

Following loosely neoclassical orders and the vernacular language of the 19th century Greek adaptation of this architectural vocabulary, Biris’ project is organized in three zones in the vertical axis, clearly visible in the façade of the structure. A two-storey-high base includes commercial spaces and a first floor of smaller residential units. In plan, the building mass is separated by two generous arcades, which split the volume in three parts, two small ones in the block’s sides and one bigger in the middle, with a large skylight positioned in the centre. The second, three-storey-high zone of the building includes the majority of apartments, organized in a typical floor plan. In this part of the project, we can clearly see the organization of the residential units around the three generous skylights, next to which the four main staircases are placed. The apartments do not have balconies, but the ones overlooking the two streets have one typical, protrusive volume of 1.4 meters, the “erker”. This very common element of the interwar modern architecture was part of the early regulations of 1923 and constituted a fundamental component of the 1929 General Building Regulation. It was finally cancelled in 1937 by a slight modification of the building code, which reduced the allowed projections to 40 centimeters. The erker, is somehow an ambiguous architectural element, but also something that relates the architecture of the polykatoikia with
contemporary examples from Europe. Early-modernist adaptations of this rather traditional architectural component of central European architecture could be also underline, as for example in Auguste Perret's Rue Franklin apartment building in Paris (1906) that had a similar volumetric treatment in its front façade. At the same time, its ornamental appearance has a rather vernacular connotation for Greek architecture, often related with traditional structures of a similar kind from Balkan and north Greek mountainous architecture.

The third and last zone of the building is organized in a generous setback from the rest of the mass, following the 50 degrees inclination prescribed in the GOK, a mechanism that defined the ideal volume, within which the building had to be included. A large cornice separates the setback floor from the three-storey-high zone.

The building’s exterior façades indicate the architect’s effort to apply contemporary building technology to his project. The structural frame of the building was made by reinforced concrete, and the exterior of the building was plastered, with a technique that is known as “artificiel”. A particularly strong plaster, with color embedded in this mash – in this case a light combination of white, grey and yellow – is hewed with a tool, giving a rough appearance to the final surface. This material was extensively used in the interwar polykatoikias, since it was appreciated for its endurance and aesthetic qualities. In addition, it was a manual-intensive technique, which, in combination with the concrete frame and the brick walls, fitted the organization of labour within the construction industry and the accumulated knowledge within its labour force.

Other building elements are the marble frames of the openings and the wooden window frames, which Biris custom-designed for the building. These details would be systematized in the following decades, becoming an indispensable part of his teaching in the School of Architecture in Athens, where Biris was elected Professor of Building Technology, a position that he held for four decades. His teaching will be extremely influential for the Greek Modern Movement, since he managed to combine local techniques and available materials with contemporary ideas of construction and
building methods. In a way, the Logothetopoulos polykatoikia consisted of his personal manifesto of how modern architecture could be adapted to the Greek building industry, an emblematic statement from Biris’ side of how modern residential types and a particular construction ethos could become possible in the country.

Biris’ polykatoikia included 46 apartments in total. It is clear from the typical floor plan that the spaces are rather fragmented, organized in a very specific, hierarchical way. We can also differentiate different types of apartments, with one or two bedrooms that vary depending on their placement in the three zones of the building. In the first zone, just above the commercial, ground floor spaces, there are two variations. The first, placed on the two separate volumes that overlook the streets, is a small, one-bedroom type, where a centered, entry hall delivers the circulation in the surrounding spaces. The first space, next to the entrance door, had a dual purpose and could operate as an office space or a dining room. A sliding door separates it from the living room, which sits at the other side of the plan. The second type, a two-bedroom flat that is located in the middle part of the building, follows a different organization: the apartment entrance leads directly to the living room, with the dining room being in a separate space, just next to it. From the open entrance hall, a door opens directly to the short corridor, which distributes circulation to the two bedrooms, the bathroom and the kitchen.

In the next three floors, there are two different types of two-bedroom flats. The small type, which can be found in the middle of the building, is organized in pairs around the two staircases. The entrance hall, which includes a storage space for coats and a guests’ WC, is organized as a waiting area – with a couch and a desk – and opens to three different spaces: a small office, the main living room, and a short corridor that organizes the circulation to the bedrooms, the kitchen and the bathroom. In the larger type, the entrance hall is even bigger than previously, and the master bedroom opens directly to the hall.
Still, there is an element of the plan that is indicative of the social organization and class differentiation of its users. No matter the size of the apartment, next to the kitchen, a small space with one bed and a washbasin is always placed, with a small window that looks in either three of the building’s skylights. This is the servant’s room. It is situated at the back side of every apartment, with a door that opens directly to the kitchen and, through another door from there, has a quick access to the main entrance hall and other spaces of the flat. Possibly, although not clear in the plan, the three atria included a lightweight, metallic staircase, which serviced the kitchen as a “secondary” entrance. This so-called “servants’ stairs”, so characteristic in the interwar polykatoikias, is a simple element of space that unveils an almost impossible rigidity of class organization and control in the Greek society at that time, and of course, gender domination and inequality. This organization of the plan, with the presence of one young, low-income, indoor servant – in the vast majority female – that took care of the household, would continue to exist and leave its traces to these buildings for the following decades.

The Blue Polykatoikia by Kyriakos Panagiotakos,\(^{21}\) sits a few hundred meters away from Biris’, in Exarhia Square, the main open air space of this dense neighborhood. It was built almost simultaneously to the previous example and it was collaboration between the architect and the famous Greek painter Spyros Papaloukas. In an unprecedented move, the exterior façades were painted dark, marine blue, constituting the first, “artistic”, large-scale installation on an existing building in Athens. As in the case of Biris’, Panagiotakos also custom-designed the building details, such as the window frames, the handrails, many furniture and the interior equipment. During the CIAM IV in Athens, as he did in another project by Panagiotakos – the school complex in Liosion Avenue and Michail Voda Street – Le Corbusier signed in the entrance of the building the phrase “C'est tres beau”, expressing this way his admiration for the project. The building is a pioneering formal experiment in interwar Athens, an interpretation of the regulatory apparatus in light of contemporary ideas of the Modern Movement. The volumetric treatment of
2.14 The “Blue Polykatoikia”, Apartment Building in Exarhia Square-Athens, 1933
Architect: Kyriakos Panagiotakos
courtesy of the Neo-Hellenic Architecture Archives, the Benaki Museum
2.15-2.16 The 'Blue Polykatoikia', Apartment Building in Exarchia Square-Athens, 1933
Architect: Kyriakos Panagiotakos


courtesy of the Neo-Hellenic Architecture Archives, the Benaki Museum
2.17 The ‘Blue Polykatoikia’, Apartment Building in Exarhia Square-Athens, 1933
Architect: Kyriakos Panagiotakos
courtesy of the Neo-Hellenic Architecture Archives, the Benaki Museum
the exterior, which strongly resembled the Immeubles Villas of 1922 by Le Corbusier, is characterized by the harmonious transition from protrusions to carvings in the building mass, from “erkers”, as defined by the building codes, to open terraces and balconies.

Although not visible to the exterior, the building has a rather complex interior organization. Actually, it consisted of two independent structures, with two different entrances from the two streets of the square, Themistokleous and Arahovis. The two “buildings” are united on the upper floor that sits on a large setback from the façade, as it was defined by the 50 degree angle of the 1929 GOK. There are two large skylights that are set in strategic locations of the plan, providing natural light and ventilation to the staircases and the secondary spaces of the apartments. Similarly to the previous example, servants’ rooms and secondary entrances are organized within these open spaces. In total, there are sixteen different apartment types, of various sizes, and the last floor was originally organized as a large, collective salon of 500 m², which, in the original plan by Panagiotakos, included a swimming pool as well. This facility was never realized, and the common space was later modified to seven new apartments, raising the total number of dwellings to thirty nine.

In this early example, the plan is rather fragmented and composed by smaller spaces, adjacent to each other. Entrance halls, living and dining rooms and often a working space are organized one next to the other, connected through sliding doors and thresholds that cut characteristically the sides of the rectangular spaces. Corridors, which are drawn in the plan with a different floor indication, organize the circulation towards the bedrooms and the secondary space, while kitchens, bathrooms, storages and servants’ rooms are set at the edge of the plan, looking to the light wells. Similar to Biris’, the organization of the interior space not only is marked by class and gender differentiation and domination – between servants and the family, between the young women servants that take care of the household and the women and men owners of the flats, between the men landlords, who always have their own working room in the house, and the female members
of their families – but also by an ambiguity that has to do with the plan itself. The heroic modernist appearance of the building, with advanced details, pioneering methods of construction and generous terraces is not registered in the way the interior space is organized, which was still closer to 19th century, high bourgeois neoclassical residential types. The typical organization of Panagiotakos’ project followed the hierarchical organization of these past examples, where large distribution halls and spaces organized in a parathesis, according to a rigid social diagram. This defined the way the interior was occupied, the different zones in terms of gender and social position, as well as the clear distinction between private spaces of the family and more “public” or open realm within the interior of the house.

In the apartment building in Zaimi and Stournari Streets, by Thoukididis Valentis 22 and Polyvios Michailidis 23, there is a tendency to move beyond and to radicalize further the architecture of the polykatoikia. This project is the first case where the provided regulatory apparatus didn’t define the form and the appearance of the building, as much as it did in the previous two cases. The façade is flat and the windows are continuous and linear, following clearly modernistic principles. Balconies are cantilevered from the vertical plane of the façade and, although the set back still exists, the characteristic concrete frame and the pergola on the last floor make it less dominant in the form of the building. Most importantly, there is complete absence and negation of the neo-traditional “erker”, a decision that makes this building almost unique in interwar Athens. In the vast majority of other polykatoikias from the same period, this possibility prescribed in the regulation was taken as a given morphological element, concluding to façade organizations similar to either Biris’ or Panagiotakos’.

This project is considered to be among the most radical of early Modernism in Greece and it is extensively studied. It sits in Exarhia neighborhood as well, almost in the middle of the distance between the other two buildings. The polykatoikia has six floors. The ground floor has commercial spaces. The next four are registered in the façade with the long vertical openings and the protruded balconies. Each of these typical floors has two apartments. Finally, the last floor has two double-height apartments.
2.18-2.22 Apartment Building in Zaimi and Stournari Str., Exarhia-Athens, 1934
Architects: Thoukidis Valentinis, Polyvios Michailidis
courtesy of Orestis B. Dounaris and The Architecture in Greece Archive
The organization of both the exterior façades and the interior spaces is significantly different from the other two projects. The central staircase placed slightly off-centre in the plan that allows a large, rectangular light well at its back. At the back of that main vertical circulation and through the open-air space, a lightweight balcony connects the secondary spaces, the kitchen, the servants’ rooms and storages. Another, smaller staircase serves the in-house workers and the catering of the apartments. In the four typical floors, the apartments are of different sizes, with two or three bedrooms. The larger ones look at the larger Stournari Street and they had a larger balcony than the smaller ones. The interior is organized in a similar way in both apartment types.

In the larger type, the main entrance opens to a small hall, which is connected with a small door to the servant’s quarters. This small space gives to a larger, open hall that is united with the living room. The dining room is separated from the main living area with a sliding door, and a series of doors connect the dining space with the kitchen, the storage and the servant’s room. These secondary spaces establish a clear division in the plan and they look as one, unified cluster with the equivalent spaces of the smaller type. The secondary spaces of both apartments embrace, from the top and through the light well, the central vertical circulation. The bedrooms of the family members are organized along the façade in Zaimi Street and they are connected with a short corridor. As the regulations prescribed, another service cluster is organized, around a smaller light well in the centre of the plan, the bathroom, together with the one of the adjacent apartment and the elevator.

The smaller type follows a very much similar organizational pattern. Along the blank façade, at the top, darker side of the building, the kitchen and the servant’s room are placed. From the main staircase, the entrance opens to a small reception space, from which, two doors open to the dining room and the short, L-shape corridor that leads to the family bedrooms and the
bathroom. The dining room consists of one, unified space with the living area, which opens to the balcony on Zaimi Street. The last floor and the penthouse have two very large, duplex flats with open-planned living areas and large terraces with a great view of Athens. Still, the typical organization doesn't change, with the characteristic separation between the areas of the owners and the one of the servants' clearly registered in the plan.

Apart from the individual differences, which in the case of the plan organization are quite significant, there is a common characteristic among these three pioneering projects. That is the effort to introduce a precise and systematic method to design and build the polykatoikia. Not only the architects of the period had to invent a particular architectural form to materialize the requirements of the available legal texts, but they also had to persuade the housing market, the construction industry and, ultimately, their own “clients” that their proposals were able to address the totality of these issues the best possible way. At the same time, they had to address the embedded habits and living practices of the Athenian bourgeoisie, a condition that of course meant to deal with a variety of complex social and political issues parallel to the ones of form and materiality of the emerging typology.

In my point of view, what these architects achieved, among many others that worked in the same period designing and building the first 450 polykatoikias in downtown Athens, was to introduce a specific construction and building knowledge. Indeed, a methodology of how these buildings could become possible in the space of the city, which actually blended advanced architectural and engineering details and forms of technical expertise with low-skilled manual labour in the space of the construction site. The invention of many details, such as the custom-made window frames and rolling shatters, created not only typical elements that characterized the architecture of the city, or specific “domestic equipments” that Greek families became acquainted to, but trained a vast multitude of workers and technicians to make, to install and to maintain them successfully for decades. Younger architects studied
and designed many of these elements, since most of the young, practicing architects of the 1930s became professors in the architectural schools in Greece. The same could be said for the “artificiel plaster”, which was also somehow invented from the architects of the interwar modernism and extensively used for decades that follow. A highly efficient material, unveil not only an ingenious chemical novelty, but also a particular care for the relation of architecture and the city at large. The thick materiality of the rough plastered plane, covering different buildings and interiors, following the geometry and the forms of the given codes, comes to unite the structures of the block and consequently, being effective in a much large scale.

Many of these techniques would determine the architecture of the polykatoikia for the upcoming decades. In a subsequent phase, when the commercialization of the housing market and the overwhelming diffusion of the type in the city would put a significant pressure to the available industry, many of these details would disappear, or would become expensive to apply. Interestingly, many of these building methods and techniques would return from well-known practicing architects, almost as a form of critique on the way the private sector destroyed and degraded building standards and the embedded local construction knowledge.

b. The façade and the generic architecture of the polykatoikia

The evolution of the polykatoikia from the pre-WW II, high-rise residential typology for the city centre of Athens to a generic form of dwelling, a form of technical and spatial commonplace, is central to the research. In the following paragraph, the scope is to present a series of architectural gestures, readable in important projects of that period, in an effort to understand how practicing architects reflected on the regulatory modifications of the postwar period and the systematic conversion of the polykatoikia building to a rather different type of dwelling, socially and economically. What is radically different from that period onwards, is the instrumentality of the polykatoikia as a mechanism of urban planning, a development that had to do with the political and social conditions in Greece in the aftermath of the Second World
War. The history of that period and the particularities that concluded to the essential alternations of this dwelling unit put forward a series of questions regarding the relation between scales of design and control of the city, as well as the method political institutions exercise governance in and through space. It is ultimately a discussion about forms of production of space, the organization of work and biopolitics and, in the case of Athens, with a clear manifestation in the way these are registered in the domestic sphere. In the end of this chapter and in next parts of the thesis, the narrative is centered on the above issues and theoretical problems. The following projects outline the indications, the traces of these conditions in architectural forms, the organization of the plan, the hierarchies of the latter, and even in structural elements and details of the final buildings.

Two very important, yet quite different architects, Nikos Valsamakis and Takis Ch. Zenetos, designed the next four projects from the 1950s. The apartment buildings in 5 Semitelou Street (1953) and 129 Vasilissis Sophias Avenue (1956) by Nikos Valsamakis are archetypical of the way the private sector modified and applied the typology in Athens. The typical floor plans, with apartments of different sizes, for different subjects, incomes and family structures, and the unifying, plastered façades that united this complex interior in one, generic vertical plane, should be understood as the exemplary architectural gestures and operations of that period. The significant modifications of the building codes since 1929, especially in the law of 1955, revised radically the volumetric composition of the type and the organization of the exterior façade. The most important alternations, visible more clearly in the second example that is designed and built according to the 1955 GOK, are the abolition of the “erker”, which its was practically canceled in 1937, the different permitted heights and directives for set backs and penthouses, and, finally, the modification of the permissible extension of balconies and terraces. Some of these requirements – and this is a point where Valsamakis’ projects are quite interesting – would be modified further, in a way adapting forms and solutions put forward by architects already working on that period.

The polykatoikia in 5 Semitelou Street, constitutes a typological,
The building has four floors, a ground floor and, typically as in the previous examples, a last floor in a setback. This trilateral organization appears in the façade of the building, in a similar fashion as in the case of Biris’ first polykatoikia example. The base, the main body and the cornice of the building with the top floor in a setback, are expressed not only volumetrically, but also with the use of different materials, textures and colors. The structure of the building, made of reinforced concrete reaches the ground with five, large circular columns, which seem to bare the weight of the building’s main body. In a setback from the main prism, a local stone, following a rather traditional masonry, constructs the base. This mixture of modern techniques and forms, such as the circular columns, with more handmade, vernacular methods of construction is very common in postwar Greek architecture, a factor that contributed to the classification of the Greek postwar modernism, and its main protagonists to critical regionalism.

Although Valsamakis was never related to this genre, this ambiguity is also present to his work, not only in these early examples, but also in his work in the 1980s and 1990s, when, a more traditionalist, classicistic vocabulary is often registered to his projects.

In this particular apartment building, the terraces expand significantly from the main prism, constituting a substantial volume that reaches the limits of the plot in two sides. In correspondence with the building’s baring structure, a series of thin vertical elements, together with the slabs, the handrails and the lightweight, movable awnings from canvas, all painted white, construct a mesh that monitors insolation, offers protection and privacy. This vertical plane introduces a secondary façade that reflects the interior organization of the polykatoikia. In a setback, the main façade of the building, painted in dark color and with the wooden frames of the balcony doors as the only material, contrasts the white grid of the front volume, emphasizing the depth of the protruding terraces. This double-layered façade is the main difference between the prewar and the postwar polykatoikia examples. If in the previous
cycle, the exterior was a subject of volumetric extrusions defined by erkers and narrow balconies, the postwar variations are typically organized in two layers: the main volume, with windows and balcony doors, and the second defined by the plane that unifies the horizontal, continuous balconies.

Another novelty in Valsamakis’ building was the functional organization of the plan in specific zones. Private spaces, entrance halls and living areas, secondary spaces, kitchen, bathrooms and servant’s room are clearly separated. In the plan, three axes prevail: the first, vertical to the main façade, splits the building in two parts and the two apartments. Two other secondary lines, parallel to the former, separate each apartment in two symmetrical parts. The first axis is visible in the walls that divide the two bedrooms at the back and the kitchen/guest WC cluster in the middle of the plan. The other, defines the light well, the main bathroom and the servant’s room in opposite sides of the plan. The staircase is placed in the middle of the composition, while a secondary vertical circulation for catering is placed attached to the kitchen. The latter, together with the dining room and the servant’s cell, form another cluster of service spaces.

The Polykatoikia in 129 Vasilissis Sophias Avenue follows the same design and compositional principles with some variations. The unified grid dominates the main façade, this time projecting the four, in-between floors. The trilateral organization is also visible. In this case, replacing the traditional masonry, common bricks build the base that has continuous, horizontal windows. In the typical floor plans, the organization of the apartments is very similar to Semitelou’s. However, each floor has three different types of apartments, with one, two or three bedrooms. A radical difference from the previous example is the absence of servant’s room in all three types. Instead, the dining room is typically connected directly to the kitchen, while a sliding door separates it from the main living room. In the two larger types, we see that the main entrance opens to a large hall that has three thresholds: one door leads to the narrow corridor back to the private areas, another to the dining
2.23-2.24 Apartment Building in 5 Semitelou Str., Athens (1953),
Architect: Nikos Valsamakis
source: courtesy of Nikos Valsamakis, personal archive
plan redrawn by Alexandra Vougia/Platon Issaias
2.25-2.26 Apartment Building in 129 Vas. Sophias Ave (1956)
Architect: Nikos Valsamakis
images source: courtesy of Nikos Valsamakis, personal archive
plan redrawn by Alexandra Vougia/Platon Issaias
room, which could be used additionally as an office space, and last, a sliding
door opens to the large living room. The larger type has three bathrooms, a
guest WC and two others for the family.

The third, smaller, one-bedroom type that is introduced in this project
is indicative of a transformation in the housing market of Athens. So far,
the polykatoikias were meant to provide dwellings for the wealthier segments
of the population, something that is really attested by the presence of the
servants’ clusters and secondary circulation cores in the previous buildings. In
this project, although in a very high-end neighborhood of Athens, we trace the
evolution of a different “clientele” for this type of residential building. From
the mid-1950s onwards, the polykatoikia has been addressing the housing
needs of many different social subjects, who live and work in the centre of the
city. The housing market therefore incorporated apartment types of different
sizes, for people to afford the rent or the money to buy an apartment. In
the decades that follow, these typical one-bedroom flats, in most cases for
young, single men and couples would become an indispensable part of the
housing market of Athens. Class differentiation is not anymore registered in
the organization of the flat itself, where servants and landlords live almost
separately, but within the whole building. Wealthy bourgeois, public workers,
working class families, or single workers-internal immigrants from rural
areas, would live from now on within the same building. The differentiation
would be now traced in the size of the flat, or, in some occasions, in the
position of the flat within the building. This new condition is also traceable
in the organization of the exterior, vertical layer of the façade in this project,
which, although still following a regular grid, becomes a complex alternation
of voids, balconies, windows and solid walls. As in the previous example,
different colors and the materiality of frames and shutters create depth and
regulate the thermal behavior of the building. This plane is now much less
homogeneous than previously, but still performs as a unitary element of the
complex interior.
Takis Ch. Zenetos’ work, in this case his two polykatoikia projects in 17 Herodou Attikou Street and Amalias Avenue of 1959, stand as a built opposition to this type of architecture. In his projects, especially the ones built within dense, urban areas of Athens, he addressed the social issues described above with a much critical view. His worked eventually formed and projected his political antithesis to this mode of production of residential space and the polykatoikia system of private ownership.

We have to be very careful though. The two projects by Zenetos presented in this part of the thesis are not working class dwellings, or in any case, buildings built outside the speculative mechanism of the private housing market. On the contrary, both were commissions from extremely wealthy property owners and both stand possibly in the two most expensive streets of downtown Athens, Amalias Avenue and Herodou Attikou Street. The second example is actually built next to the official residence of the President of the Greek Republic, looking to its large courtyard and with an uninterrupted view to the National Garden. Zenetos himself was extremely aware of the environment he was operating in and the extreme limitations imposed by the reality of the Greek society. For his work he clearly said that “I have investigated architectural problems and designed buildings for a country in the stage of partial industrial development; my client was the private businessman.” He therefore stated the main problem of architectural production in Greece, which was meant to serve a particular class of property owners in light of the overwhelming absence of public projects. He underlined that, because of this condition, “[he has] not had the opportunity to design houses for the masses”, to which he devoted his most utopian or large scale projects, like the one he called “Electronic Urbanism” of 1962. He also insisted that this particular condition in Greece is a highly political issue, related with the economic and social structures of the country. Nevertheless, it was precisely in this field where architects had the chance to propose a radical alternative, which, for Zenetos, had to attack especially the “prevalent contemporary research towards low-cost housing”. In the
2.27 Apartment Building in 17 Herodou Attikou Str., Athens (1959),
Architect: Takis Zenetos
source: courtesy of Orestis R. Doumanis and The Architecture in Greece Archive
2.28-2.29 Apartment Building in 17 Herodou Attikou Str., Athens (1959),
Architect: Takis Zenetos
plans redrawn by Alexandra Vougia/Platon Issias
2.30-2.31 Apartment Building in Amalias Ave and Daidalou Str., Athens (1959)
Architect: Takis Zenetos

source: courtesy of Orestis B. Doumanis and The Architecture in Greece Archive
plans redrawn by Alexandra Vougia/Platon Issias
case of Greece, this trend had its clearest resolution in the adaptations of the polykatoikia typology and its transformation to a system of residential production that addressed primarily the mass housing in the decades of the postwar reconstruction.

His buildings exposed the ultimate consequences of this urban development, in various scales: from the city, the block, the building itself to the interior organization of the domestic space. Zenetos’ plans, generic and as simple as possible, composed by the minimum structural elements that the regulations allowed. The buildings, defined three-dimensionally by the existing building codes, with the horizontal, continuous balconies and the lightweight movable screens, look like radiograms, x-rays of the existing built mass of Athens. By making the deep structure of the typology explicit, and within the limitations himself so honestly exposed, Zenetos opened the possibility of envisioning an alternative project for Athens and the Greek urban environment. This had to do with the way architecture could become a form of resistance to the reality of the city and the conditions imposed by the private sector and the dominant class, not by negating the historic conditions or the socio-economic context of the given time, but by challenging it from within its very apparatuses. What Zenetos put forward was a possibility to move beyond the project of the Greek postwar urbanization, by working with its own ingredients, i.e. architectural form and the organization of domesticity.

c. Breaking the floor plan and the individualization of the dwellings

In the decades that followed, commercialization of land and activities of the private sector in regards of housing had significant consequences in Athens and its immediate periphery. The extensive use of the polykatoikia typology in the city centre brought a major modification on the way the city was experienced, occupied and organized. Most of the central areas had been heavily urbanized, when modifications imposed to the 1955 GOK and the 1968 additions on the former by the military regime, increased the permissible
heights, the coverage on the plot, the volume and the building mass allowed. Additionally, and especially after the 1968 modifications, the activities of the construction industry and the way the city was expanding, entered a new, very different phase. The consequences, which are discussed in the following part of the chapter, were mainly the radical revision of the polykatoikia type in two complementary ways.

The first, illustrates the method the polykatoikia system was able to absorb the self-building practices of the poor. It constituted a mechanism that initiated the commodification of land and property within low-income neighborhoods around large cities in Greece and especially Athens. The formerly unregulated settlements were systematically “urbanized” by the application of a small polykatoikia variation, which in most cases consisted of a co-owned property of one family or associated households. Even if this object was not necessarily meant to be exploited as a property asset, but primarily to fulfill the housing needs of the owners, it overwhelmingly expanded the housing market, and especially contributed to the gigantic expansion of the construction industry and the various enterprises related to it. This protocol allowed for the suburban diffusion of the city in an unprecedented scale, in a process that blended formal economic activities with various illegalities and informal developments.

The second process constituted a similar modification of the polykatoikia unit to accommodate a systematic suburbanization of Athens, mainly for middle class and petit bourgeois subjects. In the years after 1974, and especially within the 1980s and 1990s, a large segment of the middle class population would move to neighborhoods outside the historic borders of the city centre. Many unpopulated areas in the north east and the south of the urban agglomeration, particularly on the foothills of Hymettus mountain, or even the east, agricultural land of Attica, would be transformed to dense, urbanized territories. The raise of the middle class income would allow many, employees of the private sector or public servants, to buy properties or newly
built apartments to organize their living. The housing market would expand significantly towards that direction, with many contractors and engineers buying and building polykatoikias with medium and large units, which were then sold or rented in the private market.

In 1970s and 1980s, the projects by Dimitris and Suzana Antonakakis\(^{37}\) (1973) and Tasos and Dimitris Biris\(^{38}\) (1980) are indicative of the type’s evolution and transformation. In a period of political engagement that fueled the critique on the urban environment produced by postwar governments, these two extremely important architectural practices of the late, Greek modernism proceeded with a radical re-organization of the floor plans, the building techniques and the materiality of the polykatoikia type. One could also argue that their projects anticipated the modifications of existing regulations: for example, the introduction of semi-outdoor spaces that passed only with the new General Building Regulation of 1985. Essential gestures, such as the breaking of the typical floor, the distribution of the units in multiple storeys, the individualization of the family dwellings within the unified structure and the rough, brutalist materiality of the exposed, un-plastered concrete defined these new approaches on the “polykatoikia problem”, becoming significantly influential to generations of Greek architects that followed.

The apartment building in 118 Benaki Street is rather unique for an urban building of that kind, since the process that produced it resembled practices that were popular in the previously mentioned emerging, low-income suburbs. The polykatoikia has four apartments, the owners of which were known since the beginning. The group formed a cooperation that was responsible to build the plot. The contribution varied, from capital and the land, to work itself, in the case of the architects and their collaborators. The members of the cooperation agreed in advance on the program of the building, the apartments’ sizes and organization and their particular needs.
All flats are duplex, forming a complex organization. The base of the building is higher than the other floors and the apartment is organized in two split-levels. The apartment of the third floor occupied part of the second and the one of the fourth expands to the penthouse. All apartments have cross-ventilation and lighting, while all open simultaneously in both sides of the plot. Large openings to the south overlook the courtyard and from the other side, the front façade opens to an exceptional view of Strefi Hill. The main architectural pursuit was to open the building as much as possible to the outside, in order to establish an immediate relation to the street and the exterior, open-air spaces. A unique characteristic of the project is the organization of the main entrance and the vertical circulation as outdoor spaces, an element of the building’s organization that later appear in other polykatoikias designed by Dimitris and Suzana Antonakakis. A small garden, open to the street, leads to a circular staircase, which is characteristically projected as a cylindrical form in the front façade. This decision further radicalizes the relation of the interior space of each apartment with the outdoor areas of the building. Additionally, it organizes the vertical circulation as a continuation of the public space of the street, a rather unusual move for an urban building and especially a polykatoikia. In most cases, the main entrance of a polykatoikia was just a double door that, through a small entrance hall, was connected to a dark staircase in the middle of the floor plan. In this project, these spaces become part of the life of the building, not just servicing the circulation within it, but also allowing for the user and the visitor to relate to and by aware of the space of the city, while theoretically inside the building.
PLANNING THROUGH THE UNIT
2.32-2.33 Apartment Building in 118 Benaki Str., Exarhia-Athens (1973)
Architects: Dimitris and Suzana Antonakakis
source: courtesy of Dimitris and Suzana Antonakakis, personal archive
2.34-2.35 Apartment Building in 118 Benaki Str., Exarhia-Athens (1973)
Architects: Dimitris and Suzana Antonakakis
source: courtesy of Dimitris and Suzana Antonakakis, personal archive
2.36 Apartment Building in 118 Benaki Str., Exarhia-Athens (1973)
Architects: Dimitris and Suzana Antonakakis
source: courtesy of Dimitris and Suzana Antonakakis, personal archive
The residential complex at Polydroso, a middle class neighborhood north of Athens, by Tasos and Dimitris Biris, expressed the radical modification of the polykatoikia from an urban building to a suburban, freestanding typology. In this case, the building is not in a continuous block, but sits on pilotis on the given, autonomous plot. The main idea of the project, as the architects stated in many occasions, was to create a three-dimensional neighborhood and to break that way the horizontal planes of the floors. The apartments consist of independent cubic-houses, organized in a three-dimensional baring structural grid. The units slide inside-out within this system of concrete columns and beams, constructing a complex of outdoor and semi-outdoor spaces, courtyards, terraces and balconies. The composition follows that logic in all floors until it reaches the roof terrace, which, by the placement of a large, metallic truss like an oversized pergola, creates a common outdoor space. It obvious that the architects refer to well known examples from the history of architecture for their composition, mainly Unite d´Habitation by Le Corbusier and Habitat 67 by Moshe Safdie. At the same time, they adapt this knowledge to the Greek context, which, by itself is a rather radical move, since most residential complexes of the period were built with continuous floors and symmetrical, horizontal balconies. In addition, they insisted on the idea of a constantly adaptable and kinetic exterior façade, not by complex architectural details and expensive technology, but by impromptu, self-made structures or informal activities of the inhabitants. In the building, the banality of cheap metal shelves, plants, awnings and other micro-arrangements of the outdoor spaces seem like a situation that the architects reinforced and anticipated. At the same time, the complex system of exterior, open spaces allow for the apartments to have different views – the one to the other, from one terrace or balcony to the other etc. – breaking the typical organization, where each apartment only had views only outside to the front or the back of the plot.
2.37 Apartment Building in 22 Chrysanthemon Str., Polydroso/Chalandri-Attica (1980), concept model
Architects: Tasos and Dimitris Biris
source: courtesy of Tasos Biris, personal archive
2.38 Apartment Building in 22 Chrysanthemon Str., Polydrosos/Chalandri-Attica (1980),
Architects: Tasos and Dimitris Biris
Source: courtesy of Tasos Biris, personal archive
2.39-2.40 Apartment Building in 22 Chrysanthemon Str., Polydroso/Chalandri-Attica (1980),
typical floor plan and axonometric drawing
Architects: Tasos and Dimitris Biris
plan redrawn by Alexandra Vougia/Platon Issaias, axonometric source: courtesy of Tasos Biris, personal archive
2.41 Apartment Building in Didotou Str., Athens (1991)
Architect: Alexandros Patsouris
courtesy of Orestis B. Doumanis and The Architecture in Greece Archive
Antonakakis’ and Biris’ practices formulated an intellectual opposition within the architectural discipline, against the way the private sector treated housing in Greece. With their projects, they tried to introduce some alternative possibilities and, by being active teachers in the architectural school of Athens, influenced many young practitioners. The case of the late Alexandros Patsouris and his apartment building in Didotou Street (1991), is possibly the most interesting and successful example of that genre. The project, situated in a dense, urban block of downtown Athens, combines the accumulated knowledge within the architectural discipline of its time. The project was among the ones that represented Greece in the 7th Architectural Biennale of Venice in 2000, when the national entry was curated by Elia Zenghelis. The building is a rather small polykatoikia of just seven apartments, with double-height commercial spaces on the ground floor. The project’s main characteristic is again the breaking of the typical floor plan, where apartments are organized in one floor only. In this case, the flats expand three-dimensionally within the building mass and the complex interior is registered in the façades. The project has a very minimal materiality, with exposed concrete, painted white or light grey, and large glazing being the two materials of the exterior of the building. With its gentle materiality, although of very common techniques and methods of construction, the project sits in the urban block subtly differentiated. Although it follows the existing building lines and heights, its complexity made it a rather antithetical composition to the existing structures around it, where the horizontal, continuous balconies prevail, formulating the urban façade of this typical residential block. In a very interesting moment – a homage to the interwar modern architecture of the polykatoikia type – Patsouris put a simple, orthogonal frame in the last floor, treating the coronation of its building similar to the one next to it, an architectural gesture almost identical to Valentis’ and Michailidis’ from the 1930s.
2.42 Apartment Building in Didotou Str., Athens (1991)

Architect: Alexandros Patsouris

typical floor plan

plan redrawn by Alexandra Voagia/Platon Issaias
This project seems to overcome one of the possible problems of the Antonakakis and Biris practices, the apparent suburban, almost rural “crudeness” of their architecture. This formal and material language, very influential still in Greece, is one of the reasons the architectural community was unable to intervene successfully to the polykatoikia production, especially in the last three decades. The private market was using much different materials and methods of construction, while many architects preferred this handmade, low skilled architectural technology.

d. Mono-, poly-, multi-, and more jargon: re-visiting and mutating the type

The next two case studies, the “Poly-mono-katoikia” in Philothei, one of the wealthiest suburbs of Athens by Yannis Aesopos (2003), and Sofia Tsiraki’s apartment building in Ilisia (2006), are paradigmatic of the last phase of the polykatoikia evolution. By the late 1990s-early 2000s, after the extensive diffusion of the object in every urban space in Greece, where even rural areas have been transformed to urbanized territories occupied by a three, four-storey-high polykatoikia blocks, Greek architects started to revisit and discuss the typology. New forms of occupation, hybrid programs and the introduction of new materials and building techniques were again indicated in the architecture of the type.

This is clearly visible in both projects. In the case of Aesopos’, the juxtaposition of a single-family dwelling to a three-storey high polykatoikia could be understood as a comment on the “antiparochi)” economic agreement. The autonomous unit on the ground floor seems like the quid-pro-quo space exchanged between the property owner and the small contractor, while the rest of the building enters the commercial cycle. In a typical fashion, it seems that the next three flats are to be sold or rented to others by the contractor, while the property owner gets his share in the form of the large, autonomous dwelling of the ground floor. Nevertheless, the project fails to address one fundamental aspect of this mode of development, the co-ownership of the
Architect: Yannis Aesopos
source: courtesy of Yannis Aesopos, personal archive
Architect: Yannis Aesopos
plan redrawn by Alexandra Vougia/Platon Issaias
2.48 Apartment Building in Ilisia-Athens (2006)
Architect: Sofia Tspiraki, consultant: Tasos Biris
source: courtesy of Sofia Tspiraki, personal archive, photographers: Tasos Abatzis, Silla Rantou
Architect: Sofia Tsiraki, consultant: Tasos Biris
plans redrawn by Alexandra Vougia/Platon Issaias
exterior space of the plot. The garden, as in any other suburban polykatoikia building, is one, undivided property of the shareholders. In this example, the ambiguity and the lack of clear protocols of occupation of both the ground floor and the space in-between the lower unit and the upper block, remained unresolved and somehow unused by the tenants.

In Sofia Tsiraki’s project, the space of the ground floor is occupied by a small, local gallery. The last two floors are the apartment/atelier of the owner of the exhibition space, while the four in-between slabs are designed as two-bedroom flats. In this project, apart from the successful organization of a hybrid program and the interesting solution of separating the percentage of the “antiparochi” from the contractor’s share, the architect revisited building techniques and material solutions from the history of the polykatoikia. The light-weight wooden shutters, the colored plaster, the exposed concrete and in general, the mixture of industrial, prefabricated solutions (like the aluminum window frames) with skillful, handmade details, established a possible thread, a historic continuum that relate the project of this young architect with the previous generations. Similarly to Patsouris’, her building, although it maintains and even celebrates the “roughness” and brutalist language of Antonakakis’ and Biris’ practices, retains a rather urban character.

e. The end of the polykatoikia: from the suburbia back to the city centre

In the building complex in Myllerou Street in Metaxourgeio (2009), a suburban idea, as this was developed by the Tasos and Dimitris Biris practice, is brought back to the dense city centre to accommodate rather different housing needs and production practices. In an extremely rare occasion, a large construction company manipulated the type and its precedents, while expanding its activities to the housing market. As it was shown before, the polykatoikia mechanism was shaped within the small-scale building industry, fitted to the needs of the private sector and its fragmented organization, as these have been evolving since the 1930s in Athens and elsewhere in Greece.
The polykatoikia model and consequently its architecture, its methods of design and construction and the mechanisms of disposal of the final built product, have been adapting to the particularities of the Greek economy. These had to do not only with the scale of the building, but also with the formulation of specific monetary transactions and contractual agreements that allowed this model to expand and to become the dominant type of Athens and the rest of the Greek cities.

In 2006, GEK-TERNA S.A., one of the two largest construction companies in Greece, mainly active in infrastructural projects like highways, energy plants and large private and public facilities (logistic hubs, hospitals, stadiums, hotels, etc), with activities expanding in the Balkans and the Middle East, organized an architectural competition for this particular complex. The competition was a collaboration of company with the International Architectural Review DOMES, one of the two acclaimed architecture magazines of Greece. The property situated in Metaxourgeio neighborhood of downtown Athens, and constituted one, undivided piece of land of about 2,000 m². According to the evidences provided by the company in the competition brief, the plot was historically a part of a large estate, initially devoted to agricultural production and later became part of an industrial compound. At the other side of Myllerou Street, one of the main axes of the neighborhood, the old 19th century silk factory, has been renovated to become the central art gallery of the Municipality of Athens. In the years that followed the 2004 Olympic Games, this particular area, after years of economic decline and social marginalization, was becoming an ideal place for real estate investments and an aggressive gentrification. GEK, with the support of the private banking system, decided to invest in the neighborhood, proposing as a pioneering project this housing complex, promoting the competition and the whole process through popular Greek media and the specialized architectural and design press, especially from the fellow contributor, DOMES magazine.43
2.52-2.53 Building Complex in Myllerou Str, Metaxourgio-Athens (2008)
Architects: Tasos Biris, Georgia Daskalaki, Yannis Papadopoulos
source: courtesy of Tasos Biris, personal archive
2.54-2.55 Building Complex in Myllerou Str, Metaxourgeio-Athens (2008)
Architects: Tasos Biris, Georgia Daskalaki, Yannis Papadopoulos
drawings: courtesy of Tasos Biris, personal archive
2.56 Building Complex in Myllerou Str, Metaxourgheio-Athens (2008)
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source: courtesy of Tasos Biris, personal archive
The complex expands in five levels and has forty apartments, 60 to 120 square meters, one atelier/office and three commercial spaces on the ground floor, as well as communal facilities for the inhabitants, typically a gym and an indoor swimming pool. The building is organized around a large courtyard, with all apartments looking inside this common space. Vertical circulation cores and shafts are placed at the corners of the plan in four locations.

The size and the format of the competition were rather unprecedented and the Greek architectural community enthusiastically embraced the competition. More than 100 offices took part and Elia Zenghelis was appointed head of the jury. In this particular moment, when the upcoming catastrophic economic collapse of 2010 was not even envisioned as a possibility, the “GEK experiment” seemed to open a rather different method of production of residential space in Athens and possibly in the rest of the country. The same company was already building a much larger complex of 436 units in Thessaloniki, in the working class neighborhood of Menemeni. The activities of the company marked the departure from small-scale investments based on informal economic agreements to large capital placement in real estate, supported by bank leverage. The privatization of the banking system and the available cheap, housing loans and capital for construction enterprises, allowed for systematic large-scale investments to emerge in the housing market, something almost unprecedented in Greece, before the mid-2000s. Until then, only very few housing projects had been built by private corporations, and in most cases, they consisted of residential settlements in rural areas for workers in remote locations. The two best projects of that kind are the “Aspra Spitia” [White Houses] by Doxiadis Associates and the Residential Complex in Distomo by the Antonakakis couple. Aspra Spitia, a settlement in Bocotia, Greece, was designed by Doxiadis’ practice in 1961 for the company Aluminio Ellados, to house industrial workers and technical personnel of the nearby aluminum plant. The project was built between 1961 and 1965 and included 1,100 dwellings for approximately a population of
5000 people. The design proposed two-storey houses, bachelor apartments, stores and shops, a customs house, a school, recreational and other facilities. Dimitris and Suzana Antonakakis, together with their collaborators of Atelier 66 studied the other project, in a close proximity to the former, in 1969. It was again designed for industrial workers and technical personnel of the nearby bauxite mine of Barlos, and as project is radically different from Doxiadis’. Instead of a settlement with individual plots, the architects proposed a dense complex, a system of zones, infrastructure and residential types. This building, one of the best examples of late Greek modern architecture was abandoned before its completion, now partially squatted and falling into ruins. Recently, a large exhibition, with original drawings and models, as well as an one-day conference under the title Ergazomai ara Katoiko [I work, therefore I dwell] was organized from the Department of Architecture of the University of Patras, to revisit the project and to honor the two architects.47

The building complex in Metaxourgeio was rather different, since GEK’s investment shifted the scale in economic and physical/material terms within the urban environment, producing a number of side effects, not only in this particular area but also in the entire city centre of Athens. The company assigned the team that won third prize in the competition to design the project, a decision that although allowed by the brief, raised relevant controversy. The team of the third prize included two young Greek architects, Georgia Daskalaki and Yannis Papadopoulos, while Tasos Biris served as their consultant. However, it is more than evident that the concept, the formal elaboration and, ultimately, every detail of the building, is entirely his. The main idea of exposing the different family dwellings and apartments in the building mass, a strategy clearly exhibited in the project he did with his brother Dimitris in 1980, was modified in order to accommodate this time an urban block. From a free-standing ensemble on pilotis, in this project the “house-boxes” organize the perimeter of the plot, completing the three sides of the block. Instead of the lightweight, metallic truss that unified the
fragmented form in Polydroso, a heavy, concrete slab forms the roof of the complex, in a spiral gesture in different heights. In a paradoxical reversal and negation of the urban terrace, typical of the Athenian block, this element, profoundly suburban and somehow vernacular, breaks the horizontality of the block and the public front of the building. In addition, the large courtyard of the complex, fenced and with security guards, seemed like an enigmatic space within the dense city centre of Athens. Somehow, this building, one of the last well-known and acclaimed projects of the last five years, marked the end of the polykatoikia system of housing development. The way it was commissioned, designed and built introduced a rather different system than the one of the small-scale enterprises. Most importantly, the built project unveiled the limits of the accumulated knowledge on housing design and production within the architectural discipline, the way these were taught and discussed in the local scene and its various “schools”.

The critique raised from prominent and influential architects, especially Tasos Biris and Dimitris Antonakakis on the way the polykatoikia model has been executed by the small-scale private sector, was based on their antithesis on a series of very specific issues. These were the repetition of the typical floor plan and the lack of individualization of the domestic units, the “corrupted”, bad construction quality in comparison to the magnificent detailing and custom made elements of the 1930s and finally, the complete absence of communal, primarily outdoor spaces with a relevant quality. In the buildings that both designed, these strong opinions were expressed with apparent architectural strength. In my point of view, the way they envisioned an alternative architecture for the polykatoikia model is very similar and often justified with the very same, polemic words. Their desire to register as much complexity to their buildings reached needless exaggerations in some details or formal decisions. At the same time, the custom-made technical solutions and construction details, which by the time got even more complex, made their architecture much more difficult and expensive to build, especially
within the limited capabilities of the private sector. Of course, this is not a critique, but something that unveils the limits of their approach, if you compare it for example with architects like Valsamakis and others, who were capable to propose a type of architecture that suited the forms and methods of construction available in the local building industry. Even if we tackle their projects from the opposite way, as a synopsis of their political and intellectual opposition to the methods the building sector applied and designed the polykatoikia, it is questionable their success. How could further fragmentation be an answer to itself, to the problems that has the same created?

In my point of view, the Myllerou project brings this extremely influential approach in front of a very serious moment of judgment and self-reflection. The scale of the project, its location, the available capital that guaranteed high construction quality, and ultimately, the role of architecture and its practitioners, offered a unique opportunity to re-think how residential space could be produced in Athens. I believe that the final project failed to address the complexity of the issues at stake, as it had happened in other crucial moments in the history of the Greek architecture.

IV. The collapse of the building industry and the end of polykatoikia as a system of production

Today, the polykatoikia has an almost obsolete and non-functional status, an aftermath of radical changes in the governmental policies just before the sovereign-debt crisis in the years that followed the 2004 Olympic Games. Initially, an extensive restructuring of the housing market and the construction industry, in favour of the accumulated, large-scale capital in real estate and large construction companies with oligopolistic relations with the state and its infrastructural projects, challenged, as outlined above, the fundamental characteristics of this mode of production of space. Companies like GEK S.A., AKTOR or Oliaros Properties, started to operate within the housing market of the city. The two first, in an immediate need to use personnel
and equipment acquired for the construction of the Olympic complexes. Oliaros performed a new form of gentrification in the city centre of Athens, with architecture and domestic space as the main operational fields. Active in Metaxourgeio as well, the company is also organizing a private art biennale, ReMap Athens, in properties that it owns in the neighborhood. It also promotes various activities in marginalized neighborhoods that wants or had invested already. Most importantly, under the umbrella of the KM Properties development scheme, the company had hired many architectural firms from Greece and abroad to propose a series of projects, the majority of which is residential. Following the GEK process, the first public project of the company was a competition for young architects, the so-called UPTO35 competition, for the design of a student-housing complex in Metaxourgeio neighborhood.

In the last year, the private developer, in collaboration with the municipality of Athens, applied for European funding to support the “urban regeneration” of Kerameikos-Metaxourgeio neighborhood. The scheme, a public/private contract of collaboration, involves the developer, private banks and the bankrupt local municipality. Ultimately, an aggressive gentrification process is underway, although the limited capabilities of the banking sector in Greece put some severe obstacles in the publicly declared intentions of the actors involved.

At the same time, the economic figures for the housing market and the construction industry in Greece clearly exhibited the overall collapse of the entire sector. According to the National Statistical Authority of Greece (EL. STAT.), in the last available table of data from May 2013, the construction sector in the country experienced a decline of 50,1% in the absolute number of building permits, 57,9% in surface and 50,1% in total volume, compared to a year before. For the whole year, from June 2012 to May 2013, for the same variables the figures are 47,8%, 44,3% and 42,1% decrease from the same period the year before. If we consider the continuous decline from 2009 onwards, which was 22,9 from February 2009 to January 2010, and 62,8% from 2010 to 2011, and it is clear that this essential activity for the Greek economy has very severe implications, not only in the invested private capital but mainly to the relevant employment.
The “polykatoikia system”, historically based on small-scale businesses, “informal” yet regulated contractual agreements between individuals and circulation of capital in a household basis, seemed inadequate to accommodate this new phase of large-scale economic development. In a more recent phase, IMF’s and Eurozone’s bailout package of 2010 and the various transnational agreements that followed tackled the extensive tax evasion and the largely untaxed circulated wealth within the small scale construction industry and other forms of dead capital residing within the existing built structures of the city. Numerous measures, primarily tax related policies, resulted to unprecedented crisis in the construction industry and the small-scale housing market, with severe consequences, challenging even the actual survival of this productive sector. Is there any future of this architectural model, after the period of “emergency economic rescue packages”? What can we learn from this type of architecture, especially in regards of its impact in large-scale city design? Which are the ingredients of this architectural model that transformed it from a residential type to an indispensable part of the Greek economy? Which are the particularities of a possible interference within this system of production of residential space, with a political and conceptual vision?

In order to reflect on these issues, the next chapter exposes the method the polykatoikia system became an indispensable part of the postwar reconstruction in Greece. If in this chapter the aim was to present the architecture of the model and its possible variations through a series of examples, in the following part of the research, all of the above will be discussed in light of the political and social transformation of Greece in the last six decades. The aim of the next chapter is to unveil how the absence of planning in the country was “subsidized” by a series of institutional processes that modified the polykatoikia model, from a conventional residential model to a mode of city planning, a managerial device and an apparatus of production.
Ecumenopolis for Athens, Constantinos A. Doxiadis, 1960
“Greece is and always will be a country with limited economic capabilities, in other words, it will always remain a poor country”¹, Kyriakos Varvaressos, 1951

“The reconstruction will succeed, only if it is carried out by an Authority […], an Authority is what we need and then a head […], whose leadership all the others will follow”,²

Constantinos A. Doxiadis, 1946
I. Armed Conflict and the Birth of the Project

In 1949 and upon the end of the Greek Civil War, Athens and its immediate periphery entered a rather different history in regards of planning projects and strategies. Following the liberation from the Nazi occupation in October 1944, the internal military conflict between the official government and the communist party lasted for five years and is divided in various periods, depending on the culmination and the particular characteristics of the fight. The inaugural moment of the first phase of the war are the events of December 1944, known as “Decemvriana”, when after a massive demonstration in the centre of Athens, English troops together with the official National Army attacked the crowd. Military divisions of the Greek People’s Liberation Army (ELAS), the military branch of the National Liberation Front (EAM), controlled by the Greek Communist Party and other leftist coalitions, responded immediately and the first battle of the war started in Athens and surrounding neighborhoods of Attica. A traumatic experience for various reasons, primarily the atrocities occurred from both sides within neighborhoods of the city. This sentiment was very strong in the left as well, when the paramilitary division of the Greek Communist Party, OPLA (Organosi Prostasias Laikon Agoniston, Organization of Protection of Popular Fighters) directly controlled by local branches of the party, seized the opportunity for intense cleansing within the resistance movement. Notoriously, during the battle of Athens, OPLA was active in working class neighborhoods, primarily attacking trotskyist and anarchist groups.\(^3\) The first phase ended two months later, with the Varkiza Treaty, with which ELAS surrendered and declare obedience to the official government. After the period known as “White Terror”, to describe the atrocities from the official governmental forces, the police, the army and paramilitary organizations against the left, the second and last phase started in March 1946 and was fought until late 1949, primarily close to the North borders of Greece, in the mountains of Grammos and Vitsi.\(^4\) The country was left in total economic collapse and in a deep political polarization, with the latter not been resolved for more than thirty years, producing a constant democratic, governmental and constitutional instability.
Due to its various geographical and political features, the country acquired a significant role and importance in the geopolitical antagonism between the two poles of the Cold War. The particular position of Greece, on the eastern fringe of the European periphery, adjacent to the continuously unstable territories of the Middle East and with common borders with three countries of the socialist block (Albania, Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria), meant that the country had to perform almost like the front of the capitalist block. From official documents and reports written by foreign officials of the International Aid and by local experts and bourgeois politicians – even during the Civil War when the outcome of the conflict was still unknown – it is evident that a particular project was being formulated for Greece, according to the desires and needs of the capitalist powers. The purpose of this plan was to transform and to present the country as an exemplary operation, where a rapid laissez-faire development would convert a formerly underdeveloped territory, with a parasitic and deteriorating economy, into a seemingly advanced capitalist entity.

For many historians and political theorists, this project has many similarities with the strategies unfolded later during the Cold War, primarily in the formation of postcolonial regimes in countries of South America and the North African region. Contrary to other central European countries, the concealed decision was to promote a postwar reconstruction strategy without the direct interference of the state, i.e. without a public welfare agenda, based on the capabilities and interests of the private sector. Foreign large-scale capital, in the form of aid programs and transnational loans, would take over major productive sectors, infrastructure and natural resources of the local economy, advancing a pattern of economic colonization.

Interestingly, this political condition resembles the status of the country during the 19th century, when the state-colony of the Greek Kingdom was established on the ruins of the Ottoman Empire, in order to defend and protect the economic interests of the European powers. In that previous
cycle, neoclassical planning and architecture were defined as paradigmatic, formal and pedagogical operations, capable of inventing a new national identity and representing the new political order and cultural context. The power relations and the colonial character of the state had been downgraded by a coherent narrative, which related these formal strategies of post-Napoleonic classicism with the ancient tradition of the country. Similarly, the effort within this historic period was to establish a project that could present an updated, contemporary social imaginary, one to stand as an antithetical paradigm to the one of de facto socialism of the Eastern Block. As Harry S. Truman declared in the midst of the Greek Civil War, “at the present moment in world history nearly every nation must choose between alternative ways of life”, a phrase that illustrated the political intention of the project.

The main strategy was the guidance of the population’s economic activities to the small-scale building industry, which would eventually allow the working class and the poor to enter the realm of private property. Promoted as an ideal social condition, it constituted the element upon which the social narrative of this period would be constructed. The development of a mass, petit-bourgeois consumerism accompanied this particular condition, where the possession of a single-family house or of an apartment in a newly built polykatoikia, was presented as the ultimate social achievement. In the next decades after the end of the Civil War, Greece and the city of Athens witnessed massive urban development, fueled by new internal waves of immigration from rural provinces, where the dominance of the housing market and the building industry prevailed over all other economic activities. As Lila Leontidou has argued, “Athens has been transformed to a major agglomeration, [...] a metropolitan centre growing by urbanization without industrialization”. The city changed radically in scale, expanding to a much larger territory than before. The inherited planning processes had to be mutated, not only to fit a different and more advanced economic system, but also to become generic and generalized patterns, capable of directing a multi-layered and
multi-territorial transformation of the city. Although class segregation and territorial divisions were, and still are, present in Athens, the systematization of planning mechanisms that dealt with the smaller scale of the city gradually established a rather continuous urban landscape, characterized by a seemingly homogeneous pattern of urbanization.¹³

Due to the density and the complexity of the events occurred in the political and social field, the chapter will not advance a detailed historic analysis of this cycle, but rather will elaborate on two important instances, two “fragments” from the historiography of postwar Greece. Nevertheless, it is from these two pieces of history that a deep understanding of how the social and economic environment was framed and administered could become possible. This will allow for a conceptual and operative reading of this period. The aim of the chapter is threefold: first, to sketch the transformations in the planning policies in the city, in light of the territorial shift occurred, secondly to explain the method the polykatoikia system was instrumental in this process, and thirdly, to understand how both conditions were parts of a much broader project, being however the strategy’s most important components.

The chapter focuses on the activities of two “shadowy protagonists”, the economist Kyriakos Varvaressos (1884-1957) and Constantinos A. Doxiadis (1913-1975), whose role was fundamental, yet profoundly overlooked, in the development of not only contemporary Athens, but also the Greek cities in total. These two figures, active as public officials and advisors of Greek administrations in the early postwar period, managed to foresee and to conceptualize the intentions of this broad political agenda. Within this, the plan was meant to control the economic and productive activities, and not the just the physical appearance and the form of the city, which was meant to be developed entirely by the private sector through the polykatoikia model. The city that was produced through this process is the one that constitutes the urban environment of not only Athens but of every Greek city. Dense blocks, built by residential buildings of no more that seven or eight floors,
3.01 Built Area in 1950

drawing by the author
3.02 Built Area in 2000s
drawing by the author
3.03 Kyriakos Varvaressos (middle)

3.04 Constantinos A. Doxiadis in his office in Athens
source: Constantinos A. Doxiadis Archive, Constantinos and Emma Doxiadi Foundation
where a unified façade of continuous balconies and regular openings defines the limit between the public realm and the domestic sphere.

In the case of Varvaressos, the condition outlined above, was presented as a part of an alternative economic policy, capable of achieving the advancement of capitalist economy in a country with limited resources and economic capabilities, i.e. available capital for economic investments from either the private or the public sector. For Doxiadis, the project was illustrated with a clear scale shift, which no longer perceived Athens as a confined city but as a homogeneous agglomeration expanding to the whole Attica Region. The strategy was to propose and to guarantee a physical space, which would be able to guarantee a systematic capitalist development, primarily based on the organization of adequate infrastructure and the diffusion of residential quarters and settlement units in the whole Attica Region. The transformation of the polykatoikia model to a generic system would be essential to accommodate this shift. The projects of Varvaressos and Doxiadis represent the end of a process that started with the first masterplan for Athens, the Kleanthis and Schaubert Plan of 1834. They mark the final, methodological and conceptual transition from a project of the city that sees it primarily as a theme, a space to “design” to a mass that you control and regulate, as a territory for economic exploitation. This is precisely where the polykatoikia model would prove itself being a complex system, a point where architecture met with urbanization as a form of administrative and governmental control.
II. The Varvaressos Report

Kyriakos Varvaressos submitted a fundamental text in the history of Greek urbanism by default, a text that was originally written as a contribution to local literature in economic science. In his controversial report “On the Economic Problem of Greece”, assigned by the centrist government of Nikolaos Plastiras and submitted in late 1951, he thoroughly analyzed the capitalist structure of the Greek economy, the problems and the particularities of the national resources and the permanent dependence of the public sector on foreign funds and transnational loans.

The aim of the report was to prove that the capitalistic development of Greece could not be based on industrialization. According to Varvaressos, the reasons were the lack of primary resources, the inadequacy of large investment capital, the preference of the local investors to short-term speculation, as well as the continuous political instability that characterized the history of the Modern Greek state since its early days in the 19th century. In an effort to theorize his thesis, he proceeded with a detailed analysis of underdeveloped countries, where the organization of heavy industry, according to him, failed to succeed and to bring economic and social development. On the contrary, as he insisted, the failure of an industrial turn in the national production of an underdeveloped country, further intensified class segregation and poverty, because of inflation and decrease of productivity in the agricultural sector. Instead of a rapid industrialization, Varvaressos proposed an economic recovery for Greece based on short term investments on agriculture, farm-animal raising and on products of mass consumption, which should be produced in small scale manufacturing units around cities.

Next to these activities, he underlined that the most promising economic sector in the postwar period would be the small-scale construction industry, within which the state should immediately intervene, in order to guarantee that this would become the “motor” of capitalist development in the country. According to Varvaressos, the obvious benefits would be the rise
3.05 View of central Athens in the 1980s, Patisia District


courtesy of Dimitris Philippides, personal archive
3.06 Aerial Photo of Athens, 2010

source: Google Earth, edited by the author
3.07 Athens, 1999
source: Ministry of the Environment, Energy and Climate Change Archive
of employment, the support of the local industry of building materials and the complementary manufacturing units and businesses, and finally, the rise of purchasing power for the middle and the working class due to monetary circulation. Yet, his most interesting remark, which spelled out clearly the latent political project of postwar reconstruction, was that “the insurance of the working class housing will be the most obvious indication of a public welfare, achieving the crucial strike against the communist interests in the country”.

Various sides of the political spectrum forcefully attacked the report. Apart from leftist intellectuals and economists, other centrist scientists and bureaucrats heavily criticized the document, exactly because the support it offered to the construction industry, which was considered to have limited capabilities of economic expansion and development. As a result, Greek governments, even the one that had assigned the report in the first place never officially authorized it. Varvaressos himself, after the submission and the criticism he received left all public positions and moved to United States, where he worked for the World Bank until his death in 1957. Nevertheless, in an interesting twist, the theme and the main argument of the Varvaressos report became the actual planning policy of the state, constituting the unspoken project of the Greek city. During the following years, as it was described thoroughly in his document, all Greek governments established policies that favored the construction industry and the small-scale housing market, which eventually directed and promoted the capitalist development of the country. This had been primarily achieved by the modification of the polykatoikia archetype from a high bourgeois apartment building of central Athens to a generic frame, adaptable to different environments of different densities and areas in the city, eventually becoming a quasi-“classless” residential unit. This conversion was illustrated primarily in three ways.

First, in the 1950s and 1960s when, due to the increasing demand for residential space within the central neighborhoods of the city, the speculative sector reproduced a vertical class differentiation within the buildings,
in addition to the existing neighborhood class segregation. “In a compact cityscape with tall buildings, narrow streets, small open squares, [...] and consequent environmental problems”, workers, immigrants for rural provinces and servants lived together with upper-middle class public officials, self-employed and entrepreneurs. Secondly, the retreat of the state from large-scale masterplans, and the establishment of a pattern of city expansion based on the gradual authorization of fractional plans – or on the legalization of illegal settlements – provoked a social pressure to accompany these building permissions with a densification of these new territories. Gradually, the speculative housing submarket of the working class, controlled by local-scale contractors and property owners, managed to apply this building model to various districts around the metropolitan area. The building framework of the polykatoikia allowed for a further systematic urbanization of the peripheral districts of Athens, especially after 1968, when the military dictatorship proceeded with a massive legalization of illegal residential settlements and increased building heights and densities throughout the country.

Finally, with the advancement of a particular form of economic agreement between landlords and contractors, the *quid-pro-quo* land allowance mechanism, the “antiparochi”, a particular platform was established that merged the self-building mode of production of residential space with the speculative housing market. The regulation provided the framework where, a respective land piece, owned by a family, or a single person, was exchanged, without any further tax revenues, with built space, in most cases, a number of apartments. It was a private agreement between a local contractor and a property owner to trade the plot with a percentage of the built surface in a new building. The landowners had the opportunity to increase their income, by renting the apartments that they did not use as their own house, and the contractors to obtain land without bank loans. The importance of that measurement is colossal for the Greek economy and the urban and architectural development of the Greek cities.
The above resulted in the formulation of a unified construction housing market, where all actors and agents – small contractors, construction workers, engineers and technicians – were simultaneously operating in different building scales and areas of the city. Methods, details and materials of construction, plan arrangements and volume distributions, constitute a form of almost collective knowledge. What emerged was a common architectural language and technique, a consistent building technology based on the locally available materials, cheap solution and low-skilled manual labour. In various stages, Athens was colonized by the application of the polykatoikia model, while conventional planning mechanisms were unsuccessful administering and controlling the urban expansion. The private sector and the various speculative interests of the land market prevailed and created a pattern of city growth based on the continuous negotiation of city borders, of building permissions and particular regulations regarding the extent, the size and the density of the building mass. Eventually, the architecture of the polykatoikia became the common element of all the different districts of the city, eventually establishing a continuous urbanity of limitless economic and productive capabilities.

III. Doxiadis and Ecumenopolis for Attica

Constantinos A. Doxiadis, as a planner and believer of the administrative power of physical planning in the city, proceeded with various masterplans and proposals for Athens and the city’s wider metropolitan area. In his work, the city was always conceived as a continuous productive territory, expanding to the whole Attica region, where various fragments and quarters compose the urban landscape. In Doxiadis’ projects, the objective was to propose patterns with which the productive potential of this homogeneous space would be unfolded, according to the norms of the capitalist mode of production.

Doxiadis started his activities in postwar Athens as a public official and
bureaucrat, serving consequently as Vice Minister of Reconstruction (1945-1946), as general secretary of the same Ministry until 1948 and as Supervisor and Vice Minister of Coordination until the dissolution of this authority in January 1951. Within this period, and under his supervision, 80 different projects and documents were published and presented, for the needs of the country’s economic recovery and other immediate spatial and physical planning issues, as these were defined by the Greek administrations and the international aid of the Marshall Plan.

The most important among these, in regards to the city of Athens was the “Regulatory Master Plan for the Attica Basin” (1947), which constituted an advanced project of Doxiadis and his team for the metropolitan area of Athens, following most of the provisions of Kalligas (1924) and Karantinos Plans (1940). The plan was the result of a statistical and spatial survey of the city, the port of Peiraias and their immediate peripheries, proposing a clear, functional zoning, based on the existing spatial divisions and capital concentrations. An innovative moment of the project was the appearance of Attiki Odos (E94 Highway in the National/EU chart), at that time named by Doxiadis as NATO Avenue, a highway that connected the industrial port of Eleusina with the north fringe of Hymettus Mountain, over-passing the centre of the city. The highway in its current form constitutes the most important piece of infrastructure in Attica Region, connecting other freeways, avenues and essentially the entire city to the new Eleftherios Venizelos Airport. In its original form, the thoroughfare, together with other infrastructural pieces, like Vouliagmenis Avenue, the Kifissos River Highway (the southern edge of the E75) and Kifissias Avenue, introduced the first complete peripheral network of metropolitan Athens, advancing a car oriented transportation pattern. It is important to note that within this first plan by Doxiadis there were no provisions for a public transport system in Attica.

With this initial submission, Doxiadis managed to diagnose a potential area for further development, which is the one of East Attica, at the east side of Hymettus Mountain. This area was historically the productive agricultural...
3.08 Regulative Master Plan for the Attica Basin, 1947
3.09 Ecumenopolis of Athens, 1960

3.10 Ecumenopolis of Athens, 1961
land of the region, concentrating a population of Albanian origin, since the early years of the Ottoman Empire. This territory was neglected and unexploited by large-scale capital investments in the decades before the war. Today, the diffusion of economic activities all along Attiki Odos and the rapid transformation of the former agricultural villages to urbanized territories, a condition provoked in the 2000s by the placement of the international airport strategically in the middle of Mesogea, have completely transformed this region, in the way Doxiadis envisioned and promoted.

Doxiadis left the Greek Public sector in 1951, in order to establish his practice, proceeding with well-known projects around the world. He returned to Athens in the late 1950s, when, as a private practitioner and through the establishment of Doxiadis Associates and the Athens Technological Institute, he participated in the public dialogue about the spatial and physical organization of the metropolitan area of Athens. Within this debate, Doxiadis constituted one of the three poles; the other two were the official bureaucracy of the Ministry of Public Works and a progressive group of Greek architects and planners, the EMOKA. Between 1960 and 1966, Doxiadis presented an elaborated project for Attica Region, entitled the "Ecumenopolis of Athens". With this project, he further developed the idea of a continuous urbanized territory throughout Attica, proposing a city of a different, metropolitan scale.

Ecumenopolis consisted of various sectors and subdivisions. The basic concept of the project was to advance a linear cluster of administrative and economic functions, along the central spine of Kifissos Avenue, which eventually became the E75 highway to the North of Greece. This spine, starting from the south coast, between Peiraias port and the wealthy neighborhood of Faliro, would cross the city centre of Athens at its west fringe, and then would finish in the new administrative area in Tatoi, which, at the time, was the location of the royal residence. The continuous urbanized area between Hymettus and Aegaleo Mountains would be devoted to residential settlements, following a pattern of class segregation and strict hierarchical divisions.
3.11 Ecumenopolis in Attica, 1966

*Future population distribution until 2060*

According to Doxiadis’ “Ekistics Theory”, the residential spaces had to be divided according to various social, climatic and infrastructural particularities. These neighborhoods, in a scale from 1 to 7, would segregate the different social subjects of the city. In addition, he proposed a specific network of highways and major thoroughfares that would eventually direct urban growth towards other territories, such as the east part of Attica and the area along the coastline, which he considered to be potentially the most profitable district for high bourgeois residential areas and smaller commercial centres. Finally, his plan established environmental buffer zones, protecting the dominant mountainous regions, which characterized the landscape of Attica.

In the early 1960s, Doxiadis presented Ecumenopolis on various occasions. He initially presented the project in a public press conference. His lecture, on February 10, 1960 “Our Capital and its Future” was a seminal event for the planning practices in Greece. Later on, within the format of two National Architectural Congresses in 1961 and 1965, he and his associates unfolded the particularities of the project. It was primarily within these events where Doxiadis received criticism from the local bureaucracy and other experts. When he and his collaborators presented the detailed project in its entirety, the future pattern of population growth, the organization of the various economic districts and activities and the complete circulation network were also included in a series of comprehensive documents. The last resolution was presented by his partners in 1976 after Doxiadis’ death, as the Regulative Masterplan for the Capital, a project that was initially commissioned by the Military dictatorship.

Although never authorized or implemented officially, the influence of Doxiadis’ projects for Attica was significant because they introduced a different method of controlling the form and the economic development of the city. This was mainly carried out by the transportation infrastructure, which in Doxiadis’ plans for Athens had been proved more important and influential than the organization of the settlement units. The actual space of the city followed the pattern described in the Varvaressos report, i.e. with the


*Transportation Diagram*

diffusion of the polykatoikia model throughout the Attica Region. Doxiadis himself, apart from intensifying the existing class differentiation, did not proceed with an elaborate analysis of the various districts, but relied on the present divisions and patterns of the housing market. In the case of the linear cluster, the actual concept was not the organization of an administrative and economic district like the one he advocated for, but rather to emphasize the importance of the highway in the future development of the city. Eventually, the suggested transportation network in his project, almost completely car-oriented, constituted the basis of the future transportation masterplans of Athens and the city’s wider metropolitan area. The Wilbur S. Smith (1912-1990) and Associates Plan, published and authorized in 1963, was exclusively based on Doxiadis’ Ecumenopolis patterns, a planning proposal upon which the current transportation system of Athens is still somehow based.

In addition, even when criticized, as he was by the EMOKA leftist group of planners, Doxiadis’ strategies managed to institutionalize the scale shift necessary for the advancement of a capitalist economic management.

This would become even more evident in the following years, when the state and the local authorities would try to control Athens primarily through the organization of the urban periphery, and not the central areas of the city, as it had been done before. The regulative masterplans that followed in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s constituted a “collage project”, where the authorities overlapped the infrastructural pattern of Ecumenopolis with a polycentric organization of metropolitan Athens, similar to EMOKA’s. These two elements would constitute an additional layer to the fragmented development of Athens, as it has been unfolded through the state’s intervention in the small scale of the city. The control of the building stock, the implementation of sporadic grids and expansions, the illegal economic activities would continue as essential branches of the planning practices in Athens, this time accompanied by the organization of the city’s primary infrastructure. The latter, although revised and incomplete, would direct the spatial distribution of economic development in Attica.
IV. Urban Sprawl and Gentrification: Unspoken Strategies in Attica since the 1980s

In the last three decades, planning policies in Athens took a decisive turn towards a seemingly circumstantial and spontaneous pattern of economic control of the urban space. This had expanded to a much wider territory, occasionally over-passing even the administrative borders of Attica. The city, although still consisting of a bipolar system of a compact central area and a ring of satellite suburbs and working class settlements, was now theorized as a continuous urban agglomeration, within which the various economic interests were placed and organized accordingly. The basic means of this expansion was the implementation of regulatory and planning mechanisms that provoked a systematic suburbanization of the city. The crucial operations were the establishment of the 395/1968 Law, inherited by the Military Regime, which increased building heights and densities by 30% throughout the country, and the new General Building Regulation of 1985 (1577/1985 Law). These two regulatory apparatuses allowed for the expansion of the speculative housing market in the urban periphery, fuelled by the increasing needs for expansion and the gradual legalization of illegal working class settlements.\(^\text{34}\) The full development of this project followed the accession of Greece to the EU in 1981, which was accompanied by a significant shift in local politics, when the first centre-left, socialist government was elected in the country. A rapid abandonment of the city centre occurred especially by the middle class subjects, which had overwhelmingly supported the new populist political power. As part of a broader social agenda, the socialist party established a rhetoric where the centre of the city, i.e. Athens of the densely populated polykatoikia blocks of the 1950s and 1960s, was forcefully criticized and attacked for its poor living conditions, promoting as an alternative the movement to the periphery of the city.

This sprawl had not been undertaken by large-scale developers and capital, but continued to be based on the small-scale, local building industry and market. During the 1980s and 1990s, the sector used the building model of
3.14 Wilbur S. Smith and Associates Transportation Plan, 1963
3.15 EMOKA Proposal, 1965

*The idea of polycentric Athens*

redrawn by the author, original drawings in the Ministry of Public Works Archive, Regulative Masterplans for Athens
3.16 The West Part of Metropolitan Athens
photography taken from the centre of the city at Lycabettus Hill, photo by Alexandra Vougia
the polykatoikia, mutated and transformed to fit lower building heights and densities, as the basic unit of the new middle class suburbs that evolved in the periphery of Athens. Additionally, the former working class neighborhoods of the west side and the agricultural villages and vacation settlements in the east of Attica, were sequentially transformed into urbanized territories, by their gradual legalization from the local municipalities, which increased the permitted densities and expanded building permissions. This tendency was grossly proliferated during the preparation for the 2004 Olympic Games, when new infrastructure incorporated East Attica in the urban fabric. The two essential acts were the construction of Attiki Odos highway and the regional railway system. Both projects were and still are under the control of large-scale private corporations and not the public sector.

Following the existing precedents, the actual planning of these new neighborhoods was rudimentary and weak, fully respecting the existing property lines and diminishing any provision for public spaces and facilities. The basic residential unit within these new territories was either a type of small-scale, family owned and self-built polykatoikia for the low and middle class, or a typical suburban single family house for the higher classes. Eventually, these processes restrained the illegal expansion of the city, providing a regulatory format within which these popular practices were systematized and institutionalized by the state.35 By no means, had the illegalities stopped. The difference is that these patterns became official planning strategies, with the public sector allowing for extreme densification and profound transgressions of the building regulations within these newly authorized residential areas, eventually causing overwhelming environmental catastrophes in the wider Attica Region.

This process of diffusion of the city was essential for various political and economic reasons, constituting the latent project for the Greek city within this last phase, with Athens acting again as a paradigmatic operation. The primary goal of this project was to proceed with a rapid gentrification and
a capitalist transformation of the central areas of Athens, i.e. an extensive commodification of the historic centre of the city, based on and supported by the expansion of the global tourist industry and the respective investments from local and transnational capital.\textsuperscript{36}

An extensive narrative has been established since the early 1980s.\textsuperscript{37} Various projects were conceived and advancing, such as the so-called “archaeological promenade”, the renewal of the Historic Triangle of Kleanthis and Schaubert, the architectural competitions for the New Acropolis Museum and the establishment of specific building regulations for the historic districts, like the ones for Plaka, on the North side of Acropolis Hill. These projects were presented as an essential cultural program of preservation and protection of the city’s heritage, concealing the speculative economic interests involved. These policies culminated around 2004, where Athens was rapidly transformed into “an entrepreneurial city of the Mediterranean”,\textsuperscript{38} using specifically its cultural heritage as a commodity to attract investments. Consequently, the placement of large-scale capital in the city presupposed the transformation of the planning application to a bigger scale. The fundamental shift this process caused was the reading of the city as a territorial entity, which was already occurring in practice by the continuous enlargement of the urban area.

The programmatic management and the expansion of the city were carried out by the sectional application of small-scale town planning, the legalization of illegal settlements and the partial traffic adjustments. Projects, like those of Doxiadis and those carried out by the Ministry of Public Works since the 1980s, such as the 1985 “Regulative Masterplan of Athens”, the ATTICA/ATHENS 2014, and recently the “2021 Regulative Masterplan”, operated as a reference for different economic interests. The fact that many planning provisions were known before their official authorization, and the fact that most of these directives were rarely officially authorized, created a rather peculiar condition.
A complementary strategy of urban expansion had been further elaborated and developed during the years of the Olympic preparation, in order to support the transformation of the central districts and the diffusion of capital investments in other areas of city. This spatial re-organization did not follow a conventional zoning or functional division of the urban territory but operated in accordance with the implementation of few infrastructural pieces in the Attica region. These projects, accompanied by the diffusion of Olympic venues throughout the Attica Basin, provoked a concentration of economic activities, like commercial spaces and large office complexes, in specific clusters alongside or within emerging neighborhoods. These developments were rarely officially authorized by the public authorities, remaining in a continuous stage of exception within the legal framework of the planning mechanisms of the city. Most were built without permission, or were blatantly transgressing the existing regulations. As it was discussed in the previous chapter, the examples of large-scale housing developments are extremely rare, and appear only in the post-Olympic Games period, as a result of the public sector’s interference to the small-scale building industry. This was an essential policy for the foundation of large-scale capital investment in real estate. For the first time after World War II, a strategy was implemented to re-regulate and to “rationalize” the parasitic small-scale housing market and industry in favor of large building corporations. This resulted in the complete collapse of the small-scale construction industry, which occurred before the current economic crisis.

First, the imposition of taxation on building materials and on monetary transactions within the building sector, and secondly, the establishment of an advanced private bank system, which for the first time in Greece opened the possibility for housing loans, created an economic environment which rendered the previous mechanisms inactive in practice. The *quid-pro-quo* land allowance mechanism («αντιπαροχή»), due to the price increase and the available mortgages, was unnecessary and unprofitable for the agents
involved (property owners and contractors). The mode of construction of polykatoikias and self-built, family owned houses, which were based on unorganized builders’ groups, unskilled workers, low-tech solutions, building details and materials, could not adapt to an alternative, advanced capitalist mode of production of residential space. Interestingly enough, the current economic environment did not allow these policies and transformations to be fully implemented, intensifying the already problematic function of the construction industry in Greece. With one of the country’s most profitable economic cycles destroyed, Greece entered the catastrophic spiral of the sovereign-dept default.

Today, Athens is experiencing an intense humanitarian crisis, especially within the city’s central core. The economic collapse of the past few years has had a profound effect on the market that supported the development of the city for decades. Additionally, the disappearance of private investments or public programs that would have completed the gentrification process in the city centre provoked a devastating situation within the central neighborhoods. A vast population of refugees from Asia, Middle East and North Africa, who are exploited by an emerging illegal housing submarket, has flooded the formerly middle class districts, abandoned during the 1980s and 1990s. The apartments of the 1950s and 1960s polykatoikias have been turned into emergency shelters. Athens is in a stage of emergency. The space of the domestic has become the location of an unspoken war.
3.17 Main Thoroughfares and National Airport in Attica, 2000s
drawing by the author

3.18 Railway, Subway and Tram System in Attica, 2000s
drawing by the author
3.19 Olympic Complexes in wider Attica, 2004
drawing by the author
“Dogtooth”, Yorgos Lanthimos, 2009
WAR WITHIN FOUR WALLS
A City in Crisis and the Collapse of its Domestic Archetypes, 2000-2010s

I. Cinema/Architecture: Archetypes, Analogy and Defamiliarization

The chapter analyzes two feature films of the last decade, projects of two young Greek directors, Yannis Economides and Yorgos Lanthimos. Despite their differences, one could argue that these two movies share a number of conceptual, thematic and narrative similarities. In both cases, with an almost prophetic view, the artists managed to foresee and to accurately describe the emerging disintegration of the Greek society, a phenomenon that preceded the present economic and political collapse. Premièring in two important moments of the country’s very recent history (2003 and 2009 respectively), the films emerged as symbolic representations of the social shortcomings. Dealing with different subjectivities- Economides with the urban petit bourgeoisie and Lanthimos with the suburban middle class-, the films proceeded with a brutal critique of the cultural and ideological prejudices and stereotypes of the native society. These were exposed as pathogeneses of an illusionary and disorienting social consensus, an institutional prerequisite during the decades of economic development.

However ordinary, paradigmatic and familiar, characters, situations, everyday life, language articulation and content, spaces and objects and their depictions are in extremes and are subsequently estranged to the extent of becoming intolerable. This condition of 

horror familiarità, of constant absurdness and anguish, are discussed as a fundamental quality of the metropolitan environment, a specific pattern of subjectification within the post-fordist mode of production. Within this, alienation of subjects is primarily achieved through a permanent structure of dissolution and destruction of any familiar, intimate or habitual patterns. The chapter follows Paolo Virno’s essay “Familiar Horror”, within which the author discussed this exact pattern of de-familiarization and the dialectic of habitual/terrifying, “Heimlich/unheimlich”, as theorized by Freud, in the postmodern metropolis.
In both films, there is a consistent presence of this ambivalent condition, where familiar, ordinary things are gradually transformed to unbearable, horrific ones. This is particularly exhibited as a feature of the very spatial configuration of the settings, where typical and recognizable spaces constitute containers of absolute absurdness. Furthermore, what makes these two projects significant for architecture is the way the artists correlate the social dissolution with the collapse of the domestic archetypes of the city: the typical apartment of the generic urban block, and the self-built suburban villa of the formerly rural peripheries. These two archetypes have been disseminated throughout the country, but both acquired their paradigmatic features in the areas of Athens and Attica respectively. Both settings, although are hardly contextualized, explicitly portrayed the exemplary conditions found within and around the capital city.

In both films, space is of fundamental importance, primarily because the stories are developing only within interior and introverted settings, with barely any reference on the surrounding city and landscape. By being ordinary and typical of their kind, manage to further estrange the reality of the protagonists, and subsequently, project this notion of intolerable and horrific familiarity to the viewer. The aim of the chapter is to explore the relation of these two significant films with the city’s contemporary condition. This will allow elaborating on the key element of the research, which is the relation of the profound economic and political collapse of Greece with a particular spatial crisis that preceded it. The chapter first introduces the two projects, specifically analysing the manipulation of space and the importance of the latter within the development of the stories. Additionally, the research highlights other elements of each plot, which, together with the spatial configurations, further de-familiarize the content and their subjects. In the second part, the research relates the two films with developments in the fields of spatial policies, architectural protocols and projects, specifically focusing on institutional representations of Athens from the same era. In the last part, the chapter concludes with an observation on the political significance of the two projects, in light of Virno’s concept of familiar horror.
4.01 Yannis Economides

4.02 Yorgos Lanthimos
It is essential to stress that the relation between architecture, the city and cinema is not be understood as a straightforward hermeneutic, analytical or critical one. Cinema does not perform just as a critique of an existing reality, but constitutes a structure with a relative autonomy, a form developed through a particular spatio-temporal articulation. Movies operate by the deployment and the depiction of exemplarity, performed by and illustrated through spatial, societal and behavioural archetypes. These relate the fictional reality of the film with the collective knowledge and unconscious of the viewers, who are therefore able to develop an empathic relation with the narrative and the protagonists of the film. Similarly, architecture performs through archetypical and exemplary forms and conditions, which are able to produce equivalent subjective and collective interpretations and projections of the real. In that respect, the project of architecture and the city shares a number of crucial similarities with the art of film-making, primarily the fact that both act as analogies of the actuality of the environment that are interpreting, formulating and projecting.

Therefore, while discussing films that refer to specific spatial and architectural conditions or to particular cities as their central theme, the research objective should be to uncover the cinematographic strategies that allow for this analogical interpretation of the given reality. In that sense, the various spatial and architectural configurations depicted perform as parts of this analogical structure. In the research, the effort was to identify movies that could perform this sort of reading on Athens, without following a documentary genre or becoming a film cartolina, “a collection of moving postcards of nonsensical sequence.” Like the Italian cinema of the early postwar decades, the Greek film production suffered a similar condition, where the actual city and its social reality were dismissed, in favour of artificial, attractive and glorious places and characters. With the few exceptions of early Neorealist directors, these physical and cultural stereotypes, “intimately tied to the phenomenon of tourism”, projected a reality that is still difficult to overcome. In my point
of view, Matchbox and Dogtooth are able to go beyond this problematic interpretation of urban conditions, offering a complete and significantly new depiction of Athens and its socio-political reality. Both allow for an operative knowledge of the city, overcoming the simplicity of any observatory critique, offering each one a radical approach to the very understanding of the city as a space of conflict.
II. Movies

In 2003, the Greek-Cypriot director Yannis Economides\(^9\) presented his début feature film “Matchbox” (Spirtokouto, «Σπίρτοκουτο» in Greek), which was immediately embraced by the underground movie scene and progressive youth collectives and radicals around the country. Economides’ project became an emblem of the early 2000s struggles in Greece, when the country and the city of Athens was undergoing a rapid spatial and political transformation.

The poster of the film, divided horizontally in two parts, illustrates the theme and the context of the story. In the upper part, a trace of a generic apartment building of the Greek city is vaguely distinguished in the dusk, while a slogan appears: “A movie, as tough and inexorable as the reality”. In the bottom half, a cartoon of an aggressive dog warns: “Attention: War within Four Walls”.

The story covers a single, extremely hot, summer day of a petit bourgeois family from Koridallos – a dense, poor neighborhood at the north of Peiraias, Athens’ historic commercial harbor. However, the action is never explicitly placed within this particular district, as the viewer never sees the actual city and barely has a reference to the exterior space. The action takes place only within the interior of a typical apartment, a space that could be found in any Greek city or neighborhood of the like. Other settings, spaces, or toponyms are just described or declared by the protagonists – even the fact that are actually located in Koridallos – while they are constantly enclosed “within the four walls” of their typical house.

The actual configuration of the plan and the spatial arrangement resembles domestic spaces of the kind, scattered in working class and petit bourgeois districts, within family-owned, medium-height, small apartment buildings. The front door opens to a two-by-two meters reception space, which is connected to a narrow corridor that leads to the bedrooms and a bathroom in the one direction. A small, circular staircase is located at the opposite end,
4.03 “Matchbox”, the movie’s poster
Dimitris, the father

Loukas, the son

Maria, the mother

Kiki, the daughter

Giorgos, the brother-in-law

Margarita, the cousin
4.04-4.09 (on the right) “Matchbox”, the six members of the family, snapshots from the film

4.10 Metropolitan Area of Athens, location of Korydallos district
drawing by the author
4.11 The interior space of the apartment, snapshot from the film
4.12 Typical aerial view of a dense area in Athens
source: Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climatic Change (YPEKA) Archive
which leads to the kitchen and a terrace at the upper floor. This seemingly strange configuration, where small apartments split in more than one floors, is yet regular in apartment buildings in low income neighborhoods, especially in cases where residences are built or bought in various phases, or are subjects of various building illegalities. The living room, divided typically in two adjacent spaces of equal size, unfolds along the main corridor and refers to an elongated balcony that overlooks the street.

The story develops around Dimitris, a man in his 50s, the father and the dominant character of the movie. Currently owner of a cafeteria in Korydallos, he declares his intention to start a new business in the neighborhood — “a posh restaurant that would attract high-end customers from all over Athens”. At the movie’s final scene, he eventually declares his will to abandon the project, after he has been criticized, mocked and humiliated by other family members for this “unthinkable and silly business plan.” As his brother-in-law put it, “we only know about coffee, what business do we have with steaks?” Other sub-stories of the plot are similarly evolving around him, where his reaction on various issues makes the others to attack him, both verbally and physically.

The film is structured in the following scenes. In the first, Dimitris discuss with Giorgos, his brother-in-law, about the prospect of opening the restaurant. In the second, minutes later after the intense debate between the two men, Vangelis, their employee in the cafeteria brings a check from the shop and discuss with the two men the prospect of marrying Linda, a waitress of Albanian origin. The following, third scene is when Loukas, the son of the family, talks on the phone with a friend about personal matters. He accuses his father for destroying his life. In the fourth scene and upon Giorgos’ departure Maria, Dimitris’ wife, spends some time with him in the living room. Maria and Dimitris start an intense fight, when she declares her strong disagreement with his plans to open the restaurant. Other issues come up as well. After this confrontation, the act is transferred on the second floor of the flat, where Kiki, the daughter of the family, fights on the phone with
A CITY IN CRISIS AND THE COLLAPSE OF ITS DOMESTIC ARCHETYPES, 2000-2010s
4.13-4.16 (previous) views of the interior space, snapshots from the film
the entrance hall-corridor, the bedroom, the staircase, the kitchen-dining area on the upper floor

4.17 Dimitris, the patriarchal figure, snapshot from the film
played by the actor Erikos Litsis
a female friend. Dimitris intervenes, abuses her and the mother separates them violently. Maria reveals that Kiki is not actually Dimitris’ child, causing him to collapse. The last minutes of the film cover Dimitris’ return home after he has disappeared for hours. Completely drunk, passes through various psychological stages. Others are also present, primarily Vangelis and Dimitris who help him to recover, after an intense, last fight with his wife and her cousin, Margarita, who was a guest in the house.

A representative, patriarchal figure of a previous regime of the Greek society, Dimitris is gradually transformed to the victim of the various problems and conditions that emerge throughout the story and within his family. This very fact constitutes the first occasion of a reverse typicality, a condition where something ordinary and expected (a patriarchal, oppressive male) is depicted through its opposite, eventually making Dimitris a sufferer of his reality.

His character performs as an archetype of old-fashioned, working class Greek men who, despite their various social and gender prejudices, display a particular sense of duty, fairness and sensitivity. At least in two occasions in the film, Dimitris exposes the essence of this type of behaviour. In the movie’s inaugural scene, Dimitris discuss with Vangelis and Giorgos the necessity for the first to marry his former girlfriend, who is Albanian. Leda, a waitress in their cafeteria, is currently pregnant. In these dialogues, the three men are intensely arguing on the various “options”, while multiple racial, gender and cultural stereotypes are bluntly presented to the viewers. Although he expressed himself verbally in a similar way, Dimitris’ sense of duty and responsibility overcomes the layers of social prejudices and violent racism that characterizes his brother-in-law and Giorgos. In another occasion, when he forcefully fights against his wife and daughter about the Kiki’s new boyfriend, he expresses his disagreement based on moral principals. For him, the fact that Kiki’s boyfriend comes from a family with a reputation of being corrupted, and that he earns his living as a rentier, make him an unacceptable acquaintance.
Portraits of male figures like Dimitris could be found in many movies of the local film industry, since the birth of the Greek Neorealist cinematic genre in the late 1950s. Nevertheless, depicting a character of that type in this particular historic moment was in itself a provocative action, since it exposed a social and cultural behaviour, which was supposedly absent from early 2000s Greece. Dimitris’ progressive victimization further strengthened Economides’ provocation, challenging eventually stereotypical behaviours displayed by other characters in the film. The function of the story as a political critique is based on this exposure of ordinary and typical conditions as highly intolerable. The typicality and the generic nature of setting and characters are highlighted by various means throughout the story. Faces, clothes, furniture, domestic equipment, professions, habits and social practices, gender and racial stereotypes, and foremost, the spatial organization of the apartment are depicted as familiar and ordinarily Greek petit bourgeois as possible.

Still, there is a particular characteristic that makes Matchbox’s viewing almost unbearable, a fact that significantly contributed to the film’s cultish reputation. This is the verbal articulation and the content of the dialogues between the various characters of the story. The paranoiac rhythm and the development of the narrative emerged by a specific linguistic and verbal idiosyncrasy of the script. The eight characters use very short, repetitive sentences, constantly shout, extensively swear and curse one another, while verbally abusing each other during the film’s eighty minutes. This idiomatic genre, the result of a very exhaustive, three-month-long process of constant rehearsals and improvisations within the actual setting, constitutes the main characteristic of Economides’ cinema. The director sets the basic rules of confrontation and the content of the discussion between the characters, and subsequently, the actors are improvising upon the given structure, without knowing which version of the shot, or which scene, will be used in the final editing of the film. This is repeated countless times, creating further tension in the movie set.
In terms of cinematic form and language, Economides refers to the French Nouvelle Vague of 1950s and 1960s, a movement significantly influential to his work. Apart from the absurdness and apathy expressed by the characters, the political engagement of the author with its subjects, the open narrative and the lack of a precise conclusion, he specifically deploys Nouvelle Vague’s strategies of editing and formal hierarchy in the various shots the film. He follows a technique in the timing and editing of the movie, by which he eliminates pauses and breaks within the different scenes. Economides uses stable, mono-focused cameras and long, uninterrupted takes for each scene. Then, with fragmented editing and concentrated interruptions of the narrative, compiles the material in one body, with the movie eventually jumping for the one scene to the other, without an obvious sequence or continuation of the action. All of the above are operating in complement with these vulgar and violent dialogues, eventually establishing variations in the psychological intensity of the story. The concentrated breaks act as the necessary pauses – from the one scene to the other – and the form of each shot intensifies the psychological condition and distress expressed by the characters and felt by viewers.

Following these strategies, the paradoxical behaviour and language manage to estrange and to de-familiarize not only the theme and the various sub-stories of the script, but primarily the depiction of this typicality of the setting, of the family and of its members’ relations and social interaction. Throughout the film, the space of the ordinary is presented as and gradually transformed to an intolerable environment. The element that constructs this unbearable space is precisely the petit bourgeois apartment of a dense neighborhood of Athens which, probably for the first time in the Greek cinema, is presented not as a desirable shelter, but as a nightmarish setting of everyday life. Furthermore, the director neither promotes the city of the early 2000s, nor celebrates this particular mode of spatial development and domestic environment as it was precisely the case of the various institutional
representations of the city during the same period. On the contrary, he develops a story where he is reversing the common interpretation of this urban space, eventually establishing a highly politicized opposition to it.

The title of the film refers precisely to the archetype of domestic life and space in Greece: the *matchbox* is the typical apartment, which is simultaneously the container, the instigator of the social conflict and the destructor of any positive social relation. As the poster of the movie suggests, the story is as tough and vicious as the reality of contemporary working class and petit bourgeois Greeks, whose seemingly regular, typical and predictable life disguise a society in the verge of total collapse. In the film, Economides managed to expose the reality of these social subjects with a latent sensitivity, primarily insisting on the particular conditions that destroy their social and personal dignity. This is specifically apparent in the case of the movie’s central figure, Dimitris, but is also exhibited in the treatment of others in the story, as for example Vangelis, Dimitris’ employee and a low income worker. This strategy unveils Economides’ political engagement and empathy with his subjects, allowing him to project the necessity of social struggle. In his next movie, “Soul Kicking” of 2006 (Psihi sto Stoma, «Ψυχή στο στόμα» in Greek), working with – more or less – the same team of collaborators, he further exposed the exploitation of the Greek working class and the travesty of Athens’ metropolitan imaginary. “Soul Kicking” evolves around Takis, a worker in a lamp manufacture, who is constantly humiliated by his employer, his friends, his wife and others, eventually loosing any sort of personal dignity. The movie ends by an extremely violent yet beautiful scene, when Takis, after slaughtering his boss in his car, observes the sunrise in Athens.

The story is a metaphor of Georg Büchner’s *Woyzeck* in contemporary Athens. The narrative follows a structure that presents corresponding patterns of social exploitation and similar archetypes of class differentiation and social behavior, while offering an analogous to Woyzeck’s exodus and dissolution of the story. In order to highlight these intentions, a line from Woyzeck’s 24th Scene appears in the movie’s first frame:
“It’s the water that it’s calling. It’s a long time since anyone drowned here”\textsuperscript{14}

This line is taken from the Buchner’s original text, and it is part of a dialogue that two men are having while hearing Marie being killed by Woyzeck at “a pond by the edge of the woods”. One of the two men insists that these are sounds of “a person dying”, while the other considers them instances of “uncanny”. Although the line refers to the movie’s and the play’s similar hypotheses, it also performs as a metaphor for the social condition depicted. This highly symbolic quote summarizes Economides’ and his team’s efforts to proceed with a political project, capable to unveil these instances of violence, of horror and absurdness that were covered intentionally within the contemporary metropolitan landscape of Athens, eventually erupting from December 2008 onwards.

Despite this radical approach and its fierce and unrelenting critique on fundamental institutions, such as the nuclear family, “Matchbox” received enthusiastic reviews by local film critics and was thoroughly discussed in the mainstream media, especially while these were portraying the radicalization of the student movement and the increasing disenchantment that followed a decade-long euphoria before and in the aftermath of the 2004 Olympic Games. Until the summer of 2008, apart from becoming a legend in itself with a devoted audience, the movie had been adapted by Economides to become a theatre play, with considerable success\textsuperscript{15}. Additionally, a publication of the movie’s original script,\textsuperscript{16} by Economides and his collaborator, Lenia Spiropoulou, further cultivated and promoted the peculiarity of the authors’ brutal and toxic linguistic genre.

In the spring of 2009, while the December 2008 revolt was being tamed and the country was entering a period of further political turmoil, another film surfaced, eventually premièring in movie theatres later that fall. Yorgos Lanthimos’\textsuperscript{17} “Dogtooth” (Χονόδοντας, «Κυνόδοντας», in Greek) received instantly international success and critical acclaim, interestingly instigating a combination of skepticism, shock and admiration by the Greek society,
4.18 Athens 2008
Barricades in Patision Ave., Athens
source: athens.indymedia.org, photographer concealed
4.19 “Dogtooth”, the movie’s poster
4.20 “Dogtooth”, snapshot from the film *the “dance”: a scene performed by the three children*
the media and the political establishment.\textsuperscript{18} Strangely, “Dogtooth” operated simultaneously in two very opposite ways. No matter how big and celebrated were the movie’s accomplishments, these could not overshadow and diminish the public’s disapproval for the ruthless representation of a decayed society.

The film displays an allegorical, symbolic and abstract poetic view on the condition of the Greek middle class, pointing eventually at the pathogeneses of its social imaginary. Furthermore, the theme of the story performed as a broader, general allegory for the Greek society, which, despite its recent economic improvement of the 1990s-2000s, was defined by cultural isolation, social introversion, various discriminations and prejudices. Lanthimos, departing from a less militant political position than of Economides’, depicted the savage side of this social normality, by exaggerating on its various bigotries and behavioral stereotypes.

A married couple with three adult children (two daughters and a son) lives in an isolated compound in the outskirts of the city. The landscape resembles the one of Attica’s rural periphery, whereas the only exterior space depicted in the film is an industrial complex, where the father works as a manager. The action takes place during the summer, while the actual historic period remains significantly enigmatic. Although it seems to be contemporary, various element of their life, like the lack of modern communication and electronic equipment, the dress code, the out-dated car, etc., construct a very peculiar present.

The father is the only one that travels outside the villa. The siblings are permanently confined in the estate and they have never been on the outside, constantly unaware of and disconnected from any social relation. Apart from the five family members, the only person allowed to enter the villa is Christina, a young, working class woman, who works as a security guard in the factory. She is the single person that the children interact, although within a violent and problematic social scheme. The father employs Christina to have regular sexual intercourse with the son, within a predefined and orchestrated
4.21-4.23 “Matchbox”, the two parents, the children and Christina, snapshots from the film
source: Kandontas [Dogtooth], Boo Productions, DVD, Greece, 2009.
4.24-4.26 “Matchbox”, snapshots of the three settings, snapshots from the film 
rural Attica, the industrial area where the father works as a manager and the interior of the villa 
source: Kinodontas [Dogtooth], Boo Productions, DVD, Greece, 2009.
pattern. Christina eventually develops a close relation with the older daughter. Reversing her exploitation by the family, she then asks the daughter for sexual favors, in exchange of various gifts. In the development of the story, this close relation between the two women would become catastrophic for the life within the family, eventually provoking the daughter escape from the compound and the murder of Christina by the father.

According to their parents, the children will be allowed to venture beyond the limits of the house once she/he loses hers/his dogtooth. Until that moment comes, they are obliged to follow an extremely oppressive everyday life pattern within the interior of the property and the large garden that surrounds the villa.

As in the case of “Matchbox”, the space of the compound is depicted as typical and ordinary as possible. A two-storey, large house is surrounded by a generous, paradoxically tidy garden. A small swimming pool, in close relation with the ground floor portico and the living room, constitutes the centre of the kids’ everyday activities. A tall fence encloses the estate, isolating the house from the surrounding rural landscape. This particular notion of enclosure is strengthened by a cinematographic technique that runs throughout the movie. Lanthimos takes advantage of the very bright light of Attica’s sky – especially strong in the summer months during which the film intentionally takes place. Most scenes are filmed on the exterior space of the villa, during daytime, with the use of natural light. The ones filmed within interior spaces – in rooms where the white colour characteristically prevails – are also naturally lighted through the windows and other openings of the house. Even when artificial lighting is necessary and therefore added, this is of similar brightness and colour tone than the one naturally illuminating.

The treatment of light in the photography of the film creates a condition where space is widened in all the shots and, therefore, is significantly enlarged and depicted somehow limitless. This creates a very distinct antithesis with the actual story and central theme of the movie, which is precisely the
4.27 cinematic strategy, snapshot from the film
the light of Attica enlarging the exterior space
source: Kostantaras [Dogtooth], Boo Productions, DVD, Greece, 2009.
4.28 The Fence, snapshot from the film
source: Κανδητας [Dogtooth], Boo Productions, DVD, Greece, 2009.
children’s constant physical restriction behind the tall fence of the villa. In the movie, enclosure is depicted as a condition of the suburban life style and imaginary. The film acts as a parody of this concept of protected and controllable living, one that lacks any social interaction and engagement. Furthermore, it is portrayed as a condition of conscious departure from the social and political life of the city, exactly in the quest of this alternative existing in seclusion. This is highlighted with a symbolic way in the movie’s second scene, where the father, accompanied by Christina, drives back from work. Blindfolded, in order not to be able to identify the exact location of the villa, she is driven through a generic suburban environment of Attica’s rural periphery – a background vaguely, yet recognisably, depicted by the camera. With this shot, the viewer is taken from the actual social reality of the city to the isolated enclave of the family, which, instead of a “shelter of harmony”, as the middle class imaginary describes it, has been alienated to the extent of becoming a container of outmost horror.

The film is characterized by extreme violent content, where a combination of social isolation, physical torture and controlled sexual behavior, psychological distress and misery is mixed with surreal dialogues and symbolic representations of everyday life. Yet, as in the case of “Matchbox”, the device that further estranges the generic reality of the protagonists is a verbal/linguistic one. The children are educated by their parents with the use of homemade audio tapes – played in portable audio devices –, which teach them basic vocabulary and provides them with screened and manipulated information and knowledge. In these tapes, the items of their environment are re-named and the content of words and meanings is extensively distorted. In their twisted language, “sea” is the armchair, “highway” is the strong wind, “excursion” is the resistant material of the floor, “shotgun” is the white beautiful bird, “zombies” are the yellow flowers, “telephone” is the saltshaker, “pussy” is the large lamp in the dinning table.
Instead of understanding this as a playful parodiable interpretation of home-schooling, the narrative of the film forces us to classify it as a crucial, conceptual operation. Within this, the reality of the family, and especially the categorization of social experience, everyday practices and objects, becomes meaningless, heavily unreadable, eventually re-enforcing the barrier, the fence that separates their lives with the actuality of the exterior, social space. This strategy, promoted by the parents, is even more apparent in two cases – stray cats and airplanes – that, throughout the movie, constitute the representative “creatures” of the external environment. Planes are constantly present in the film, as they are flying closely over the house. This is important information for the viewers, because this further contextualizes the plot in the Attica’s rural suburbs, which are located in vicinity with Athens’ Eleftherios Venizelos Airport. The aircrafts become symbolic representations of the outside world. The planes are considered “toys” for the children, who are continuously wish for them to fall from the sky. This is because their parents hide small model planes in the garden, which are supposed to be the one overflying the estate. These are the kids’ most desirable toys. On the contrary, “cats” are “the most dangerous animals of the world”, “carnivores that have a preference for kids’ flesh”. In the movie’s most violent scene, the son discovers and slaughters a stray cat. The parents invent the story of the dissolute brother, who, after escaping the compound, was killed by a cat. The cats are symbols of a non-disciplinary life, with a behavior that is not controllable or restrained, as is the one of the kids.

This dialectic relation between the exterior social space of the city and the internal, introverted space of the family unit is the central theme in both features films. Despite the absence of actual cityscapes, the description of spatial conditions and architectural configurations of the two archetypes of the Greek city, managed to promote a meta-critical view that expands beyond the limits of these two singularities, to the city as a whole. This particular, analogical function of the two settings has to be understood as an element that comes in correspondence with the development of the Greek, urban
4.29 exterior view; father and Christina departing from work, snapshot from the film 
symbolic representation of departure from the active life of the city 
source: Kithotos [Dogtooth], Bos Productions, DVD, Greece, 2009.
4.30 the father with one of daughters, snapshot from the film
*the parodial game of homeschooling-distortion/estrangement of reality*
environment, which is built and organized accordingly by these privately-owned domestic monads. In that sense, a successful cinematic operation could depict the totality of this urban landscape by insisting on the details of its singular elements, the apartment of a generic polykatoikia and the suburban, self-built family house.

Constantly present in both films, typical and ordinary micro-elements of space and of everyday life establish a recognizable reality. Yet, these are eventually being heavily distorted – not as such, but as features of intolerable situations that are progressing in the development of the story. Various cinematic and cinematographic techniques (editing/photography/shot forms, etc.) are deployed in order to achieve the de-familiarization and the estrangement of the ordinary. This function of the camera constitutes the element of the medium’s political dimension, already highlighted since the birth of modern cinema in the early 20th century, a condition that affected other forms of artistic production, such as Brecht’s dialectical theatre.

In his book *Brecht and Method*,20 Fredric Jameson quotes Walter Benjamin, while discussing a particular function of Brechtian dramaturgy and modernist narrative, a process called autonomization. According to Jameson, autonomization is “[…] a particular property of narrative that yields a first approach to estrangement”,21 “a process that operates indifferently on the real and on the pre-given cultural text”,22 eventually forming “something new and as yet unnamed”, which could “emerge from the lexic of the already classified”.23 Despite the different historic context and Jameson’s distinction between Brecht’s and Benjamin’s hermeneutic analysis, the author underlines the operative nature of the new apparatus – the camera – which has “the capacity to uncover spatial dimensions of our existence which had been, as it were, concealed by the conventionalities of human stature.”24 In Benjamin’s words, “by close-up on the things around us, by focusing on hidden details of familiar objects, by exploring commonplace milieus under the ingenious guidance of the camera, the film, on the one hand, extends our comprehension of the necessities which rule our lives; on the other hand, it manages to assure us of an immense and unexpected field
of action”. Although Benjamin’s main concern is the conceptual dimension and political operativity of this particular technological innovation in the field of the emerging modern art – a highly different condition from the one of the two movies –, we could follow this description for contemporary cinema as well.

The argument of this chapter is precisely that both features managed to operate in this almost elemental way, eventually extending the comprehension of this social reality and calling for its radical re-evaluation. As Benjamin also underlined in another occasion, “only film commands optical approaches to the essence of the city”, which, in the case of early 2000s Athens, was very different from the one theorized and historicized with the disciplinary boundaries of architectural studies. By constructing these highly unbearable normalities, the movies projected the actual patterns of alienation of contemporary social subjectivities and completely rejected the institutional interpretation of the actual urban environment. As Elie During describes, following again Benjamin’s approach on film, it becomes evident that “there is, […] a true homology between the spatiotemporal experience freed by cinema and the spatiotemporal of the city and its architecture”. This function of freeing and uncovering is the one performed by both movies with a significant success, raising eventually the awareness on the city and its immense political problems. “Matchbox” and “Dogtooth” rendered their historic actuality very differently than many of their synchronous architectural projects. Neither celebratory, nor observatory, the films rejected the passivity of a documentary genre, and went beyond the tamed and polished depiction of the city.
III. A Critique of Architectural Positivism: Athens and its Representations since the 1990s

The following part discusses various architectural projects that are more or less contemporary with the two feature films, yet very different in the ways they confronted the actuality of the urban environment of Athens and its socio-spatial patterns of development. Despite theoretical and methodological differences, the various representations, projections and discussions of the city were characterized by the absence of political criticism, or of arguments that could offer an operative knowledge of the city. Developed within a framework defined by the prospect of the 2004 Olympic Games, and the subsequent aftermaths of the venues, most of these projects were forcing a positive look on the developments of the city, underestimating or ignoring conditions and places like the ones depicted in the movies. The severe political and social crisis was undermined, in favor of an ideological trend to celebrate the peculiar urbanity and the distinctive archetype of the polykatoikia of the urbanized centre, and the self-built, “informal” development of the Greek middle, and working class suburbs. The Greek city was analyzed as a condition that holds these very different, yet complementary, spatial configurations and properties, which therefore had to be theorized accordingly. Both realities were undergoing transformations very different from all previous cycles, and thus calling for their re-interpretation.

Additionally, another trajectory surfaced, one that emphasized on the specific form and use of public space in the Greek city, as if these particularities could constitute an alternative paradigm within the South European experience. This direction was primarily promoted by architectural competitions and projects organized and developed by public authorities, or semi-public institutions. Most were for Athens and were deployed between the mid-1990s and the late 2000s, and others were for Thessaloniki, which in 1997 hosted the European Capital of Culture yearlong event. In Athens, among other projects, the most significant ones were the “Unification of
4.31 The archaeological promenade, Dionisiou Aeropagitou Street, EAXA, 1997-2001

4.32 winning entry of the Omonoia Square Competition

4.33 winning entry of the Monastiraki Square Competition
the Archeological Sites of Athens”, which had been carried out by various offices and public authorities between 1997 and 2007, the “Omonia Square Competition” of 1998, and the “Monastiraki Square Competition” of the same year. These were organized by a highly controversial semi-public institution, EAXA A.E,30 which lead and directed the various projects devoted to public space, operating autonomously from other state-owned organizations and committees, therefore lacking any sort of democratic control.

Another complementary event was the international competition “Ephemeral Structures in the City of Athens” (2002), which attracted hundreds from all over the world.31 The Greek Ministry of Culture and UIA (Union Internationale des Architectes-International Union of Architects) organized this multi-competition, with five different themes, and with prizes for practitioners and students, within the framework of the Cultural Olympic 2001-2004, a parallel international event to the Olympic Games.

Although the specificities of the spatial and architectural policies in place during the same period had been discussed in other parts of the thesis,32 it’s worth describing briefly an important aspect of the framework within which these projects evolved. This was the clear methodological ambition to theorize the relation of socio-spatial phenomena with historical and political developments. Primarily, the various incidents that placed Athens at the centre of the complex project of the postwar reconstruction, whose resolution and traces in the urban environment were finally evaluated to their complete extent. The significance of the capital city was hence described not in quantitative, but qualitative terms. Furthermore, the city of Athens was understood to constitute the epicentre of the various socio-political transformations occurred since the early 1980s, when, economic growth – primarily stimulated by European funds – and respective spatial developments, promoted an image of prosperity and wealth. The latter has been theorized as economic and social modernization, a political project displayed in various means.
Modernization was a concept used extensively as a theoretical umbrella and a political slogan of the PASOK socialist governance of the 1996-2004, under the Prime Minister Constantinos Simitis. This term was used to describe the economic and social policies put in place during that period, primarily referring to so-called structural reforms in the market economy, the state apparatus and the labor legislation. These particular actions have identical characteristics with similar policies deployed throughout Europe at that same time, following the Neo-liberal agenda of EU institutions. What is interesting though is the way this concept appears as a term in various theoretical and research projects in the architectural discipline from that era, the most important being *Landscapes of Modernization* of Yannis Aesopos and Yorgos Simeoforidis.

Projects like the ones dealing with public space, which were supposed to intervene and to renew the city centre, further cultivated this notion of modernization and improvement. Simultaneously, vast and extensive additions and renewal of the city’s infrastructural network, established Athens’ new metropolitan scale. A specific pattern of suburban diffusion emerged, which run parallel with the celebratory narrative for Athens’ new downtown qualities.33

Architects, critics and urban theorists were exposed with the task to relate these developments with the actuality of the city, i.e. with the elements that constitute its very recent history. These reached their clear resolution in the three theses already mentioned, the “peculiar urbanization”, the “modernistic heritage” of the polykatoikia, and the “unconventional” and rather “informal” use of public space. These three positions were present in all the different installments, publications, exhibitions and built projects of that era, where the theoretical ambition was to establish a pattern of re-evaluation and acclaim of this urban milieu. A fourth direction, which constituted somehow an accessory contribution on this notion of idiomatic urbanism, was the one developed by groups of architects and artists, who
analyzed the conditions of the suburban territories, promoting sort of “as found” strategies and views. These projects either proceeded with elaborated documentations of the emerging middle class suburbs of Attica, or with the recording —by various means like mapping, photographic surveys, short films, etc — of many, formerly neglected territories of Athens, primarily within working class neighborhoods.\(^{34}\)

The fundamental political issue, embedded in all the different projects of that era, was to project and to cultivate a notion of an extroverted, modern and updated society, capable to be placed as an equal participant within the emerging project of the EU. Within this historic period, we witness a methodological shift and a different research objective from the previous era, which tried to investigate the totality of this homogeneous urban space and to overcome previous classifications of the local architectural production, which had produced an actual deadlock in the theoretical and critical discourse in Greece.\(^{35}\)

These trajectories are characterized by an ideological position that relates the various projects more to the Western European context and its respective architectural and cultural discourse, insisting not on the eccentric features, or the regional idiosyncrasies, but on the modernist tradition of this sort of planning and architecture. Whatever appears as idiomatic should be re-categorized as a variation of this modern heritage. A new generation of architects tried to establish this alternative reading, not only on the local architectural production, but primarily, on the metropolitan features of the Greek city. These concepts were thoroughly worked out since the late 1980s, within the format of a highly influential architectural and design magazine “Tefhos”, «Τεύχος» in Greek, a word that can be translated as the “Issue”. Most critics and practitioners of this younger generation collaborated for its publication, with Yorgos Simeoforidis, the central figure of the group and co-editor of the magazine, significantly formulating this methodological and political genre.
In order to promote this particular analysis, the necessary gesture was to define a genealogy, a convincing historic narrative for this urban space, capable of projecting assigned qualities and knowledge of a wider interest. The main argument was that it had been born within a historic period (1950s-1960s) of economic growth and cultural modernization, which resembled – according to this analysis – Greece’s present reality of the late 1990s-early 2000s. Apart from various observations on their similarities in the political and ideological field, these two periods had been considered as the most important ones since, within both, cultural production of all kinds was strongly influenced and related with contemporary, European avant-gardes.

Furthermore, this analysis insisted on the exemplary character of this mode of urban and architectural production, which, according to this line of thought, born and flourished especially in the 1960s and 1990s. Local, yet cosmopolitan, regional, yet metropolitan, modernist but still with strong notion and preoccupation for local spatial values and building techniques, this genre avoided, according to various authors of this new generation, the populism and the iconographic traditionalism of the 1970s and 1980s, or some other characteristics of the pre-WW II discourse within the local architectural and cultural scene. In that sense, it could be theorize as a paradigm of a complete and successful modernist project. Although one in a rather peripheral context, it acquired a series of advanced metropolitan characteristics. This last point was extensively underlined and argued, primarily in an effort to surpass and overcome analyses that insisted on the local particularities of Greek architecture. Greek Modernism was not therefore critically regional, as it has been understood previously, but rather, peculiarly metropolitan and urban.

This notion of exemplarity of the Greek urban development and its architecture is very different from the way this research discuss its paradigmatic value, since there is not an emphasis on the particular social and political dimensions of its evolution. Instead of a methodology that puts
forward a classification of this type of architecture as an apparatus and a form of production, in the projects in question, the emphasis was rather on the modernistic iconography of this space or occasionally, on the supposing overlooked qualities of its apparent informality. These were understood to be primarily the result of two factors, which reflected the essence of the urban space in Greece. Firstly, a consequence of specific patterns of program distribution and differentiation, those that are existing in various scales – from the interior of the building, to the scale of the neighborhood and to the city as a whole. Secondly, of the particularities of the spatial occupation and the treatment of public space that characterizes the Greek city. There, within a rather continuous, indifferent urbanized territory – one that lacks conventional planning, zoning and other regulatory provisions – activities seemed to emerge spontaneously and unexpectedly. Additionally, the lack of systematic architectural treatment of these public spaces, promoted a rather informal and ingenuous inhabitation of the exterior of the city, especially the one observed in narrow streets of the dense urbanized areas. The latter, are constantly related with their respective ground floors of the block, formulating an active relation between these private, commercial spaces and the exterior of the city.

“Overlapping uses”, “mixed-used”, “multi-programming”, “randomness”, “spontaneity”, “metropolitan essence”, “openness” and many other similar terms of the 1990s disciplinary jargon seemed to fit paradigmatically the actuality of the Greek cities. Furthermore, in this particular moment, this constructed narrative that insisted on the exemplarity of Greece, operated in favour of political and economic interests, which identified within these research projects the possibility of economic exploitation of these cultural and spatial values. These were going beyond previous stereotypical interpretations of greekness in any sort of artistic production, since they were capable to relate and to promote not only the local, but primarily, the essence of a European identity. Interestingly, these trajectories monopolized the
discussion on the specifics of the Greek city, and Athens in particular, even after the end of their essential political and economic function, which was the commodification of the urban, modernist ethos of the city and the projection of a Neo-Greek identity. In many ways, however novel or “radical” were some of the ideas projected and suggested, this particular reading of the city and its architecture constituted the official perspective and the institutional representation of Athens. It is important to underline how strongly embraced and supported were, and still are, these research trajectories. Projects like the “Landscapes of Modernization”; the exhibition “20th Century Architecture in Greece”; the “Athens 2002: Absolute Realism”, official national entry at the 8th Venice Biennale, were funded generously by the Greek Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Environment, Planning and Public Works, and other semi-public and private foundations and enterprises. The last resurrection of this genre was “Made in Athens”, the Greek entry in the biennale of 2012, curated by Panos Dragonas and Anna Skiada. Like in the case of Matchbox’s poster, an outline of a polykatoikia appears as the main protagonist of posters, leaflets and book covers of the project. Here, instead of a space of alienation and conflict, it is presented as a beautiful metropolitan space. Even graphically, the tough, dirty banality of Economides’ poster stands as the extreme opposite of this gentle, clean cut outline of the building volume.

Ironically, these depictions, so much influential, promoted and discussed, failed spectacularly to foresee what actually the present of Athens is. The city has become the space of a political, social and humanitarian crisis never seen in the continent since the end of the Second World War. The theorization of specific spatial and architectural phenomena and the promotion of particular urban lifestyle, deterministically excluded all the other social subjects, places, practices, which could not fit these analyses. Neighborhoods, apartments and families like the one depicted in “Matchbox”, which constitute the vast majority of the city, are desperately absent. Similarly, economic and political refugees that constitute a significant percentage of the population of Athens
landscapes of modernisation
Greek Architecture 1960s and 1990s

Yannis Aesopos, Yorgos Simzoforidis, editors
4.34-4.37 Projects


were also excluded from the analyses in question, or were superficially presented in a celebratory fashion, as features of the Athenian, “multi-cultural” metropolitan essence.

Nevertheless, the fundamental problem of these approaches was the misreading of the specific mode of production of urban space, which was developed within a series of political struggles in the city’s recent history. The Athenian working class, or even the petit bourgeois subjects that inhabited these vast, homogeneous urban territories, were not theorized as the producers of this particular space, underestimating the importance of the activities, the practices and the conflicts of these specific subjectivities in the development of the city. Hence, the peculiar urbanism of the city and the modernist characteristics of the Athenian polykatoikias, or the emergence of suburban territories around the city, were seen through the lens of a bourgeois, celebratory critique of the economic achievements and the versions of lifestyle of the native dominant class. Dogtooth’s tall fence of seclusion and isolation, or Matchbox’s intolerable pressure and confinement were dismissed in favour of a depiction of the city, where the notion of openness, inclusion and modern lifestyle prevailed.
IV. Familiar Horror

Whenever I happen to be in a city of any size, I marvel that riots do not break out every day: massacres, unspeakable carnage, a doomsday chaos. How can so many human beings coexist in a space so confined without destroying each other, without hating each other to death? As a matter of fact, they do hate each other, but they are not equal to their hatred. And it is this mediocrity, this impotence, that saves society, that assures its continuance, its stability. Occasionally some shock occurs by which our instincts profit; but afterward we go on looking each other in the face as nothing had happened, cohabiting without too obviously tearing each other to shreds. Order is restored, a ferocious calm as dreadful, ultimately, as the frenzy that had interrupted it.”

In his article “Agonizing Arcadia: Notes on Postwar Architecture in Los Angeles”, Dirk De Meyer uses as frontispiece this particular quote by Emil Cioran, in his effort to describe the rise and the fall of the L.A.’s domestic archetypes, from the celebratory depiction of the city’s lifestyle in Julius Shulman’s photographs, to the late 1990s L.A.’s segregated and polarized sprawl. This space eventually became one of the emblematic settings of social struggle in US during the turn of the millennia. Similarly, the urban space of Athens, from the celebratory depictions and discussions of the 1990s, is now becoming one of the most brutal urban environments, where the economic destruction and the extreme social problems are mixed with intense political violence and everyday agony. As in Schulman’s and Hollywood’s idealized LA, or to some extend Reyner Banham’s fascination with the city’s environments, the various institutional representations of Athens seem to have overlooked the actual social and political problems of the city.

In this particular paper, De Meyer described the various stages by which this particular description of L.A.’s domesticity and suburban lifestyle was constructed, primarily through John Entenza’s L.A.-based magazine, *Arts and Architecture*. Within its various issues, Entenza “really made it appear that Los Angeles was about to contribute to the world not merely odd works of architectural genius but a whole consistent style”.

The archetypes of this genre were Pier Koenig’s
Case Study Houses, which the architect built between the 1940s through the 1960s, and specifically, the way these pieces of architecture were idealized in Shulman’s photographic recordings. Furthermore, the author describes the various stages by which Entenza’s and Shulman’s view established this particular notion of the city’s domestic lifestyle, eventually promoting a reality very similar to the one of a fictional film set. “Entenza and Shulman had both worked for the movie industry, and neither (of them) had failed to notice the one peculiar characteristic of the city,” which could be described as “a city (made) of location than of sites.” De Meyer argued that the influence of Hollywood’s movie industry in this particular project, i.e. the description of L.A.’s domestic lifestyle in Arts and Architecture magazine, reached a limit where it actually “preceded the materialized architecture”. The main goal of De Meyer’s article was to discuss this distorted and fictional depiction of Los Angeles’ residential patterns, which eventually created a stereotypical interpretation of the actual city and its social constituencies. In light of the city’s violent strikes and riots of the 1990s, the discussion on the city’s future development was primarily facing the challenge to overcome the various social problems produced in a highly segregated, socially and racially, society. Moreover, the city had to overcome this highly constructed and celebrated narrative, which the author credited for many of the existent social and political structures.

What the chapter tried to put forward was a presentation of a similar way by which the mis-represented, idealized and celebrated urbanity of Athens overlooked the various social and political shortcomings. Carried out by many different means within the disciplinary discourse, this intentional misinterpretation promoted a fictional reality, a condition which was probably always absent from the actuality of the city. However, and this is a diametrically different condition than the one described by De Meyer, the examples outside the architectural discipline— in our case the two movies, Matchbox and Dogtooth — didn’t operate as Shulman’s images, but on the
contrary, depicted the savage reality of Athens’ domestic life. This although the institutional depiction of the city was constantly failing to grasp and to theorize the particular modes of production of space, as well as to present the subjectivities that produced and inhabited the latter in the first place.

In order to highlight the importance of these two movies, as well as to describe a possible politically operative strategy, it is necessary to return to Paolo Virno’s concept of familiar horror. This will allow underlining the political significance of Economides and Lanthimos projects, which, contrary to their contemporary within the discipline of architecture, managed to introduce a political exodus, an alternative to the actuality they were describing.

In his short article “Familiar Horror”, Paolo Virno discusses Sigmund Freud’s famous essay “The Uncanny”, within which Freud elaborated on the dialectical appearance of habitual-familiar/unfamiliar-terrifying conditions in the human, social experience. Within the latter, “the familiar trespasses on the uncanny; the protection also threatens; the sought-after reveals a sinister nature.”

Based upon Virno’s remarks, we could argue that this conceptual pair appears as a fundamental condition and quality of the metropolitan space, not only the present, but also the one historically developed since the mid-19th century, i.e. the city initially of industrial and today post-fordist capitalism. By exceeding this dual paradigm (familiar/unfamiliar), a sense of collectivity within the contemporary city could be re-established, based upon a third category, habit, which refers to the common practice and the shareable knowledge produced and re-appropriated by productive labour and the class of producers. Similarly, an operative reading of the architectural and urban space, could allow establishing a sort of spatial ethos, a habitual practice of space. As Virno argues, this pairing of experience should be placed at the centre of the contemporary discussion on habitual patterns, primarily because “the predominant passion of capitalist modernity has been to pull out all the roots one by one”. Especially in the postmodern metropolis, “heimlich tends to disappear”, while nobody anymore has a direct reference of any
familiar, traditional orders and things, making any supporter of a romantic resistance to modernization to seem irrelevant and mistaken. Furthermore, the constant exposure of distorted familiar objects or conditions, especially the ones promoted within the “heimlich of the mass-media pogrom”, creates a condition where the dialectic is regularly present; “the mixture of the familiar and the frightening is by now systematic; we are still able to recognize the first only when we encounter the second”.52

As it was underlined in the first part of the paper, cinema and architecture share a number of crucial similarities, which allow us to expand further Virno’s remarks. These are the use of archetypical objects and conditions, as well as the analogical performance of both genres to the reality both are trying to depict and project. Contrary to a widespread rhetoric in both disciplines, we could argue that cinematic and architectural structures never just describe, interpret or document an existing present, but mainly distort it, precisely by introducing new forms and ethos of representation.

Athens, as a case study for this hypothesis, allows us to reflect on the performativity and the reasoning of archetypical conditions in an explicit manner, in cinema and architecture respectively. The urban development of the city is based almost exclusively in two complementary architectural objects and techniques – the urban, speculative polykatoikia type and the “self-building” practices of the peripheral neighborhoods. This creates a condition where the whole city could be depicted and analyzed as an urban formation based on singular archetypes, which not only function as such, but unveil specific, complementary societal and behavioural strategies of spatial occupation.

The particular phenomenon of human experience, where something habitual is gradually transformed to its exact opposite, and the function of this pairing in narrative structures, is the main theme of Freud’s “The Uncanny”. Freud started his text on the concept of uncanny with a linguistic observation in his mother tongue. In German, the word “heimlich”, literally
meaning “belonging to the house”, deployed originally to describe intimate and familiar conditions, takes gradually an ambivalent semantic direction, “until eventually coincides with its opposite, unheimlich”.

Typical example of that sort is the terror developed while confronting unfamiliar objects or conditions in myths and fairytales, like for example ghosts. In there, the uncanny is ultimately a traumatic reaction to the previously familiar, “that, unexpectedly, returns [to us] in disguise”.

As Virno successfully underlined, the idyll of the fairytale and the ancient familiarity of things, objects and narratives has been transformed to the nightmare of our present horror. What is left to us, by taking this pairing of opposite experiences and dialectic conditions for granted, is to reclaim a social space of habits, of activities beyond any traditional and familiar order of things. This double-sided experiential scheme should be placed at the centre of the contemporary discussion on habitual and repetitive patterns, especially because these constitute a fundamental characteristic of contemporary production and a quality of our life in the metropolitan space. Life in the modern city is constantly being defined by the simultaneous, parallel presence of experiences, each one as a reflection to the other, each one within the other. Similar to Freud’s, Virno’s position reflects primarily on a linguistic observation on the origin of habit from the word ethos. In ancient Greek, the noun ἑθος (ethos) literally means habit, tradition, idiosyncrasy of a person/or a group of individuals, essentially carries all the characteristics of a way of thought, of a position in life of an individual or/and a group of individuals, beyond any sort of values or predetermined rules. Ethos is therefore the essence of life appropriated by habits and shareable knowledge among a community of individuals. To reclaim the ethos of a place should be therefore primarily understood as a political act, one that insists on the re-appropriation of habits, activity and knowledge by the ones that produced it in the first place.
This condition of horrific familiarity, of constant absurdness and anguish is not an “accidental” aftermath of capitalist modernity, but the pattern of subjectification within this mode of production. Within this, alienation of subjects is primarily achieved through a permanent structure of dissolution and destruction of any familiar, intimate or ordinary patterns. Habitualness, ethos to be more accurate, has been replaced by repetition, a social compulsion towards another paradoxical condition, within which the whole of our social experience is known and predictable, but also extraneous and unforeseen.

As Marx had argued, this condition identified as estrangement (Entfremdung) is the core foundation of the capitalist mode of production, expressed in different aspects of life, at the core within which lies estranged labour. However, within the totality of the post-fordist metropolis, is not anymore the alienation, the estrangement of the worker towards the product of its labour, or towards production itself, or even the detachment of man from its species-being that it’s dominating, but the destruction of a communal ethos, of any relation based on familiar and habitual patterns that ultimately estrange the community and the individuals themselves. The constant exposure to the dialectic of familiar/unfamiliar is the aftermath of the sophistication of estranged labour achieved within the post-fordist mode of production. The constant exposure of distorted familiar objects or conditions, especially the ones promoted within post-fordist capitalism creates the condition of a permanently present dialectic of familiar/unfamiliar conditions. As stated by Virno and underlined previously in the paper, it is exactly the constant mixture of this dialectic experience that today is systematically established. Our distorted view on social life allows us to identify the familiar only when we are confronted with its exact opposite, the frightening and absurd.

The two movies managed to proceed with a reading on the supposing familiar conditions as significantly intolerable and horrific realities of the
metropolitan subjects of Athens. The directors deployed the technique that Virno described in his article, where the familiar is only readable on the encounter of its terrifying other, and thus annulled and dismissed. The success of both projects is mainly based on their ability to reverse the very ingredients of the metropolitan space of Athens, i.e. the two archetypical housing units – the polykatoikia apartment and the single-family unit – from desirable shelters to enclaves of total horror.

In order to expose his conceptual observations, Virno discusses the story of Jean Améry, pseudonym of Hans Mayer, an Austrian Jew who fled to Belgium in order to escape the Holocaust. In his state of exile in Belgium, Améry suffers from an individual decline, a condition of “incurable instability”, which makes him unable to comprehend anymore its surrounding environment and gradually to lose his instincts of survival, the ones based on our constant ability to adapt to the new. Virno relates this feeling with the ordinary metropolitan experience, which constitutes an “extraneous environment”, an unfamiliar territory of regular terror and absurdness. In an unexpected turn of Améry’s story, the author realizes that his quest for familiar essence was meant to fail, as this precise feeling of familiarity is indeed repugnant. He understands that the place of familiar has never actually existed; to mourn the absence of roots or of any home-ness is a self-destructive deception. As Virno continues, “it is futile, and in the long run dangerous, to rid oneself with a shrug of need for a familiar place”. For Améry, but also for the ones that today inhabit the post-fordist metropolitan machine, “it is better to stick to the ethical and sensory poverty implicit in exile […] rather than cherishing images of a “familiarity” charged with disquieting images”.  

Yet, the exodus proposed in this short article is one that takes us back to the essence of social experience, the shareable knowledge, the comfort and the power to adapt to the actuality of any living environment. This way, the
possibility for an alternative project could be exposed, one that could establish a different urban and social practice based on habit, “which is to say ethos, what is at the antipodes of roots (or familiarity) and can be glimpsed only when their every trace has disappeared.” 61 This pursuit for another degree of habitualness takes us back and connects us to the “ever-deferred actuality” of communism, as Paolo Virno underlined in the end of his short piece. The political challenge implied is the one that will direct us back to the essence of our present life within the post-fordist city, one that will allow us to reclaim the very ingredients of our existence, our subjectivities and the things we produce.
The Fis Brewery, Takis Ch. Zanetos, 1957
I. **Lump City and Common**

The essential property of the polykatoikia becomes apparent immediately someone confronts the space of Athens, even by observing the city's landscape in popular images, breathtaking photographs and carte postales. The polykatoikia, as a basic architectural unit of the house managed both to address and to control the city as a whole. This architectural object, structurally standardized, built by low-cost labour intensive methods of in-situ concrete framing, plastered brick walls and lightweight partitions, multifunctional and profoundly domestic, exposed a particular political ambivalence and thus challenged the common interpretations of the role of architecture in city planning and urban design. The polykatoikia’s concrete slabs, bare terraces, unfinished floors and cheap wooden or aluminum window frames and shutters, so much celebrated as the local and “as found” modern vernacular, are the material proofs of how a seemingly “informal” infill architecture for all could disguise a highly sophisticated political project. The gradual retreat of the state from large-scale planning proposals, and the constant failure or absence of conventional planning applications, has been replaced by an architecture reduced to the simplest structural form. An architecture of all-embracing formal and spatial vocabulary, capable to mutate in order to accommodate different subjectivities, alternative forms of occupations, social desires and practices.

This type of architecture produces what we could define as Lump City, a category that allows us to go beyond the distinction formal and informal modes of urbanization. The urban substance and homogeneous mass of Athens, one that seemingly lacks hierarchy and regularity in terms of shape and form, is precisely the product of a specific form of production and employment within the building sector. Instead of approaching this type
5.01 Vincenzo Castella, *Athens 1998*

5.02 View of Central Athens, 2000s
image source: courtesy of Dimitris Philippides, personal archive
5.03 Manolis Bahousis, Gallietha 1987, Project Athens 1984-1996
image source: courtesy of the artist, personal archive
5.04 Manolis Baboussis, Terrace, Project Athens 1984-1996

image source: courtesy of the artist, personal archive
of urbanity as a solution to the acute problems of contemporary cities, the attempt here is to problematize and to redefine key categories that construct this space in the first place. Furthermore, to promote a historic reading of this condition, which would allow to tackle it not as a positive effect of spontaneous, bottom-up, DIY urbanism – a process that does not really exist as such – but as the exact opposite, an institutional technology of administration. Within this thick, continuous urban agglomeration of the lump the possibility for the urban common, as a spatial quality beyond private and public space, is thus envisioned and proposed.

These two categories cannot be understood as “alternative propositions” to the actual conditions of the “informal”, but as elements of a political project of space that stand in an antagonistic relation with the foundations of free-market economic and spatial planning. As Antonio Negri defined in *The Porcelain Workshop*, “the common”, as ontology with its own demands, acknowledgments and its politics, “does not constitute a “third way” that might mediate between private and public. Rather, it is a “second way”, antagonistic and alternative in regards to the management of capital and to the effects that capital (the private sector and/or public property of the means of production) can have on common life”.¹ To add further, the common sums up and express the totality of social desires, while it constitutes the wealth of the results of social production necessary for the interaction and production of this sum of “knowledges, languages, codes, information, and affects.”² It is the product of what Marx himself defined in the Grundrisse as the general intellect, the most crucial force of production, where the general social knowledge of producers expresses itself in their own social expertise and organization.

The common as a category allows us to consider the transformation of the multitude to productive labour, i.e. the way it is organized against capital in the space of production. The emergence of the common at the crux of the multitude, from a productive and political point of view, is what makes it “subjectively efficient and objectively antagonistic.”³ As an open field, the common operates where the labour force moves independently. It is where the
production of subjectivities and cooperation of singularities are accumulated and consolidated, linking potentially infinite singular activities to a network of relations. The common defines the multitude in two complementary ways: in an objective base as accumulation, and in subjective base, as the production of ever-renewed values of subjectification. This is what links the common to the extraction of wealth, but also as an ontological condition of value itself. As Hardt and Negri underlined, “a theory of the relation between labour and value today must be based on the common. The common appears at both ends of production, as presupposition and as result.” Production of the common yields a surplus that is always un-exploitable, and provides the possibility to transform the antagonistic relationship residing in production to a possibility and a moment of confrontation and revolt. It is that potential that will always exceed, and it is this “will to struggle” that capital always exploits, and which serves as the foundation of struggles for the multitude.5

The common “is the sum of everything that the labour force produces independently of capital and against it.”6 It is to be understood as the ultimate power of producers over production and capital, as an open capacity for transformation and cooperation. In the space of the city, the common is the foundation of biopolitical production. It constitutes the totality of production and reproduction of social life, while at the same time, expresses the unpredictability of encounters that have defined the city in the first place. These encounters among singularities produce the wealth of the metropolitan space, and they are expressed constantly as new forms of knowledge, exchange, cooperation and, ultimately, production of the common as such. Hardt and Negri stressed that “there is no longer a factory wall that divides the one from the other, and “externalities” are no longer external to the site of production that valorises them. Workers produce throughout the metropolis, in its every crack and crevice. In fact, production of the common is becoming nothing but the life of the city itself.”7 Thus, the task is to transform this conflict existing in every set of relations and encounters in the city and to enable different forms of cooperation and knowledge to emerge as capacities, as the potential of the common in space.
As an open capacity for transformation and cooperation, the space of the common is manifested as an institution beyond public and private space. The articulation of this space relates to a different form of ownership, a change in paradigm, where the multitude has assumed the right to the productive transformation of “every crack and crevice” of the city. It thus becomes a system of ownership as an alternative to the perceived right to private property, a project that could be manifested as a shared understanding of property based in a collective legal framework. The language of the common excluded that which is specific, individual, unique or selective. In the city, has to be identified as emerging from within the existing urban fabric. Therefore, the block becomes a potential basic unit of the city, an operation extremely critical in the space of Athens, where the hyper-fragmented urban properties resulted to the dissolution of the block as a political and spatial element. The concept of the urban common proposes an idea that is articulated as part of an already shared urban language, a method to codify an already existing system of architecture as a form of shareable knowledge and spatial technique. In that respect, it acts within the block and it embodies the different opposition instances of plurality and potential conflict. The space of the common presents itself as a re-composition of parts.

The two propositions of lump and common indicate the evolution of the apparent “informality” as the very evidence of a generic, abstract formal apparatus. They expose the effect of this type of urbanization in the city, where fragmentation of property and wealth being its most obvious consequences. The two categories are proposed as elements of an strategy to acknowledge the subjects of the city, and their relationship to architecture. As such, the categories become a way to frame the social and political moment in which architecture is operating, understanding and ultimately projects and constructs a representation of the subjectification process, especially through the apparatus of production. The common, as a category, is primarily a political challenge; architecture can only describe, draw and suggest a space that could provide a framework for the common as practice.
II. Private Property and the Issue of Scale

For a critical reading and understanding of the city’s urban development, it is crucial to underline two fundamental characteristics of this advanced form of city management. First, the fact that the control of the city at large, and even Greece as a whole territory, was put forward by a project of the smallest possible scale, the housing unit itself. This attribute of the polykatoikia type is the foundation of a savage social management from within the very space of social reproduction, the typical house and family-owned apartment unit. The polykatoikia project as a whole should be understood as a method to “domesticize” the population, i.e. to accustom the Greek society to a specific domestic urban lifestyle and to control the social subjects through this precise domesticity, taming and averting any possibility of conflict and social unrest. Second, Athens’ continuous urban landscape is a manifestation of the celebration of one of the most essential elements of modernity and capitalist economy, private property.

In the previous chapters, the thesis explored the methods the state used to determine a pattern of urban development similar to what it is often labeled today as “informal” urbanism or “unregulated” city expansion. Since the early 1920s and the establishment of the 228A Law in 1923 on “Plans for Cities, Towns and Settlements of the State” the public interference in planning shorted of in the partial authorization of a proposed plan or the tolerance of its imposition. A group of individuals, autonomously from any municipal intention or central decision-making, initiated these layout plans. Although seems a very typical and conventional mechanism, two characteristics make the Greek case valuable to study. First, this legal tool remained active for more than fifty years, consisting the most important planning mechanism for the expansion of existing neighborhoods, or the foundation of new districts in the periphery of the urban centres. A highly advanced and technical manuscript, systematized the pattern of suburban diffusion in the Greek cities. Among the many provisions of the law, the most important are the ones that defined
the agents of any particular plan or expansion, and the economic format of
the agreement between the public and the private sector. Responsible for
the plan are always the municipal authorities, who authorized the provisions
of any intervention. However, the initiative lies in the private sector that
buys, expropriates and proposes the location of the project. Additionally,
this planning apparatus absorbed activities of low-income and working
class households and communities in a systematic way, since it was used to
achieve the gradual legalization of settlements, or un-authorized residential
clusters in squatted land. The technique was very simple: the formation of
a “cooperation of property owners” allowed for these groups to establish a
legal subject that could achieve a similar treatment by the authorities, as for
example a cooperative of high-ranking military officers or bank employees
did in the 1920s, the 1930s or after the Second World War.

The demand was twofold. The first step was the acknowledgement, from
the state’s side, of the property right and its legal acquisition for each household
or individual on the specific piece of land or a poorly made construction, i.e.
the legalization of property shares that allowed these to enter the realm of
formal economic transactions. The plot or the “house” could be sold, rented
or built, if it was not already done so in advance. The second step was the
recognition of the existing street layout, which of course was not determined
by any plan, but by the divisions of the legalized properties. In other cases,
a street layout, often in the form of a generic hippodamian grid or a garden-
city-like pattern was arranged in the area were the city would expand, followed
by the re-distribution of property shares on the members of the group.
This is very clear in the fabric of Athens and the wider region, especially
in working class districts and neighborhoods in close proximity with natural
and geographical obstacles, such as the west fringe of Aegaleo, Peristeri and
Koridallos or the recently urbanized agricultural settlements in Mesogea, East
Attica. Together with the new street layout, utility networks were also put in
place, with the characteristic form of legalization of the property to be issued
by the Public Power Corporation. Naturally, the areas “within the official plan” were subjects of proper building permissions and regulations, offering the possibility for a much larger building to emerge, which now acquired a monetary value much higher than the one in the previous precarious status of the property. Land and space entered an extensive cycle of commodification, based on small-scale property owners and local developers.

The use of the polykatoikia as a residential unit further privatized and fragmented the urban environment. This fragmentation is readable within the building unit itself, with the apartments representing fractions of the entire equity. The 3741/1929 law “On horizontal property” provided precisely the regulatory framework that made the polykatoikia possible – and extremely profitable – as a building type. Each building, although defined as “one and undivided” property, was nevertheless composed by a number of property shares, portions of both the land and the building mass combined. Every apartment, not only consisted of a predefined “property right” of the whole estate, but also shared rights of the communal spaces and the plot combined. The capitalization and commercialization of land was brought to its extreme. A formerly one and inseparable asset with a specific value – the plot that the polykatoikia has being built – dissolved in the various segments of the new building, which now had a considerable added value to be exploited. Individuals and their families, who invested money, co-own a building as shareholders.

This is how the existing small-scale private property in Greece, a condition already emerging in the 19th century and the early decades of the newly founded nation state, was not only respected, but also extensively intensified and celebrated. Various benefits were gradually added, such as limited or no taxation, low-interest loans for specific professionals, while other provisions facilitated this type of “investment”. The critical point throughout the building process is the absence of direct interference from public authorities. This factor made the “polykatoikia protocol” so outstandingly prosperous
and valuable for the wider political project of Greece. Since this process seemingly relied on private initiatives and informal agreements between individuals, it masked its essence as an apparatus of control and management of the city through the institution of private property, in this case materialized in a rigid architectural device. Domestic space, in its various forms, sizes and patterns of occupation constitutes primarily an asset, property to be exploited, distributed and accumulated. In these early stages of development of the polykatoikia type, the local middle class population was trapped in the sensation of an improvised entrepreneurialism that brought an illusion of wealth and prosperity. Although this in not at all a “local idiosyncrasy”, a “natural faculty” or “form of resilience” of the Greek society, as it had been argued elsewhere, it is the scale of the process that captured this productive potential that makes it somehow unique.

If in its initial stages of development, this system of urbanization was designed to tackle the housing needs of the higher layers of the Greek society, in the aftermath of Second World War and the Civil War that followed, radically modified the value of the polykatoikia typology for the Greek State and its dominant institutions. The polykatoikia would become now instrumental to incorporate en masse the working and the middle class subjects in a rough capitalist mode of spatial production and to the realm of private property. In the next three decades after the end of the Civil War, Greece and the city of Athens witnessed again a massive urban development, fuelled by new internal waves of immigration from rural provinces. In the years that followed the end of the internal conflict, “rural-to-urban migration escalated and increased the Greater Athens population from 1,124,109 in 1940, to 1,852,709 in 1961 and as high as 3,016,457 in 1981, when the capital concentrated about one third of the Greek population.” As it was prophetically described in the Varvaressos Report of 1951, the increasing housing needs had to be tackled in an environment with limited economic capabilities and with a concealed
decision for an almost complete absence of public housing projects. Instead of the 20% European average, public housing in Greece represents the 3% of the total production of residential space. In countries with advanced welfare state such as Holland, it reached almost 35% of the total dwelling stock in the early postwar decades.

In Greece, the guidance of the population’s economic activities towards the small-scale building industry replaced the responsibility of the state to provide decent housing, as it had happened in the city before. The abstract protocol of the polykatoikia would become the foundation on top of which the state would unfold this new strategy. The type was generalized, mutated and transformed to a seemingly “classless”, all-embracing generic framework, capable to adapt to various urban conditions, densities and programs. Above all the genericness of the polykatoikia, as a piece of architecture and a building process was able to absorb the “informal”, “self-building” practices of the poorest layers of the population, merging them eventually with the speculative enterprises of the private housing market. Unregulated settlements and autonomous units, diffused around Athens and the other urban and rural centres of Greece, were incorporated in the same architectural and urban machinery. It was carried out either by the “genericness” of architecture itself, or as part of a system of commodification of the domestic space and land property.

This was primarily executed by the advancement of a particular form of informal economic agreement between landlords and contractors, the “antiparochi” (αντιπαροχή), a quid-pro-quo land allowance mechanism, which fueled further the small scale building industry. Following the provisions of the 3741/1929 law “On horizontal property”, this mechanism provided a framework where, a respective land piece, owned by a family, or a single person, was exchanged, without any further tax revenues, with built space, in most cases, a number of apartments.
5.05 Dimitris Philippides, *An Inner City Squatter Settlement in Athens, 1966*


courtesy of Dimitris Philippides, personal archive
5.06 *Afthereto*, illegal dwelling in Attica, 1990s


courtesy of Dimitris Philippides, personal archive
If the polykatoikia is the architectural object of the post-war reconstruction in Greece, the “antiparochi” was the system that made it possible, the element that executed the latent project of the contemporary Greek city. It is important to underline that this arrangement was never regulated as such by the state; there is not any “antiparochi” law to be found. This mechanism can be accurately described as a “private contract” between individuals, which not only multiplied to the extreme the dominance of private property, but also replaced advanced capitalist methods of financing in the building sector. The land owners had the opportunity not only to acquire a newly-built apartment to organize their living, but also to increase their income and their private assets, by simply owning properties or by renting the apartments that they didn’t use as their own house. House occupants, average or poor households understood themselves as potential entrepreneurs and land speculators. Dowries, “apartments as gifts” to younger family members, extensive tax evasion was not only tolerated but accepted as an indispensable part of the Greek economy. Apart from the unskilled labour force of the construction workers, related employment, such as architects, civil and mechanical engineers and even lawyers and conveyancers, became the spine of the native middle class. Many of these professions, with their incomes being fuelled by the activities within the building industry had their wages regulated and secured by the state, which legislated accordingly. At the same time, the contractors were able to obtain land without bank loans or other public subsidies. Again, the absence of a direct presence or interference of public authorities within this process rendered the latter as a self-initiated and autonomous economic activity.

The proliferation of this mechanism concluded to the formulation of a unified construction market, where all the actors and agents were simultaneously operating in different building scales and areas of the city. The most important effect of this phenomenon was the emergence of a common architectural technique, a consistent building technology based on
local materials, cheap methods and manual labour, with the polykatoikia being the emblematic resolution, the architectural form that incorporated and illustrated these complex socio-economic activities. The generic architecture of the archetype became the shareable knowledge of space and occupation for the producers and the inhabitants of the city. The polykatoikia materialized the “social contract” of the post-war reconstruction, being the machine with which the Greek society exchanged the possibility of social change with material wealth, overwhelmingly entering the imaginary of private property. Defined as a “necessity” in the aftermath of the Civil War and executed, as seemingly un-planned and informal strategy, became the point where the opposing camps of the conflict met, consenting upon the form, the content and the character of economic development and social welfare in Greece.

III. The Dom-ino

Eventually, the polykatoikia controlled the spatial development of Athens and, eventually, managed the population of the city, following its most important precedent, Le Corbusier’s Maison Dom-ino of 1914.11 As the most simple, prototypical form of housing, Le Corbusier’s architectural object departed precisely from his studies of self-made and local construction methods. As it was argued before “in order to shorten the distance between architecture and everyday building processes”, Le Corbusier “reinterpreted these vernacular examples within the logic of the industrial typical plan and the new developments in concrete construction.”12 Similarly to the polykatoikia system, the Dom-ino had been envisioned and developed in an extremely critical political moment, anticipating the post-WW I reconstruction especially to tackle the housing needs that the conflict would create, especially for the working class. For Le Corbusier, the archetypical housing unit would have to perform simultaneously two complementary tasks. First, the structure is capable to absorb and re-appropriate the labour force and the abstract human faculty of labour, promoting a this seemingly adaptability as an almost “natural order of things”, not as an apparatus of
control the capitalist system imposed to the working class, especially to the most unskilled workers. Contrary to the rigid reality of the organization of industrial work, the seemingly “informal” properties of the Dom-ino masked the very forms of domination and exploitation from within, promoting a particular domestic landscape. It is the generic character of both the Dom-ino as an archetype and the polykatoikia as one of its variations that allowed resisting time and to exist even within the post-industrial age, since it is precisely the generic that constitutes the fundamental attribute of capitalist production.13 The organization of the domestic space as a standardized, generic space, apart from formulating its productive potential as an economic machine, it allows primarily for the management of society at large through the space of its own reproduction.

Maison Dom-ino is the best embodiment of Le Corbusier’s motto “Architecture or Revolution”. In the Dom-ino, architecture is not simply a shelter, or a quasi-ideogram of building methods, or a celebration of the emerging spatiality of the Modern movement. As it was argued in the introduction, it is the specific characteristics of the Dom-ino and the polykatoikia model as systems of production that bring them closer to what Foucault calls a dispositif, or an apparatus. As machines and set of relations materialize in space power relations and forms of exploitation, which put at work and thus control the most basic skills of the actual producer of this spatial device. The abstract ability to produce “in general” collapses and simultaneously is glorified within a peculiar diagram, where an architectural abstraction, a space reduced to its bare minimum – “columns, beams, slabs and a staircase” – become the diagram through which production and private property are proposed and promoted as the one and only possibility. The seeming “informality” of the Dom-ino model is the paradigmatic scheme through which the organization of work of the assembly line merged with the organization of production of space.
5.07 Le Corbusier, *Maison Dom-ino*, 1914
5.08 Manolis Baboussis, *Skeletons*, 2010
courtesy of the artist, personal archive
These characteristics of the Maison Dom-ino and the polykatoikia have proved to be far more effective today, when the generic quality and adaptability of labour and, through that, the totality of everyday life constitutes an existential and ontological paradigm of the post-industrial condition. However, the adaptability of both architectural objects unveils the fact that, within capitalism, flexibility is never an innocent attribute. Although it does make use of standardized, industrial forms of production, the Dom-ino is an in-situ form of construction, capable to adapt to any site condition and to project different forms and conditions of occupation. At the same time, it does not require skilled workers and, while it exploits the cheap “informal” labour force, it is also based on industrially produced raw materials that drive the profit back to larger scale corporations. In the case of Athens, the polykatoikia system, apart from allowing the vast majority to enter the realm of private property, and at the same time, boosting the small-scale building sector, it promoted an extreme accumulation of capital in industries that provided these materials.

This diffusion of initiatives and control, the very fact that economic power and exploitation was masked by this extreme fragmentation of activities registered in the actual form of the building. This process tames the possibility of conflict by building a class of property owners and micro-entrepreneurs that, while economically less privileged than the high bourgeoisie of the city, were however sceptical towards the possibility of organizing, sharing, and demanding social equality. The subjectivity of the Dom-ino, in spite of what Le Corbusier had hoped, did not result in a shared effort to construct readable urban environments, but rather in the myth of self-entrepreneurship. The Dom-ino model, and the polykatoikia as one of its most clear manifestations, could be seen as a paradoxical form of atomization of the urban by the extreme proliferation of a system of production of space, where private property exposes itself without any shame. On the one hand,
5.09 Axonometric Drawing of the Kerameikos/Metaxourgeio district of Athens

The drawing was produced for the Research Project "Towards a Common Architectural Language" conducted at the Berlage Institute, Rotterdam, by Pier Vittorio Aureli, Maria S. Giudici, Platon Issaias, Elia Zenghelis, and postgraduate researchers Juan Carlos Aristizabal, Hyun Soo Kim, Ivan K. Nasution, Davide Sacconi, Roberto Soundy, Yuichi Watanabe, Ji Hyun Woo, Lingxiao Zhang (2010-2011).
urban form is socially and politically fragmented to such extend that, into a homogeneous agglomeration of buildings, every monad, every pixel of this urban lava signifies a different ownership and every private asset is readable and celebrated. On the other, such extreme fragmentation is “united” by the same shared technical and formal vocabulary. This situation is precisely what took place in the development of the polykatoikia as the spatial machine, the apparatus that built modern Athens.

In the history of this type the various political and economic relations, the struggles and the social desires of the Greek society could be read. Contractual agreements between individuals, property owners and contractors, forms of labour and employment in Greece, family structure, gender and class domination, and ultimately, the patterns of estrangement and disenchantment in the urban space are registered in polykatoikia’s continuous slabs and plastered brick walls. The polykatoikia is the system through which the city has been transformed to a continuous, un-interrupted productive landscape. It eventually became a complex spatial machinery of social engineering, capable to exploit labour power, diffuse production and foster accumulation of capital in every space and territory of the Athenian landscape. It is a device of subjectification, of class differentiation and social alienation, presented as self-help, welfare project. It produced a vast Greek middle class, the constituents of which were simultaneously owners, producers and consumers of space, in a paradoxical manner. The unconstrained land exploitation, rentals and private ownership as the primordial economic resource, the fragmentation of property to the most extreme level, are some of the consequences of this mode of city planning.
III. *Takis Zenetos and the Struggle Within*

In order to conclude, I would like first to return to the projects of Takis Zenetos, this emblematic architectural figure of the postwar era: the Fix Brewery (1957) and the multi-storey apartment building in Herodou Attikou Str (1959), that was presented in the second chapter. These two projects managed to expose the fundamental issues at stake in the Greek method of urbanization and their respective social implications. Scale, territorial expansion, forms of occupation, alienation of subjects and ultimately the destruction of any political consciousness and awareness were successfully related to the spatial and social fragmentation implied in the postwar development in Athens. The factory and the generous polykatoikia in Herodou Attikou could be read as Zenetos’ synopsis of his own political opposition to the urban lava that consumed the landscape of the Attica basin, the wider metropolitan area of Athens. Through architectural forms, he made explicit the essence of the Greek, postwar “social contract”. The open-ended, highly fragmented, all embracing, seemingly classless and self-help legal framework that produced the polykatoikia type in the first place had to be tackled precisely through a project of architecture. His propositions developed to attack the two fundamental properties of that system: small scale and domesticity, precisely the way the political institutions registered the above in the space of the city and the architectural apparatus of the polykatoikia.

In the factory, Zenetos proceeded with an unprecedented move within the structure of the Athenian block. Situated in Syngrou Avenue, the pre-existing facility was distributed in four independent structures, from different eras and architectural styles. The different, yet regular grids, determined a complex space, within which the workers operated the machinery of the brewery. The production run in an assembly line that moved from the one building to the other, covering a plot of about 200 meters long. Zenetos, asked to redesign and refurbished the existing facility, proposed a very simple architectural
5.10 Fix Brewery, elevation 1957
Architects: Takis Zenetos - M.Chr. Apostolidis
5.11 Fix Brewery, *aerial view* 1957

Architects: Takis Zenetos - M.Chr. Apostolidis

gesture: a prefabricated, composite panel that would unite the complex under one, unified façade. Zenetos’ project is literally a skin, a mounted structure that creates a megaform in the space of Athens. Removing partitions and non-bearing structural elements, he created a continuous, interior productive space, almost like if he wanted to unveil the bare, deep structure of the Greek urban space.

The productive process, a choreography of machines, workers and beer bottles hanging from the roof and moving from the one step of the line to the next, together with the generic grid that occupied, was exposed almost brutally to the space of the city. The continuous, linear windows that run from the one edge of the building to the other, unveiled this spectacle to the pavement of the avenue. With these two simple acts, the unification of the façade and the exposure of the structural logic of the building to the city, Zenetos estranged the scale and the form of the Athenian block. He introduced a radically different architectural size in the city, therefore unveiling the existing, unconstrained fragmentation of the land and the space of Athens.

The Fix Brewery does not exist anymore in the city. In the early 1990s, after years of decline that followed the closure of the factory, the building was half-demolished, in order to build a subway station and an underground parking space in its plot. In an extreme irony and as a response to the reaction of the Union of Greek Architects (SADAS/PEA) and the schools of architecture, the Ministry of Culture declared the project a “protected monument of modern heritage” after its demolition, which was carried out by the same public authorities. Furthermore, the part of the project authorized by Zenetos, i.e. the prefabricated, continuous façade, was not protected, but it was a subject for immediate removal for safety reasons. The remaining structure, less than half of the previously existing, was to be modified to host the Museum of Modern Art of Athens. A competition for the building renovation took place in the early 2000s, calling for the “redesign of the
building’s exterior elevation”. The state’s and the public’s well known hatred and disgust for Zenetos’ architecture seemed to take it final revenge. Most of his private housing projects were already demolished or severely modified, abandoned and in a derelict status. Similarly, the Fix Brewery could not exist in Athens as he designed it; what remains, as almost uncanny ghosts in the memory of Athenians are the factory’s spectacular windows.

One of the very few projects by Zenetos that are still surviving in a good status is his multi-storey apartment building in Herodou Attikou Street. Built in 1959, two years after the factory, it takes his ideas and provocations on scale and structure to a different theme, this time tackling domestic space itself. Here again, the deep structure of the building is exposed completely in the space of the city to its barest minimum. His proposal stood in extreme opposition to the one of the polykatoikia urban block. His design for this apartment building makes clear his severe antithesis of what he called “the new madness of low-cost housing”, one “boding the most destructive possible consequences for man.”

Taking the building regulations of the period to their limit, especially the ones determined spans, size of columns and bearing walls, and of course, the width and length of the balcony, he designed the most generic structure possible, one that exposed precisely the essence of this predetermined architectural form. His project, paradoxically aligned with the apartment building next to it, seems like a three dimensional radiogram of the Athenian block.

These two projects are in my point of view paradigmatic of a possible project for Athens today, precisely because they are based on the most fundamental quality of the “polykatoikia system”, i.e. the generic architecture of the object. Zenetos, operating and designing his proposals in the most intense years of the postwar reconstruction, when political struggle and conflicts were at their highest, attacked this form of urban development from within, proposing, manipulating and fighting the project with its own means. The complex regulatory apparatus, the available structural methods,
5.12-5.13 Fix Brewery, elevations from Ilissos and Syngrou Avenues
Architects: Takis Zenetos - M.Christ. Apostolidis
(drawing-mix technique)

5.14-5.15 Fix Brewery, elevation and plan
redrawn by Alexandra Vougza/Platon Issaizas
5.16-5.18 The process of renovation, the construction of the hanging façade in three phases (detail from Syngrou Avenue)
Architects: Takis Zenetos - M.Chr. Apostolidis

5.19 The Fix Brewery before the renovation
In the foreground, a model of the structure is displayed, showing the various components and materials used in its construction. The model is composed of various materials, including concrete, steel, and glass, arranged to simulate the actual building. The model is designed to demonstrate the structural integrity and aesthetic appeal of the proposed design. The scale model is an essential tool for visualizing the final product and assessing the design's feasibility.

A guide section is shown in front of the structure, highlighting the various elements and features that contribute to its overall design. The guide section includes details such as the structural components, materials, and dimensions, providing a comprehensive overview of the structure's construction. This section is crucial for understanding the design's complexity and ensuring its successful execution.

References:
1. Author, Title (Year). Publisher. Page numbers are provided for each reference.
2. Another Author, Title (Year). Publisher. Page numbers are provided for each reference.

Footnotes:
A1. Additional information or notes related to the referenced content.
B1. Additional information or notes related to the referenced content.
5.20-5.21 Original Spreads from the first publication of Fix Brewery, magazine Architektoniki, October 1963.

techniques and materials were alienated by the architect, in such a way as to make them obvious and explicit. This opened precisely the possibility to rethink, re-evaluate to comprehend the essence of this complex apparatus, through architecture above all, as a form of struggle.

IV. Analogous Athens

The second proposal I would like to use as a paradigm of a possible project is the one at the Berlage Institute for Athens, a research studio taught in 2011 by Pier Vittorio Aureli, Maria S. Giudici, Elia Zenghelis and the author. The purpose of this project was twofold. On the one hand, we aim to expose the generic nature of the polykatoikia model, and at the same time we tried to recover the architecture of the city beyond the pixel of the single dwelling, moving beyond the small scale development of the city, moving therefore beyond the polykatoikia. Reversing the typical outcome of a project of this kind, instead of a masterplan we propose, together with the students, a catalogue of architectural actions that aim to connect the fragmented properties into coherent and yet formally finite collective urban forms. These forms tackled the “polykatoikia problem” from within, targeting specific organizational codes of the city, such as the courtyard, the block, the street, and the most collective layer of the city: the ground floor. The typical attributes of the polykatoikia model, flexibility and openness, are thus manipulated towards the opposite direction for which they were developed in the first place. If the Maison Dom-ino is a system that encourages the individual house owner to become an independent entrepreneur filling, organizing and manipulating his part of the skeleton, the forms we propose all imply a form of collective will and collaboration. As we wrote elsewhere, “the courtyard, the block, the street, and the ground floor become figures that can be rescued from the polykatoikia carpet” and overall, “our proposal radicalizes these figures into discrete architectural archetypes.”

The main theme of our proposal was to discuss and to challenge the Dom-ino protocol in a rather opposite way as it is usually done. In most cases,
this is done through the performance of this protocol in terms of its infill, of a type of architecture of multiple variations and mutations, where the rigid skeleton of its structure remains on the background. The “lesson from Athens” proves actually that the real issue of this system is the environment it creates. In the case of Athens, we are actually dealing with a formal and urban paradox. The two attributes of the city at a large scale, repetition of a singular object and discontinuity in terms of the fabric construct the rather repetitive and homogeneous lava that consumes the Attic landscape. Dismantling this thick urban structure into its own particles, unveils an unresolved dynamique with the scale of the block and its architecture. The Athenian model of urbanization, one that lacks hierarchy and a clear urban anatomy resolves to an even more visible and overwhelming fragmentation in the scale of the block, while at the same time, the monad of its structure – the polykatoikia – stands as the element with structural clarity: regular, rigid concrete frames, filled with brick walls and partitions, plastered, painted in multiple ways creating a chaotic multitude of variations of this ambiguous continuous gridiron.

Therefore, the decision to work with the Dom-ino departed from an understanding of this existing condition. Instead of manipulating the infill, and thus adding more “variations” and “possibilities” of the skeleton, adding further to the apparent informality of the city, we decided to intervene in the ways the multiple individual skeletons relate to each other. The architectural forms we deployed in the proposal are “part of the grammar of any Mediterranean city, but are unreadable in Athens today”, due the overwhelming disintegration of the urban block. The main reason for the lack of formal and social integrity to the block has to be attributed to the essential condition of Athens, the small-scale propriety of the city and the multiplication of this historic condition by the fragmentation of property to the extreme by the polykatoikia model. We identified the following spaces, where our archetypes could intervene as both finite forms and suggestions of possible alterations of the existing
regulations. These were the poorly maintained, over-divided courtyards, the ground floors, the semi-outdoor spaces of the discontinuous stoas, and the bare terraces of the block. The proposed archetypes of our project suggest looking again at the strength of these basic figures to reconstruct spaces that can be shared. This strategy implies a series of agreements between the individual owners of the block to use alternatively their properties, in order to produce different forms of occupations and, ultimately, the recognizability of the block as a unit in the city.

The first example emerges from the unification of the fragmented courtyards to a new unified and common property in the middle of the block. The project by Ji Hyun Woo forms a cloister, a space that is produced by the extension and enlargement of existing properties to construct a collective, shared balcony, framing this way the interior collective space of the block. As similar strategy is proposed by the second archetype, which, “by demolishing all the non-load bearing partitions of the ground floors”, introduces “a continuous private, yet public accessible platform”. Typically, ground floor spaces, except from the entrance and the circulation core, it hosts retail and other commercial uses. In polykatoikia examples from the 1950s and 1960s, it might also include larger spaces, like cinema or theatre halls, which introduce a different structural and programmatic scale to the building. As an operational protocol, the platform by Ivan Nasution exposes the structural genericness and the formal simplicity of the polykatoikia system. The continuous space this project constructs, unveiling the structural logic of this type of architecture. The load bearing, concrete structural grid of columns and walls is “liberated” from any other element. In a way, the project is similar to Zenetos’ and Archizoom’s No-Stop City, the plan of the continuous platform looks like an x-ray of Athenian urbanization, exposing in the most radical way the deep structure of this form of spatial and social management. The rigidity of this structure, this field composed by “a column every x meters, a staircase every y meters and a bathroom every z”, is brought to the surface. At the same time, it becomes the space of any possible resistance to this formal apparatus; a space to occupy within.
5.22 Cloister, Ji Hyun Woo
5.23 Platform, Ivan K. Nasution
These two projects were developed with an idea about sharing the space of the block and the city. The main operation was the demolition of divisions and parties, a strategy to reclaim "what are today residual interstices revealing physical and linguistic possibilities for an architectural common." The next four selected proposals operated in a different way. Instead of removing built mass, in a kind of reversal of a typical architectural operation, these projects promoted the need to reorganize productive and collective spaces within the block, by inserting a series of formal devices with different typological configurations.

The first example by Davide Sacconi, constructs a continuous beam as an insertion of an additional level to the roof of existing polykatoikia blocks, a sort of entablature that hosts a variety of different working spaces. At the same time, the project as a political strategy promotes a new readability to the block as unit of the city. It forms a and projects the community that shares, operates and lives in these spaces, and, at the same, the particular protocol of the collective ownership of the beam initiates a radical re-organization of the property in the city. A similar attitude could be applied to existing stoas of Athens. These spaces were produced by a particular regulatory protocol applied to polykatoikias built in dense areas of the centre. As a response to that, the project by Roberto Soundy added an additional layer of stoa in front of the current facades, a project that propose, when and where applied the re-configuration of the vehicular and pedestrian network. The impact of this project in the existing blocks, apart from unifying them in a series of framed zones, is also readable in the forms of occupation of the spaces in contact with this new collective structure.

A third group of projects attempted to "proposed a grammar that challenge directly the polykatoikia as tectonic model." In these projects, there is an attempt to rethink the Dom-ino model as an administrative machine of domestic space, or a system of production and reproduction of the labour force. What these projects attempted was to claim the concrete skeleton in its tectonic simplicity, constructing "a framework where different productive and social activities could
5.24 Polykatoikias, Davide Sacconi
5.25 Stoa, Roberto Soundy
In the project by Hyun Soo Kim, the insertion of a new generous system of circulation, becomes an openly accessible sequence of floors used for work, play, exhibition and production. A Theatre “of contemporary labour, a social infrastructure; if state-driven welfare seems impossible, offering citizens a space to use is possibly the last kind of welfare the state can provide.” In this project, the deep structure of the polykatoikia is again exposed to its bare minimum. All non-load bearing partitions have been removed and the typical apartment building as it is known disappears from the city. What is left is its outline, in the form of the skeleton. The last project, the Wall by Yuichi Watanabe, stands as the opposite of the previous example. By refusing the structural simplicity of the Dom-ino, it re-introduces the wall as an architectural element that defines limits, distinguishes interior from exterior space, creating privacy and different forms of occupation of the urban block. The project constitutes an opposition to the polykatoikia landscape, and is composed by a “thick slab containing services, opaque towards the street,” which “supports an ample series of balcony-like apartments facing an inner garden” that becomes a very different environment than the one currently exists as a left-over, un-used space of the block. While this service wall constitutes the fixed element of the composition, the “balconies” can be occupied in a flexible way.

All the previous archetypes were not meant to become fixed, definite projects, or as parts of a large-scale masterplan. On the contrary, they operate as indications, possible examples and suggestions of how are examples of how it would be possible to act within the existing urban fabric of Athens. They consist of paradigmatic actions, protocols that acquired a specific, recognizable architectural form, in an effort to investigate the limits of their performativity. In that sense, they stand as the opposite of a “normative operation”. They do not consists and they were not worked as abstract regulations and diagrammatic proposals, but as concrete architectural propositions. They stand as principals; they open up possibilities that could be applied in different areas, densities, urban characters and environments.
5.26 Theatre, Hyun Soo Kim
5.27 Wall, Yuichi Watanabe
In that sense, as architectural forms would be forced to modify by the context they would be tested in the city. Our collective ambition was by the “proliferation of these examples, to change Athens through architecture; in short, making space.”

The projects, as well as our theoretical inquiries, took a final resolution in the drawing that we called *Analogous Map of Athens*. The map described Athens not in the “objective”, “scientific” terms of conventional cartography; on the contrary, it aimed to challenge the instrumentality of the latter and its speculated neutrality. In composing this drawing, our reference was Aldo Rossi’s *Città Analoga*, a drawing in which Rossi contrasted urban representations and artefacts with architectural projects. Similar to ours, his effort was to produce a map, whose geographical and architectural features do not correspond to an existing city in a “scientific” manner, but one that performs as an analogy that estranged the existing attributes of urbanization.

Our eight projects are presented in this framework. Like the exemplary excerpts of the city, they are presented as archetypical objects, potentially repeatable. The criteria of their reproducibility are not defined in vacuum but within the architectural form of the archetypes themselves and are based on analogies and associations. Most importantly, they perform as two-fold analogies: first, because they project analogically new possible urban meanings and, secondly, because they reveal the nature of what is already there, becoming analogical images of the city as it actually is. The archetypes are architectural forms that seek their place in the city; as to the actual result of these choices, we can only put forward a possible scenario, one of the many ways the narrative could unfold. We could ultimately say that the analogical link between city and object is the *ethos* of a place: not a fixed behaviour, not a handbook rule to follow, but rather a shared value, a way of understanding space and the way social subjects appropriate it.
This new city would not be another Athens. It would be Athens as it really is, hidden under the chaos of an apparently “informal” development that is actually one of the most violent biopolitical projects of the past century. The apparent individual differences that gave the Greek society the impression of unique lifestyles have ended up as a rather dreary and monotonous environment, before altogether collapsing in the last five years. It is then the hope of my thesis. Similar to the findings of this collective project, the thesis proposes that it could be through sharing, rather than fragmenting, that we might gain back a real spatial consciousness, which could take us back to a possibility of an alternative political project for the city. It as a project based on a very simple act, the exposure of this system of production, the polykatoikia skeletons in their genericness, in its most bare, unapologetic and clear way. It is this way, not by praising their fake informality and the variations of their fillings that another possibility for Athens might become possible.
INTRODUCTION

3. Ibid. 54.
4. Ibid. 53.
5. Ibid. 53.
6. Ibid. 54.
7. Ildefonso Cerdà, the person that defined for the first time the term and the project of Urbanization in his General Theory of 1867, described that: “The word urbanization defines the set of acts [...] as well as the set of principles, doctrines and rules that have to be applied so that the buildings and their grouping [...], can contribute to foster its development and to increase the individual and public well being”. In: Ildefonso Cerdà, Teoria General de la Urbanización (Madrid: Imprenta Espaρola, 1867; trad. it. Teoria generale dell’urbanizzazione) (Milano: Jaca Book, 1985), p.89. (English translation by Maria S. Giudici)
8. “Text, drawing and number, the three codes of the urban discourse, are not at all overlapping; they form a chain of heterogeneous signifiers that correspond to one single signified: the discipline of urbanization”. In: A.L. de Aberasturi, Per una lettura di Cerdà, introduzione a I. Cerdà, Teoria generale dell’urbanizzazione, cit., p.55. (English translation by Maria S. Giudici)
11. Agamben uses a part from an interview give by Foucault in 1977: “What I am trying to single out with this term [note: the apparatus] is first and foremost, a thoroughly heterogeneous set consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral, and philanthropic propositions – in short, the said as much as the unsaid. Such as the elements of the apparatus. The apparatus itself is the network that can be established between these elements”. Michel Foucault, Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977, ed. C. Gordon (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 194. 
13. Ibid. 6.
14. Agamben in his text discusses the following book by Jean Hyppolite, which deals with Hegel’s concepts of “destiny” and “positivity” that are central to Hyppolite’s understanding of the “historical element”. These are “The Spirit of Christianity” and “The Positivity of the Christian Religion”. In: Jean Hyppolite, Introduction to Hegel’s Philosophy of History, trans. B. Harris and J.B. Spurlock (Gainesville: University Press Florida, 1996), 21.
15. Agamben, 6.

17. Agamben, 9.

18. Ibid. 10.

19. Ibid. 11.

20. Ibid. 10-11.

21. Ibid. 12.

22. Ibid. 15.

23. For a complete presentation of Arendt’s thesis on labour, work and political life, in: Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1958). In page 7, Arendt stressed that “Labour is the activity which corresponds to the biological process of the human body, whose spontaneous growth, metabolism, and eventual decay are bound to the vital necessities produced and fed into the life process by labor. The human condition of labour is life itself.”


25. Ibid. 82.


27. The reference here is the passage by Virno: “Capitalists are interested in the life of the worker, in the body of the worker, only for an indirect reason: this life, this body, are what contains the faculty, the potential, the dynamis. The living body becomes an object to be governed not for its intrinsic value, but because it is the substratum of what really matters: labour-power as the aggregate of the most diverse human faculties (the potential for speaking, for thinking, for remembering, for acting, etc.).” Virno. 82-83.


29. Ibid. 19.


31. Adam Smith says – and Marx comments on the accuracy of his observation – that the effective development of the productive power of labour begins when labour is transformed into wage labour, that is, when the conditions of labour confront it in the form of capital. One could go further and say that the effective development of the political power of labour really begins from the moment that labourers are transformed into workers, that is, when the whole of the conditions of society confront them as capital. We can see, then, that the political power of workers is intimately connected to the productive power of wage labour. This is in contrast to the power of capital, which is primarily a social power. The power of workers resides in their potential command over production, that is, over a particular aspect of society. Capitalist power, on the other hand, rests on a real domination over society in general. But the nature of capital is such that it requires a society based on production. Consequently production, this particular respect of society, becomes the aim of society in general. Whoever controls and dominates it controls and dominates everything.” Ibid. 234.

32. Ibid. 236.

33. Ibid. 236.

34. Ibid. 236.

35. *Oikodomi* («οικοδόμη» in Greek) is the term used to describe a building under construction,
but also the array of processes related with the construction of buildings of any kind. It's a composite word from *oikos* (the house) and *domi*, which signifies the structure of a thing, the way an entity is composed by different elements. *Domus* is also the origin of the Latin word.

CHAPTER 1

2. Ibid. 65.
3. Ibid. 65.
4. Among many others, special mention should be made on the following books and collective volumes, which constitute a basic bibliography on the history of town planning, architecture and housing in Greece, from the mid-19th century onwards. In alphabetical order: *20th Century Architecture in Greece*, eds. Savas Condaratos, Wilfried Wang (Frankfurt: Deutsches Architektur Museum, Prestel Publishers, 1999).


Dimitris Philippides, *Gia tin Eilliniki Poli: Metapolemiki Poria kai Mallonikes Proutipikes* [For the Greek City: Postwar Course and Future Perspectives] (Athens: Themelio, 1990),


6. For this concept of the “invention of tradition” and its relation with the formation of the nation-state and nationalism in modern times, see the extremely influential book by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger:

7. We can briefly mention the very important group of historians that operate within the framework of the Contemporary Social History Archives (Arhia Syghronis Koinonikis Istorias, ΑΣΚΙ in Greek). Most of the prominent left wing historians are, or have been member of this organization. Professors of history like Spyros Asdrasas, Antonis Liakos, Giannis Giannoulopoulos, economists, social scientists, law professors and researchers like Sotiris Valden, Giannis Voulgaris, the late Aggelos Elefantis, Konstantinos Tsoukalas, Nikos Alivizatos and many other prominent intellectuals of the left have active in the last two decades, challenging many narratives of the official history of Greece. In a similar way, intellectuals and politicians of the liberal tradition, like the historian Thanos Veremis, have been active within the platform of ELIAMEP, the Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ΕΛΙΑΜΕΠ, in Greek) with many publications, conferences etc. Both groups, although departing from different political positions, often meet in their criticism on many prejudices and steryotypes of the historic structures in the country.

8. The references here are two political narratives of the 20th century. The first, the so-called, “Megali Idea”, translated as the Big Idea, was an indispensable part of the rise of the Greek nationalism since the mid-19th century. This concept advocated towards the formation of one Modern Greek State that would include all the territories inhabited by, so-called, Ethnic Greek. The sovereignty of this artificial nation-state, with Istanbul as a capital, would expand in areas of the former Byzantine Empire, from the Ionian Sea in the west, to Asia Minor and parts of the Black Sea in the east, and from the North Macedonia to Crete and Cyprus at the south. This narrative fueled the continuous military confrontations between Greece and the Ottoman Empire, culminating in the Balkan Wars of 1912-13 and the Greek-Turkish War of 1919-1922 that followed the Versailles Treaty. Eleftherios Venizelos was a prominent supporter of this narrative. Being a Cretan politician in the late 19th and the early 20th century, he was the Prime Minister during the Balkan Wars and the beginnings of the 1919-1922 confrontation. As part of this narrative, the liberal bourgeoisie claimed power over the Greek State, polarizing politics in the country against the power of the king and the conservative loyalists, and, in a second phase, forcefully against the emerging communist and left wing political parties.

The second, “Eksynchroynismos”, translated as Modernization, the central political concept and slogan of Costas Simitis’ administrations from 1996 to 2004. The policies under this umbrella focused on public investments, in most cases subsidized by EU funding and economic packages, and extensive labour and economic reforms. Having as main goals of his leadership the Greek admission at Eurozone and the of the organization 2004 Olympic Games, Simitis is often credited as the most successful liberal politician after Eleftherios Venizelos, and his is praised by his supporters for his reformist, moderate policies and liberal ideology.

9. Both Venizelos and Simitis had a significant impact on the modern history of Greece, primarily because they brought into power the progressive segments of the liberal bourgeoisie, achieving specific political and institutional reforms towards less conservative politics. In regards of spatial policies and planning, both periods under their leadership have quite significant results, which will be analyzed later in the thesis. Briefly, Venizelos’ governments in the 1920s established a very advanced corpus of building regulations and planning codes, fundamental for city development and town planning until today. In Simitis’ case, his administrations supervised the radical transformation of the public infrastructure in Athens, when the subway system, the light, suburban railway, new highways, the refurbishment of the main transportation network were built for the needs of the Olympic Games. Apart from the previous, Simitis’ economic reforms and admission to the Eurozone brought years of economic development and subsequently, the rise of private consumption and investments. Details of the 1990s-2000s will be discussed in the third and fourth chapter of the thesis.

A very complex political figure, extremely controversial and a key player of Greek politics for decades, Karamanlis is regularly criticized as the “destructor” of Athens and of the Greek cities after the Second World War. Interestingly, in the general public, he is considered the “founder” of the polykatoikia urban landscape, the one that promoted this mode of production of residential space in Greece. Details of his policies, decisions and the system of urbanization he, mistakenly, credited for, will follow in the third chapter.


12. The sovereignty of the Greece was confirmed on February 3, 1830, with the London Protocol.

13. The bourgeois revolution initiated by a military coup d'état that took place in Goudi, a neighborhood on the eastern outskirts of Athens on August 28, 1909. The coup put Eleftherios Venizelos in power, who was appointed Prime Minister later that year. Under the liberal governments of Venizelos, the bourgeois class seized control of the state, initiating major political, economic and social reforms. This period will be analyzed in the next paragraph of the chapter.

For further reading:


15. Briefly, the main practical reasons were:
“The reconstruction of devastated and destroyed cities of the liberated territories.

Historic and economically important towns of Central Greece and the Peloponnese, such as Aegion, Andritsena, Argos, Kalavrita, Kalamata, Messologi, Messini, Nafplio, Pirgos and Tripoli, had been severely damaged and evacuated, during the last violent phase of the liberation war (1825-1828). The reconstruction of these centres was a precondition for a rapid economic recovery.

-The formation of reception hubs for Greek refugees of the European diaspora and other regions, which were still under the Ottoman rule (for example, islandish population from the NW, Greeks from the Turkish sea coasts, etc.)

-The establishment of economic and administrative centres of the new state.

The political organization of the new Greek State required a re-organization of the national space with a series of prioritized clusters and units, with local settlements and regional centres, as well as the establishment of a national reference city (what eventually became Athens), where the central power and public administration of the new state would be based.” In:

Also, very important reference is the following book by Dimitris Philippides:
16. A reflection and interesting texts on the transition from the Ottoman tradition to the Modern Greek period, in: 
 *Neoelliniki Poli, Ottomanikes Kliironomies kai Neoelliniko Kratos* [Modern Greek City, Ottoman Heritage and the Modern Greek State], International History Conference (Athens: Eta iria Meletis Neou Ellinismou, 1984).

17. The German influence in the 19th century was quite important, because of the origin of the King of the New Greek Kingdom. At the London Conference of 1832, Great Britain, France and Russia offered the Greek throne to the 17-year-old Bavarian Prince Otto of the ruling House of Wittelsbach, who became the first King of Greece. Until he was deposed in 1862, the king's court and the public sector were mainly controlled by Bavarian officials. The influence of German - both Prussian and Bavarian - architecture and planning will be elaborated in the following part of the chapter.


21. Ibid. 47.


23. Ibid. 402.


28. More specifically, Pundt proceeds with a very thorough and elaborated presentation of Schinkel's planning principals and architectural projects for Berlin in the chapter The Transformation of the Central Berlin (106-195).

29. For example, while describing *Schauspielhaus* project in Gendarmenmarkt in Berlin of 1821, Schinkel claimed that “In general, considering the style of the architecture in which I created the building, I tried to emulate Greek forms and methods of construction […]”. In: Hermann G. Pundt, *Schinkel's Berlin-A Study of Environmental Planning*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972), 130.
28. Ibid. 127.
29. Ibid. 127.
32. Detailed analysis on the social and ethnic segregation of Athens, before the inauguration of the city as the capital can be found in:
33. The history of the land owners’ reactions and sabotages during these first months is quite anecdotal. The Athenians first signed a decree on June 15th 1833, where the community agreed on specific prices per land unit for the necessary expropriations. The first plan of Kleanthis and Schaubert was made according to these provisions and agreements.
When the plan was authorized after a month, the local community demanded a re-evaluation of the land prices, especially for the properties located on the Acropolis hill. The reactions were forceful, especially from foreign officials that had been settled in the city and had bought large pieces of land. The reactions cancelled the plan in practice, with the king demanding a revised masterplan from a third party, the Bavarian architect Leon von Klenze.
For further reading on this story:
34. Schinkel also proposed his alternative for the placement of the king’s residence, with his well-known project for the Royal Palace on the Acropolis (1834). Although he never visited Athens, he was aware of Kleanthis and Schaubert project. Also, when he submitted his proposal to the Crown Prince of Bavaria, brother of King Otto of Greece, he underlined the importance of the Hellenic style in his architecture. Interestingly enough, one of the main supporters of the project was the architect Leo von Klenze, the Bavarian equal to Schinkel’s in the court of Ludwig I. Klenze was the architect that revised Kleanthis’ and Schaubert’s plan according to the King’s instructions and will.
For Schinkel's project for the Royal Residence in the Acropolis, read:
35. Important instances on the evolution of planning in the 19th century are:
1. The formation of the “1847 Committee”, primarily consisting of military engineers and architects that were assigned to elaborate on a new masterplan for the city. This plan legalized the previous revisions and failed to propose an updated city planning for Athens. It was never authorized by the court.
2. A second committee was formed by the municipality of Athens in 1860, known as the “Stavridis Committee”. Although never officially realized, many provisions of this plan were implemented in the city, primarily new squares and avenues.
3. The last plan of that genre was the masterplan assigned to the German architect Ludwig Hoffmann, on 1908. Although already in the 20th century, this plan followed many of the neoclassical norms, proposing an extended re-organisation of the central area of the city. Also, the plan organized a new point of reference in Athens, the new central railway station, already built at that time.


37. The national railway line Peiraias-Athens-Peloponese (to the southwest of the country) started to operate in 1882. The second line, Peiraias-Athens-Larissa (to the north) and the regional train of Attica finished on 1894.

38. As it will be elaborated in the following parts, this cycle could be divided in the following sub-periods:

-1909-1922, which started with the Goudi military coup d’état, that brought in power the liberal bourgeoisie, under the leadership of Eleftherios Venizelos. The end of the period is the defeat of the Greek army forces in the Greco-Turkish War of 1919-1922, which resulted in massive population exchanges between the countries, and a retreat of the territorial sovereignty of Greece to its contemporary borders. Politically and socially, it is a very intense period, with major internal antagonisms in the political field, primarily between the royal party and the emerging liberal bourgeois class.

-1923-1935, a period of cultural and national introspection, where the country tried to heal the wounds of the military and the political collapse of the previous years. Although the royal party resisted violently, under the liberal governments of Venizelos and Papanastasiou, the emerging bourgeois managed to implement and authorize a rapid process of modernization and cultural and political renewal.

- 1936-1940, a period of retreat and collapse of the political power of both the working class and the bourgeois parties. The Metaxas Dictatorship re-established the King’s authority and power, causing a complete deterioration of the political institutions.

For further reading:


39. On the importance of the class struggle within these first decades of the 20th century:


40. The Greco-Turkish War of 1919-1922, concluded in a massive population exchange between the two countries. The first 649,059 refugees were violently deported from Turkey, after the defeat of the Greek Army by the Turkish republican forces. Additionally, 375,918 people were forced to evacuate the Turkish territory, as a result of the Lausanne Treaty, raising the total number of refugees to 1,024,977. Gradually, 600,000 settled in urban centres, all around the remaining Greek territory. Among them, 246,000 reached Athens and 117,000 the outskirts of the port of Peiraias, increasing the population of the first by 33% and of the second by 48%.


42. The RSC was established in 1923 specifically to tackle the issue of the refugee wave, which brought more than 1,000,000 people to Greece. It was an autonomous organization, controlled by the League of Nations with a supra-national founding that remained active until 1931. The Ministry of Public Welfare was a specific institution established by the Greek government for the needs of the welfare program. Both authorities had considerable political power and economic capabilities.

The function of the entire program was accompanied by a number of laws and constitutional articles, which guaranteed the provisions of the project. The main issue was the control over public land and the cost of the necessary expropriations of urban and agricultural land. *Oiokonomikos Tachydromos*, “Prosfyges stin Ellada: Peninta Xronia Simvolis pou Allaksan tin Ellada” [Refugees in Greece: Fifty Years of Contribution that Changed Greece], special issue: 992/1973.


43. An exception is the design and the implementation of a public transportation network. Apart from the railway lines that connected Athens with the port of Peiraias and other regions, the city acquired a network of horse-driven trams and busses. The network was also connecting the centre of the city with the emerging high-bourgeois suburbs in the outskirts of the city, like Kifissia in the north and Faliro on the coast.

For further reading:


46. On the history of these three plans:


Ioannis Polyzos, “Athina 1900-1940: Metashmatismoi tis Protevousas kai Poleodomikes Rithmisis” [Athens 1900-1940: Transformation of the Capital and planning Adjustments], 36


47. The projects by Constantinos A. Doxiadis, significantly important for the post-WW II planning of the city of Athens, will be analyzed on the third chapter of the thesis, p. 166-176 (see: *Doxiadis' Ecumenopolis for Attica Region and other projects*)


49. This thesis was elaborated on many occasions by the architect and planner Lila Leontidou, not only as a condition of the Greek cities, but also as an emerging characteristic of many Mediterranean urban centres. For example, read:


50. The Law (ΦΕΚ 228Α/1923) remained for more than fifty years the most important planning mechanism for the expansion of existing neighborhoods and the foundation of new districts in the periphery of urban agglomeration. A highly advanced and technical manuscript, systematized the pattern of suburban diffusion in the Greek cities. Thus, it is very significant for the next periods as well.

Among the many provisions of the law, the most important are the ones that defined the agents of any particular plan or expansion, and the economic format of the agreement between the public and the private sector. Responsible for the plan are always the municipal authorities, who authorized the provisions of any intervention. However, the initiative lies in the private sector, which, in the form of cooperatives or large private investors, buys, expropriates and proposes the location of the project.

For a complete analysis of the law:


An exceptionally good presentation of these emerging suburbs of Athens in the 1920s and 1930s, in:


51. Philippides article is quoted in the introduction and describes very successfully the hypothesis of the paper.


52. The complete analysis of the development of the polykatoikia building archetype in these early stages can be found in:


53. The six centres were:
The Commercial (within the historic triangle, along Athinas Axis), the Monetary (in Kotzia Square), the Educational (around the existing neoclassical trilogy of the university building in Panepistimiou avenue), the Health Care, the Administrative (on the east side of Lykabettus Hill), and the Judicial (in Koumoundourou Square). Finally, the plan organized a new Railway Hub, where the two central railway stations of Athens were joined and redesigned. Georgios M. Sarigiannis, *Athina 1830-2000: Ekseliksi-Poleodomia-Metafores* [Athens 1830-2000, Evolution-Planning-Transportation] (Athens: Symmetria, 2000), 113.

54. The owners from the Patisia district reacted against the plan’s proposals to rationalize circulation from the centre to the north part of the city, while the owners from Plaka reacted due to the plan’s provisions for a wide program of archaeological excavations on Acropolis Hill. In both cases, many of the properties were supposed to be expropriated for the needs of the project. Ibid., 112-113.

55. The Metaxas Regime, or the 4th of August Movement, was an authoritarian and populist regime under the power of the military General Ioannis Metaxas (1871-1941), who ruled the country from 1936 until 1941, when the Nazi occupation of Greece began. The regime suspended the democratic functions of the state, dissolving the parliament and re-establishing monarchy in the country. For further reading:


CHAPTER 2

1. The term “Poly-katoikia” (πολυκατοικία in Greek) is a composite word, from the word πολυ- (poly, trans. as multi) and the noun κατοικία (katoikia, the dwelling, the house). In Greek, the word “polykatoikia” stands not only for the multi-storey apartment building as it is defined in the architectural discipline, but eventually is used by the general public as a term that describes every housing building except of the suburban, single family villas.


3. Ibid., 564 and after.

4. Marmaras, a prestigious Greek planner and historian, did a remarkable research on the birth and early appearance of the polykatoikia type in the interwar period. He explores the birth of the ‘multi-storey apartment building’ in Greece, primarily focusing on the analysis of the various factors that defined the early stages of the type’s development. Marmaras explains how, since its initial appearance, the type was captured by the private sector, the agents of which exploit the potentiality of this architectural and urban machine. His book is a fundamental reference for the thesis. See: Manolis Marmaras, I Astiki Polykatoikia tis Meopolemikis Athinas: I Arhi tis Entatikis Ekmetalleusis tou Astikou Esdou, [The Bourgeois Polykatoikia of Interwar Athens-The Beginning of the intense exploitation of the Urban Land] (Athens: ETBA Cultural Foundation, 1991), 9-12.


6. These projects have been discussed in the previous chapter. See pages 44-45, 52-56 and figures 1.25, 131-134 of the current.

7. A discussion on these particular neighborhoods can be found in the previous chapter, p. 53 and figures 1.29-1.30.


9. Working Class Housing Organization, Organismos Ergatikis Katoikias or OEK in Greek, was the main public institution of social housing in Greece. It was founded in 1954 and closed in 2012. Apart from the construction of new houses and apartments to workers and their families, the organization also provided subsidized rents and low-rate housing loans.

10. Marmaras, 10.


14. Ilias Iliou (1904-1985) was a prominent Greek intellectual and politician, member of the Greek Parliament and leader of the United Democratic Left, (Enomeni Dimokratiki Aristera,
EDA, or EΔΑ in Greek). He was born in the island of Lemnos and he studied Law in the University of Athens, graduating in very young age in 1924. Throughout his life, apart from his activities as a lawyer and barrister on the High Court, he was a prolific writer, poet and translator, writing regularly in magazines and contributing in books on legal issues, the arts and Greek letters.

Active politically and supporter of progressive causes in the 1920s and 1930s, he will become a member of the National Liberation Front (EAM) in 1942. In the aftermath of the December 1944 military confrontation between the military branch of the Greek Communist Party and the official, governmental forces, Iliou will be active as a lawyer of many, leftwing Resistance members, eventually becoming a member of the Communist Party himself. During the Greek Civil War, he was arrested and sent to exile in the islands of Makronisos, Ikaria and Aghios Efstratios from 1947 to 1951.

In 1951, while still in exile, he became a founding member of EDA, a coalition party of the left that housed members and supporters of the banned Communist Party and other smaller political unions of the left. Iliou participated in all elections from 1952, being an MP from 1956 to 1967. He served as a parliamentary leader and then President of the party in the 1960s. During the Military Dictatorship (1967-1974) he was again arrested, tortured and jailed, serving most of his imprisonment in the hospital of Averof jail in downtown Athens. In 1974, he participated again in general elections, becoming the leader of the Coalition of Left and Progressive Forces, a short-lived coalition party that included both fractions of the Communist Party (which had split in 1968) and other smaller parties. He retired from politics in 1981 and he died in Athens on January 25, 1985.

For more about Ilias Iliou in:
Newspaper Άγι, Obituary for Ilias Iliou, 26 and 29 January, 1985.

**15.** EDA, United Democratic Left, or Ενιαία Δημοκρατική Αριστερά, EΔA in Greek, was a prominent political party in Greece, mainly active before the 1967 Military Coup. The party was founded in July 1951 from centre-left, leftist and communist politicians, many of which were active members of the Greek Resistance. Although it was supposed to act as a legal front of the left, subsidizing the then banned Greek Communist Party, eventually EDA acquired an independent role, advocating towards progressive, rather moderate and pluralistic positions. Most of its prominent members left the Greek Communist Party in 1968, to form a Euro-communist, anti-soviet party, the so-called Greek Communist Party of the Interior. The Party participated in all elections in the 1950s and 60s, succeeding to become the leading party of the parliamentary opposition in 1958.


**17.** Kyprianos Biris (1907-1990) was a prominent Greek architect and Professor in the School of Architecture in the National Technical University of Athens. Under PM Constantinos Karamanlis, he served as a Deputy Minister of Public Works (1974-1976) in the first government after the fall of the Military dictatorship.

One of his most important contributions in the realm of planning policies in Greece was the study, writing and introduction of the article 24 in the new Greek Constitution of 1975. Also, Biris included in the article 21 “On the responsibilities of State towards the institution of the
family and its citizens”, two crucial paragraphs that had to do with the right to housing and the exercise of demographic policies. The article 24 proceeded with a radical re-organization of land uses, the expansion of residential quarters, the extensive restructuring of physical planning and urban design principals, the protection of historic monuments and listed settlements and the environmental protection of forests and other natural environments. Above all, this extremely progressive article dealt and strictly defined the state’s responsibilities to its citizens and vice versa. An automatic requirement of Biris’ constitutional reform was the establishment of a National Cadastre and Mapping Agency, as well as a Public Register of Forests and Other Natural Zones. Unfortunately, the intentional delays to structure these two public agencies had catastrophic results in the decades that followed.

Biris founded DEPOS, Dimosia Epichirisi Oikisis kai Stegasis [Public Enterprise of Settlement and Housing], which had as a mission to reform existing settlements in Greece. Mainly, DEPOS targeted the unregulated neighborhoods that operated without any planning or environmental provisions. The restructuring of these settlements, although never achieved due to intense reactions, would be carried out by a combined funding from the state and the private sector, which would provide land allowance and exchange mechanisms, or the moderate exploitation of problematic land properties.

As a practicing architect, apart from his initial contribution to the foundation and theorization of the polykatoikia unit, he was considered one of the pioneers of the modern movement in Greece, designing and building many private and public projects. He was particularly active in the health sector, for which he designed many hospitals and recovery centres mainly in Athens.

As a professor, he established the studies of Building construction and technology, being the first professor of that kind in Greece. His books and writing became the foundation of modern building technology in the country. For more on Kyprianos Biris, among others, in: Tasos Biris kai Dimitris Biris-Archiitektoniki: To Anfithroma Persama Anamesa stin Efarmogia kai ti Didaskalia, Ekthesi [Tasos Biris and Dimitris Biris-Architecture: The Bidirectional Path between Practice and Teaching, an Exhibition], ed. Lena Kalaitzi (Athens: Papasotiriou, Benaki Museum, School of Architecture-NTUA, Centre of Mediterranean Architecture-Chania, 2011).

18. On DEPOS, Dimosia Epichirisi Oikisis kai Stegasis [Public Enterprise of Settlement and Housing] see the previous footnote.

19. Among other, projects like the following are characteristic of this trajectory: Richard Woditsch, Plural-Public and Private Spaces of the Polykatoikia in Athens (PhD Dissertation, Berlin: TU Berlin, 2009).

Anastasia Paschou, Gebäudeleptologie der Grossstadt, eine Analyse der griechischen Metropole Athen (Zurich: ETH, 2001).


20. Among many other books publications of Greek architecture, all three are included in the very important volume and exhibition by the Hellenic Institute of Architecture on collaboration with the German Architectural Museum (DAM, Deutsches Architektur Museum). In this publication, apart from the presentation of the three buildings, all three are discussed in many of the essays included in the volume. For more, see: 20th Century Architecture in Greece, eds. Savas Condaratos, Wilfried Wang (Frankfurt: Deutsches
21. Kyriakos Panagiotakos (1902-1982) was a prominent architect of the Modern movement in Greece. He studied architecture in Greece, at the School of Architecture of the National Technical University of Athens, from where he graduated in 1923. Since the period of his studies and as a young professional, he was associated with the pioneers of the Modern movement in Greece. He had a very long friendship with Dimitris Pikionis and his classmate Patroklos Karantinos, with whom he collaborated in various occasions. In 1930, he was hired as an architect in an extremely important public organization, the Architectural Department of the Ministry of Education, responsible for the design and construction of hundreds of schools in Greece, especially during the Eleftherios Venizelos governance and Gondikas-Papandreou educational reform of 1929-1933. The program run until 1935, during which the most important Greek architects of the Modern movement had the chance to produce an incredible amount of public school buildings, all of which are of exceptional quality and critically acclaimed. During the CIAM IV in Athens, many of these schools were visited by Le Corbusier and other foreign architects and extensively praised. It is interesting that in one of these schools at Liosion Avenue and Michail Voda, designed by Panagiotakos, Le Corbusier wrote on the wall: “Compliments de Le Corbusier”.

Parallel to his work in the public sector, he continued working as a private practitioner in various projects. In 1936 he was hired in the architectural department of the Municipality of Athens, where he would become the director after the Second World War.

His complete work is displayed and archived for researchers in: Kyriakos Panagiotakos Archive, in the Neohellenic Architectural Archives at the Benaki Museum.

Particularly for the Blue Polykatoikia, in:


22. Thoukididis P. Valentis (1908-1982) was a pioneer architect of the Modern movement in Greece, active in the public sector and as a private practitioner. He was born in Cairo and he arrived in Athens in 1925 to study architecture. From the moment of his graduation in 1930, he was hired in the Ministry of Education, where he worked in the major public program of 1929-1935. He had the chance to design 10 complexes in Greece.

In the early 1930s, he was in practice with his friend and classmate Polyvios Michailidis and his brother Giorgos. Later on, he became the main architect of the Greek Air Force, and after the Second World War, well-acclaimed for his office projects. He introduced an interesting office typology in Greece, especially in downtown Athens.

He serviced as a lecturer in the School of Architecture-NTUA (1943-1950) and he was elected Professor of Architectural Design in the department of Architecture in Thessaloniki (1961). He subsequently moved back to Athens in 1965, where he taught until his retirement in 1980.

Recently, his complete work was organized and archived under the supervision of the Department of Architecture in Thessaloniki, and the faculty, in collaboration with the Benaki Museum and the Neohellenic Architectural Archives, organized a large exhibition. A volume with his work and texts was published as well. For more, see:


A publication of the building, in:

20th Century Architecture in Greece, eds. Savas Condaratos, Wilfried Wang (Frankfurt: Deutsches
23. Polyvios (Polis) Michailidis (1907-1960) was a Cypriot architect. He studied architecture in Athens. In 1931 he lived in Paris and worked for Le Corbusier. He came back to Greece and he was in practice with his brother, a civil engineer, and his good friend and classmate Thoukididis Valentis. Their project in Zaimi and Stournari Streets it is considered one of the most important buildings of the Modern Movement in Greece. In 1935, he moved back to Cyprus, where he practiced architecture until his death in 1960.

24. Nikos Valsamakis (1924) is a Greek architect. He was born in Athens and studied architecture in the city’s Architectural School of the National Technical University during the years of the Civil War. He is in practice since 1953, running one of the most prolific practices in the country. The majority of his buildings was and is commissions of the private sector, having served as an official architect for banks and other corporations. He had also designed and built countless private villas and many hotels. He hold honorary doctorate from both the School of Architecture in Athens (2001) and the department of Architecture of Thessaloniki, Greece (1991). In 2007, he was elected member of the Academy of Athens, in the Chair of Architecture.

Although often praised and celebrated, particularly from conservative architectural historian and theorists, or young Greek architects, who specifically admired his early practice during the 1950s and 1960s, his work is highly inconsistent: from a kind of purist architecture of his early career, he easily moved to more traditional, post modern themes, to settle recently to a heavy, white post-rational vocabulary. Still, his influence as a figure cannot be underestimated, although he never had any academic position and he barely contributed with essays or any other written testaments for his work or architectural issues in general. For a complete presentation of Valsamakis’ work, among many others, in: Nikos Valsamakis/Architect, eds. Nikos Valsamakis Office, Maria Valsamaki and Olga Trantali (Athens: Benaki Museum, 2007).

25. In 1937, the allowable protrusion of the building volume outside the property line – not with a balcony or a terrace, but with an interior space that counted in the permissible built surfaces – changed from 1.4m. to 0.40m, cancelling practically the “erker” as an element. In following years, until the 1970s, these small extruded volumes 40cm. would appear in some commercial polykatoikias as a decorative element of the façade, in most cases including a shelf or an expansion of a room in the interior.


28. It’s interesting that in both articles that introduced the term, by Liane Lefaivre, Alexander Tzonis and Kenneth Frampton, Greek architects of the postwar period are paradigmatic of the argument on “critical regionalism”. Dimitris Pikionis, Aris Konstandinidis, the Antonakakis couple and others, are considered representative figures of that genre, primarily because of this mixture of modern, architectural forms and technological solutions with vernacular and handmade structures and details. For more, in:


30. For more on the building, in:

31. Takis Ch. Zenetos (1926-1977) was possibly the most radical architect of 20th century Greek architecture. He was born in Athens and he was coming from a wealthy family. In December 1945, he flew Greece to study architecture at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. He was one of the few hundred boarded the ship Mataroa, after the Institut Français d’Athènes, under the direction of Octave Merlier and Roger Millieux, provided scholarships to young leftist students and intellectuals, escaping the violent conflict of the Greek Civil War.
Upon his graduation from the Ecole in 1953, he returned to Greece, where he open his practice in Athens in 1955. His was very productive, completing about 120 projects, many of them built. He designed many factories and private houses, but also a few, but exceptionally good polykatoikias, two of which are discussed in the chapter. He committed suicide jumping from his office window in 1977.

32. Ibid. 6.
33. Ibid. 6.
35. Takis Ch. Zenetos, 6-7.

36. These were:
- The law 395/1968, with which the regime gave the right to add one more floor in every existing building, or to increase the height by one floor to all the buildings to come in the future. This law applied to the whole country, without exceptions.
- The law 410/1968, with which all the informal settlements in the country were legalized, and given building permissions and regulations.

Both laws were a populist move from the side of the military dictatorship, which eventually fueled the urban expansion in Athens and elsewhere.

37. Dimitris (1933) and Suzana Antonakakis (1935) and their architectural firm (Atelier 66, 1958-1986, A66 since 1987) is among the most important Greek architectural practices of the second half of the 20th century. Their contribution is colossal in the second phase of architectural modernism in Greece.

Dimitris Antonakakis was born in Chania, Crete and studied architecture in Athens-NTUA. Suzana Antonakakis studied in Athens as well and upon their graduation in 1958, they formed their office in the city. From 1966, when they established the Atelier 66, the office operated more as an open, collective platform with their own guidance. Many young Greek architects from many different generations worked with the Antonakakis couple. Their office is now located in the ground floor of the famous Polykatoikia in 118 Benaki street.

Dimitris Antonakakis taught for many decades in the School of Athens (1958-1992), where he had a significant impact in architectural design studies. He also was a visiting professor in MIT (1994-1999), Delft (1987) together with Suzana upon invitation of Herman Hertzberger, and in the University of Patras, Greece (1999-2000). He was the Art Director of the Centre of Mediterranean Architecture-Chania (1997-2007).

Suzana Antonakakis was a member of the National Committee of UIA in Greece (1982-1992) and a prolific writer and commentator in many magazines, newspapers and volumes. For more on their practice, among hundreds of publications, in the following monographic volumes:


Also, available online, an oeuvre complete of Antonakakis with very well curated visual material. In: http://www.a66architects.com/

38. Tasos (1942) and Dimitris Biris (1944-2002), the sons of Kyprianos, are, together with the Antonakakis couple, the most influential architects in Greece after the Second World War. Tasos, still active as a practitioner, has been constantly contributing in the architectural debate in Greece, with numerous articles, essays and publications.

Tasos Biris was born in Athens in 1944 and he grew up in a family environment of architects. His father, Kyprianos and his uncle Kostas, guided his first steps in architecture. He studied in the School of Architecture in NTUA, from where he graduated in 1966. Immediately, after a proposal by Yannis Despotopoulos who was his professor, he was hired to work in the Chair of Architectural Composition. He served the school from various academic positions, always in the department of Architectural Design and Composition, for more that 40 years, until his retirement in 2009. He wrote many articles about architecture in Greek and foreign books and magazines, and he published three books with essays on architectural composition and form. (see selected bibliography below). Together with his brother Dimitris, he continued
the architectural practice of their father. Within this group and always collaborating with other architects, he designed various private, but mainly public projects. His main activity in architectural practice was devoted to architectural competitions in Greece and abroad. Tasos Biris is still an active architect.

Dimitris Biris was born in Athens in 1944. He studied Civil Engineering for a year and then started his studies in architecture in the School of Architecture in Athens. He graduated in 1967 and in 1976 he started teaching in the Chair of Building Technology, until his death in 2002. He was very much interested in lightweight structures, for which he devoted his research and academic interests.

For more on their practice and their theses on architecture and its problems, among hundreds of publications, in the following:


39. Alexandros Patsouris (1955-1998) was born in Athens and studied architecture in NTUA and Sculpture in the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Arts Decoratifs in Paris. He was considered to be an exceptionally talented sculptor, working in metallic compositions. He was a student of Kostas Koulentianos and he exhibited his work in many occasions in Greece and in Europe. At the same time, he served as an associate professor in the School of Architecture in Athens, practicing architecture as well.

His project in Didotou Street it is considered one of the most important buildings in Greece of the second half of the 20th century. It was exhibited in the 7th Venice Biennale, curated by Elia Zenghelis. Also, it is included in the 20th Century Architecture atlas by the Greek Institute of Architecture and the Deutsches Architektur Museum. For this project, but also Patsouris’ work as artist, in:


40. Yannis Aesopos (Athens, 1966) is an architect, associate professor of Architecture and Urban Design, Department of Architecture, University of Patras, Greece and a teaching fellow, Master of Architecture in Urban Design, Bartlett School of Architecture, University College London. He holds a Master in Architecture, Graduate School of Design, Harvard University


42. For more on the antiparochi system, p.165-166 and the epilogue.

43. The magazine took care not only the publicity procedures, but played a key role in the organization of the competition as well. After the results’ disclosure, a large exhibition was organized at the Benaki Museum, from 21/09/06 to 01/10/07. An extended catalogue was published that included the minutes of the jury meetings, the company’s and the review’s statements, texts from various architects on the competition and all the projects submitted in the competition. For more, in: 102xMetaxourgeio: An Architectural Competition of GEK S.A. and DOMES, eds Giorgos Panetsos, Dimitra Katsota, Stephan Buerger (Athens: Domes, 2006). “Metaxourgeion Housing, Athens”, in DOMES, International Review of Architecture, issue 06/2006.

44. According to the company’s website, we can list the following figures of the Metaxourgeio project. The construction took three years, from 2006 to 2009. The total surface of the plot is 2,155m² the gross area of housing units 3,900m² (40 apartments), total area of commercial spaces 260m² and the gross area of underground facilities and parking 2,300m².


45. According to the company’s website, we can list the following figures of the Menemeni project. The construction process took six years, from 2001 to 2007. The total surface of the plot is 12,285m², the gross area of housing units 27,880m² (436 apartments), the gross area of office and commercial spaces 2,530m² with underground service spaces/storage of 1,130m², interestingly with only 26 underground parking spaces. (55 more on the outside). The complex is organized in six independent buildings, 8 floors high, and there are three different types of apartments, between 55 and 95m².


48. Oliaros and the KM Properties is very active online, where a complete presentation of the project and the various initiatives, can be found in: http://www.oliaros.com/kerameikos-metaxourgeio/, accessed 01/09/2013).

49. As previously, a complete presentation of this competition and its result, in:

50. From ELL. STAT, document: A1302_SOP03_DT_MM_05_2013_01_P_EN. All statistical data for Greece, can be found in:
For the activity in construction, in:

CHAPTER 3

1. The sentence is a quote from the first paragraph of the Introduction of the Kyriakos Varvaressos’ Report, which is one of the main references for this paragraph. (in the original document, p. 9, in the source: p. 89).
2. Constantinos A. Doxiadis, while is describing his proposals for the post-WW II reconstruction in Greece, in 1946.
Minutes of a meeting of the Reconstruction Committee, (Athens: Ministry of Reconstruction, 1946), 117.
3. For political reasons, there is very limited bibliography on the activities of this organization during the Civil War. Most of the sources come from few contemporary historians, intellectuals of the radical left in Greece, or people that were involved in the conflict. For more on the activities of OPLA, in:
4. For further reading in Greek Civil War, among other in:


8. For a comparison of this particular period with the 19th century, see the first chapter “Athens as a Paradigm: Planning and Architecture in Athens, 1834-1929”, p. 1-65.


The above reference is used by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri in their book Empire, in order to describe the mechanisms of decolonization, decentralization and the new international relations that followed WWII, under the influence of the U.S. hegemony. Specifically, Greece has been the paradigmatic case of a European state that was trapped within the bipolar division of the Cold War and was engaged in a profound crisis that followed the end of the war.

“The decolonization movements were seized immediately in the jaws of this cold war vise, and the movements that had been focused on their independence were forced to negotiate between the two camps. What Truman said in 1947 during the Greek crisis remained true for the decolonizing and postcolonial forces throughout the cold war: ‘At the present moment in world history nearly every nation must choose between alternative ways of life’” Michael Hardt, Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 245.

10. This particular social transformation and imaginary of the postwar era, has been the fundamental theme of the seminal exhibition and publication organized in the late 1990s by Yannis Aesopos and Yorgos Simeoforidis. For further reading: Yannis Aesopos, Yorgos Simeoforidis, *Landscapes of Modernization: Greek Architecture 1960s and 1990s* (Athens, Greece: Metapolis Press, 1999). Also, on consumerist lifestyle in this particular period:


12. Ibid. 48.

14. Kyriakos Varvaressos (1884-1957) was a professor of political economy in the University of Athens since 1918 and had a significant role in the national economic planning in the first half of the 20th century. He served as Minister of Economy (1931), chairman of the National Bank of Greece (1939), vice-president in the first post-war government (1944) and Minister of National Supplies. He also represented the exiled government of Greece in the Breton Woods Conference in 1944.

Apart from his Report, Varvaressos tried to implement a reformist program to revive the economy and to update the country's essentially laissez-faire capitalism with the hasty introduction of several aspects of state economic management. To tackle the causes of inflation—rampant budget deficits, unequal distribution of income, and severe shortages of goods—he imposed special taxes on the rich, established a system of price controls, and attempted to enforce a degree of official control over production and distribution. Despite initial success, Varvaressos failed to achieve any of his major objectives, as his policies provoked an avalanche of hostility from powerful groups of interest within Greek society. He resigned and moved to Washington, where he worked in the World Bank.

15. Recently, republished as:


16. Ibid. 90.
17. Ibid. 170-305.
18. Ibid. 313-316.
19. Ibid. 314, 321.
20. Ibid. 322.
21. A complete analysis of the history of this debate, can be found in:


22. The first significant action of the Greek authorities in the postwar era is the establishment of a new General Building Regulation in 1955, which, although based on the previous one of 1929, dramatically increased the already high densities.

A complete analysis on the transformation of the polykatoikia archetype within the postwar era, in:


24. This was done by two regulatory initiatives:

- The law 395/1968, with which the regime gave the right to add one more floor in every existing building, or to increase the height by one floor to all the buildings to come in the future. This law applied to the whole country, without exceptions.

- The law 410/1968, with which all the informal settlements in the country were legalized, and given building permissions and regulations

Both laws were a populist move from the side of the military dictatorship, which eventually fueled the urban expansion in Athens and elsewhere.


26. In 1937, Constantinos A. Doxiadis was appointed Chief Town Planning Officer for the Greater Athens Area and during the war (1940-1945) held the post of Head of the Department of Regional and Town Planning in the Ministry of Public Works. From 1945 to 1951 Doxiadis served first as Undersecretary and Director-General of the Ministry of Housing and Reconstruction (1945-48), and subsequently as Minister-Coordinator of the Greek Recovery Program and Undersecretary of the Ministry of Coordination (1948-51). During these years he was also head of the Greek Delegation at the UN International Conference on Housing, Planning and Reconstruction (1947) and head of the Greek Delegation at the Greco-Italian War Reparations Conference (1949-50). In 1959 Doxiadis founded the Athens Technological Organization and in 1963 the Athens Centre of Ekistics. In 1963 and 1964 he served as representative of Greece on the Housing, Building and Planning Committee of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations in New York.

27. For more on these two projects, in the first chapter, p. 61-63. Also, figures 1.39 1.40.

28. In the first publication of the Masterplan, Doxiadis suggested that this thoroughfare was a suggestion of the NATO army forces for military reasons. The port of Eleusina was, and still is, the central naval base of Greece. In the years that followed, another axis, parallel to Doxiadis’ highway, was named NATO Avenue.

29. The construction of this thoroughfare started in the late 1990s, and was finally completed before the Olympic Games of Athens in 2004.

30. A complete presentation of Doxiadis work in the following, a book published to accompanied the exhibition and conference organized by the Doxiadis Foundation in Athens (2006-2007):


31. EMOKA (Etaireia Meleton Oikonomikis kai Koinonikis Anaptikesis, The Association for Economic and Social Development Studies). Leading figure of this group was the communist architect and planner Grigoris Diamantopoulos (1923-2010).

32. Information about the specific events, can be found in:


33. In the Architectural Conference of 1965, the group presented an alternative project to the one of Ecumenopolis, where the linear administrative cluster of Doxiadis’ project had been replaced by six peripheral commercial centers in greater Athens.

34. Further readings on the importance of these two mechanisms can be found in:


Nikos Kazeros, Pavlos Lefas, Choris Oria: I Achaneis Ektaseis ton Athinaikon Pronstion [Without
Dimitris Philippides, Gia tin Elliniki Poli: Metapolemiki Poria kai Mellontikes Prouptikes [For the Greek City: Postwar Course and Future Perspectives] (Athens: Themelio, 1990),

35. A reflection of this transformation of the outlaw housing market may be found in:
Maria Mantouvalou, Maria Mavridou, “Illegal Build: An one-way strategy in a dead end?”, in the periodical of the Union of Greek Architects, issue 7: 1993.

36. These strategies of gentrification and commodification of cities and culture are extensively analyzed by David Harvey in his seminal article “The Art of Rent: Globalization, Monopoly and the Commodification of Culture”, in Leo Panitch and Colin Leys (eds.), A World of Contradictions, The Socialist Register, 2002 and in David Harvey, Spaces of Capital, (New York: Routledge, 2001), 394-411. In this article, Harvey refers to the very important work of the Greek scholar Argyro Loukaki, who analyzed precisely these policies of commodification of the historic centre of Athens. For further reading:

37. The projects made for the 1985 Athens Cultural Capital of Europe venue, which may be considered as the event that initiated the gentrification process, constituted another critical point.

38. The term is used to define the particular project by Lila Leontidou in:
CHAPTER 4

3. The relation between archetypes and collective unconscious has been discussed and theorized by Carl Gustav Jung. For Jung, additional to Freud’s purely personal unconscious, a deeper level is felt to exist. This level is expressed by purely archaic images, depicted in dreams, religious beliefs and the various collective narratives and myths. For more on these concepts: C. G. Jung, “Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious” in Collected Works of C. G. Jung, Vol. 9, Part 1 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 3-41.
4. An important essay on this particular function of movies in relation to specific cities or urban environments and categories is Steven Jacobs’ “Between E.U.R. and L.A.: Townscapes in the Work of Michelangelo Antonioni”, in The Urban Condition: Space, Community, and Self in the Contemporary Metropolis, eds Ghent Urban Studies Team-GUST (project directors: Dirk De Meyer, Kristiaan Versluyn, collaborators: Kristiaan Borret, Bart Eeckhout, Steven Jacobs, Bart Keunen) (Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 1999), 324-342. In this particular paper, Jacobs discuss Antonioni’s depiction of townscapes, specifically focusing on Rome and Los Angeles. The author describes the ways Antonioni was “influenced by neorealist evocations of the city and bow he (gradually) distanced himself from these” (325), eventually forming a particular cinematographic genre, where “urban emptiness” becomes a fundamental formal strategy.
5. Film Cartolina is a particular term in Italian that refers to movies that are “a sort of moving postcard collection”, where “the city is transformed and reduced to a series of wonderful attractions, in which dull or dangerous non-places get stashed away”. (Jacobs, 327) This term was used to describe precisely this Hollywood-made Italian urban environments, presented in various films of the 1950s and 1960s.
7. Directors like Vittorio De Sica, Roberto Rossellini in Italy, with films like Sciuscià (1946), Ladri di biciclette (1948), Umberto D. (1951), Roma città aperta (1945), or the Greek Michael Cacoyannis (Stella, 1955) or the actor/director Alekos Alexandrakis with his seminal Dream Neighborhood (1961), are few examples of this tendency.
9. Yannis Economides was born in Limassol, Cyprus, in 1967 and studied film in Athens. He has directed several short films and documentaries. He directed his début feature film “Matchbox” back in 2003. “Soul Kicking”, his second feature, celebrated its world premiere at the renowned official section of the Cannes International Film Festival 2006, “The International Critics’ Week” (“Semaire de la Critique du Festival de Cannes”) and was selected for competitive screening at various film festivals throughout the world. His third feature, “Knifer”, had its world premiere in Pusan International Film Festival 2010. At the Hellenic Film Academy Awards “Knifer” excelled and received seven awards (Best Film, Best Director, Best Screenplay, Best Cinematography, Best Editing, Best Production Design, Best Sound) and it was also awarded with the Greek Association of Film Critics Award as the Best Greek Film of the Year 2010.


10. In 2005, the documentary-essay “In exchange for five apartments and one shop” presented the architectural and social evolution of Athens since the first fiction films appeared in Greece in the early 1920s. In this, the viewer could have a very elaborated observation of how the local film artists depicted the city and its socio-spatial development. *In Exchange for Five Apartments and One Shop*, 2005, director: Giannis Skopeteas, writers: Giannis Skopeteas, Dimitris Philippides, Production: Benaki Museum, Studio Pixel.

11. Details on this observation will be discussed on the next paragraph of the paper. Briefly, the reference is the various projects, exhibitions, articles and conferences organized that period, regarding the spatial development of Athens and the emergence of the architectural archetype of the polykatoia. Among many, the most important are the multi-projects *Landscapes of Modernization: Greek Architecture 1960s and 1990s*, organized by Yannis Aesopos and Yorgos Simeoforidis, and the *20th Century Architecture in Greece*, edited by Savas Condaratos and Wilfried Wang. For additional information, refer to:


12. Interestingly, the role is played by the same actor that plays Dimitris in “Matchbox”, Errikos Litsis, who is a close collaborator and friend of Economides. Litsis is credited for Soul Kicking’s script, which is again characterized by extreme, vulgar language and violent verbal and physical confrontations.

13. Woyzeck is Georg Büchner’s unfinished theatre play, which evolves around Franz Woyzeck, a German soldier stationed in a provincial town. He is the subject of various humiliations, degradations and social discriminations, constantly exploited by characters that represent superior social subjects (the Doctor, the Captain, his wife’s lover, a Drum Major). Woyzeck gradually broke down, his mental health is disintegrating and eventually kills Marie, his wife and her lover. The play, although fragmented and unfinished by the author, constitutes a fierce critique on the contemporary social condition and could be read as a “working class tragedy”.

14. "Es ist das Wasser, es ruft: Schon lang ist niemand ertrunken", in German, as it appears in the Buchner’s theatre play.

15. In 2006, Economides collaborated with the theatre collective *90° C* and allowed for the adaptation of the script to a theatre play. The performance started on October 5th, 2007 and lasted till April 20th, 2008. The play was presented in Victoria theatre, in the centre of Athens, and was embraced enthusiastically by both viewers and critics, winning the 2007 Theatre Award for the Best New-Greek Play.

17. Yorgos Lanthimos was born in Athens, Greece in 1973. He studied directing for Film and Television in the private Stavrakos Film School, where he graduated in 1995. Throughout the 1990s and since then, he has directed series of videos for Greek dance-theatre companies, a number of TV commercials, music videos and theatre plays. His was also a member of the creative team which designed the opening and closing ceremonies of the Athens 2004 Olympic Games. His first feature film “Kinetta” (2006) played at Toronto and Berlin festival to critical acclaim. His second feature film “Dogtooth” (2009) won the Un Certain Regard Prize at the 2009 Cannes Film Festival, followed by numerous awards at festivals worldwide. The film was nominated for a Foreign Language Film Oscar in 2011. Recently, his last film “Alps” (2011) premiered in the 68th Venice International Film Festival, where it was awarded the Osella Prize for Best Screenplay.


18. Originally, the film premiered in the 2009 Cannes Film Festival, where it won the Prix Un Certain Regard and the Prix de la Jeunesse. Numerous prizes followed in various occasions throughout the world, among others in the Sarajevo, Montreal, Stockholm and Dublin Film Festivals. The movie premiered in Athens in November 2009 and immediately attracted large audiences and extensive media coverage. The film was screened in Athens while violent demonstrations were taken place, commemorating the first year after the assassination of Alexis Grigoropoulos in December 2008. Eventually, the film was considered to be an allegorical and abstract depiction of a society in a severe social and political crisis. Nevertheless, its international success, especially the film’s nomination for an Oscar for a Best Foreign Language Film in 2011, was celebrated extensively by the mainstream media.

19. from Dogtooth’s original script.


21. Ibid. 55.

22. Ibid. 55.

23. Ibid. 66.

24. Ibid. 61.


26. Benjamin’s quote is from his seminal text The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction (1936), and thus refers primarily to the argument of his theoretical concern. Full text available in: Walter Benjamin, Illuminations, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 2007), 217-252


30. EAXA A.E. (Ενοποίηση Αρχαιολογικών Χώρων Αθήνας A.E.) stands for Unification of the Archaeological Sites of Athens S.A. This company was founded in October 1997 (its incorporation published in issue 909/15 October 1997 of the Greek Government Gazette) and is a Société Anonyme type company owned entirely by the Greek ministry of Culture, and the ministry of the Environment, Planning and Public Works. This institution was supposed to operate for ten years under the direction of these two ministries and the Municipality of Athens. However, the company is still in place, and it organized recently two large international competitions in Athens, the AthensX4 and the Competition for the Theatre Square, (Πλατεία Θεάτρου, in Greek), which attracted many offices and participants from Greece and abroad.

31. For more on this, see the four volumes of: Ephemeral Structures in the City of Athens, eds. Maria Theodorou, Lina Stergiou, Ole Bouman (Athens: Ministry of Culture, 2003).

32. For more on this in the last paragraph of the previous chapter The Absence of Plan as a Project, where the bond between economic development and spatial policies in Greece of the last 30 years is thoroughly discussed, p.177-185.

33. As it has been described elsewhere, the diffusion of commercial uses and domestic spaces throughout Attica was developed parallel with the placement of various projects for the needs of the 2004 Olympic Games. New infrastructure, such as the Attiki Odos Highway, the new Subway Lines, the Regional Train network, etc., promoted the extension of the city in areas that were previously underdeveloped, such as East Attica settlements.

34. Most important are the projects Without Limits, and Athens 2002: Absolute Realism, and the most recent project Ephemeral Borders by Yannis Aesopos, who insisted on the function of the new infrastructure in Attica. For more see: Nikos Kazeros, Pavlos Lefas, Choris Oria: Ι Αχανείς Εκτάσεις του Αθηναϊκού Προαστίου [Without Limits: The Vast territories of the Athenian Suburbs] (Athens: Futura, 2003).

35. The reference here is Kenneth Frampton’s, Alexander Tzonis’ and Liane Lefaivre’s concept of critical regionalism, which was extensively influential to many Greek architects of an older generation since the early 1980s. The concept was initially presented in: Alexander Tzonis, Liane Lefaivre, “The Grid and the Pathway; the Work of Dimitris and Suzanna Antonakakis”, in Architecture in Greece, vol. 15, 1981.

36. Apart from their various contributions that supported this particular thesis, Yannis Aesopos and Yorgos Simeoforidis insisted on the possibility of projecting a peculiar metropolitanism in the Athenian paradigm. The following book elaborated specifically on the latter, within which Athens is theorized not as an example of Greek urban development, but as paradigmatic European urban case-study: The Contemporary (Greek) City: Athens, eds. Yannis Aesopos, Yorgos Simeoforidis (Athens: Metapolis Press, 1999).

37. The most characteristic moments of this trajectory are the following projects:


38. See footnotes 32 and 34.


43. For more on Banham’s description of LA, in his seminal book “Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies”.


46. Ibid, 171. Appeared in:


47. Ibid. 171.

De Meyer actually underlines that “even the building-site pictures of the Case Study Houses look like film stills”.


51. Ibid. 13.

52. Ibid.14.

53. Sigmund Freud, 222, 226.

56. The story that Paolo Virno refers to can be found in:
Jean Améry, Jenseit von Schuld und Sühne: Bewältigungsversuche eines Überwältigen (Munich: Szczesny, 1966). Published in English as:
Jean Améry, At the Mind of Limits: Contemplations by a Survivor of Auschwitz and Its Realities, trans. Sidney Rosenfeld and Stella P. Rosenfeld (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980).
Other references on Améry’s story in:
Jean Améry, Über das Altern: Revolte und Resignation (Stuttgart: E. Klett, 1968). Published in English as:
57. Virno, 15.
The Améry’s story culminated when, while hiding with other members of the resistance movement in Belgium, he came face to face with an SS German soldier from his hometown.
58. Ibid. 15.
59. Ibid. 15.
60. Ibid. 15.
61. Ibid. 16.

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5. For more on this concept, on the Introduction and the presentation of Tronti’s thesis. Also, in:
8. For example, in:
9. In:
10. On the absence of state policies in housing, among others in:
11. For a complete analysis of the relation between the Maison Dom-ino and the polykatoikia
type, see:
Pier Vittorio Aureli, Maria S. Giudici, Platon Issaias, “From Dom-ino to Polikatoikia”, *Domus* 962, October 2012, p. 74-87.

12. Ibid. 82

13. On the generic attributes of human nature and the abstraction of production, see:

14. For the definition of Megaform, its characteristics and performance in urban space, in:


16. For a complete presentation of this collective research project, in:
Pier Vittorio Aureli, Maria S. Giudici, Platon Issaias, “From Dom-ino to Polikatoikia”, *Domus* 962, October 2012, p. 74-87.


Also, a reference to the Athens Studio recently in:


18. Ibid. 85.

19. Ibid. 85.

20. For a complete presentation of this emblematic project, in:


22. Ibid. 86.

23. Ibid. 87.


26. Ibid. 87.

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