



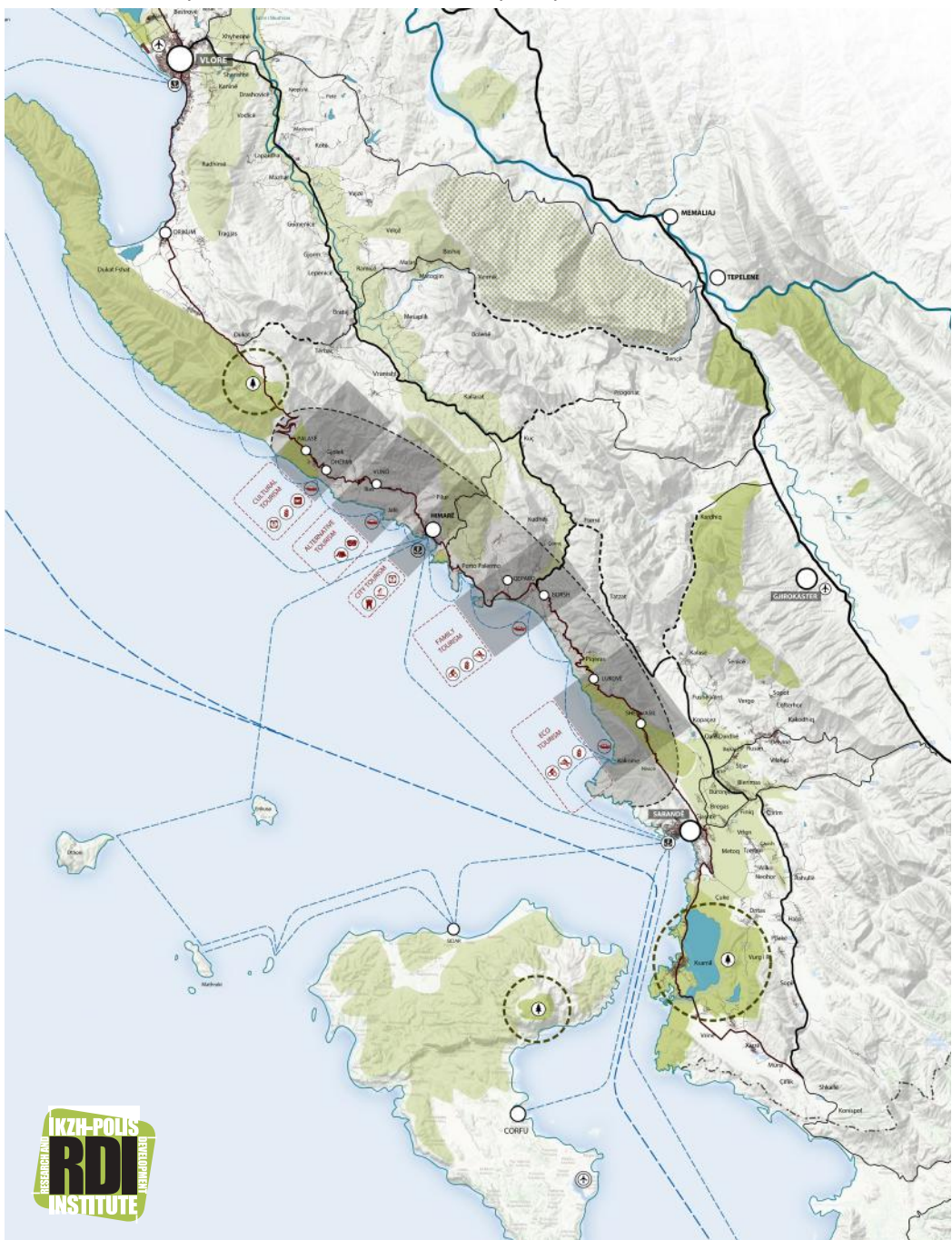
Observatory of Mediterranean Basin

Albanian Riviera

An alternative model of Progress and Development
for a Next Generation Albania

A Project of the
Joint International PhD Program

POLIS University Albania / Ferrara University Italy





dipartimento
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Albanian Riviera /

An alternative model of Progress and Development for a Next Generation Albania.

A Project of the Joint International PhD Program
POLIS University, Albania / Ferrara University, Italy

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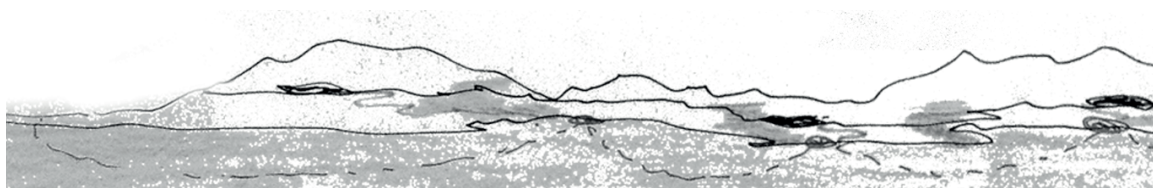
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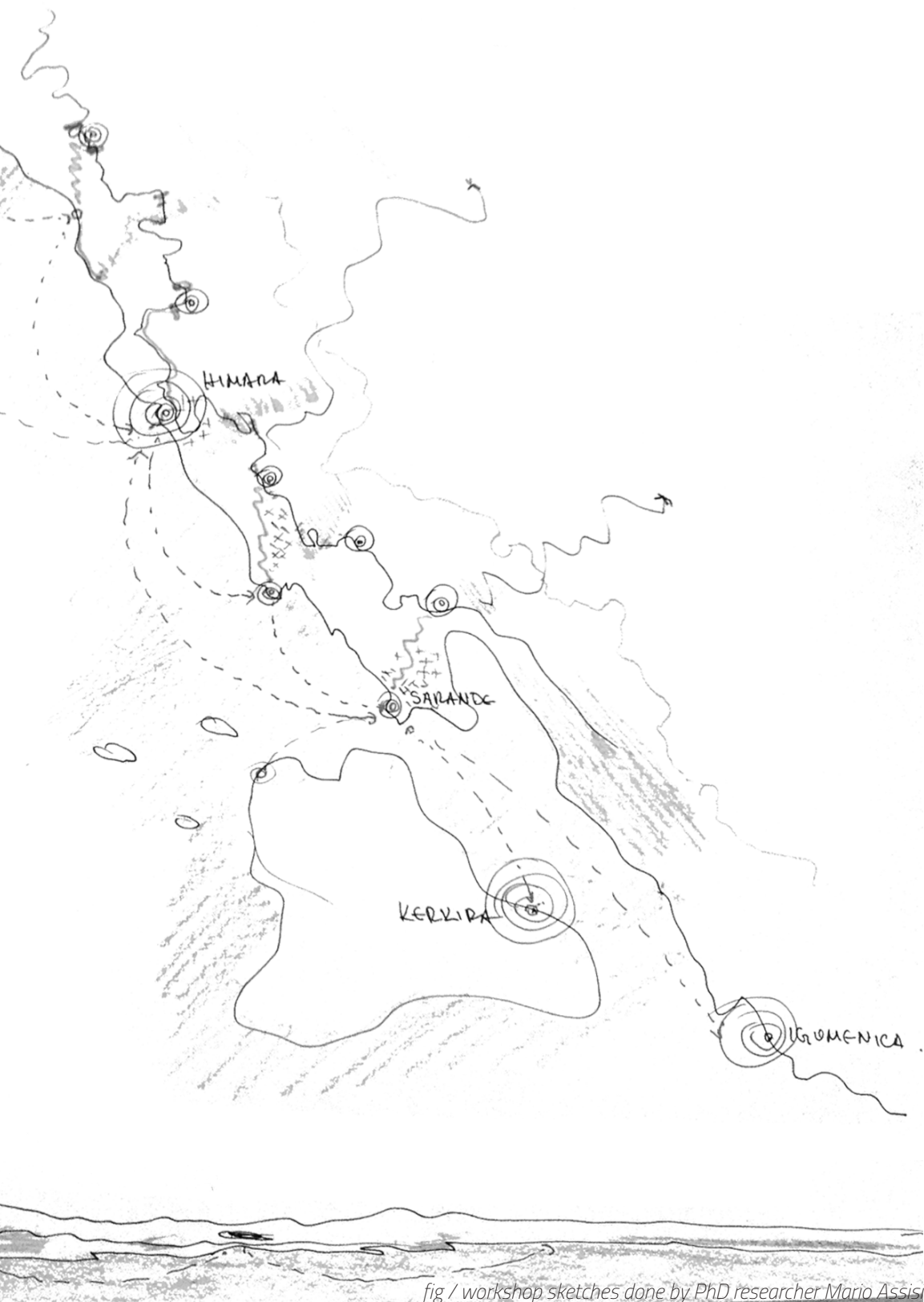


fig / workshop sketches done by PhD researcher Mario Assisi

I like this publication basically because of two reasons. First, I like the idea to give this PhD researcher a floor to disseminate their work in a book. That helps them for their professional carrier and assures that the knowledge is spread in the scientific community. Second, the topic is of great interest for the Albanian tourism economy but also from high importance for the Albanian society. The key question is how tourism can be improved without negative social and environmental impacts. The contributions in this book show a way!

*Prof PhD Thomas Dillinger
TU Wien, Austria*

From the reading emerges an interesting and ambitious approach to the "Albanian Riviera" research and strategy. A new perspective and point of view are fundamental for the rising of a consciousness towards the potentialities of the territory and its respect and protection. The proposed study cases lead the theory to the real essence of the Albanian Land. It is mostly clear and well presented how the various parameters are pulled together on a real scenario, where the outcome is continuously confronted with the consequences of any kind of intervention.

*Prof PhD Silvia Lupini
Università di Camerino, Italy)*

Preface

Since the transformation which occurred during the 90s, Albania's tourism has been growing fast, from 300,000 (in year 2000) to more than 3 million visitors per annum (2013). This increase has created a lot of hope regarding the economic growth of country, as tourism, along with agriculture and energy are considered pillars of the national economy. Therefore, the government has become increasingly focused on this sector, trying to provide more services and infrastructure to the strategic areas of interests, while attempting to reestablish a new 'order' regarding territorial planning and development as opposed to the spread of informality. In 2014, the Albanian government declared the coastal strip of the country a strategic corridor and placed it under temporary "freeze" in terms of development until the preparation of the National Territorial Plan, and the specific master plans for strategic areas like the Ionian Coast of Riviera (Southern Albania). In the meantime, three international competitions have been opened, including: i) branding the new image of Albania; ii) redesigning the waterfront of the city of Vlora; iii) and planning the development of the Riviera region in the Southern Ionian Coast of Albania. Other planning exercises have been also implemented in the metropolitan corridor of Durrës-Tirana (Durana region), and the Northern mountainous region of the Albanian Alps. Polis University (U_POLIS) and the Institute for Habitat Development (Co-PLAN) together with their strategic partner Ferrara University Italy (UNIFE) have been cooperating during 2013 in the framework of research and practice agenda. Their specialized units Metro_POLIS (architecture and urban design) and SEALINE (planning and design of coastal developments) have been working, focused on these subjects, trying to materialize the vision of POLIS/Co-PLAN and UNIFE on such high-interest issues for the country.

Our response to such needs has been addressed mainly in four lines:

- 1. undertaking a research and academic project finalized under the publication entitled Albania 2030 Manifesto – A national spatial development vision;*
- 2. competing and being qualified up to the finals for the Riviera Planning and Development international competition. This was a project not simply in the framework of the competition, but also part of the research and International Workshop of the joint PhD program between U_POLIS and UNIFE;*
- 3. competing and winning the first place in local team category in partnership with Sealine (UNIFE Departmental research center) for the Vlora Waterfront international competition. Now the project is under detailing and implementation;*
- 4. undertaking a strategic vision for Saranda municipality in south Albania.*

This process is summarized in this publication of the Research and Development Institute of Polis University / IKZH, Department of Applied Research with its unit Observatory of Mediterranean Basin / OMB.

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Rector of POLIS University Tirana, Albania*

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introduction

Albania 2030 / economic development based on tourism

*Prof PhD Besnik Aliqj
Rector / POLIS University*

Albania possesses highly valuable potentials for the development of tourism, which ensures long-term economic development and social-environmental prosperity. Albania is presently considered one of 10 fastest growing economies, based on its own GDP, and it is recommended as one of the world's top 10 touristic destinations. The country has a 450 km long costal line, 300 of which are located along the Adriatic Sea, and 150 along the Ionian Sea. These areas include 24 areas of high-quality touristic potential locations, mostly on virgin and undeveloped territories. In the meantime, more than half of the country's surface is mountainous, above 600m from the sea level, and on these areas we find 15 other areas full of touristic potentials. Based on these facts, the main conclusion presents a clear need for the implementation of a national system of access and a pragmatic network of roads, which must be sensitive towards environmental values and the uniqueness of the landscape. They should be based on a ring-radial transportation and circulation system.

Despite the considerable potentials of the "sun & sand" type of tourism, Albania also has other interesting options inside its territory, including: i) two regions surrounding the country's main lakes (Shkodër and Ohër-Prespa), a network of small lakes (Dumre, Lurë, etc.), and many artificial reservoirs built since and during communism. The country also counts 15 national parks, 25 emerald-ecologic sensitive areas, and lots of forests everywhere;

ii) There exists rich archeological heritage of Illyrian, Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Venetian, and Ottoman character, including: Butrinti (UNESCO), Apolonia, Bylis, Durrësi sites, etc. But there are also many monasteries, churches, mosques, castles and fortifications belonging to the medieval age, including two museum cities: Berat and Gjirokastra (UNESCO), and many others of special architectural character;

iii) Albanian culture has a rich variety of religions, folklore, traditions and costumes; a diversity of craft works and culinary variety; people are hospitable and friendly with foreigners, and they also speak several foreign languages, in most cases. The climate is very good, mostly sunny, with a long summer.

So the potentials are incredible, but what has been missing is the increased awareness of the population; capacity building for the local public and private actors; and lack of national spatial visioning and policies. The conclusion pertaining to the spatial dimension holds that Albania must diversify and extend its own touristic menu, beyond coastal areas and summer seasons, by promoting combined products of destinations and itineraries in inland regions which could be cultivated through instruments of spatial planning. Meaning that, despite the territorial planning of strategic touristic regions, like: the Riviera, the Alps, Ohër-Prespa, and the Metropolitan region; the country must also plan at least six identified touristic itineraries with a cultural-landscape-historic character,



*Fig1 / panoramic view of the Riviera
source / PhD international workshop students*

such as: the "Via Egnatia" itinerary, the "Scanderbeg" itinerary, the "Ali Pasha" itinerary, the "Bektashi culture" itinerary, the "Myzeqeja" itinerary, "The Nation's Road" itinerary, etc. This stimulates local economic development and the return of local people to the peripheral-abandoned areas.

In terms of spatial dimensions, today, Albania is confronting the challenge of limited physical capacities for the accommodation of the growing demand on tourism. According to INSTAT Albania: i) The number of total visitors that enter our country by different means of transport (land, air, sea) has increased 10 times, from 300 thousand in 1995, to 3.3 million in 2013; ii) The number of visitors in hotels has grown from 140 thousand in 1995, to 220 thousand in 2013; while the number of foreigners has tripled out of 40 thousand to 120 thousand visitors; iii) The number of visitors' overnight-stays in hotels have doubled from 200 thousand in 1995 to 400 thousand in 2013. Out of them, the number of overnight stays for foreign visitors has increased 2.5 times for the same period. Others are local Albanian visitors; iv) Such a growing demand is accompanied by the increase of accommodation capacities from 60 hotels and 2,000 beds in 1995, to 300 hotels and 10,000 beds in 2013; which means a 5-time increase of capacities in two decades.

The conclusion here is that Albania faces another challenge, which needs urgent capacity development of accommodation

by at least 2-3 times growth in 2030. In figures, it means that the country must expand its capacity with at least 15-20 thousand new beds, aiming to support a demand of 7 million visitors per year by 2030; and complementing and/or competing with neighboring countries with historic consolidation of touristic demands. However, this must be done without causing new real estate "bubbles" and in conformity with unique environmental and landscape values. For this purpose, the main planning and development instruments will be: i) rehabilitation, revival, re-contextualization, and maximal reuse of the historic villages and traditional areas of the existing settlements and informal developments – instead of opening new development areas with high costs on territorial consumption; ii) encouraging high-quality investments for a limited number of areas of serious and good quality hotels and small-scale resorts, which can serve as magnets or have an acupuncture effect in terms of energizing local development and employment, as well as demand increase from the elite visitors. This plan can also stimulate the increase of foreign investments in such a specialized infrastructure and working culture.

As regarding the infrastructure of international access, Albania has to overcome another challenge in order to break down the inherited isolation of communication. The analysis of the access for the existing demand of 3 million visitors shows: i) Sea-travelling has doubled, thanks to the high volume



of the Albanian emigrants in EU "western" countries; as well as from the improvements of ports and ferry services during the last decade; ii) Air-travelling has increased six times, thanks to the construction of the new international airport in Tirana; the increase of service quality because of private concession, and because of the introduction of competition by the private sector and low-cost flights; iii) Land-travelling has increased 15 times, mainly because of the huge emigration in Greece; of the regional visitors from other Albanian-speaking territories (Kosovo, Macedonia, Serbia) and the region in general; as well as the increasing influxes of visitors from "eastern" EU countries like: Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, etc.

A conclusion on the spatial character is that Albania must progressively focus on ensuring the chain of events and activities of economic-cultural-touristic character all over the territory; including the use of: religious festivals, bio- and local products, and agro-tourism activities; as well as a more strategic use of infrastructure within and in the neighboring countries: i) improving border infrastructure and road-access, in order to confront and ease the growing rhythm of entries, especially during summer season or on national-religious days. These changes facilitate the protection of the internal demands and of the Albanian emigrants; the demand of other Balkan countries, and especially that of other Albanian-speaking territories; ii) activating two regional airports in Kukës and Saranda, in order to directly reach the

main national touristic destinations like: Riviera, and the Alps; and connect them with the EU, Japanese and North American markets; iii) using regional-neighboring infrastructure in order to benefit from the "crossborder" tourism, including borders, roads, ports and airports, especially the airports of Podgorica, Prishtina, Ohrid, Ioannina, Corfu; and ports of Bari, Brindisi, Ancona, Trieste and Koper. This implementation must be followed by the activation of a national sea-line along the Albanian coast which will ensure the connection of different sea-side cities and towns by the sea; as well as an Adriatic-Ionian route along the Western Balkan coast, from Koper (Slovenia) to Patra (Greece), connecting all the countries together.

However, as there cannot be economic growth without sustainable development, the issues of environmental concern and sustainability are very important for any spatial analysis. From a geographic point of view, Albania is a country dominated by a hilly-mountainous terrain, thus there exist three main topographic characteristics based on the average altitudes: plains, hills and mountains. Such a topography could either be an advantage or a barrier for the development of the country. In terms of environmental concerns, the main identified national hotspot areas are mainly located on the western plain of the country. They are the result of the urbanization effect, lack of solid waste infrastructure and services in a consumerist growing society, and because of inherited problems of the past from the



*Fig2 / UNESCO site of Butrinti theater
source / PhD international workshop students*

industrial and human discharges, which have polluted many rivers and sea areas. Other environmental problems are related to the shortage of forest surfaces, erosion from the mountains, pollution because of mining and the existence of mining areas due to the military actions of the Second World War, as well as the history of isolation during communism and the conflict in Kosovo (1999).

But Albania also has amazing potentials of landscaping and natural historic itineraries. This wealth could be important for the education of environmental and cultural sensitivity, as well as for the economic growth through tourism and the cultivation of national identity. For this reason six national and cross-border itineraries are identified: i) the Alps itinerary; ii) the Skanderbeg itinerary; iii) the "Via Egnatia" itinerary; iv) the Bektashi itinerary; v) the Ionian Riviera itinerary vi). and the "Ali Pasha" itinerary. But other smaller landscape potentials and historic national routes can be found on each region or specific areas too. In order to address such issues, a special strategy is recommended. Combining agricultural land, existing protected and emerald areas, with the new green extensions and corridors, aiming to create a national green strategy, which cures the existing ecological problems, improves the quality of life and helps branding a future Albania of high standards. This will be the answer to the existing situation.

At the moment there are 54 listed protected areas, which are categorized

into six main groups: i) Strict nature reserves; (ii) National parks; (iii) Nature monuments; iv) Managed nature reserve; v) Protected landscape; vi) Protected area of managed resources. There are also 25 ecological emerald areas which represent an effort to prepare Albania to gain access to EU projects through projects like "Natura 2000". The extension and consolidation of the "Green" and "Emerald" areas aims to at least triple the green space in Albania, while the existing protected areas have increased from 15% to 30% of the national territory, which also goes in line with the EU directives and advice. This consolidation process will also make up for the protection of these areas, firstly, and secondly for the protection of the agricultural land against further urbanization, outlining clear borders based on the example of green corridors, between these categories of land use.

In order to better and more thoroughly explain such a strategy of networks and corridors, two case studies were elaborated:

- The first case is the Albanian Alps Natural Corridor and the relation of the Park of three nations with the polycentric developments in between Shkodra-Podgorica and Kukës-Prizren. This is an example of how hydrographic potentials, national parks and protected areas of three countries can be part of one natural system and work together as a sustainable green network. This network also provides better conditions for free movement through the improvement of infrastructure, integrates economic corridors in the region without



harming the natural potentials and promotes the development of ecotourism and landscaping.

- The second case is that of the space between southern Albania and northwestern Greece, including the Riviera Corridor, where the natural and historic corridor of Ali Pasha between Tepelena, Gjirokastra and Ioannina could be a strong economic drive and touristic incentive for the region between the natural parks of Vikos, Hotova, Labëria and Butrinti-Llogara/Karaburun.

Therefore, POLIS/Metropolis and UNIFE/Sealine accepted "Albania 2030 Manifesto" as a starting document. The Albania 2030 Manifesto describes the development policies for the coming 15 years, based on the growth scenario of the four main economic pillars: tourism, agriculture, energy and mining. This projection is achieved by taking into consideration several spatial instruments, including:

- Controlling the growth of urban centers against sprawl and informality, by consolidating urbanized areas, metropolitan regions and complementary urban centers;
- Identifying industrial and economic priority areas to support employment and economic growth;
- Increasing the regional competitiveness of the country by strengthening the international hub, national and regional networks and regional gateways;
- Identification and completion of national and regional importance infrastructure of roads, seaports, airports and energy;
- Identification of 6 main regions, which are

specialized based on their social-economic resources;

- Identification and strengthening of polycentric and cross border regions, growth poles and free economic areas, aiming to establish a new economic model which is based on a better regional balance and corrects the effects of radical urbanization, disparities and segregation;
- A special focus on environmental issues and sustainable development by identifying projects of hot-spots rehabilitation, protection of forestry and green space, extension and consolidation of "green Albania";
- Recognition and cultivation of the big potentials of the country as regarding landscaping, historical and natural routes, eco-tourism, etc.;
- Achieving national development goals by considering with special importance the neighboring Albanian speaking territories as well as coordinating with the western Balkans and Adriatic sea region, not forgetting the process of EU integration;
- Improving the social-economic efficiency and effectiveness by providing integrated and equal access between the center and periphery based on a ring radial system. Thus, we would achieve an important objective, transforming Albania from an isolated economy, to a regional and European actor of economy.



*Fig3 / Porto Palermo beach
source / PhD international workshop students*



*Fig4 / Butrinti national park
source / PhD international workshop students*



OMB / the Observatory of Mediterranean Basin

The new unit of Applied Research Department - POLIS University

PhD Loris Rossi

Head of the applied research IKZH and OMB research unit / POLIS University

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The objective of this unit is the creation of a new research dedicated to the Observatory of the Mediterranean Basin (OMB), a possible niche in the market and within the focus of the Department of Applied Research at POLIS University.

Starting from the Balkan regions, the interest will be extended to all the cities that overlook the Mediterranean. In this frame of work, the observatory intends to highlight several topics that the Balkan regions and Mediterranean cities have in common, considering all the aspects dealing with the issue of land and water.

The main idea is to define a strategic network in the crossway of multiple activities and interests in which Mediterranean Cities can be observed as crossing points of different identities. We can adopt the term multimodality to define a complex condition in which the Mediterranean basin has always lived, a mix of knowledge and heritage that through time and history gave birth to human civilizations. Part of the scope of this unit will be the idea of making the Albanian nation more operative within an already existing network facing the Mediterranean basin¹.

Regarding the two above-mentioned aspects: In terms of land domain, the role of informal cities must be seen as an opportunity to elaborate new ways of alternative planning and urban design processes, taking into consideration all the activities that grant importance to this geographic area. The aforementioned statement can be associated with the concepts of multimodality in terms of the opportunity to find multiple ways to

explore the new post-process cities in the Balkan regions. In others words, this argument can be seen as an opportunity to investigate the issue of different identities belonging to the Mediterranean basin. The topic of post-process cities can be analyzed and studied like a new phenomenon and added to the actual debate of the Mediterranean basin. The contribution can be seen as a new trend, traceable in some cities of Eastern Europe, reconfigured by a particular attitude toward urban disorders. This new model has started a new interest in the city processes that generate new landscapes made by society, tradition and heritage.

In terms of water domain, the Albanian coastline must be explored as a natural stripe of a varied landscape and richness, flora and fauna of Mediterranean typologies. The marine resources along with the villages facing the sea, are considerable primary values for the research of a new characterization of Albania's landscape. In many cases the sea has the potentiality to become a tourist as well as an economical resource. In a more strategic manner, the water issue must be seen as a primary resource for future research and investigation in the Albanian coastline.

Geography of the Mediterranean cities

The meaning and importance of the Mediterranean from a geographical point of view is easily understandable by analyzing the etymology of the word - mediterraneus: terre di mezzo (middle land), that can also be seen as a big threshold in which the water realm has



Fig1 / Mediterranean Map
source / internet edited by Loris Rossi

simultaneously favored and stimulated communication and limits throughout history. Looking at the maps, the big basin appears contained in between three important straits: Gibraltar, Bosphorus and Suez; it was mostly through the Gibraltar strait that connection with the rest of the world and an exchange of nutrition for the marine flora and fauna was made possible in the past centuries. (Fig1)

The same basin is geographically encircled by three continents: Europe, Asia and Africa which, since their origins, have been crossroads of knowledge, traditions and wars. Certainly, religious influences have conditioned the relations between the different countries; it is important to mention that the Mediterranean saw the origin of three important monotheist religions: Christian, Islamic and Jewish. Throughout the years, this condition has caused a lot of conflicts and migrations. The topics of contradiction and cultural multiplicity emerge in our research, absorbing and metabolizing all the typical aspects of multiethnic cultures.

A well-known French historian, Fernand Braudel, described the Mediterranean as follows: "Che cos'è il Mediterraneo? Mille cose insieme. Non un Paesaggio, ma innumerevoli paesaggi. Non un mare, ma un susseguirsi di mari. Non una civiltà, ma una serie di civiltà accatastate le une sulle altre" (BRAUDEL, 2014). This quotation highlights the importance of

the Mediterranean in terms of diversity and multiplicity of identities. Through Braudel's eyes it is possible to cross the history of different cultures and traditions in which the concept of the Mediterranean basin is seen as a common inspiration for all the continents that look over this sea. Considering all of the above reflections, one of the main objectives of this unit is the identification of some common characteristics traceable in the Mediterranean environment. Certainty, as argued by Fernand Braudel, the autochthon elements we can find in this area belong to the natural world: the vine, the wheat and the olive originate in the beautiful and suitable climate typical of the region. But above all, the olive tree is the symbol of the Mediterranean flora.

For our purpose, the story of one of the most famous mythological sculptures sculpted by Phidias in the oriental tympanum of the Parthenon in Athens seems very relevant. The myth tells the battle between two important figures for the possession of ancient Attica: Athena and Poseidon. The story goes that Athena won the challenge thanks to an olive plant donated to the citizens of Attica. In his representation, Phidias organizes the composition by placing in between the two important figures of Athena and Poseidon (respectively representing one the earth goddess – dea terrestre – and the second the god of the sea) an olive

1 / The first attempts of cooperation within the regions of the Mediterranean basin was in the 1995 with the so-called Barcelona Process and the idea was to create an Euro-Mediterranean union. The next tentative was the Union pour la Méditerranée (UPM) launched in the summer of 2008 by the then president of the EU, Nicolas Sarkozy. UPM includes about forty countries from the EU and the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean. (SIGURA, 2014)



plant as a symbol of the union between land and sea. (Fig2)

Looking more closely at the location of the story recounted in the myth we notice another important phenomenon. The topographic distribution of the Acropolis in Athens certainly served as an interesting inspiration for the following centuries, something that is still visible today in many Mediterranean cities. At different historical moments, contemporary society has been influenced by a close relationship between classic creativity and contemporary experiments, celebrated through different creative expressions like: poetry, music, paintings, architecture, philosophy, culinary art, folklore, etc.

The influences of classical culture in the Mediterranean basin can be re-read through important books or interesting critical contributions (PAZZAGLINI, 2003). In this context, what's seems more relevant, is the amazing creative influence that the Acropolis Topography (together with the famous Phidias Mythos) gave to the Mediterranean basin in terms of organization of society, landscape and architecture. Following all of the above considerations, another important component that needs to be introduced emerges in our reflection: the podium concept. The three elements utilized by Phidias: Land, Sea and Nature (the last one represented by the olive plant) are practically sustained by the emblematic volume of the Parthenon suspended above the Acropolis podium which, in turn, is grooved through paths and covered by a dense vegetation composed of olive trees. (Fig3)

All the above considerations could guide an alert mind towards the reinterpretation of the Mediterranean sea as a huge podium which supported different identities and various types of modernities for many centuries. In other words, a kind of podium on which the word landscape is engraved through history, heritage, nature, living settlements, villages and cities with different stories but joined by a single, common base. (Fig4)

The above-mentioned characteristic is more evident if we observe how the Mediterranean sea, in the majority of the cases, presents a rich landscape vegetation that usually support cities and villages; it appears as a strip in between seaside and settlements. Following this argument, the three elements - water, land and nature - are joined by means of a large base that unites the entire Mediterranean basin.

Thus, I believe that the idea of the podium as a metaphor for life as well as sign of modern culture, able to move meanings through space and time, is deeply rooted in the Mediterranean culture. (Fig6)

The influential area will be considered as a gathering point of common interest research, projects and cultural activities. Before mentioning the geographical relation with the other Mediterranean nations we must reflect further upon the importance of the Mediterranean sea in relation to the contour, the land belt that overlooks the Mediterranean.

Nowadays, in general terms, we can state that all the cities exposed to the sea are considered Mediterranean cities; in reality if we go deeper with our analysis, the influence of the sea frequently goes



Fig2 / Reconstruction of the west pediment of the Parthenon
source / commons.wikimedia.org

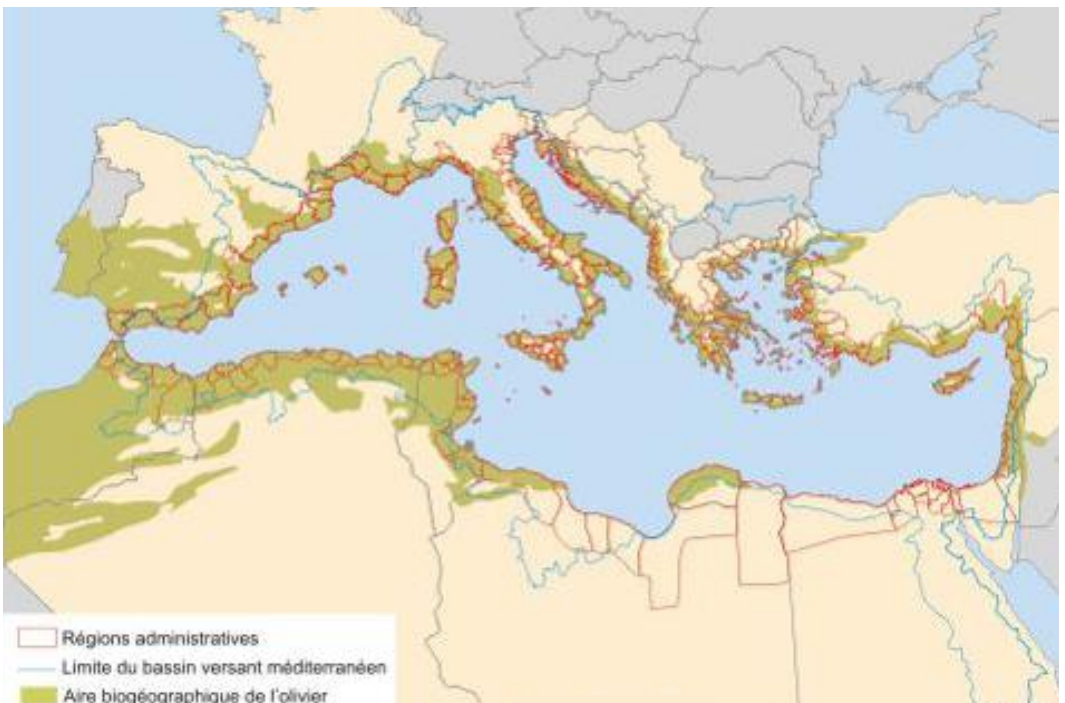


Fig3 / The Olive trees in the Mediterranean Basin
source / Gaussen & De Philippis – FAO

beyond the coast and reaches the inner land, encountering different cultures and traditions. In our frame of interest, we will also consider some sort of transversal connection between the coastline and the inner land in which strategic corridors can become focal links in terms of common interest. For this reason we can classify our networks in terms of transversality, stripes, points of interest and city networks.

OMB – geographic actions

From a geographical point of view, the Balkan cities will be considered as a

priority, especially the ones directly exposed to the sea line. On a larger scale, the Mediterranean can offer much more connectivity considering its boundary along Gibraltar, Bosphorus and Suez straits. This is why an attempt to promote geographical actions is needed, in order to guide the choices of international partners and common research interests.

Another important way in which geographical actions can contribute is the breaking of that sense of distance and prejudice that exists between countries and cities. This is a case in which sharing research activities and common projects



Fig4 / Acropolis View Athens
source / historiarrc.blogspot.it

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Fig5a / The staircase of Campidoglio square - Michelangelo Buonarroti 1548
source / studyblue.com



Fig5b / The Amalfi Landscape Italy
source / positano.news.it

can offer a new perspective, one centered on building and a high sense of community (BOTTA, 2010).

Trasversality: in this case the relation is given by a line, not necessary straight, in which inner cities and seaside cities can be joined, sharing common experience and activities. A typical example is retraceable in the case of via Egnazia. It is not by chance that many of these lines coincide with the ancient Roman path. Within the logic of transversality as infrastructure, there is also the idea of the riverbank as a connection between the seaside and inland.

The contours: they refer to the city-landscape and sea-landscape belonging to the coastline. In some cases, this typology of network can be connected to specific points in the inner land. The example of the blue corridor in the east of Europe along with the panoramic Riviera road can contribute to provide a new perspective in terms of tourism and landscape characterization in the Albania coastline.

The centralities, the points, the nodes: this is the case in which important cities can offer a great contribution in terms of urban design study and in respect to the surrounding influential areas. Mediterranean City patterns can be compared by searching for common identities and different ways to solve the urban dilemma.

In some cases all the above categories can work as a network for developing a new concept of a sustainable city in which the richness of the sea landscape can greatly contribute to the cities inland and vice versa.

The main arguments. The OMB as Mediterranean breviary

To appropriately define the topic of this unit, we must start with those characters that primary contribute in the creation of such important attention on the Mediterranean concept. The identification of the Albanian Landscape², in terms of important meanings, is something definable through commons characteristics traceable in the biophysical, anthropic as well as some local traditional meanings. The beauty of the landscape can be rediscovered through the identification of specific actions in order to capture some historical and natural persistence in the Albanian landscape and to reconnect it with the Mediterranean context. The Mediterranean is a source of a multiplicity and contradiction with different identities but, at the same time, common characteristics traceable in the world between land and sea. One of the limits of this Research can be retraceable in that infinity of meanings which the Mediterranean contains, from this perspective, it is quite impossible to find clear guidelines. Doubtlessly, the first attempt should be related to the interest

2 / The meanings of landscape in this contest, must be read as multiple way to perceive the beauty of a territory reach of social traditions and heritage. For this reason the word landscape can be associated to all the layers that composed the actual Albanian panorama.

3 / Pedrag Matvejevic was born in Mostar (Bosnia-Erzegovina) from Russian father and Croat Mather. He thought France literature at the Zagabria University, literature compare at the Sorbona University of Paris and he was full Professor of "slavistica" La Sapienza of Rome and at College of France.

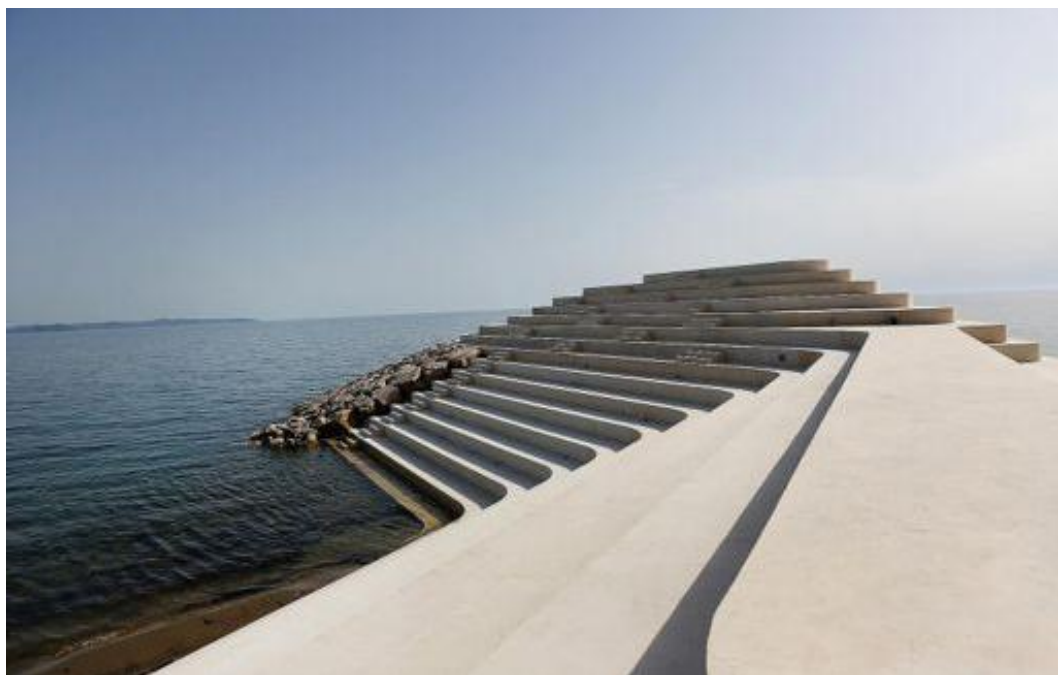


Fig5c / Cape square Durrës. Boomlandscape and Cityforster / 2014-2015
source / shapedscape.com

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Fig5d / The monumental staircase of Spagna square / F. De Sanctis and A. Specchi / 1723-1726
source / romeguide.it



*Fig5e / Annunziata Church in Lipari
source / notiziarioeolie.it*

and research already present in the POLIS environment, in the already established networks with the other universities and in the field of European financing. For this reason, as a starting point and as part of the brainstorming process, we must individuate basic elements in which our competences and skills can find cross point of interests. In this frame of thinking, the idea suggested by Predrag Matvejević³, in his book *Mediterranean breviary*, namely the description of the organism that is the Mediterranean through basic elements, assumed great relevance (MATVEJEVIC, 2013). The Predrag breviary introduces the importance of some basic elements as a guide towards better understanding the fascination of such an old presence like the Mediterranean basin.

The beauty of this book lies in the constantly highlighting of the concept that such a complexity can be seen only through a bottom-up process. According to Predrag Matvejević, the way to observe the Mediterranean basin is comparable to the way in which the marine Sciences analyze the structure of the sea through: the study of the itineraries, tides, currents, salinity, the stratigraphic relief, etc. The book is structured in such a way as to appreciate the simplicity of primary elements like: the sun, the sea color, the piers, the inlands, the peninsula, the waves, buoys, hemp ropes or cables, the cemetery, the rain, the water, the wells, the lighthouses, etc. and many others. All those components can be considered as pieces of a huge mosaic. For Matvejević, those are some of the basic components in which the complexity of the Mediterranean can be observed,

captured and understood.

Looking at the above mentioned considerations, the first attempt could be retractable in the individuation of basic elements describable like reactive elements. The purpose of this is to open debates and gather common interest within the same umbrella. Primary landscape elements like: Water, Heritage, City, Food and infrastructure can be relevant points of discussion reconsidering the importance of certain aspects within the Albania seascape. Using the Predrag Matvejević intuition we can draw from the Mediterranean basin many basic meanings on which better describe The Albania Context. All those elements could have the capacity to be common topics useful to sharing knowledge and tradition with the other cities around the Mediterranean band.

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Rivieras

Prof PhD Luca Emanuelli

Head of Sealine / DA Departmental Research Unit / Ferrara University

UniFe – PolisUniversity

Since 2010, our two Universities – the Architecture Department of the University of Ferrara and Polis University of Tirana – have been collaborating on the teaching and research aspects – through the PhD program IDAUP, workshops, Master's degree thesis – and, more recently (since 2014), the Departmental Research Centre Sealine has been working on different competition projects with CO-PLAN and Metro-POLIS from Polis.

Sealine

Sealine, focusing its activity on coastal systems and tourism's sustainable development, was founded in 2009 thanks to an agreement with the Municipality of Riccione, one of the Italian icon touristic destinations. Such agreement has been later extended to other thirteen municipalities, some of them along the coastline and some others inland around the the Conca river valley.

Progressively, Sealine has broadened its activity to other Italian regions and foreign countries of the Adriatic-Ionian basin. At the same time, the original mission was also better defined as we found that major landscape transformations (hyperNatural landscapes) in such contexts are preponderantly determined by two phenomena: Tourism and infrastructure developments. In this perspective we started, in partnership with other institutions (Wageningen University, UPC-Barcelona and Cornell University), a research project (the T-Atlas) aimed at building an atlas of

tourist territories, analysing them and proposing new strategies to manage the issues related to their development. On these same assumptions, we are appraising the opportunity to create a II level Master Degree on Infrastructure & Tourism Landscapes. Coastal systems as well as the territories subjected to strong anthropic pressure are still the kinds of landscape in which Sealine is interested the most, and in particular their maritime and marine environments.

In this framework, the "Vlora Waterfront Competition" and the "Albanian Riviera Competition" have been an opportunity to operatively face such topics outside Italy, offering the chance to compare two different realities that are physically near, but very far from each other regarding their recent history.

to React

The project proposal for the "Albanian Riviera Competition" is called Reactive Riviera. Reactive is the same adjective we used to describe the reaction of the Italian area known as Riviera Romagnola to the economic crisis (starting in 2008), following the very same attitude it had previously developed in similar experiences (e.g. the mucilage proliferation in 1989, which destroyed the "seaside reputation" asking for a change in the touristic model).

In the Albanian case, the adjective is used to give a sense of reaction to the challenge represented by current tourism pressure. The Albanian Riviera is a brand new destination for international tourism: arrivals are growing, and the local

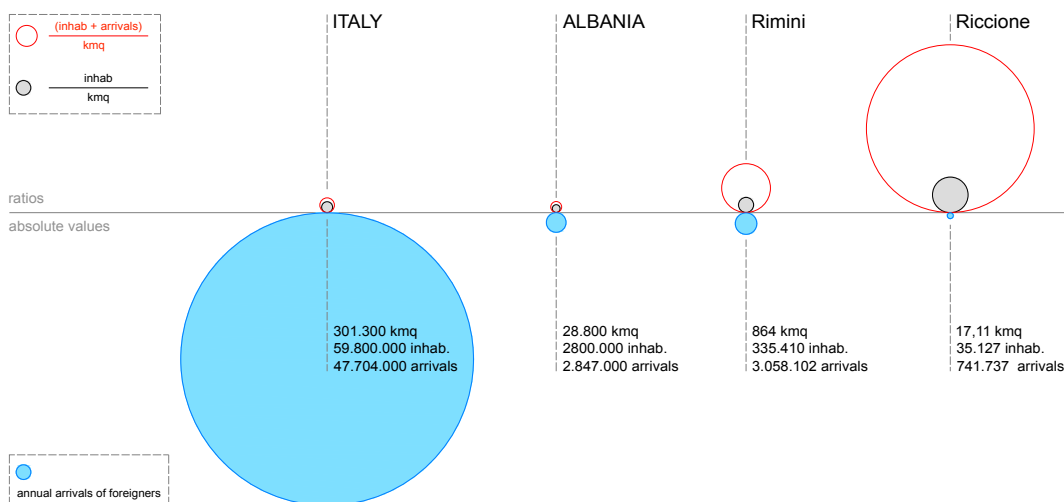


Fig1 / Touristic data comparison between Italy, Albania and the touristic district of Emilia-Romagna (referred in particular to the territory of the Rimini and Riccione) / source Sealine

potential is high, but the territory is not yet fully equipped for that. Here, the informal growth of touristic accommodations - due to a sort of lack in planning and regulations - has been recently tackled by the new Government through strong and sometimes exemplary actions (as demolitions). On this basis, a new attitude should be grounded on planning policies, on a clear vision for the future and based on a careful assessment of the tourism impacts.

method/model

In order to develop the project idea, in both competitions, we started "sizing the context" through the comparison to other touristic areas, more consolidated and mature. A key-indicators analysis has been carried out to define an appropriate intervention scale and foresee the project impacts.

The Figure 1 shows only few data of the main ones that have been taken into account: in particular the territorial extension, the number of inhabitants and the number of touristic arrivals from abroad - listed in terms of absolute value and related through a graphic representation of their ratio. If the comparison between Italy and Albania points out a similar impact index of foreign tourism in the overall country (in relative terms), the analysis of specific Italian areas - such as the Rimini province or the city of Riccione - clearly

highlights how mass-tourism can stress and totally "shock", at least for a period, an entire territory. It is useful, for example, to remark the fact that the Rimini Province on its own (864 km²) has the same foreign arrivals (3.058.102) as the whole Albania (2.847.000) and Riccione on its own (17,11 km²) a quarter (741.737). Such destinations owe their "performances" to a consolidated and popular touristic model, but, at the same time, they are facing the consequences of controversial choices in term of urban development and touristic flows management. The same issues are possibly the ones that will affect some spots of emerging touristic destinations such as Albania in the near future.

In this regard, the sociologist Eric Laws' scheme (1991) about the Tourism Design Model is a useful instrument to represent and understand how tourism "works" and affects a territory. In Figure 2, we propose a new version of it, adapted to our aims and research field. Such a diagram helps to analyse the components by which tourism organizes and "shapes", in some way, a place.

The Primary Component can be described as the set of the attractions that the visitor is encouraged to seek over a city or a region: it is the trigger for the trip. The Secondary Component includes all the range of touristic service facilities, including accommodation and catering. Such two

1 / Refer to the Chapter 4.2 for a more detailed explanation of what we mean for "hyperNatural landscapes".

2 / Refer to the Chapter 1.1.

3 / The data (updated in 2014) come from: the Albanian Institute of Statistics (INSTAT) and the Italian Institute of Statistics (ISTAT).

components can sometimes merge with each other to become one: a set of high-standard, diversified and unique services that can contribute to the attractiveness as the appeal of a destination is also dependent on the offer's richness and its complexity.

The Transportation Component deals with the accessibility to a sight and it is supported by the Connectivity Index of that place which refers to its ability to be recognisable on the market and "user-friendly" in terms of trip planning.

The original version of Law's diagram shows a Buffer Zone between the influence area of the Local Community and the tourists' one (the temporary community) where their mutual relationships take place. Inside it, we introduced a "Sustainability limit" beyond which such relationships turn into conflict affecting moreover the Primary Component. Many are the examples of popular destinations "drained" by their own development: here containing the touristic flow becomes an urgency which must be dealt with. Such a limit has to be considered and planned also for those areas that are currently growing. Defining a tourism development strategy means to set targets and limits at the same time: the accommodation capacity, for instance, should be planned according to the existing supply and to a careful assessment of all its repercussions on the environmental and infrastructural networks (for water, energy, waste management, etc.).

Working on the Albanian Riviera, this has been the basic point on which to focus: how to deal with a territory that is going to host an increasing number of visitors in the next few years while, probably, its best and more charming current features are related with "loneliness" and isolation?

keywords/analysis

Such kind of topics need to be explored by a deep analysis of the Primary Component, both in a present and in a future perspective. A site-specific interpretation can be supported by a set of key-words allowing to read into a place, better draft its development and strengthen its potentials. They describe the consequences that tourism generates in a territory, once it starts to change, in term of behaviours, trends, processes. Some of those, derived from the Riccione case-study, are:

. accumulation over selection - the act of accumulation doesn't select, but collects very different things in a rapid and intense

way;

. frenetic update - the attitude to always be updated, opened to the change and new trends, is pursued through small and fast interventions;

. diffuse repetition - new trends are captured and displayed by few, then they are replicated diffusely by many;

. multiplicity without inhibitions - anomalies and irregularities foster the ability to multiply experiences without inhibiting the various expressions;

. interferences and overlapping - different activities overlap and interfere to go beyond the seasonal tourism switching from a cyclical temporariness to a simultaneity of temporariness;

. reassuring instability - the instability of the territory, instead of generating uncertainty, reassures through the change; the result is not an enclosed framework, but the chance to imagine adaptable scenarios.

some considerations

A first consideration is about the word Tourism and the evolution of its usage. Such a term, first used in the singular form, has soon been employed in the plural form (Types of Tourism) in order to better highlight the many facets composing the phenomenon. Nowadays, the attention is shifting on the Tourist itself, as an independent entity with specific and personal interests who plans his/her own the trip and the experiences he desires. In this framework, the Connectivity Index of a destination is increasingly important in reaching these kind of users, to show them the alternatives offered by a territory, to improve its popularity. Such new way of access, by the Tourist to a site, also question the notion of "identity" related to a destination. It seems more appropriate, in this perspective, to use the word "character" instead.

A second consideration concerns the seasonal trends of tourism and the fact that many mature tourism-oriented territories are now striving to overcome it. Their mission is tough considering the fact that often their whole urban and social system has been developed according to the classic vacation scheme derived from the mass-tourism phenomenon. The rigid distinction between tourists' and citizens' settlements, corresponding to the same split between the seasonal and all-year services, or the great density and propriety fragmentation, are only a few of the problems slowing down the change. Emerging destinations, such as Albania, can instead programmatically tackle this

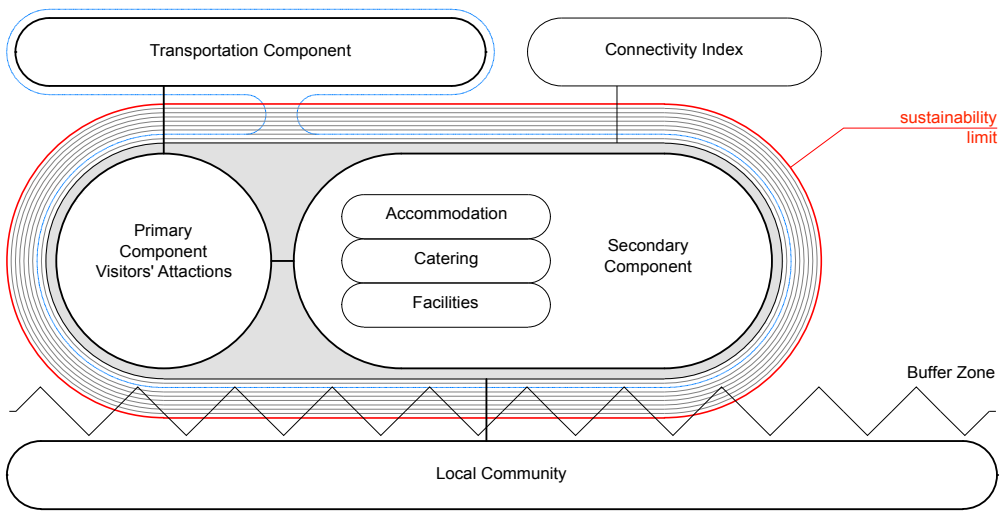


Fig2 / The reviewed version by Sealine of E. Law's diagram on Tourism Design Model.
source / Sealine

topic from the very beginning, setting up more resilient development models. The negative consequences of the touristic growth are sudden and fast. In some way they need to be forecasted by planning strategies and, more importantly, they need to be managed over time by a clear and flexible framework of rules.

A third consideration deals with the boundaries in which the strategic design can actually be effective in addressing the development. We believe that the "landscape dimension" is fundamental to approach the topic of tourism, especially if the landscape is interpreted with disenchantment: as a change-driver and not as "victim" of it.

In order to manage such a

"touristic landscape", the above-mentioned diagram helped us to evaluate the consequences of our design choices. In the projects for Vlora and the Albanian Riviera, we decided to focus on a specific component that seemed to override the other ones. In Vlora, we worked on the

Primary Component (represented by the beach and the sea quality), trying to figure out how to exploit its potential (over the seasons) through new services and to manage its overcrowding. In the Riviera project, we focused on the Transportation Component and the way it can be turned into an instrument to drive the territory towards the touristic transition, regulating flows, affecting the touristic experience and consequently the type of users to attract.

today

A final consideration that can be seen as a warning too, concerns the unpredictability of tourism given its global dimension and the influence of geopolitical issues on its trends. For example, in the last few years, several happenings (civil wars, natural disasters, trade sanctions, etc) have been shifting the Mediterranean touristic flows from one area to another. Whether it cannot be directly tackled, such a dynamic should affect the way a touristic model is thought, designed, achieved.

2.1

A new characterization of the
Mediterranean landscape /
itineraries, lines and natural podiums

Loris Rossi

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A project for the Albanian coast

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hyperNatural landscapes

Luca Emanuelli

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Learning from 'La Riviera'

Laura Pedata

2

interdisciplinary exchanges

A new characterization of the Mediterranean landscape / itineraries, lines and natural podiums

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Head of the applied research IKZH and OMB research unit / POLIS University

Begin an article by attempting to explain a possible new characterization of the Mediterranean landscape is an act of great responsibility. This paper does not aim at demonstrating anything new but, rather focalize the attention of the reader on certain important aspects which have been long discussed during the PhD Riviera workshop.

The area object of study, requested by the tender, is located in between Vlora and Butrint, divided in three lots: the Orikum area stretching from Vlora to Palas Beach; the Himara area stretching from Palas Beach to Lukova Beach; the Saranda area stretching from Lukova Beach to Butrint. The so-called second lots from Himara to Palas Beach has been a matter of our reflection in terms of the PhD workshop experience and design competition.

In the last years, the Albanian coast has started to become an important point of reference concerning the potentiality of tourism as well as the development of the urban settlement. In fact, it is not a coincidence that the new Albanian government has organized different important international competitions focused on the idea of changing the image/role of its coastline.

Thus, one of the main aims of this project is to underline, within the area selected, the main characteristics of the landscape, capable of redefining the strong peculiarities of the Albanian coastline.

The identity of the Albanian landscape is something definable through commons characteristics traceable in the biophysical,

anthropic as well as in the meanings of a number of local traditions. Among these characteristics, the beauty of the landscape can be certainly rediscovered through the identification of specific actions able to capture some historical and natural persistence in Albania's landform. To explain how to capture the essence of the beauty of Albania's coastline landscape, we must compare the experience of the site visit with the experience of drawing as an act of interpretation. The experience of the site visit became an experiment in the moment in which the act of drawing became a tool able to redraw the main line belonging to the landscape; certainly, in between these lines the artificial one, composed by roads and paths, are the most easily recognizable. The experience of the crosswalk through paths is an ancient human activity. Since its origins, the concept of wandering has represented the main activity for many ancestral populations. (Fig1)

Before the competition site is seen as a place of renovation in terms of building and infrastructure, it must be first seen as a landscape experienced by the lines which mark the land. As a first attempt, these kind of lines can be intended as simple connections useful for the human activity in joining different places belonging to the landscape. In a deeper analysis the lines can be seen as an aesthetic experience for better understanding and capturing the beauty of the Albanian coastline.

The above introduction want to underline how certain typologies of Landscape



Fig1 / Drawing elaborated during the Riviera workshop by the students of Ferrara and Tirana
source / PhD international workshop students



Fig2 / Ancient engraving, Bedolina Val Camonica, 10000 A.C.
source / Francesco Careri, Walkscapes

can be translated in terms of aesthetic experience (thanks to the real experience) through interpretative drawings. This modality of linking both conditions, has been very well investigated by Francesco Careri in his book *Walkscapes*. In the practice of landscape as experience and experiment, the act of walking (in our case to be intended as crossing a certain landscape) assumes a specific relevance especially if related to the idea of landscape as a matter of observation and investigation.

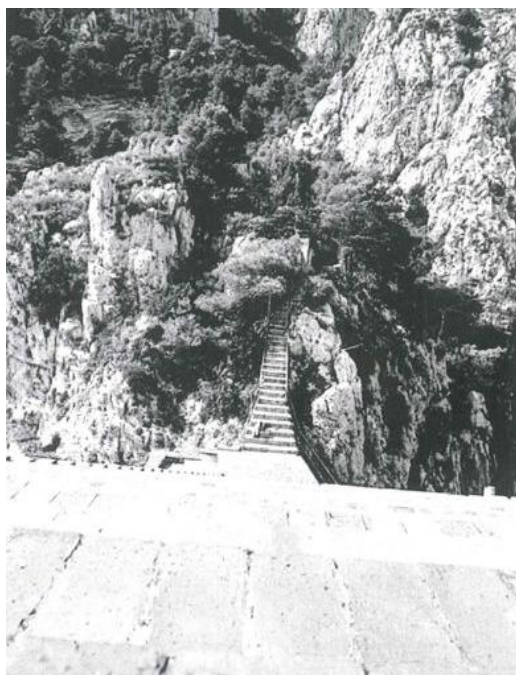
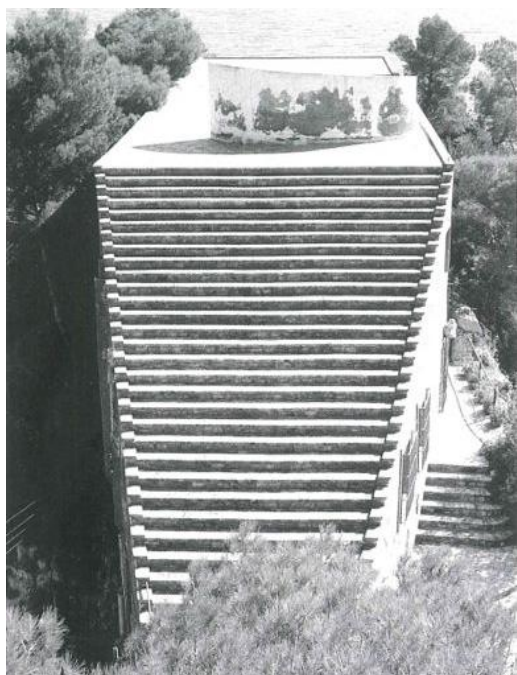
"the history of humanity's origins is a history of walking, a story of the people's migration and cultural and religious exchanges which have taken place along intercontinental routes. It is to the first men's incessant walks that the earth owes the beginning of the slow and complex act of appropriation and mapping of the territory. (CARERI, 2006, p. 22) (Fig.2)

The idea of mapping mentioned by Careri holds specific relevance if compared to our tentative to observe the landscape through direct experience or interpreted drawings. In our specific case the entire coastline of South Albania is identifiable with two important itineraries: the first is called the Riviera road, the most important feature of which is its panoramic quality due to its position above of the sea. For obvious reasons, it has also the peculiarity of being artificial because it was built by man. Its opposite, the second line has been created by God but in a certain sense it has been rearranged by human activity. This line is definable as the coastline and its main role is to guarantee the natural subdivision in between sea and land. In the majority of

cases, its configuration is continuously contradicted by the movement of the sea. Observing the map from above the two lines, the Riviera road and the coastline, one notices a strange relation between the two, in which in function to the reciprocal distance the landscape changes its shape as well its inner inclination to be crossed by the secondary path. Both itineraries are characterized by a varied topography due the always different condition of the land. The characteristic of this part of the Albanian landscape is its production of an immediate effect of metaphysic suspension in which, as a main interpretation the meaning of landscape podium can introduce a new typology of panorama.

As part of the Mediterranean basin, Albania's coastline is characterized by a rich variety of landscape typologies and, in most cases, the relationship between the coastline and the mountains above is always emblematic especially when the artificial condition created by men meets spontaneous nature.

There are traceable cases in south Albania coastline where the distance in between the line of the coast and the Riviera road offers the possibility to include a natural and spontaneous vegetation or the presence of old villages. In both cases the main problem to be considered is how the three elements, the itineraries, Mediterranean nature and the old villages can be reinterpreted within common esthetic characteristics able to identify a certain modality of observing the Albanian landscape.



*Fig3 / Villa Malaparte, Capri. Arch. Adalberto Libera 1938.
source / Marco Ferrara, Adalberto Libera - Casa Malaparte a Capri*



*Fig4 / Curcio Malaparte facing The Annunziata Church in Lipari Sicily 1934
source / Adalberto Libera: Casa Malaparte a capri: 1938- 1942*

The above reflections attempt to bring out new arguments easily connected within the concept of podium as an interpretative tool able to link and underline specificity in a determinate typology of landscape. In this frame of investigation, it is possible to include meanings useful for us and to connect many of the previous discussions regarding the importance of landscape as value and perception.

We can start to assume that one of the main challenges for the new characterization of the Albanian coastline is the reconfiguration of the value of its landscape through two important elements: the concept of podium, seen as a natural threshold and the idea of the itinerary as aesthetic practice.

To better connect abstract concepts with objective realities, I will try to proceed describing my sources of inspiration, through images and thoughts.

The first thought is associated with a very important image in the history of architecture which shows in the foreground the poet, writer and controversial author Curcio Malaparte (1898-1957). Behind him, an old stone path can be seen which leads to a steep stairway and holds up an important church called "Chiesa dell'Annunziata" in Lipari; an island in the Tyrrhenian sea close to Sicily. In addition to the beautiful atmosphere it evokes, this photo, depicts two important moments: the first is, without a doubt, the figure of Curcio Malaparte with the church held up by an artificial podium preceded by an old road, as already mentioned; the second moment, hidden but substantially present in the photo, is the snapshot of a wonderful intuition that will be materialized in the following years.

The intuition of which we speak, sees the extension of an old itinerary with an artificial podium that underlines and, metaphorically speaking, suspends in the void the importance of the temple of Christianity.

The second thought is easily describable thanks to the previous image that most probably, as already mentioned shows the materialization of an intuition expressed and later realized in a different context and place. That intuition was completely absorbed and reinterpreted by the great Italian architect Adalberto Libera (1903-1963) to whom Curcio Malaparte in (1938) gave the commission to design the famous villa Malaparte in "Punta Masullo" in Capri (FERRARI, 2015).

Villa Malaparte is the conclusion of a path that, after crossing all the striking existing

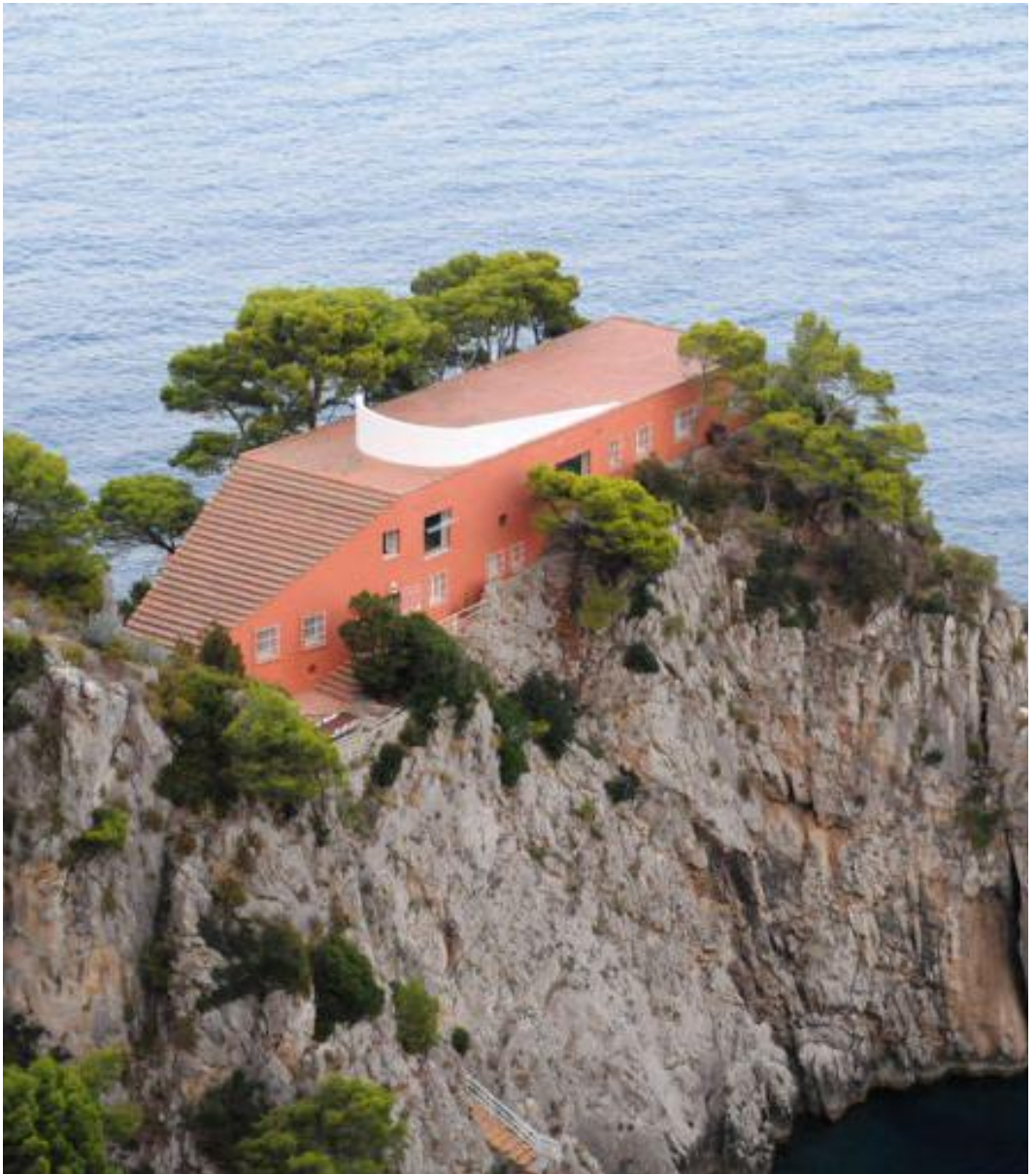
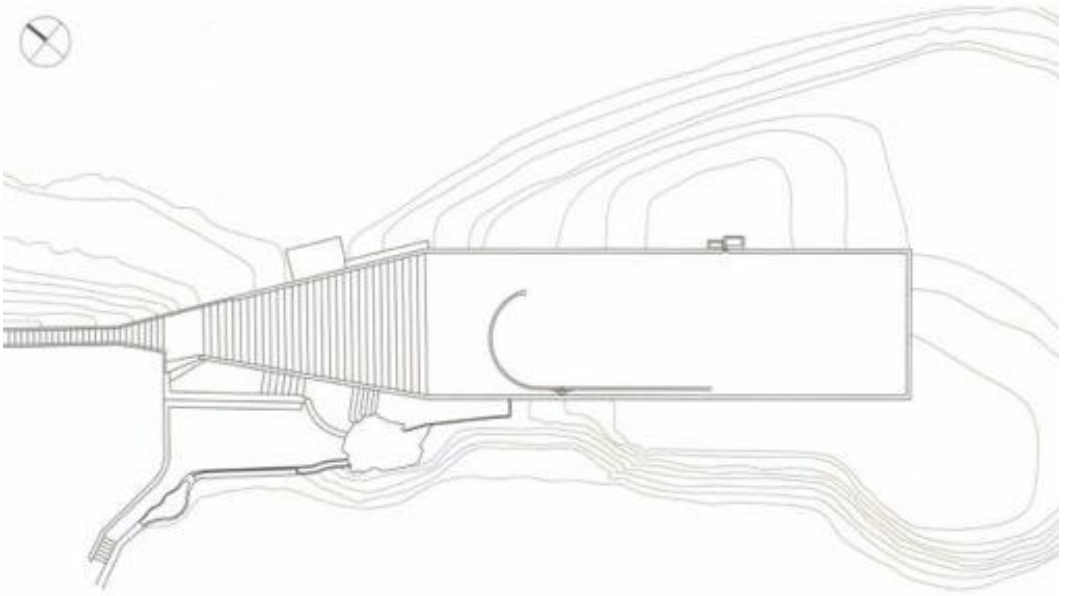
nature, guides the visitors until the end of the line of the coast through an artificial podium.

Similar to the case of the church of Lipari in which the idea of the podium is to suspend and elevate the temple of Christianity, in Malaparte villa's the roof of the building becomes an artificial podium used to suspend and elevate the beauty of the horizontal line of the sea.

The two lines of the Albanian south coast: the Riviera road and the natural coastline, initially introduced, became in this frame of investigation the focus of moment of reflection in which the Albanian landscape can find a new possible characterization. The existing Itinerary, the natural podium and the artificial lines belonging to the landscape can contribute to the rediscovery of a new possible interpretation of Albania's coastline which may prove useful for future intuitions regarding the preservation and rethinking of this beautiful territory. (Fig.3,4,5)

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A project for the Albanian coast

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Every architecture project is always constrained by particular aspects, the famous *Genius Loci*, and more general intentions that act, urged by a necessary action of transforming the existing. Such a dichotomy is expressed through its marks on the paper. This reflection wants to show something about the meaning of these signs. Before doing this, however, a brief premise on the state of the places is needed.

At the moment, the Albanian coastline represents an area that has withstood great transformations over time and therefore shows a very weak infrastructure. This is a characteristic of the entire Albanian coast, with the exception of few urbanized points, as for instance Durrës and Vlora; therefore, the challenge of the project has been that of endowing the territory near the coast with a system of infrastructures that can enhance its use, while at the same time respecting the landscape and environmental characteristics of the place they traverse. The projects introduced here want to create a stronger connection between the new system of longitudinal crossing of the country that will run upstream of the coast, and a secondary road network that allows the comb penetration toward the coastline, where sustainable tourist development functions are hypothesized in the area of intervention. Such interventions have a "light" nature, since they try as much as possible to maintain the unbuilt nature of the coastal band working, above all, on the paths and on "landscape design" actions, corresponding to the wish of preserving

the natural features of the sites of our interventions.

But, before describing in detail the intentions of the project from the architectural and functional point of view, I would like to express some reflections on the meaning of the coast project. I think that planning along the coast means confronting the topic of limits: the coast is, not only from the geographical point of view a limit of dry land, a place that evokes the very concept of the limit, beginning from the "limit of the look", evoking several particular perceptive conditions.

Such a reflection is part of a phenomenology of architecture and is inclined towards reading the signs of the project as linked to a more general perceptive dimension of architecture, in continuity with the natural landscape in which it is inserted.

One of this particularities, for instance, could be defined as "the indifference of the horizon line". Beyond the historical/geographical that differentiates one sea from another, as Predrag Matvejevic showed in his fundamental texts on the various historical/geographical meanings of the Mediterranean, the line of the horizon is the same for every sea, it on the Pacific coast or the more defined limits of "Mare Nostrum". The coast is the limit of a territory with a precise identity and "genius loci", but it leans toward an endless infinity that is the line of the horizon.

Therefore the project, as "every project" that wants to define the identity of

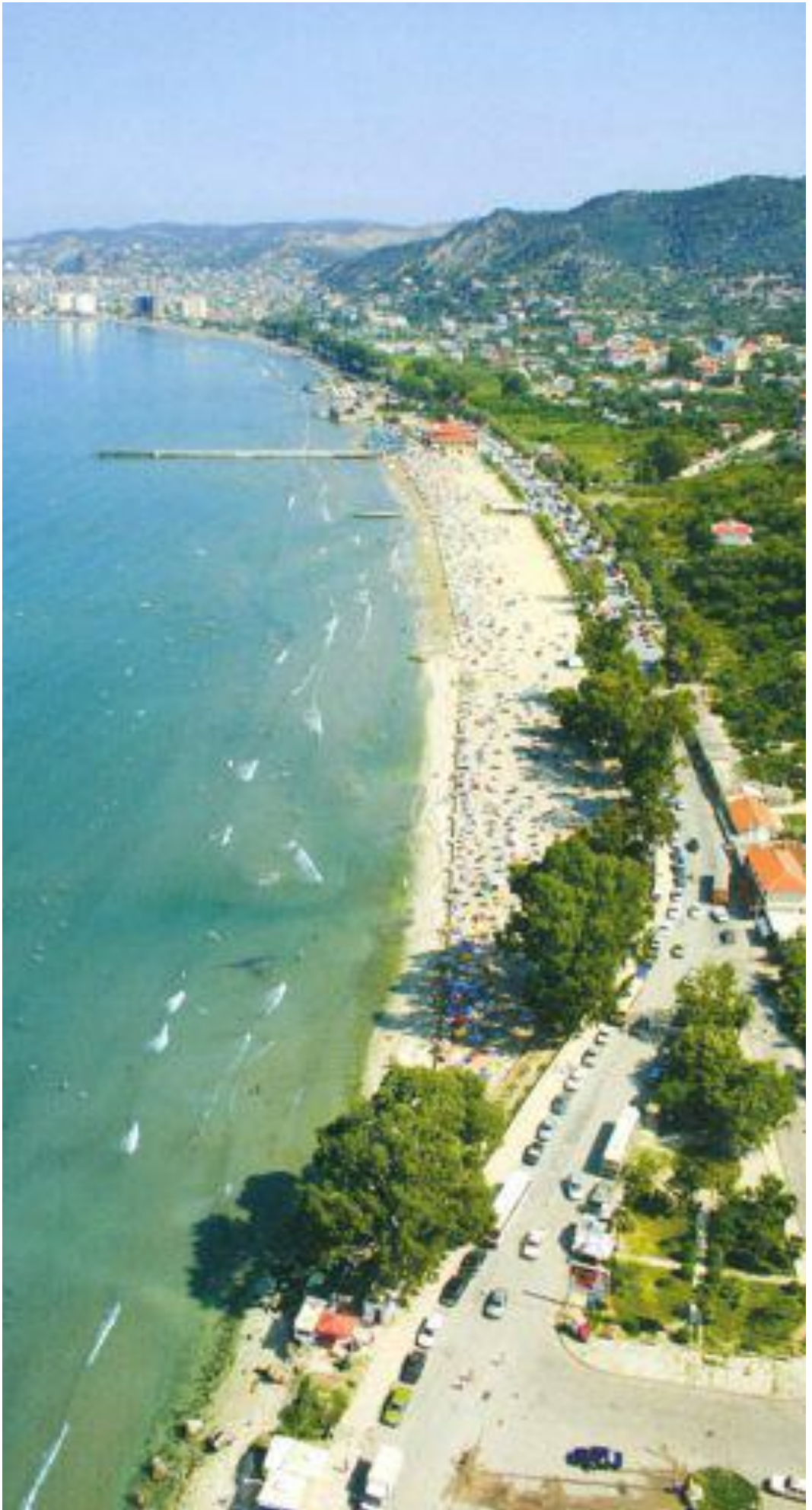


Fig1 / Vlorë waterfront
source / internet



a coastal place, faces two particular conditions: on one side you must answer to the particularity of a place, unique in every coastline: steep, plain, jagged or linear from the point of view of the geographical characteristics; and urban, natural, more or less suitable and adapted to the human presence; and also architecturally different according to the "genius loci" to which it belongs, while on the other side it looks at the infinite/indifferent horizon line.

Another very important action of the general project has been to think about and therefore plan the relationships between the various places, giving them equal or even more importance than the particular projects of the places themselves. Planning a long coastline means, firstly, connecting different points that today are quite connected among them, finding new relationships but also ensuring that every place maintains his own particular characteristics, both geographical and social.

This way, the projects developed for the Albanian coastline in the area of Vlora, located in the South of the country follows the logic of this dichotomy, even reading the signs that represent it on papers: starting from the inside and thus the line of the new north-south axis that runs internally, the new coastal setup leans out toward the sea with the wish to orient itself toward the horizon as the last visual limit. In the different morphological situations connected to the different areas of intervention, some more urbanized, others more natural, some

others even more consolidated from the point of view of the touristic provisions, the guidelines of the project are always the same, differentiating themselves only for demands that are functional and of different uses.

From the functional point of view, it is important to underline the ways in which the choices of the project led to the hypothesis of a strengthening of tourism with an increase in services available for tourists, as this is the vocation of this area of the country. In this sense, therefore, the symbiosis between architecture and landscape, between artificial and preexisting natural elements, represents the original concept that has shaped the project and the guiding element for every project choice.

In particular, observing the project's drafts, the new interventions search a continuity with the signs of the existing territory, as if they want to prolong the signs of the ground, abstractly represented by the curves of level. The desire is to think of the architectural project as the transformation of the natural terrain.

Finally, the general strategy of the project, as emerges by these brief considerations, starts from the idea of preserving the characteristics of the existing landscape as much as possible, and particularly the "Genius Loci", which in Albania, especially along its coast, maintains a very natural and unbuilt character that must remain so, thus trying to recover and improve the quality of the existing buildings



*Fig2 / Albanian Riviera
source / PhD international workshop students*



*Fig3 / Vlorë waterfront
source / internet*

(sometimes also demolishing structures of low quality, as already done by the government for a lot of constructions built illegally along the coast). Starting from this premise, the new project wants to favor such characteristics, adapting to the signs of the area and interpreting the

theme of the coast as a general "limit": the limit between the natural landscape and architecture, between built and not built and finally between the signs of the existing land and the new signs of the project.

hyperNatural landscapes

*Prof PhD Luca Emanuelli / Head of Sealine / Ferrara University
Gianni Lobosco / IDAUP PhD researcher and Sealine member*

During the introduction (1.2) we discussed landscape transformations provoked by tourism and the necessary infrastructures to support it. In this contribution, we introduce the topic of 'new landscapes': the concept of what we call *hyperNatural landscapes*.

The need to bestow a name, to find a neologism for these landscapes is a way to explain the attempt to change attitudes while addressing some fundamental issues like great territorial transformations induced either by tourism or by the realization of new infrastructures, defence or reclamation works.

hyperNatural landscapes

In the above-mentioned cases, the landscape suffers the consequences of the undergone transformations, and the 'new landscape' is the outcome of other phenomena which are normally considered as a necessary and inevitable damage, an impediment, a balance alteration to be restored. These interventions wound the landscape, and the most common approach is to find remedies -ex post facto- through mitigation and compensation works.

We would like to go beyond such an attitude, which seems to derive from a sense of guilt towards Nature, in order to face territorial transformation processes (with a special attention to the design phase) with a different and open mind-set. The precondition to such a change of attitude lies in the avoidance of the ideological dimension of the discussion. In fact, when the clash between different positions shifts to an ideological level, it

usually detaches from the actual matter. When speaking about realizing infrastructures, the point of contention is between who wants to safeguard nature and those who would want to destroy it: it never refers to the actual needs, benefits and costs that building an infrastructures implies.

It would be necessary that, once decided to realize an infrastructural work and carry out all the appropriate evaluations, such transformations were conceived as actual improvements: a brand new landscape is about to be designed, and it will change and replace the former one.

transformation as consequence

Let us focus on the construction of infrastructures, the creation of defensive, reclamation and renovation territorial works, and all those works necessary for tourism development. These represent important contemporary issues (with different weights and impacts depending on the country) and an existing condition within the Albanian context. In fact, Albania is expecting a consistent growth of touristic presence during the next few years, and with this consideration in mind the country is getting ready (e.g. Albanian Riviera); it will have to safeguard its territory with defence works, thinking in terms of resilience (e.g. IPA funding for the provinces of Vlora and Fier, after the recent floods); to carry on reclamation and rehabilitation works of large areas, such as disused productive sites, extraction quarries, areas for the deposit of contaminant materials. These are all opportunities to be exploited in order



Fig1 / the New Highway Tirana - Elbasan under construction from KLM 2+850 (distance counting starting from Tirana) up to the Entrance of the Krabe Tunnel KLM 15+650 / source AKTOR

to develop the "hyperNatural" attitude and re-design the future landscape as something new and original.

against the concept of compensation

If the idea of mitigation, compensation, restoration becomes the dominant one, it means that we move away from the assumption of producing a damage towards the idea that we need to make up to such damage by doing something else. The fact that something is being implemented in order to improve a situation is not envisaged, creating an infrastructure for providing a service and by doing that -together- the landscape could be improved, by taking care of it, changing it, enriching it.

Moreover, if it is assumed that a damage is being done regardless, the measure of its entity threatens to fade into the background.

The point is: when building a functional infrastructural work, a touristic infrastructure, a damage to nature is surely being provoked; so we design and build being persuaded of producing a detriment and it does not matter how we proceed, mitigation and compensation interventions will be realized by doing something else.

against the concept of re-naturalization

The concept of re-naturalizing a place or a landscape comes from the idea of compensation, of restoration. It is not yet very clear what this means in operational terms, if not referring to the prosaic opposition between natural and artificial. If in a certain area of the territory one

exaggerates with artificial works, this has to be compensated by re-naturalizing.

Questionable in its essence, the idea of re-naturalizing an environment is also reassuring for the reference to a return to the past, to what was there and to how it was, and it is certainly better than anything we can imagine as a future perspective of evolution.

landscape disclosure, the sea

A further contribution for developing an alternative approach in addressing the issue of landscape and its transformations as a result of infrastructural territorial and touristic processes may come from the disclosure of those landscapes transformed by man, but not yet recognized as anthropic. The sea is one striking example. And the sea for some nations, such as Albania, holds an exceptional importance. In industrialized countries with a high population density along the coasts (as for the Adriatic conurbation in Italy), the sea all along the littoral is actually an urbanized territory, but yet hidden.

Disclosing these kind of landscapes is the prime move towards effectively operating in the direction of responsible, inasmuch unavoidable, change.

We must open up to the idea that even the sea represents a territory to be taken care of, rich in resources and potential. The sea and the seabed are crossed by infrastructures; it is exploited for fishing and fish farming; for oil and gas extraction. Historically, coasts have been lines of defence, and the matter of resilience against climate change can



*Fig2 / aerial view of the Elbasan metallurgical complex built in 1974 and called the "Steel of the Party"
source / internet*



Fig3 / the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline (TAP), under construction, will connect with the Trans Anatolian Pipeline (TANAP) at the Turkish-Greek border at Kipoi, cross Greece and Albania and the Adriatic Sea, before coming ashore in Southern Italy / source internet

only be effectively faced if we consider such environments, in their process of evolution, as a result of the continuous interaction between humans and nature.

perspective vision

In conclusion, we are facing the opportunity to think prospectively, and not retrospectively. In the Albanian case, such an attitude would seem a natural way of behaving, because a lot has to be done and it represents an opportunity for Albanians to decide, plan, and schedule which direction to take, toward what kind of future, and above all in what manner to proceed.

The alternative is in between tackling the problems and finding the solutions case by case, facing each emergency one at a time, and creating single-purpose infrastructure projects in response to singular needs, or addressing the whole issue of landscape transformation which needs to be adequately equipped, maintained and protected by building a set of works in an integrated and coordinated way.

This latter approach combines different skills in fields as various as landscape architecture, environmental engineering, geology, agronomy, fish farming, and so on.

research by design

Only in the project practice - avoiding ideological issues and misleading terms from the very beginning - such different competences and disciplines can really match and collaborate according to a

pragmatic and disenchanted attitude. The very essence of the landscape issue arises from the design process in which real necessities and clear objectives are posed. In this perspective, the proposal for the "Vlora's seascape" has been a further step of research in the attempt to better define the idea of *hyperNatural* landscapes and its implications.

Learning from 'La Riviera'

Landscape perception as a decoder to analyze and interpret the landscape experience of the motor tourist

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Judging from the entries to the International Urban Design competition dedicated to the Albanian Southern Coast-Strip launched by Atelier Albania in October 2014, the most common trend among most teams was the desire to preserve the landscape of the entire Riviera and the interventions set forth in the proposals were very discreet, almost imperceptible. The only tangible sign expressing a conscious will to manage, through planning and design actions, the improvement of the urban condition in the old settlements and stimulate the economy for the entire region, was the proposal to introduce "land art" elements, new street furniture and road signage. Similarly, the results and the general opinion of the jury and experts showed a commitment to non-intervention. In short, no matter despite the political pressure to boost the economy through the development and strengthening of tourism along the Albanian Riviera and the related need to improve infrastructures and services, most planners, designers, architects and landscape designers that took part in the competition and presented a proposal, took a stand in favor of minimum impact-intervention.

Among others, the zero-impact attitude adopted by the winning project for lot 2 (Burea Bas Smets – Vadim Vosters – Transsolar – Erik de Waele – Son Engineerin & Construction) stands out for its focus on landscape preservation. The chosen strategy to guarantee tourism throughout the year is to "reinforce the cultural landscape" by transforming the

Albanian Southern Riviera into a DRIVER'S experience: like in the nostalgic French Riviera or, even better, in the spooky Mulholland drive in Los Angeles (a product of the Hollywood movie industry, made popular worldwide by the cryptic David Lynch movie in 2001) the landscape is not accessible but it is reserved solely for gaze and contemplation (MARINI 2008 p. 309).

Through popular precedents such as the French Riviera, the Pacific Coast Highway 1 and Mulholland Drive, and using as inspiration and interpretation tools the movies that transformed them into iconic experiences and established them as touristic attractions, this article intends to reflect upon the Riviera as a touristic landscape experience and on the use of landscape perception as a decoder to analyze and interpret the landscape experience of the motor tourist.

The START line

The INTERNATIONAL URBAN DESIGN COMPETITION for the Southern Coast Strip and Surrounding Settlements – RIVIERA in Albania¹, is one of the most relevant initiatives of the last decade in Albania, as it attempted to address the need to generate new economy in the region and reinforce and preserve the natural and cultural assets present in the country. Meeting these sometimes contradictory objectives, and therefore attempting to boost tourism whilst protecting and recovering the natural and cultural assets of the coastal-strip, is always a delicate task and the choice to open a public discussion through an international



Fig1 / Rendering of the project "Reactive Riviera",
source / Re-Active Riviera competition panels

competition was certainly a wise strategy. Given the strong economic pressure imposed by the building industry and, in particular, by the tendency towards the strengthening of tourism, and given the local tendency to operate fast and without the mitigation of planning instruments, the risks at stake are numerous and imminent. According to the competition's brief objectives the priorities for the coastal area involve mainly the urban and economic condition of the villages along the coast and the seaside belt - with its beaches and potential touristic attractions - and the connections between them; the main problems being the progressive abandonment of the villages, the lack of service-equipment, adequate infrastructures, signage for storytelling and orientation. (Fig.2)

Given all the above mentioned risks, it came as no surprise that the main strategy among the selected design teams was the desire to operate discretely and always leaving a margin of indeterminacy. The proposals were subtle suggestions that paved the way to an extended and continued discussion. Also the final results, and the general opinion of jury members and experts, showed a commitment to non-intervention. Within this common attitude it seems worth mentioning the projects for lot 2 (Team 1 - finalist: "Reactive Riviera" -

Metropolis - Sealine - Polis University - Ferrara University; Team 2 - winner: "Albania Riviera Drive" Burea Bas Smets - Vadim Vosters - Transsolar - Erik de Waele - Son Engineerin & Construction), as they had similar intuitions but slightly different approaches to the area. The winning project - "Albania Riviera Drive" - consisted mainly in redrawing the existing landscape and proposing few low impact interventions along the coastline - small sea activities, some contemplation and/or recreational objects scattered along the Riviera Drive - while attempting to preserve the unique landscape conditions and reinforce urban structures and historic polarities.

The "Reactive Riviera" project, on the other hand, was very exhaustive in terms of analysis and deep understanding of the area, and its strategy went beyond the lot and the region itself, taking into consideration the role and the condition of the area within the national and international context. In fact the project wisely considered the Blue European Corridor, its strategic role, and the advantages of its location in the Mediterranean basin. Consequently, accessibility and infrastructural networks² were key elements of the proposal and a strategy based on specific local conditions, guaranteed a flexible approach that could "react" to the peculiarities of

1 / The completion was promoted in October 2014 by Atelier Albania, mandated by the Ministry of Urban Development and Tourism and the Office of the Prime Minister.

2 / It is important to point out that in the "Reactive Riviera" project the term infrastructure was not referred strictly to new roads and service networks, but rather intended in a broader sense; it was in fact referred to the rehabilitation and restoration of existing walking itineraries and pedestrian accesses to beaches, archaeological sites and Natural reserves.



environmental characteristics and socio-economic conditions of each site and respond to the needs and requirements of local communities and municipalities. The proposed time-scale based strategy offered a comprehensive approach aimed at steering a sustainable and gradual development of the strategic program for the coastal areas, while preserving the natural landscape and the cultural heritage through low impact interventions (Sealine, Metropolis, 2014). (Fig 1)

The above mentioned project shared with the winning team an intuition in terms of 'observation' and 'interpretation' of the site: firstly in the identification of different transversal sections (within Lot 2 itself), each one forming a system characterized by peculiar natural, morphologic and anthropic conditions. The team led by Burea Bas Smets called them landscape sequences - the entire coast is then perceived as a meeting area in between two parallel linear systems, the coastline and the coastal road, which in section appear as lines separated by a variable rock formation (Bas Smets, 2014).

While the Metropolis-Sealine team defined them as potential transversal networks³ - natural, historic, landscape, cultural, religious or destination corridors that offer different landscape conditions, morphology and relationship between

road and coastline, villages and beaches, which could potentially work as systems contributing to the ecological, financial and social sustainability of the area (Sealine, Metropolis, 2014). (Fig. 3, 4)

The DRIVE

Given the very high standards of the two entries, what I believe determined the choice of the jury was the poetic reference to the French Riviera and Mulholland Drive at the very beginning of the presentation by Burea Bas Smets. The reference to the above mentioned scenic roads seems right in principle if we consider that, in order to meet the main objective - which was to preserve the landscape of the entire Riviera but still attract tourists and boost the economy - the strategy adopted by the winning team was to consider the "Riviera Drive" as a linear system connecting all the natural elements of the area and the cultural/manmade landscape⁵. Moreover this seems to imply that the Albanian Southern Riviera would have to be transformed into a DRIVER'S experience and, naturally, the kind of tourist that ought to be interested in this kind of attraction would be the motor tourist. (Fig 7/8)

Given the morphology of the coast and the presence of rock formation that acts as a topographic boundary and prevents the road from running close

3 / The strategy adopted by the "Reactive Riviera" project team was to associate to the common words: culture, religion, history and nature, the term landscape; as an attempt to renew and remark the importance of an Albanian Patrimony within a euro-Mediterranean network.

4 / Characterized by sea, mountains, valleys, caves, canyons, waterfalls and springs.

5 / Characterized by villages, castles, religious buildings and terraced cultivations.



Fig2 / Image of the landscape in Borsh, Albanian Adriatic Riviera
source / Metropolis

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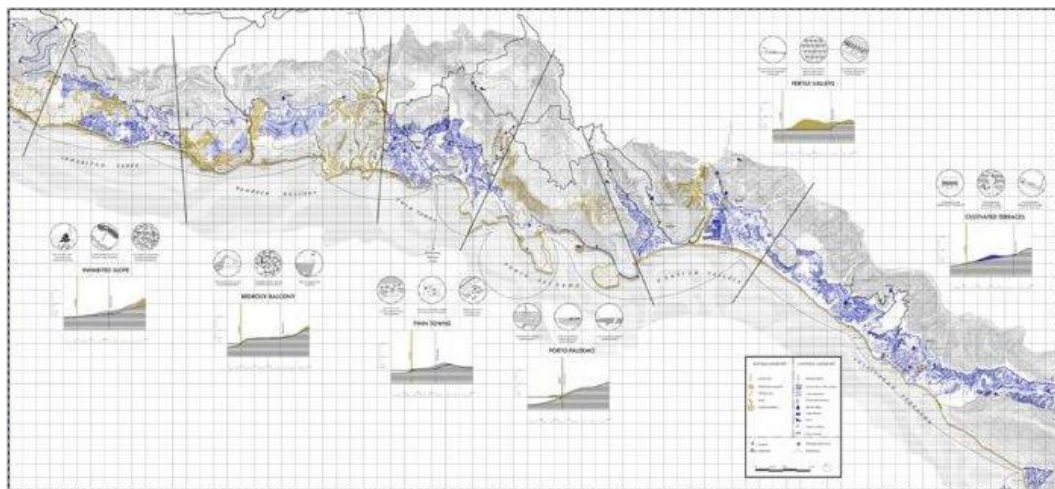


Fig3 / Landscape sequences "Albania Riviera Drive" project
source / Burea Bas Smets

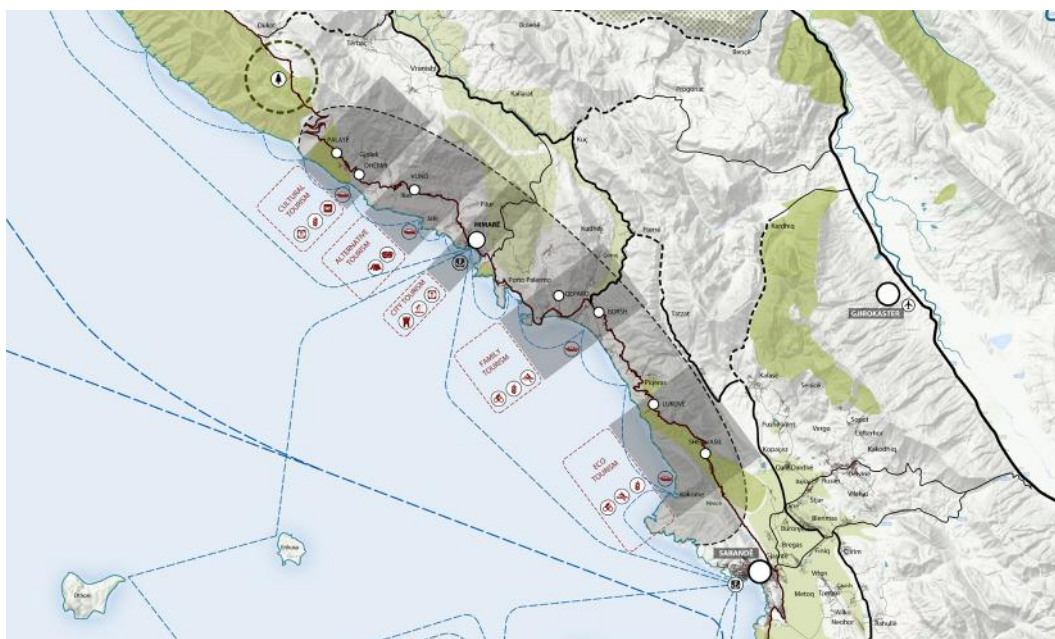


Fig4 / Potential transversal networks "Reactive Riviera" project
source / Re-Active Riviera competition panels



Fig5 / Modern day Claude Mirror / Fig6 left / "Bad Gastein" by Emil Ludwig Löhr 1876
Fig6 right / "Frame It"— Ein Ort setzt sich insBild project / sources internet

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Fig7 / Concept poster for the "Albania Riviera Drive" project / source Burea Bas Smets
Fig8 / French Riviera vintage poster / source internet



Fig9 / The sharp curves along Mulholland Drive, Los Angeles, CA
source / internet

to the coastline in several portions of the coastal strip, according to the winning team the "Riviera Drive" has the potential to become more than a simple connecting infrastructure, specifically a dynamic sequence that visually connects contrasting environments and offers privileged panoramic views of the landscape. The journey along the "Riviera Drive" then becomes a landscape experience and the main attractions are not the possible destinations, nor are the historic landmarks and towns along the way, but the "DRIVE" itself turns into a touristic attraction. The contemporary motor tourist (driver/rider) is guided by the predetermined constriction of the road trajectory and directed toward privileged panoramic spots, where he can gaze and contemplate⁶ nature as it unfolds before his/her eyes, but never really feel as part of it. The landscape perceived by the motor tourist appears as a landscape

painting framed by predefined scenic outlooks along the road, and the view from a moving car appears as a landscape-film, a landscape in motion framed by the side window, the wind shield or the rear view mirror of the car⁷. In this kind of journey "man becomes a passive observer⁸ - a spectator - and nature a distant and fascinating exteriority" (Jakob, 2009, p.112)⁹.

If nothing else, Mulholland Drive and the French Riviera Drive might indeed share with the Albanian coastal-strip the potential to become a Twenty-first Century picturesque travelers'¹⁰ pilgrimage destination, thanks to its aptitude to offer prepackaged real-life postcards. The Albanian Riviera drive would then become a set of predetermined panoramic spots where we can access virtual vending machines selling readymade landscape-images. We could identify and reproduce

6 / Translation from Italian text, Marini, 2008 p. 309. In Marini's book this definition of landscape as gaze and contemplation is used to distinguish between the conception of landscape referred to representation alone, like in paintings, and the more comprehensive meaning which includes in the physical space - and assigns a central importance to - the transformations and the people who operate the latter by living the space day by day.

7 / Through the rear view mirror of the car drivers can perceive at once the landscape they are approaching and the landscape they left behind. On the city seen through the rear view mirror Cfr. "Reynier Banham Loves Los Angeles" (USA - Documentary, Julian Cooper (director), Malcolm Brown (producer) (1972).

8 / The vision from a moving car or bus breaks the frontal logic - framed and still - allowing for a broader view - panoramic and dynamic (Jakob, 2009 p. 119). We are passive observers because even as drivers we only have the illusion of control over visual space. In reality it's the road that defines the field of movement of the car and therefore the car is imposing its point of view on both the driver and the passengers.

9 / See also (Bianconi, 2008 pp. 36-37).

10 / Landscape paintings were so popular in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century that they gave way to a tourism that attracted rich Europeans toward the countryside looking for landscapes that resembled the picturesque paintings themselves.

11 / Our visual experience of landscapes is anticipated by landscape images diffused around Medias. We confuse images with reality and instead of images portraying reality, life imitates the images and videos of real life accessible by new and old visual media users; we value as authentic what we see through technological means more than what we see through our own eyes. In his book "Il Paesaggio" Michael Jakob argues that in the contemporary society everything exists and is recognized through images. The world around us is represented through two kinds of landscape-images: the images that we find on magazines, billboards and television that publicize touristic attractions through which we discover and memorize landscapes; and the endless landscape-images that we produce through photographs and video recordings when we travel. JAKOB, 2009 p. 11 and 115-120.



Fig10 / Mulholland Drive as a metaphor: scene from the movie where the character Rita/Camilla uses a shortcut to reach one of the expensive houses set back and hidden from the road / source internet

the landscape images we saw online and instantly post them on our favorite social network¹¹, contributing to the creation of the new constructed iconic image for the Albanian Riviera.

Motor tourists would park their car at the scenic overlook rest areas and use their Smartphone photographic apps as modern day Claude mirrors¹², to frame the same scenario they saw on their computer while planning their next holiday destination. Or even better, audio guides would accompany them on their journey, alerting them with an acoustic sign when they need to stop¹³, telling them where to direct their gaze, and instructing them on how to frame the predetermined landscape view appearing before their eyes¹⁴. (Fig 5/6)

DRIVING on the 'EDGE'

Mulholland Drive (LA) and the film Mulholland Drive (David Lynch, 2001).

Although the Albanian Riviera in some parts may resemble Mulholland Drive, with its sharp turns and dangerous blind curves, in practical terms it is substantially different. In fact if we take a closer look at the reasons behind the popularity of the reference in question and at its cultural context, it starts losing ground and appears as a superficial comparison. First of all Mulholland Drive is not located along a coast. Although it shares with a coastal road the characteristic of working as a "limit", it's not a limit between land and coastline, but rather between the beautiful

homes and sublime nature of the Santa Monica hills, and the valley - a line running along the edge between the real life and the make believe life of the Hollywood movie industry. Moreover in order to stand a comparison with Mulholland Drive, the Albanian Riviera would need to have a pop culture background that cannot be forcefully injected or imitated: Albanian culture lacks the myth and the movies, which in the case of Mulholland Drive transformed the road itself, and the experience of driving along it, into an attraction¹⁵. (Fig 9)

Mulholland Drive is a scenic road that follows the ridgeline of Eastern Santa Monica Mountains and Hollywood hills, connecting two sections of US route 101 and leading to Pacific Coast Highway 1 near Malibu, "taking Angelenos from the city to the ocean"¹⁶. Along the winding road the driver can gaze over the panoramic views of the city, the mountains and the ocean. Behind each blind curve the surrounding landscape is revealed to him in all its overwhelming power. There are only but a few safe spots where the driver can stop and contemplate the scenic overlooks (like the outlook offering one of the 1000 views over the Hollywood sign), and the landscape is mostly experienced in motion. But Mulholland drive hasn't gained its reputation solely for its scenic properties, it withholds meanings that are deeply rooted in its morphology and the culture of the Hollywood movie industry: its Metaphorical geography¹⁷ is what transformed it into a driving experience, and David Lynch is the movie director who



Fig11 / Grace Kelly and Cary Grant along the French Riviera in "To Catch a Thief" / source internet

Fig12 / French Riviera vintage poster / source internet

consecrated it as a dark and mysterious icon.

Mulholland Drive is in fact a 50-mile long road that winds its way along the spine of the Santa Monica Mountains, offering amazing views of the San Fernando Valley and the Hollywood Hills, where the rich – and, sometimes famous – reside¹⁸. At the base of the hills are the people trying to climb the ladder of stardom; the road on

the "edge", seen as a metaphor, represents "the path on the journey to stardom"¹⁹. Thanks to its geography and morphology and to the context, the road serves as a perfect backdrop for Hollywood Movies. It is no surprise then that David Lynch chose to title his masterpiece (Mulholland Drive, 2001) after the road itself, which serves as a metaphor for some of the main "interpretations" behind the storyline. (Fig 10)

12 / The Claude mirror (In Italian "Vetro Claude" – from the name of the painter Claude Lorrain) was a tool which inherited his name from the famous Seventeenth Century picturesque landscape painter Claude Lorrain, who painted predominantly central Italy landscape views. His paintings were considered more beautiful than the landscapes they were reproducing. If this mirror was held in the right position it could frame a scenario similar to o paintings by Claude Lorrain. In fact Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century picturesque tourists and painters used to bring along the Claude mirror or Black mirror in order to faithfully reproduce the effect of the paintings they had seen. This tool was a carry on size mirror, with a convex surface tinted grey. If, while giving his/her back to the panoramic view, the observer/tourist looked at the Claude mirror held in front of him, he/she could see the reflection of the landscape, looking better than in reality and resembling the one reproduced in the landscape paintings of the time. The convex shape of the mirror was able to squeeze in the framed field a very wide view, wider than what the human eye could have embraced, and the grayish color of the glass altered the real colors of the landscape, rendering them more pleasing to the eye of the Seventeenth/Eighteenth Century traveler (following the taste and the standards of the picturesque). See also (Bianconi, 2008 pp. 52-53).

13 / Cfr. "Reyner Banham Loves Los Angeles" (USA – Documentary, Julian Cooper (director), Malcolm Brown (producer) (1972). In his documentary Banham lands at the LAX Airport and rents a car equipped with a recorded tour guide that shows him around Los Angeles. While Banham drives, the recorded voice gives him directions and delivers information about the city; an acoustic sign played by the recorded tape warns him when it is time to stop the car, or simply direct his attention towards something in particular.

14 / Similar to the task of the British Improvers who would accompany the visitor of the 1700-1800 on site giving them a rectangular glass inserted in a frame with a handle to admire the landscape.

15 / Similar to the myth of Historic Rout 66 which keeps attracting every year herds of pagan pilgrims.

16 / Mulholland Drive is actually only one stretch of the entire extension of the road. In fact the western rural portion is called "Mulholland Highway"; a non-paved portion called "Dirt Mulholland" – not open to motor vehicles – follows and runs until few miles west of S 405 San Diego Freeway, where the actual "Mulholland Drive" begins and, after running parallel to US Highway 101 along the Santa Monica Mountains and passing the Hollywood Hills, ends at Cahunga Boulevard, close to Universal Studios. WIKIPEDIA (2015)

17 / From Your guide to understanding this movie: Mulholland Drive – Blog. [Online] Available online from: <https://rodsmovierants.wordpress.com/2012/05/19/your-guide-to-understanding-this-movie-mulhol/> [Accessed: September 2015].

18 / Many of the most expensive homes of the world can be found along Mulholland Drive, but since they are set back from the road they are not easily visible from the latter.

19 / In one scene of the film Mulholland Drive by D. Lynch, the character Rita/Camilla uses a shortcut to reach one of the expensive houses set back and hidden from the road, symbolically suggesting that this might speed up her journey to stardom. From, Your guide to understanding this movie: Mulholland Drive, op. cit.

20 / In the film scene in question Grace Kelly is not actually driving along the French Riviera; it is what is commonly known as a blue screen driving shot – also known as a process shot. The scene is a typical special effect of the early days of motion pictures, something called "rear window" projection, wherein due to the difficulty of shooting on a moving car, the moving background was filmed separately, then projected onto a screen behind the actors, who sat in a mockup of a car and acted as normal. Thus the illusion and the thrill of the movie scene might appear ruined to contemporary spectators and the act of steering by Grace Kelly – clearly not matching the movement of background – might appear comic.

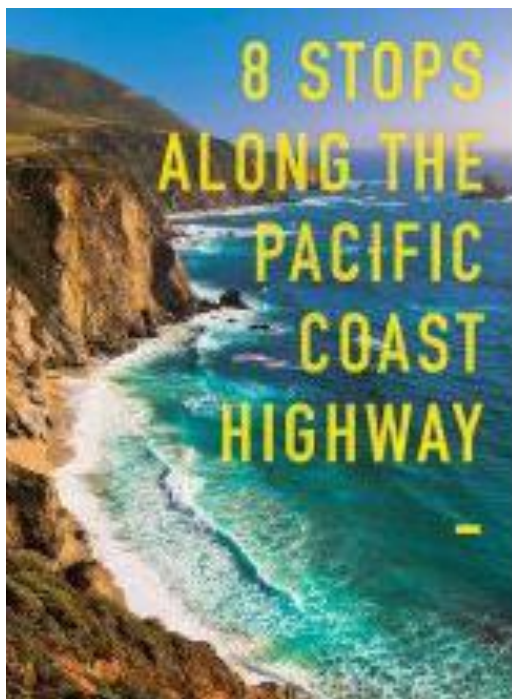


Fig14 / Pacific Coast Highway, California, USA / source internet



Fig13 / Llogara, Albanian Adriatic Riviera / source Metropolis.

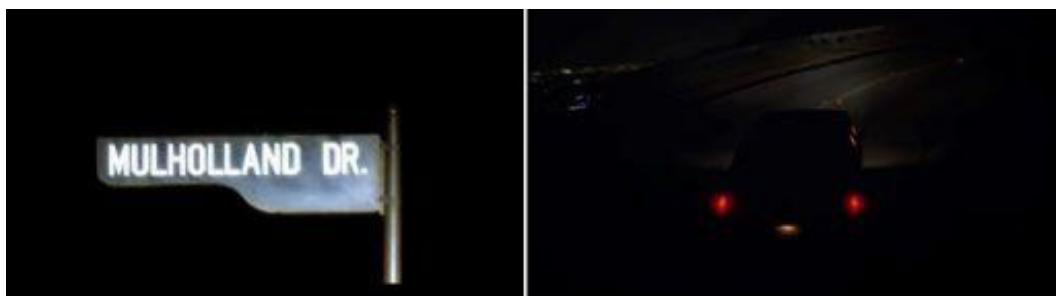


Fig15 left / Mulholland Drive street sign from the homonymous movie by David Lynch;
Fig15 right / "Mulholland Drive", opening sequence showing the sharp headlights of the dark limo.
source / internet.



Fig16 / "Mulholland Drive: The Road to the Studio" England 1980, David Hockney / source internet

The French Riviera (FR) and the film To Catch a Thief (Alfred Hitchcock, 1955).

The very first reference in the presentation of the lot 2 winning team was an old poster of the French Riviera, with its colorful towns and winding road, the same road that showed a preoccupied – but still composed, dignified and slick – Cary Grant and a fearless and flawless Grace Kelly, virtually speeding on the cliff side, in what today appears as a far too obvious and slightly disappointing a blue screen driving shot²⁰. In the Movie *To Catch a Thief* (1955) the winding, and potentially dangerous, Riviera Drive presents itself as a backdrop to the Hitchcock thriller masterpiece and confers the feeling of danger to the plot, by providing a strong contrast with the colorful, luscious, expensive and classy life in the small towns clinging to the steep slopes of the French Riviera. (Fig 11)

It would certainly be desirable to transform the Albanian Riviera in a colorful, but classy, touristic destination, but apart from the different culture and historic substance, the French Riviera is successful because along it we encounter several cities rich of attractions and services for the tourists, and not just land art sculptures and small scenic outlooks. As a matter of fact the French Riviera is not about the

"DRIVE" itself, or at least only secondarily; the tourists are mostly attracted by the picturesque towns and the small equipped beaches along the coast. I believe that this highlights the importance of such attractions, infrastructures and services to guarantee economic growth and prosperity for the entire region – as long as these services are developed following an informed and sustainable approach. (Fig 12)

Pacific Coast Highway 1 (California) and the HBO Crime drama television series True Detective. (Cary Joji Fukunaga, Justin Lin, 2014).

My opinion is that the Albanian Riviera Drive actually shares more similarities with the pacific Coast Highway and the area of the Big Sur, than with Mulholland Drive or the French Riviera Drive. First of all in terms of geography and morphology of the coast: just like in the Albanian Riviera, here the road is not always near the coastline due to the steep rock formations that act as topographic boundaries. When the road runs deeper inside the land, the drive crosses Natural parks and springs and offers privileged panoramic points overlooking the natural landscape. In the few instances where the road comes close

21 / Artificial as in *Anthropized*, modified by men. This includes of course rural landscape and things that seem "naturally" present in our landscape but have an artificial character (water basin of a hydroelectric plant, trees in a forest managed by men, grass in farming land, etc.) (CLÉMENT 2005). For Typological study of landscape see also, BIANCONI 2008, p.22.

22 / "The picturesque found pleasure in roughness and irregularity, and they tried to establish it as a critical category between the "beautiful" and the "sublime". Picturesque scenes were thus neither serene (like the Beautiful) nor awe-inspiring (like the Sublime), but full of variety, curious details and interesting textures [irregularity, asymmetry, and interesting textures] – medieval ruins [in the natural landscape] were quintessentially Picturesque". (Oxford Dictionary of Art and Artists – available online at, <http://oxfordindex.oup.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199532940.001.0001>).



Fig17 / Two men walking back to the village along the Albanian Riviera, Borsh
source / Metropolis

to the coastline, the beaches and the ocean become accessible. As we drive along PCH 1 we can experience very different environments, where the relationship between natural and artificial²¹ landscape is still balanced and harmonious. The main difference between the Californian Pacific Coast and the Albanian Southern Riviera is the fact that in some parts the Pacific Coast runs at very high levels above the water and the landscape appears more

dramatic, overwhelming, tending towards the sublime; whilst the Albanian southern coastal-strip seems to be characterized by the alternation of sublime panoramic moments - mountains, canyons and waterfalls - and more subtle picturesque views²² - terraced cultivations, small, sometimes abandoned, villages, ancient ruins of castles and religious buildings, and mimetic bunkers overthrown by wild vegetation. (Fig 13/14)

The sublime landscape of the Big Sur in California and the iconic elements of its landscape, like Bixby Creek Bridge – one of the most photographed bridges along the Pacific Coast – keep inspiring movie directors who seek to confer to landscape a leading role in their films. One of the most recent examples can be found in the HBO Crime drama television series *True Detective* (Cary Joji Fukunaga, Justin Lin, 2014), where several scenes are shot in the sublime and violent nature of uncontaminated landscapes along PCH1. The plot of the Second series is about a bizarre murder that brings together three law-enforcement officers and a career criminal, each of whom must navigate a web of conspiracy and betrayal in the scorched landscapes of California²³. The sublime landscape serves as a backdrop where the characters are introduced and it contributes to the construction of a “psycho-sphere ambiance”²⁴.

The example of PCH1 and the surrounding settlements shows us that, in order to make the area sustainable and attractive to tourists, it's important to provide facilities. For example, even when the beaches are not accessible, it's important to supply alternative activities and structures that adapt and change their offer, guaranteeing the extension of the touristic season to the entire year. In this respect the “Reactive Riviera” project seemed to give a more realistic and convincing answer to the need of improving the urban condition and the use of the touristic areas along the coast, providing concrete answers to the problems and the needs of the Albanian Riviera. Land art objects and iconic images alone cannot activate tourism and boost the economy. While preserving and respecting the natural landscape remains the priority, complementing the evocative contemplation elements with new services and including the existing villages and attractions in sustainable networks, is a promising and farseeing strategy.

CONTRASTED environment

It has come to my attention while researching the above mentioned references for the “Riviera Drive” and watching the movies shot in such locations with greater attention, that they all share a common characteristic: they seem to have a “Dark Side” to them. Why?

In the famous picture directed by Alfred Hitchcock, the French Riviera Drive serves as a backdrop to the thriller: the feeling of danger and thrill is conferred by the “speed” of Grace Kelly's car on the winding road located on the edge of the cliff, along the ridge of the mountains. In the film *Mulholland Drive* the road appears as a dark and dangerous place and it is only shown during nighttime. The total absence of street lighting enhances the sharp headlights of the dark limo, which only show what is in the very proximity of the car and leaves the rest of the landscape in total darkness. This condition contributes to the mystery of the movie and the feeling of incognito and danger. (Fig. 15) Similarly PCH 1 is the backdrop for several thriller movies, probably because it appears as a dark and idyllic setting, at the end of the world, where the landscape is often overwhelming and tends towards the sublime: a dangerous road with low visibility where “bad things happen”²⁵.

If we were to seek for an answer to the question why all these drives have a dark feeling to them, it might be traceable in the strong contrast that they establish: in both PCH1 and *Mulholland Drive* the road setting is in contrast with California culture, the colorful world of the movies industry, the fictitious façade of the Hollywood stars. Likewise we could say that the French Riviera Drive offers a substantial contrast: its unpredictable blind curves against the colorful towns along the coast, full of life and frivolous activities.

Speaking of contrast it is interesting to notice that one of the famous car journey paintings by David Hockney is entitled after the road I refer to as dark and spooky, while the painting in question appears as a glorification of color. In the painting *Mulholland Drive: The Road to the Studio*, Hockney breaks the confinement of the one-point perspective and represents a sequence of familiar landmarks along the winding road (which is flattened to cover the horizontality of the painting's layout), with harmonious forms and joyful colors – which seem to be informed by the color of Matisse, Seurat and Dufy – while the “vast horizontality of this very large work (it is over twenty feet wide) encourages the viewer to obey the verbal noun of the title:

23 / From Series Information. HBO Website. [Online] Available online from: <http://www.hbo.com/true-detective/about/index.html> [Accessed: September 2015].

24 / From: Hibberd, James (May 27, 2014) *True Detective' season 2 scoop: Trio of leads, California setting* – Entertainment Weekly Website. [Online] Available online from: <http://www.ew.com/article/2014/05/27/true-detective-season-2-scoop> [Accessed: September 2015].

25 / Quoting Jason Payne – Professor at UCLA, school of Architecture and Urban Design (LA)

Drive" (MELIA 1995, p.141). (Fig. 16)
Also Albania is a country full of contrasts and this could become a quality that is preserved and valued. Albanians would then stop blindly imitating neighboring and distant countries, and start creating their own identity instead, offering to the world a whole new experience that cannot be found anywhere else and that has its personal and unique identity.

The FINISH line

The Albanian coastal-strip shares many characteristics with other coastal areas of the Mediterranean, and to some extent, with the California Pacific Coast, but at the same time it retains many peculiarities that make it unique. Therefore the lessons learned elsewhere cannot be directly applied to the Albanian context, but need to be elaborated and adapted to the territory and to its unique landscape conditions. The negative consequences of borrowing planning approaches design strategies and even technologies from near or faraway countries and applying them without any filter, revision and adaptation, appears obvious if we look at cities like Tirana and on how these operations can disrupt the landscape and erase what is left of tradition and cultural heritage.

The future of the Albanian Riviera should be in line with its contrasting and multicultural heritage, even with the clamorous contradictions of its contemporary culture - the country seems "simultaneously 20 years behind and 20 years forward" - where we can find on the same street of the capital city an old man pedaling his improvised vehicle²⁶ to deliver goods and a line of sluggish cows returning to their stables, riding alongside a young and polished entrepreneur speeding with his awkward Mercedes, while talking on his shiny smart phone; or an old bunker annexed to an improvised informal house,

being swallowed by an agglomeration of curtain walled hotels that seem to be about to dive into the sea. (Fig 17)

If Albanians were indeed to draw inspiration from the resourceful American culture, it should not be to mimic their iconic roads, but rather to draw inspiration from their imagination and their capacity to transform a road that takes you nowhere into a mystic experience; to make a museum out of potatoes ("Idaho Potato Museum", Blackfoot, Idaho), bananas ("International Banana Museum", Mecca, California) or even toilet seats ("Toilet Seat Art Museum" in Texas). The same inventiveness that made Americans see the moon as the ideal open air museum display case (CATUCCI, 2013, p. 105) and allowed them to come up with the idea of creating Museums on the Moon²⁷. All the traces left on the moon by the astronauts during the lunar missions are not elements that retrace a history, but rather "objects of self-interest, aesthetic objects" (CATUCCI, 2013, p.107). The traces have become fetishes and maybe someday the sites will become yet another theme park where they can sell us memorabilia of the programmed²⁸ trace of men on the moon.

If we were to follow this attitude, the task of a designer approaching the Albanian Riviera and its future development, should not be only a traditional mapping of the area, a simple redrawing of the landscape, the infrastructures and the settlements, but rather an investigation that highlights the hidden - apparently unimportant - peculiarities of the environment: like augmented landscape representations where bunkers become elements of the natural landscape; schizoanalytic²⁹ cartographies of the Riviera, where Time and Space merge and the highlighted temporal contradictions become a characterizing aspect of the Albanian landscape; documentations of the

26 / In Tirana it is very common to find small self-assembled transportation means made with bicycle or scooter spare parts combined with a container to place materials and goods.

27 / The US government attributes a "unique historic and cultural value" to the first and last NASA expedition to the moon (respectively, Apollo 11 and Apollo 17) and this resulted in the prohibition of future visits to these sites in all their parts. In fact to safeguard the human artifacts left on the moon by the astronauts, NASA defined Exclusion Zones around the sites of the moon landings, tracing a perimeter with a 75 m. ray from the lunar modules left on the moon during the expeditions. These areas are not accessible by machines or people. Ref. CATUCCI, 2013, p. 105.

28 / According to Catucci in his book "Imparare dalla Luna" (English translation: "Learning from the Moon"), the entire moon expedition experience was part of a precise documenting strategy, where organized narration was staging the event before it even happened. Ref. (CATUCCI, 2013, p. 107).

29 / Schizoanalysis (schizo- from Greek skhizein meaning 'to split') is a concept created by philosopher Gilles Deleuze and psychoanalyst Félix Guattari and first expounded in their book Anti-Oedipus (1972). In Chaosmosis, Guattari explains that "rather than moving in the direction of reductionist modifications which simplify the complex," schizoanalysis "will work towards its complexification, its processual enrichment, towards the consistency of its virtual lines of bifurcation and differentiation, in short towards its ontological heterogeneity." Guattari 1992. Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm. Trans. Paul Bains and Julian Peñafís. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 1995. Trans. of Chaosmosis. Paris: Editions Galilée. (P. 61).

30 / See "Every Building on the Sunset Strip", 1966, Edward Ruscha. Self-published book, offset lithograph, 1966.

31 / Ref. Venturi R., Scott Brown D., Izenour S. (1977) Learning from Las Vegas. Cambridge: MIT Press.



Fig18 / "Every Building on the Sunset Strip", 1966, Ed Ruscha
Self-published book, offset lithograph, © Ed Ruscha / source internet

coastal territory through sequential views printed on one single sheet of foldable paper³⁰; or exercises of isolation and combination of popular culture elements and unconventional mapping that draw inspiration from the ever-referenced research by Robert Venturi³¹.
(Fig 18)

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3.1

Re-active Riviera / competition description

Metropolis / Sealine

3.2

The contribution of cultural routes regarding the sector of sustainable tourism in the Albanian Riviera

Sonia Jojic

3.3

Survey and architectural recovery activities of semi-abandoned villages as strategic actions towards the sustainable development of local economies

Luca Rossato

3.4

Transhumances

Roberto Pasini

3.5

RIVIERA PANORAMIC CORRIDOR_ a Gateway towards the South Albania Landscape

Mario Assisi

3.6

Re-use and Revitalization of Military Bunkers in the Albanian Riviera

Egla Luca

3.7

Landscape project / Large-scale project

Elena Dorato

3.8

Albanian Riviera / urban form and landscape, the core elements for a future metanational Landscape

Saimir Kristo

3.9

Slow road to Butrinti / Time-based reflections for an emerging touristic territory.

Lang Thorsten

Gianni Lobosco

3.10

Taking measures regarding the invisible dimension of the landscape

Joana Dhiamandi

3.11

Albanian Riviera: Creative Tourism Transcending Local Expediency

Arta Januzi-Cana

3.12

The contribution of cultural routes Olive tree as a way of life in the Albanian Riviera

Erida Curraj

All the PhD researchers contributions in this chapter have been through a double-blind peer review process.

3

riviera competition

Re-active Riviera / competition description

Sealine / MetroPOLIS
Second Prize Winner / lot 2

design team Metropolis / Prof PhD Besnik Aliaj, PhD Loris Rossi, PhD Antonino Di Raimo, MSc Endrit Marku, MSc Ledian Bregasi, MSc Laura Pedata, MSc Edi Hila, MSc Elvan Dajko
design team Sealine / Prof PhD Roberto Di Giulio, Prof PhD Luca Emanuelli, Prof PhD Antonello Stella, PhD Giacomo Bizzarri, PhD Marco Stefani, PhD Massimo Tondello, MSc Luca Coltro, MSc Carlo Ruyblas Lesi, MSc Gianni Lobosco
collaborators / Sonila Brahollari, Gerdi Papa, Emel Petërçi, Dean Hado, Iris Hyka, Ada Lushi, Klaudio Ruci, Nevila Zaimi, Sonia Jojic, Luca Rossato, Roberto Pasini, Mario Assisi, Egla Luca, Elena Dorato, Saimir Kristo, Lang Thorsten, Joana Dhiamandi, Arta Januzi-Cana, Erida Curraj, Filippo Pesavento

The Riviera Competition was launched by Atelier Albania, mandated by the Ministry of Urban Development and Tourism and the Office of the Prime Minister, in 2014. The international design competition was aimed to the improvement of the public space, in the southern coast strip. Such area attracts the majority of the local and international tourists coming to Albania and is a generator for the economy of the whole region especially during the summer. The Reactive Riviera proposal has been developed for such competition by a multidisciplinary team that collect several expertises from Sealine and Metropolis. In its early elaboration it has also been fed by the theoretical contribution of Polis&UniFe's PhD candidates. This mix allowed to accomplish the competition challenges and in some way to go beyond it proposing a "process" more than a "steady" project.

The definition "Reactive Riviera" comes from a research project by Sealine that focuses on comparison, parallel study and feedback between coastal cities and tourist areas pertaining to the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion. It investigates consolidated and emerging realities:

contexts at different stages of progress in relation to the development of a touristic model. The reference point is the Riviera Romagnola coast. As a mature and extreme territory from this point of view, it represents an example in both positive and negative. Starting from it, the aim is to define new solutions and strategies for emerging contexts, the booming ones – most of them placed in the east Adriatic basin. They have different characteristics, but are increasingly subject to similar dynamics. Emerging realities, in tourism trade, are now in the position to plan their growth after an initial unchecked boom period. Within the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion public and private subjects are increasingly interested in strategies and devices to address this turning point. Operating here provides the ability to test innovative solutions in less compromised and locked situations. That is the case of Albanian South Coast where the proposal Reactive Riviera has been developed as a first case-study.

Objectives and challenges

The proposal is grounded on the belief that Tourism is the most important

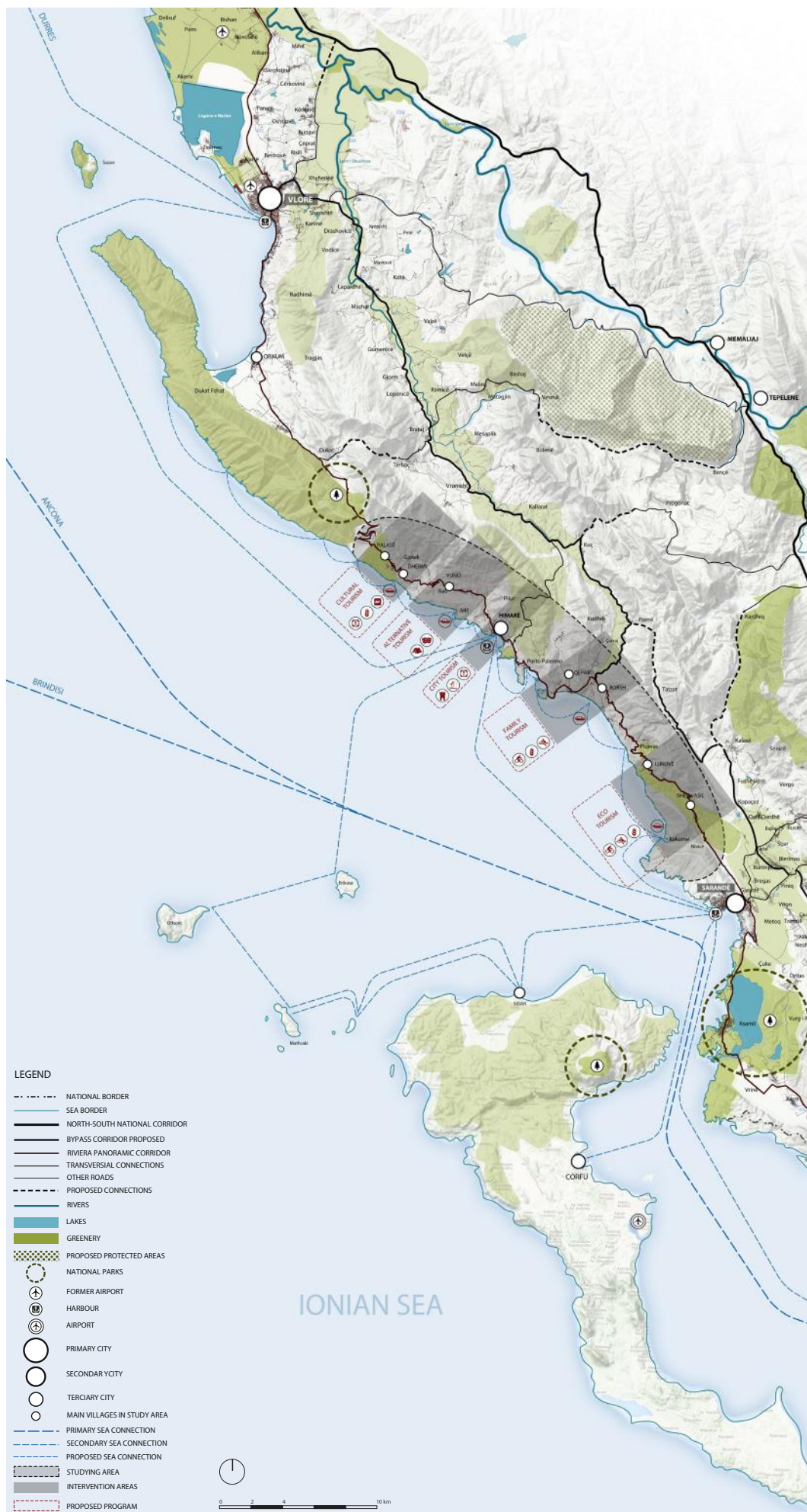
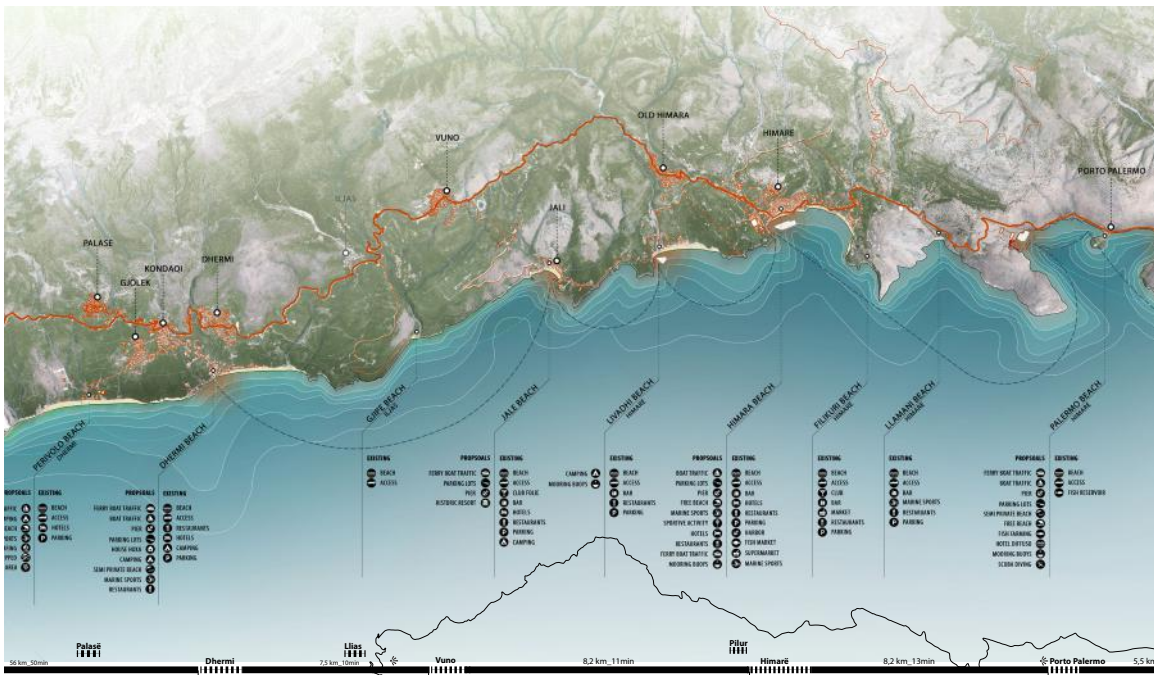


Fig1 / Re-Active Riviera Vision
source / Re-Active Riviera competition panels



source for the Riviera segment, identified as Himara Area, to growth safeguarding and improving its environmental and cultural heritage (i.e. mountain and coastal landscapes, villages and local communities, traditions and identities). This means a low impact development of infrastructures and facilities for both local people and the travellers, cultural heritage and environment. Protection of natural sources requires as well interventions to be planned in the logic of a limited consumption of land beside a strategy to improve accessibility and understanding of natural and cultural sites. In that perspective, Reactive Riviera Project aims to take the opportunity to act in a proactive way. Tourism and Public Aesthetics have the potential to create beneficial effects on the environment by contributing to its valorisation and conservation. They can act as instruments to raise awareness of environmental values and tools to finance protection of natural areas and increase their economic importance.

These have been the main objectives and the ambitious challenges of the Reactive Riviera Project.

Sustainable, ethical and local are the three important keywords that drive the project. Ideas and proposals focus intersection of environmental, social and economic issues, founding their feasibility on: data survey of environmental conditions, eco balance, potential risks and potential impacts produced (environmental sustainability); assessment of community resilience, local traditions, potential involvement and participation of inhabitants in the changes and growth (social sustainability);

compatibility and balance between investors' expectation and community needs, rights and participation (financial sustainability). In order to address these different tasks, the first issue concerns the interpretation of Albanian Riviera in terms of touristic potential. According to the general reference model described by Luca Emanuelli in the introduction of the book (Chapter 1.3), the components that determine the tourist attractiveness of an urban system or a territory can be studied and related one each other. The "primary component" includes the reasons for the attractiveness of a destination: the territory resources (historical, landscape, environmental) that justify the visit. The "secondary component" includes the services to tourists, receptivity and functions designed to satisfy the accessories needs. The "infrastructure component" includes devices that allow tourists to reach the destination and move in the area. The efficiency of the individual components and their relationships determine the success and attractiveness of the territory from the point of view of tourism. The key factor, however, is represented by the relationship that all of the components are able to engage with the "local community". This relationship field is called "buffer zone".

Looking at this scheme it is possible to identify strengths and weaknesses of the Albanian Riviera and, at the same time, to clarify the proposal operation field and its challenges. Here the value of the Primary Component is preponderant. The Albanian Southern coast, seen as a thick and complex territory, shows

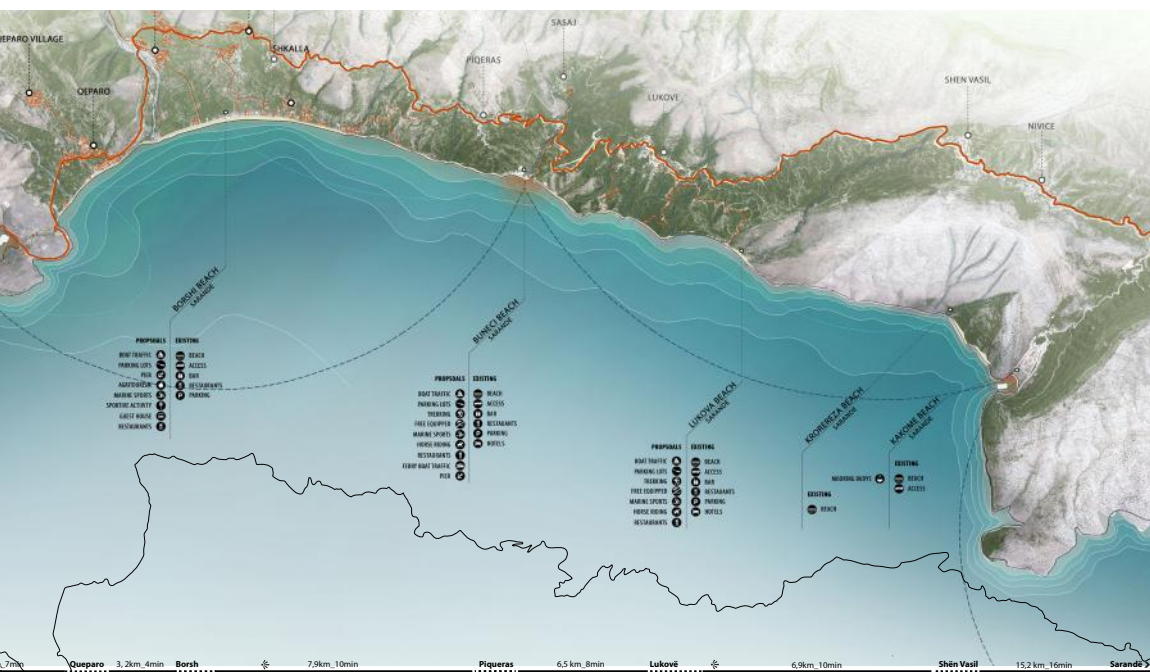


Fig2 / Plan in 1:25000
source / Re-Active Riviera competition panels

its huge attractiveness potential in the fields of: natural environment, leisure and cultural heritage. Beyond that, the role of public aesthetics and the quality of public space via smart design can help not only building a successful economic and financially viable area, but also branding and marketing a totally new international image for Albania, as a world destination. Reaching this goal working on Infrastructure Component is the main challenge to deal with, first of all in terms of transportation. The project aim is to control and drive the infrastructure development toward a smart and sustainable system: connecting mobility systems and transforming the time of travelling in an amazing experience across the Albanian Riviera Landscape and its Art Works and Heritage Sites integrated along the transportation itineraries. Beside that it is fundamental to work on the energy process efficiency in order to support possible facilities developments through renewable sources and a zero-kilometre approach in the energy supply chain. This two main challenges have to be matched by a sustainable financial approach based on principles of business ethics driving the business models beyond the proposal. Some models, in this sense, have been investigated, compared with the available ones in the Albanian legislation and applied to the different situations.

Strategic vision

The project strategic vision is formulated in order to emphasize the mutual relationship between the the primary component and the mobility infrastructural one. In this

sense it aims at boosting accessibility through an infrastructural network based on relevant spots and diverse-scale itineraries (seaborne connections, pedestrian paths, trails). This spots will also support inter-modality between large scale flows and local mobility networks. Working as Touristic hubs, they are meant to be gates for wider territories: allowing to penetrate other adjacent regions of the country - making the whole tourist package of Albanian and their economic program more sustainable; allowing to discover and access unknown landscape and coastal areas - maximizing social and economic impact of strategic public investments, and promote incremental public-private partnership. The proposed interventions concern specific and diverse spots in the territory addressing all the other components of the touristic model. Different types of intervention methods have been planned depending both on the areas conditions and on the possible timing that the strategy of the Reactive Riviera Project should be based on. We propose to extend then the intervention in certain natural, historic, landscape, cultural, religious or destination corridors that start but go beyond the area of the competition, in order to boast the economic impact and maximize the social benefit of the public investments for all Albania.

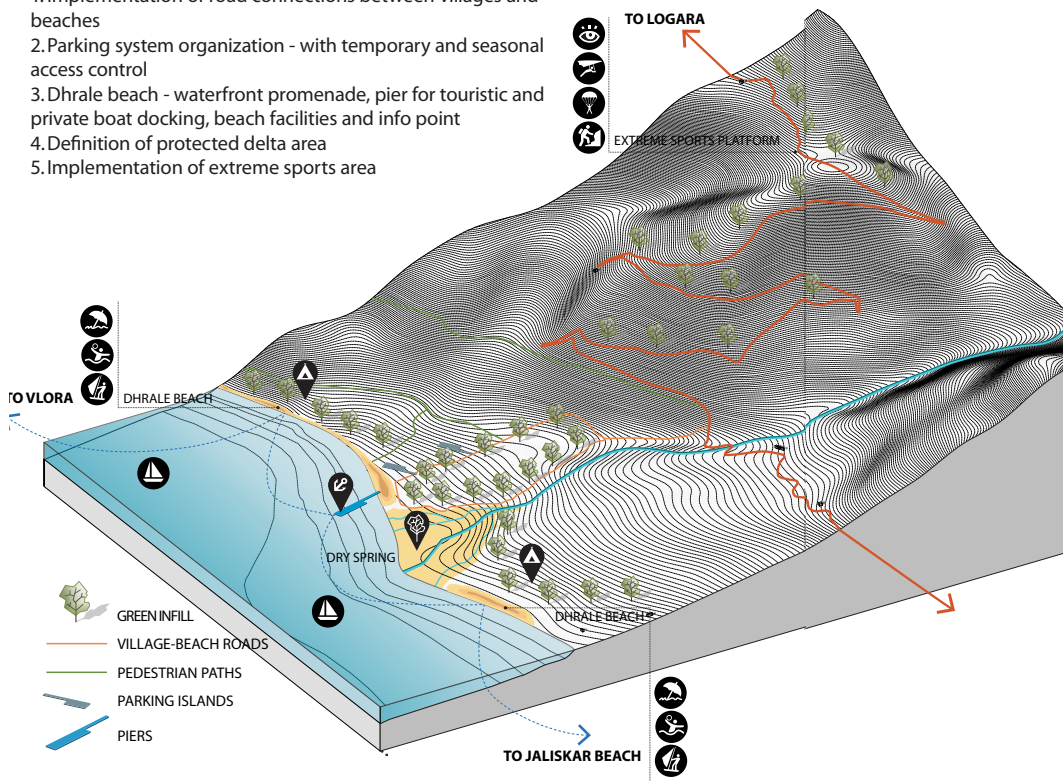
Strategy based on the areas conditions

Based on a first "site-specific analysis" of the areas included in the Lot 2, four different typologies of them have been identified according to the level of impact allowed and to the environmental

PALASA

Key actions:

- 1.Implementation of road connections between villages and beaches
- 2.Parking system organization - with temporary and seasonal access control
- 3.Dhrale beach - waterfront promenade, pier for touristic and private boat docking, beach facilities and info point
- 4.Definition of protected delta area
- 5.Implementation of extreme sports area



PALASA-DHERMI

Key actions:

- 1.Implementation of road connections between villages and beaches; restricted (service) access to the road along Dhermi beach
- 2.Revitalization of pedestrian historical paths connecting the historical centres and the beach
- 3.Paving and renewal of the facades in the main plaza of Dhërmi
- 4.Definition of intermodal nodes
- 5.Parking system organization - with temporary and seasonal access control
- 6.Dhërmi beach - waterfront promenade, new public plaza and belvedere, pier for touristic and private boat docking, beach facilities and info point
- 7.Definition of protected green areas

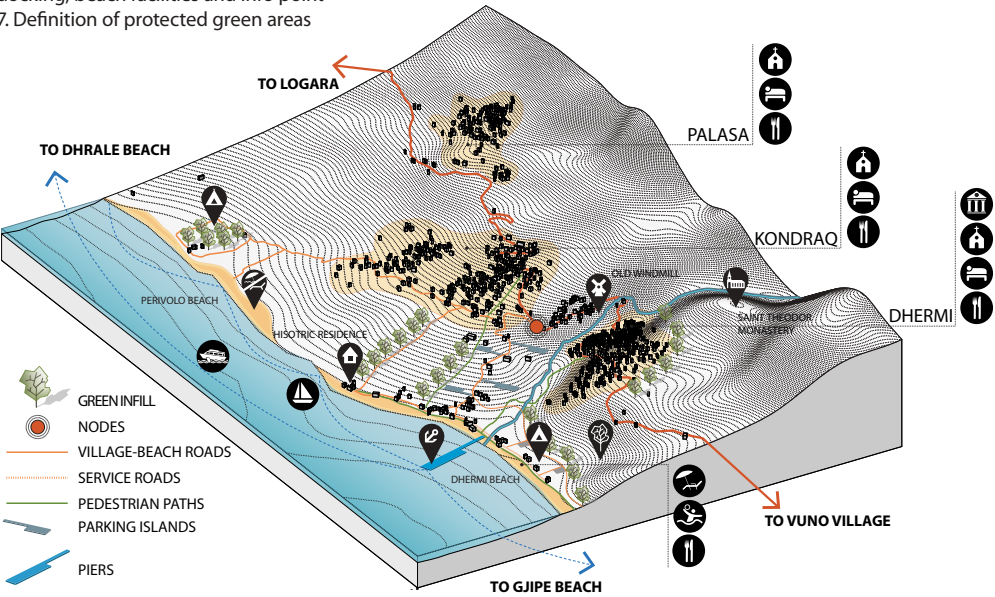
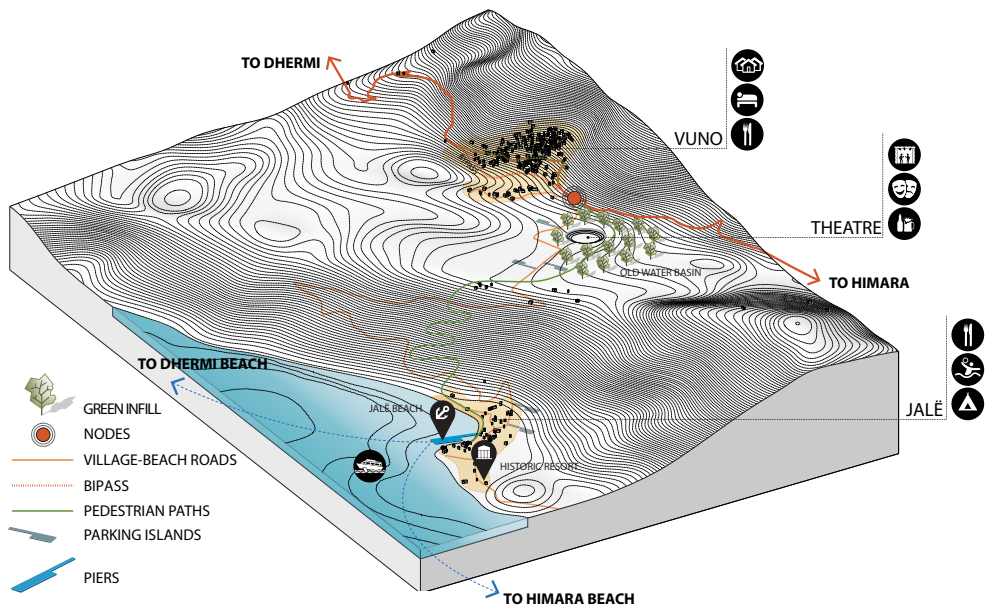


Fig2b / Palasa and Dhermi thematic clusters
source / Re-Active Riviera competition panels

VUNO-JALE

- Key actions:
- 1. Bypass around Vuno village to limit nonresident traffic in the centre of the village
 - 2. Parking system organization - with temporary and seasonal access control
 - 3. Jale beach - pier for touristic and private boat docking, beach facilities and info point
 - 4. Conversion of the old water basin into a theatre arena for concerts and plays and annex facilities



HIMARA

- Key actions:
- 1. Renovation of waterfront promenade to connect all the beaches
 - 2. Linear pine tree park along the promenade
 - 3. Development of urban park and steps
 - 4. Addition of a pier at the end of the main road
 - 5. Reconstruction and extension of the harbour, new harbour terminal, lighthouse, mooring buoys
 - 6. Introduction of new facilities around the stadium
 - 7. Restoration of the pedestrian path to the historic castle of old Himara
 - 8. Reconstruction of the historical square in the old city

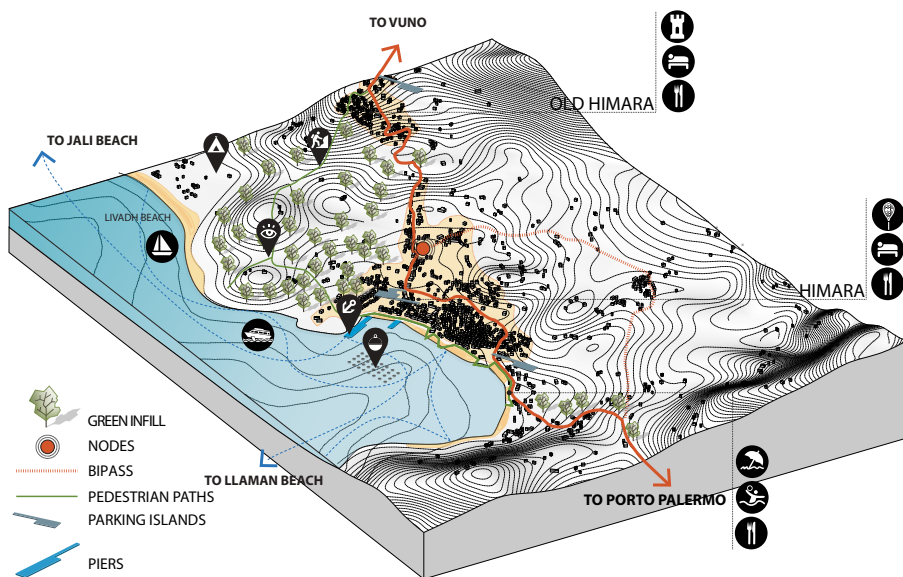
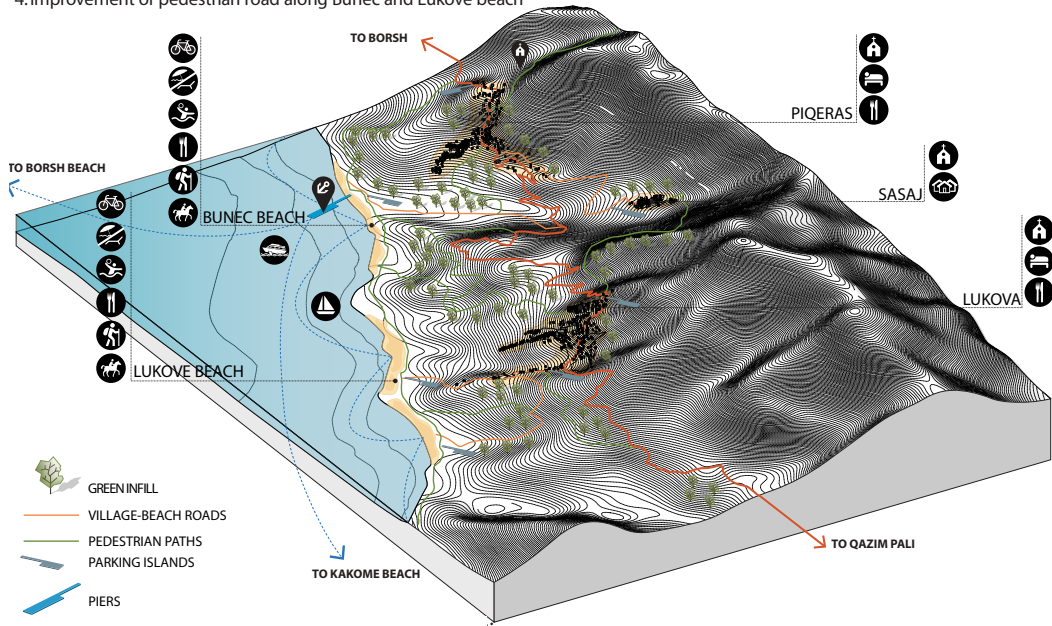


Fig2c / Vuno-Jale and Himara thematic clusters
source / Re-Active Riviera competition panels

PIQERAS-LUKOVE

- Key actions:
- 1. Improvement of trekking and horse riding trails and biking paths starting from the beach area.
 - 2. Implementation of road connections between villages and beaches;
 - 3. Pier for touristic and private boat docking, free equipped beaches
 - 4. Improvement of pedestrian road along Bunec and Lukove beach



BORSH-QIPARO

- Key actions:
- 1. Improvement of facilities in Qeparo and Borsh beach
 - 2. Borsh central square, Improved accessibility to Borsh castle
 - 3. Revitalization of Old Qeparo village
 - 4. Creation of sports activity area
 - 5. Improved connectivity with the inland by Borsh river valley

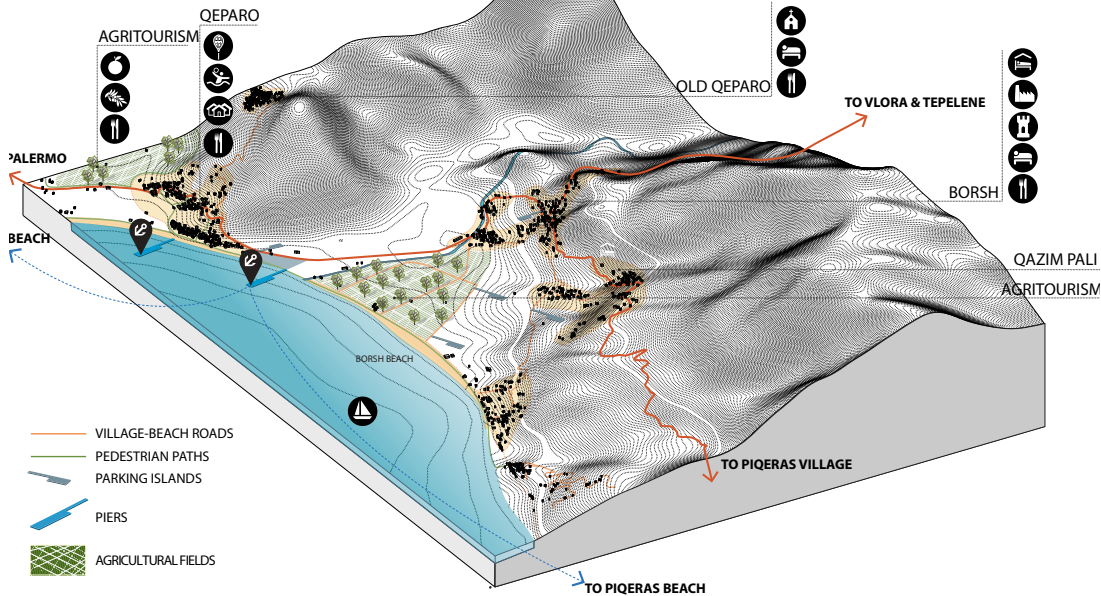


Fig2d / Piqeras-Lukove and Borsh Qiparo thematic clusters
source / Re-Active Riviera competition panels



PORTO PALERMO

Key actions:

1. Addition of mooring buoys and pier
2. Parking system organization
3. Design of an Eco hotel/resort
4. Design of underground buildings for cultural, training and research facilities.
5. Renovation of the path connecting the port with Alipasha Castle

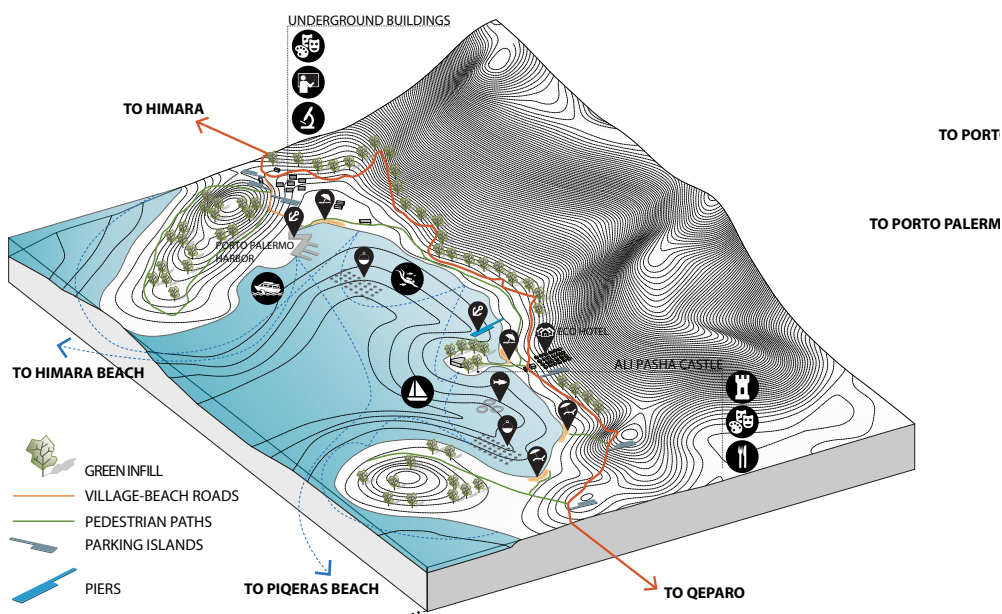


Fig2e / Porto Palermo thematic cluster and view
source / Re-Active Riviera competition panels

protection to respect: protected zones, regeneration sites, new low-impact developments and urban areas.

Protected zones The aim is working on connectivity. Regulated accessibility improves the awareness of environmental values meeting the needs of sustainable tourism. This will pay special attention not only to natural and historic areas but also to the environmental hot spots, informal areas or crisis situations that damage the image and qualities of protected zones, along way or adjacent to such destinations. In the totally safeguarded areas the RR proposes solutions for improving accessibility and understanding of cultural and environmental heritage (i.e. light tourist facilities to improve accessibility to villages, beaches, and cultural sites).

Regeneration sites The aim is working on the efficiency of urban destination stressed by increasing tourism flows. The upgrade of the hosting system has to impact local communities' economy and the quality of public space via innovative urban planning exercises and flexible actions of urban design and inspiring art or landscaping works. In the areas where "low impact" interventions are allowed proposals are focused on the improvement of infrastructures and facilities addressed to a policy for a progressive growing of tourism. The development of coastal infrastructures (as well as short sea shipping, docks and marinas, rehabilitation of beach-scapes, etc.) and a strategy of regeneration and refurbishment of small coastal settlements and villages are the focus of the project.

New low-impact developments The aim is working on brand new leading infrastructure according to sustainability and smart cities standards. An innovative model acts as example and driver for other areas pushing the entire touristic sector. This might be the backbone for the marketing and branding of the Albania Riviera: selected sites and landmarks able to introduce this territory on a global stage. The seafront line is the "sea side" of the coastal infrastructures including maritime terminals (mainly for tourist transportation), pleasure boats facilities and other light works aiming at improving the mobility along the coast.

Urban areas Proposals for the urban areas include regeneration of waterfronts, improvement and implementation of urban furniture, implementation of infrastructures for a more extensive use of renewable resources.

Strategy based on a time-scale

Reactive Riviera proposes a phased

approach aiming to steer a gradual development of the strategic programme. Priorities, feasibility and sustainability of interventions drive the definition of a timetable for the whole process. Each proposal has been "scored" according to the growing strategy and a sequence of steps has been scheduled inside each single intervention as well. The working plan of the Reactive Riviera Project should be implemented after a preliminary and in depth analysis of environmental, social and economics issues focused on: the peculiarity of environmental characteristics and condition of each site; the needs and requirements of local communities and municipalities; the market indicators, applicable business models, sensitivity analysis, appropriate eco-fin models, juridical and legislative frame.

Short/medium term Short and medium term strategies consider light and low cost interventions that could start in the small villages and could include: renovation of public spaces, facilities for beach areas, pathways for connecting villages, etc. Within these timelines it is possible to start the implementation of a network of sea shipping and maritime terminals to connect the villages each other and with the larger terminals of Durres, Vlore, Saranda and Corfù. This maritime network, at its starting stage, is feasible within a short space of time and it does not require expensive infrastructures. It is a good solution for an eco-sustainable tourism as well.

Medium term The medium term strategy follows the previous one: the seaside infrastructures increase (also with the contribution of private investors) implementing new facilities, the local entrepreneurs grow up in the tourist sector. A sustainable energy policy and a strategy of subsidies for the inhabitants of the small villages could support the refurbishment and improvement of houses expanding the accommodation capacity based on the "albergo diffuso" model ("widespread hotel" or "virtual hotel" is an innovative concept of hospitality, was launched in Italy in the early 1980s). In this stage the internal pathways (including new types of path as well as trekking tracks, bike paths and horse tracks) and sea shipping network should extend.

Medium/long term Strategies at the medium and long term will correspond to a change of scale: the interventions are related to their effect on a larger area including other national and international sites and bigger infrastructures (airports, ports, motorways). Investments and



Fig3 / View of the Himara waterfront promenade
source / Re-Active Riviera competition panels

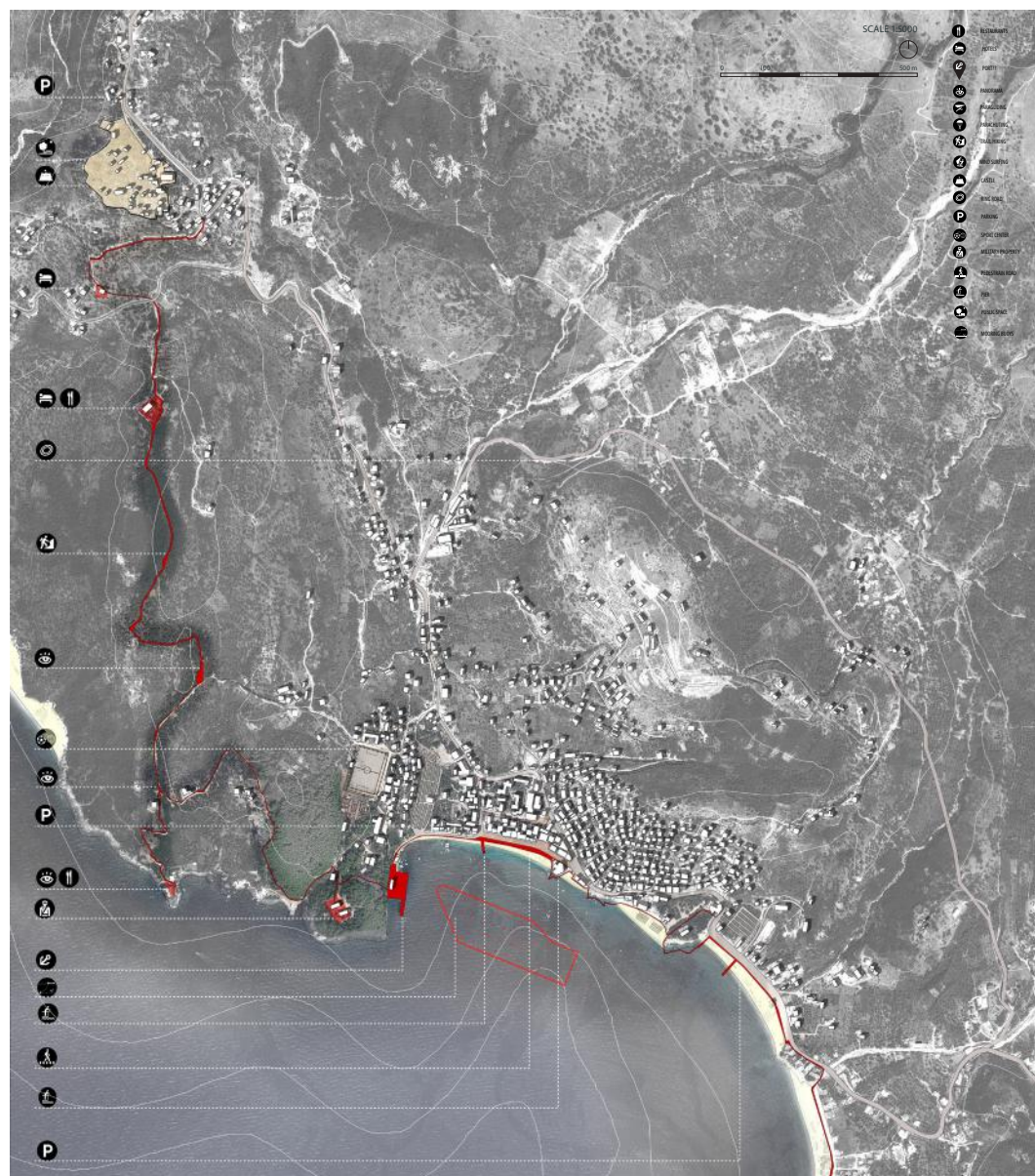
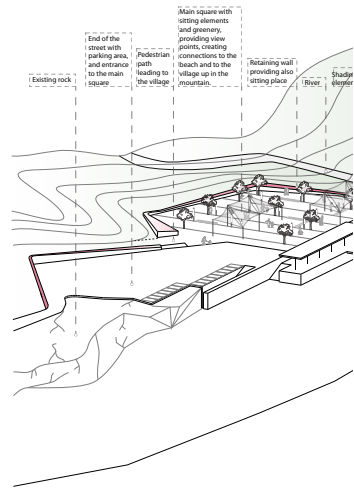
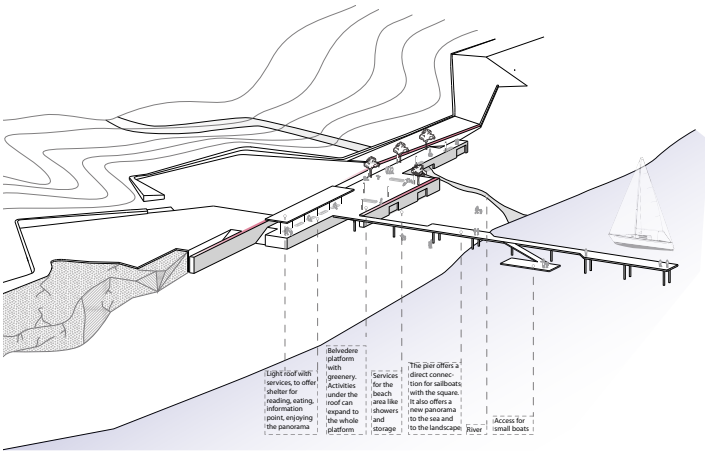
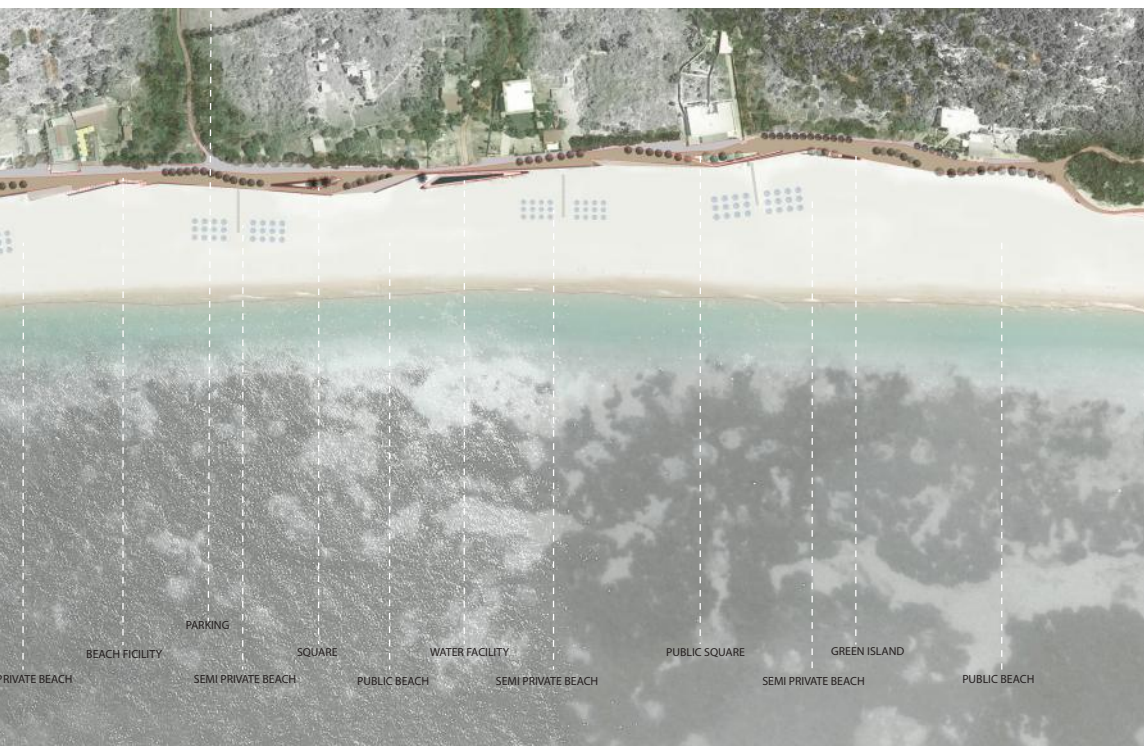


Fig4 / Himara waterfront promenade
source / Re-Active Riviera competition panels

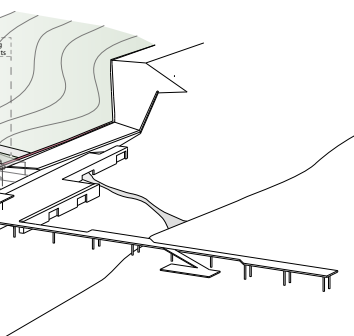


connection with the sea





connection with the land



connection with the beach

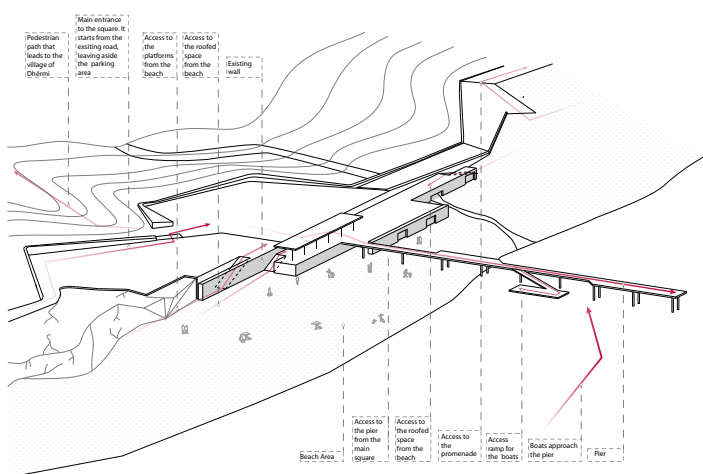


Fig5 / Dhermi Sea Plaza / Masterplan, diagrams and view source / Re-Active Riviera competition panels



business models are based, at this stage, on various typologies and levels of PPP policies. The seaside infrastructures (marinas, beaches, resorts, etc.) increase and consolidate their facilities, villages and tourist sites become bases for national and international sporting, arts and cultural events, accommodation facilities widen their capacity and improve their offer.

Sustainable energy policies

The choices in terms of energy policy that has been adopted in the development of the master plan can be summarized through the following three keywords: energy process efficiency, renewable sources, zero-kilometre approach in the waste management and in the energy supply chain. Energy process efficiency means that the first aim of the project is to retrofit the existing energy supply chain rather than to install new large power plant. In a territory such the one of Himara District, at the actual state of the art, there are different actors, agriculture, services, housing, tourism, each characterized by its specific energy pattern, but however all of them see the peak of the demand concentrated during daytime hours. The future expectation of a strong development of the tourist sector will not change this general picture.

If it is true that in Albania a big fraction of the demand is already satisfied thanks to hydro power (in 2012 1446 MW over 1695 MW country production capacity was from hydro power station), but there is still a strong potential in the development of local distributed small and micro power stations directly feeding the local end

users, the small cities and the villages. The shortening of the energy supply chain, besides, has the potential both to reduce the energy grid transmission losses and to reduce the risk of black out.

The development of the last policy can be fulfilled though two steps acting on different segments of the demand structure. The first action consists in the installation of plants able to cut the daily peak of consumptions. Photovoltaic plants, in particular, have the potential to produce electricity exactly at the same time the electricity demand show its peak. The fact that the peak of demand and production perfectly coalesce is very desirable especially in the touristic sector: even though the target of the master plan is to provide instruments that will allow an all year long tourist season, it is obvious that the highest number of visitors will come in Summer causing the highest demand as well. Since the latitude and the solar potential of Albanian coast, and in accordance to what has been recorded in the last years in solar-fed facilities located in Puglia and Basilicata, one can expect a very high production during the Summer months, when the tourism will be in high season, and a lower generation of electricity, in any case adequate to satisfy at least the demand, during the other months of the year.

Another important issue, associated to the implementation of PV plants is the possibility of installing heat pump fed by electricity to replace old and pollutant fossil fuel boilers. The climate of the Himara region is in fact ideal for the operation of heat pumps. These system operating at



*Fig6 / Vuno and Jale Events Catalyst, view
source / Re-Active Riviera competition panels*



*Fig6 / Vuno and Jale Events Catalyst, masterplan
source / Re-Active Riviera competition panels*



Fig7 / Borsh and Qeparo Wellnes Park, masterplan and view
source / Re-Active Riviera competition panels

the highest thermodynamic efficiency (especially when coupled with renewable plants), can assure a complete fulfil of the demand (both electrical and thermal) resulting environmental friendly and cost effective as well. Since the lowering costs of photovoltaic and heat pump, today they are already in a market grid parity if compared to the traditional systems, and they can hence guarantee the return of the investment in no more than 6-7 years. Wind turbines are another technology that can be recommended at a master plan level, since they allow to exploit an important energy resource available especially close to the coast. According to the data provided by the Albania Energy Association, the coastal region of Himara shows an interesting potential in terms of wind energy. However it is important to underline that, since the specific demand coming from a territory where there very few energy intensive end users are settled, and stated that the country industry demand already is fed thanks to large plants, it is more advisable to investigate the installation of local smaller wind turbines directly feeding local grids, rather than build brand new wind farms with the related infrastructures.

Recent advances in smaller-scale wind turbines research, in fact, have led to the commercialization of small products in the range of 60-120 kW that perfectly fit with the local demand. These machines have rotors (25-30 meters) with characteristic similar to the bigger ones but have been designed to operate at the range of the lower wind velocities resulting in an excellent use of the resource limiting the hub height at no more than 40 meters. The power output allows easy connections to local existing grids as well, avoiding the necessity of larger infrastructures such as substations and/or new high voltage cable lines. However the main limit of solar and wind technologies is the uncertainty of their operations. The perfect match between demand and photovoltaic output curves and the possibilities coming from the adoption of heat pump fed by photovoltaic systems, of course can help a lot in lowering the former weakness, but there is the necessity to find other complementary solutions to come to a full optimization. The ideal solution is the installation of small hydro plant to exploit the existing head, naturally created by the same shape of the coastal territory, with mountains directly surmounting the seafloor.

Pelton turbines, for instance, can operate even at low water flow rate in case of relevant geodetic head. These systems

can be diffusely installed and have the potential to provide enough electricity to a whole village: they are too small to be industrial plants, but enough big to be cost effective in the supply of the local demand. Since the small scale of the architectural buildings hosting the plants, several solutions can be investigated, in some case adopting underground installation for the plants absolutely neutral from the environmental and landscape point of view. The electricity produced thanks to this run-of-river plants, being reliable and continuous in time, can hence harmonize the one coming from the photovoltaic plants both to supply electrical and thermal (though heat pumps) end uses.

Finally in the near future there will be a growing interest towards the installation of small micro-combined heat and power (CHP) plant fed by biomasses (mainly wood chips). In recent years small CHP have been already launched in the energy market and, even though their cost is still rather high, there are some small scale machines (electrical output ranging from 25 to 50 kW) that already results cost effective especially in the cases where biomasses is not bought in the market but directly provided thanks to a self-managed supply chain (e.g. fallen branches collecting, wood cleaning, etc.). The last systems allow a tailor made solutions to satisfy the entire energy demand of a the associated facility permitting in certain case even small local district heating plant configuration maximizing hence the energy and environmental benefits also creating jobs both in the biomass supply chain and in the energy network management.

Sustainable financial approaches

Impact investing

The approach that we propose is commonly known as Impact Investing. Impact investing means to insert an ethical element in the sustainability paradigm. In other words, our objective is to develop projects which present:

- Economic and financial sustainability. The projects must be conceived and structured so that they reward the investors with the expected return.
- Environmental sustainability. All aspects of the projects strategy and design should be environmentally friendly and respectful.
- Social sustainability. (i.e. the ethical component) A part of the profit of each project is allocated to social programs. The goal of our social programs is not charity but to increase the quality of life in the long-run by promoting high education and local entrepreneurship.

A possibility – which we have already experienced elsewhere successfully – is to use some of the impact funds to fund research and educational programs jointly developed by the local and international universities.

From an operational point of view this can be achieved by creating a non-profit company, with private-public governance, that not only will manage the funds deriving from the Riviera investment projects but also will look for additional funds on an international scale. The eco-fin sustainability is a necessary condition of a successful investment project. The Business Plan is the tool that describes the market scenario, defines the project assumptions, and elaborates the eco-fin projections in order to estimate – with a certain degree of confidence – the likelihood of success, in terms of Net Present Value, Internal Rate of Return or other eco-fin parameters.

Key issues

The initiatives that will involve the participation of private investors can be divided in 2 macro-categories: Full ownership (e.g. a real estate operation where the investor acquires the land); Concession (e.g. a marina where the investor benefits from the management of the infrastructure for a defined number of years). The first case requires a public auction of the land, most likely not only based on the price but also on the technical project and the positive externalities to the local communities. In the second case a PPP / PFI procedure will apply: Project Financing launched by Public Authorities with project base guidelines (large projects); Project Financing proposed by private investors (small projects); Specific procedures for waterfront / marine initiatives (e.g. L 509 / 1997 - Italy); Public-Private companies; Investment attraction. There are 2 issues that must be taken in account in order to attract international investors:

Financing Smaller projects could be fully-equity funded but the possibility of applying a gearing makes the projects more appealing for equity investors. The financing for smaller projects should be available with the local financial institutions which therefore must be included in the loop from day one.

Real Estate operations should consider pre-sales and separate the transfer of serviced land (1st phase) with the transfer of the actual residential units (2nd phase) to lower the financial leverage needed.

In operations in concession (e.g. marinas and similar initiatives) the financing from

local institutions becomes critical. It is very unlikely to find financing from abroad because of the exchange risk and the size of these initiatives. All operations should be considered and structured on a Project Finance scheme, i.e. non-recurse. Nevertheless, the presence of the equity and / or quasi-equity part should be ensured at start. Financing institutions should guarantee their loans through bonds on the land or pledges on the shares. Large projects: larger projects may require a higher gearing and therefore, the participation of international financial institutions. Some sort of guarantee or hedging on the exchange rate should put in place. In any case full backing by the Government should be structured especially concerning the infrastructure projects with long-term concession. Alternative structures of funding such as corporate bonds offering should be considered. Equity and mezzanine finance will have to be looked for on the international capital markets. Therefore, the positioning on the efficient frontier, a transparent juridical frame and a robust Government support are decisive. A good communication and marketing strategy with the participation to worldwide fairs like the MAPIC at Cannes (France) must be organized.

Steering team A steering team which defines the terms and conditions, establishes the strategic overview and leads the operations is critical to success. This steering could be formed by Government representatives, specialist from Institutions like Universities or Research Labs and private companies and professionals. Know-how, transparency, institutionalization, local and international experience should be the criteria of selection of the members of the steering team.

Pilot projects

Pilot projects should have different objectives:

- create a track record i.e. show to a larger audience that investing in the Riviera is a good deal;
- demonstrate that the sustainability paradigm is robust and the best way to go;
- test and fine-tune the strategic structure and the operational machine including the steering team that will establish the criteria and that will guide the future phases of more significant development projects;
- test the current legal frame and evaluate potential improvements / integrations for the larger projects;
- test the current financial climate and



Fig8 / Porto Palermo Maritime Cluster; masterplan and view
source / Re-Active Riviera competition panels

identify the critical instruments for the larger projects;

- generate an initial turnover with a seeds of investments which will involve the local communities.

Therefore, all the aspects of larger projects should be present in the pilot projects:

- pilot projects must already be inserted in a larger masterplan of portfolio investments that foresees a significant scalability;
- they should move from a rigorous Business Plan;
- the impact approach should be applied to these initiatives (with the participation of the local communities and the educational / research programs);
- a marketing and communication strategy

should be implemented at an international level;

- a rigorous quantitative approach should be applied in the construction of the eco-fin model.

Design Actions

On such integrated approach the RR project has been developed focusing on different contexts along the coastline chosen for their strategic status within the territory. Each detailed project has been implemented according to the general guidelines and interpreted as a case-study in order to achieve specific intervention devices and tactics to be used in other similar spots along the Riviera.

The contribution of cultural routes regarding the sector of sustainable tourism in Albanian Riviera

keywords / cultural route, sustainable tourism, cultural tourism

Sonia Jojic
PhD researcher

Abstract

This article studies the potential impact of the cultural routes proposed in the Albanian Riviera case study on the development of sustainable tourism in the southern coast of Albania, focusing especially on the innovative co-creation of experience and narratives. Nowadays, in the field of cultural tourism, there is a similar shift away from static museums and monuments towards more interactive and intangible way of experiencing. Because of these new approaches, cultural tourists seek out the defining elements of the atmosphere of places even more than before. This knowledge empowers individuals not only to see or experience a place, but to live and breathe the very culture.

Introduction

Nowadays, tourism is one of the most important economical sources of Albania, especially for the southern Albanian Riviera. Even though the coastal region of Albania has been commonly recognized as the country's most valuable development asset since the 1990s, there are many unfavorable phenomena's that have continued to prevail during the transition to democracy, along with new unfavorable development trends such as unregulated urbanization, illegal building, sprawl development along the coast. All of the aforementioned factors have directly affected the cultural and natural heritage, frequently ignoring traditional urban/architectural patterns (World Bank, 2015)¹.

The region of the Albanian Riviera begins south of the Llogara National Park, continuing along through the villages of Dhermi, Vuno, Jale, Himare, Borsh, Qeparo, Pigeras, Lukove. This entire area has been proclaimed as one of the 2012 Top Value Destination by Frommer', not only for its beautiful rocky beaches but also for its untold stories and great landscape (Frommers, 2012)².

The Riviera features traditional Mediterranean villages, ancient castles, Orthodox churches, turquoise beaches, interesting mountain passes, seaside canyons, flowing rivers, amazing underwater fauna, caves, orange and lemon crops, and olive groves; quite the package in offering diverse and sustainable tourism.

Due to Albania's long isolation and the urge of its inhabitants to migrate after the '90s, there was a tendency to leave the villages located along the abandoned coast for either Greece or Italy. Yet, for the past 10 years and still continuing, many immigrants are coming back due to the economic crisis affecting Europe, investing their capital earned abroad in either building hotels or estates, without firstly evaluating the current state of the place and surroundings. This neglect directly affects the cultural and natural heritage of the historic villages by destroying the picturesque scene and polluting it. It is essential to emphasize that tourism in the Albanian Riviera, aside from all the natural diversity offered, is greatly focused on beach retreats during the



Fig1 / Albanian Riviera Landscape / Himara
source / Sonia Joić

summer season from June - August with no other options for the rest of the year. While beaches can be fully packed during summer season, there is plenty of space and peace during low season. Sadly, the issues of the past decade's poorly planned development have ruined many once-charming coastal villages. This trend is still directly fostered by local management issues such as poor road and public utilities infrastructure, unregulated waste disposal, illegal construction etc.

In addition to the attempts of the previous government and the World Bank in disposing managing alternative projects such as the Integrated Coastal Zone Management and Clean-up Project, focused on supporting infrastructure for the improvement of environmental and sanitary conditions essential for the long term coastal development and tourism of the Albanian Riviera, there is still the need to come up with alternative ways for the future development of the southern coast, better hosting alternative tourism, without affecting the environment and the unique picturesque landscape of the Albanian Riviera. (World Bank, 2015)

Sustainable tourism categories should be introduced to the Albanian culture, not only because of the long-term economic gain and inclusion of SME – small and medium-size enterprises, but also for the proper use of its natural, cultural and

historical potentials in branding Albania in a better and more sustainable way. The European commission has been fostering the concept of cultural tourism since 1987, encouraging methods that have impacted many countries in terms of creating better sustainable tourism in Europe. There are many countries that have fully embraced it but the southeastern part of the Balkans is still falling behind in creating sustainable tourism and branding cultural tourism / routes. (UNTWO, 2013) Cultural tourism / routes can be the perfect solution for preventing the continued uncontrolled development in the Albanian Riviera, noting cultural/natural heritage as the main actors in fostering solutions regarding the area's alternative tourism.

Council of Europe - The Cultural Routes Programme

Cultural tourism is essentially about journeys. Not just because tourists by definition travel to experience culture, but also because culture itself is a journey – a voyage of discovery and self-realization. Cultural Tourism searches for and uses the local and defining elements of a place which enables visitors not only to see or experience a place, but to live and dwell in the culture itself.

Not only does cultural tourism develop a narrative of the place in which both locals and tourists dwell, but it also develops narratives about the individual tourists who go through and experience

1 / Based on the report obtained from the Ministry of Urban Development, Albania Coastal Zone Development and Clean-up Program Environment and Social Safeguards Framework. 2011.

2 / Source: <http://www.frommers.com/micro/2011/top-destinations-2012/top-value-destination-albanian-riviera.html>



Fig2 / Village of Dhermi
source / Sonia Joijc

interculturality in those places. The narrative of tourism therefore links place and journey, local and global, dwelling and mobility, host and guest. (WTO, 2014)

In 1987, the Council of Europe launched The Cultural Routes programme. Its objectives were to demonstrate how the heritage of different countries and cultures of Europe contributes to a shared cultural heritage, putting into practice the fundamental principles of the Council of Europe: human rights, cultural democracy, cultural diversity and identity, dialogue, mutual exchange and enrichment across boundaries and centuries. The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted Resolution CM/Res(2010)53 in December 2010, establishing an Enlarged Partial Agreement (EPA) to enable closer co-operation between states mostly interested in the development of Cultural Routes. (Council of Europe, 2015)³

The representatives taking part in this Committee were the Ministers of Austria, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Portugal, Russian Federation, Slovenia and Spain, outlined the Policy-making and standard setting of the established EPA⁴ (Khovanova-Rubicondo, 2013)

The EPA states that: the expertise of the European Cultural Routes Institute shall provide advice and expert assistance for the development, implementation, evaluation and promotion of Cultural Routes.

This involved expertise on:

- setting up and functioning of project

networks and organizations and the development of co-operation agreements;

- research on the historical background of the routes and the development of the cultural and educational content and activities of the Cultural Routes;
- development of a sustainable tourist offer based on the Cultural Routes, thus contributing to the economic well-being of regions;
- preparation and implementation of financing and promotion strategies;
- training and capacity building for Cultural Routes operators, in particular in relation to the Council of Europe and other international standards in the field of heritage and culture, as well as standards of professional practice in the field of tourism;
- promotion, visibility and all other aspects related to compliance with the Council of Europe standards.

Furthermore, the EPA is obliged to support networking and exchange between Cultural Routes operators and other partners in the field of cultural tourism, specifically:

- the development of a common vision and strategy for cultural routes as touristic products;
- the development of partnerships to increase the resources available for cultural tourism in Europe;
- the identification and dissemination of good practice.
- EPA shall develop further methodologies for the promotion of cross border cultural tourism⁵.

In September 2010, the European



Commission and the Council of Europe launched a study focusing on European Cultural Routes impact on SMEs⁶ innovation, competitiveness, and clustering. The aim of the study was to provide insights on the effects produced by the CoE Cultural Routes Programme on SMEs performance, network and cluster development. Moreover, the study also sought to observe the potentials of the Cultural Routes in promoting sustainable and quality tourism in Europe, increase European identity, disseminating the richness of European cultures and promoting intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding. (Khovanova-Rubicondo, 2013)

Of particular importance for Albania is that the study analyzes how much the Cultural Routes networks can affect and benefit SMEs, especially in less-known destinations, where the local culture and heritage are the main resource for development, and how SMEs' clusters can create a solid basis for promoting the region as "the world's No 1 tourist destination".⁷ Thus the idea of cultural routes for Albania, but especially for the Albanian Riviera can create potential clusters and co-operation for the entire region of the Balkans. This will give more

potential in controlled development and stable economy growth for tourism in Albania.

Adriatic – Ionian Basin States involved in Cultural Routes programme

Promotion of cultural tourism is a logical next step in developing Cultural Routes. For years now, the European Commission has especially focused on encouraging countries in fostering Cultural Routes for a more sustainable tourism. The uniqueness of this type of tourism builds on the individuality and authenticity of remote destinations, local knowledge, skills, heritage and traditions. Over the past years most of the South Eastern states in the Adriatic – Ionian Basin have been and are still participating in the Cultural Routes programmes. These countries include Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Albania and Greece. However, in all the different cultural routes that the majority of these countries partake in Albania is involved in only one of them "The Routes of the Olive Tree", which does not fall under the category of cultural routes, but that of gastronomic tourism. If we take a look at all the Cultural Routes from the previously listed states, we can ascertain that;

3 / Information obtained from official website of Council of Europe; "Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes"; http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/culture/routes/default_en.asp

4 / Enlarged Partial Agreement 2010; the Committee of Ministers of Councils of Europe.

5 / Policy-making and standard setting outlined in the Resolution CM/Res(2010)53 by the committee of Ministers of Councils of Europe in establishing an Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes

6 / SME abbreviation for "small and medium-sized enterprises"

7 / Chapter 6, Increasing attractiveness of the lesser known European destinations via the Council of Europe Cultural Routes programme; Impact of European Cultural Routes on SMEs' innovation and competitiveness, published by the Council of Europe, 2010



Fig3 / Village of Upper Qeparo
source / Sonia Jojic

Slovenia is currently participating in the following Cultural Routes activities and present projects:

- Saint Martin de Tours: a great European figure, a symbol of sharing
- The Routes of the Olive Tree
- Transromanica

Croatia Council of Europe Cultural Routes:

- Saint Martin de Tours: a great European figure, a symbol of sharing
- The Jewish Heritage Routes
- The Routes of the Olive Tree

Bosnia and Herzegovina Council of Europe Cultural Routes:

- The Routes of the Olive Tree

Montenegro Council of Europe Cultural Routes: None

Albania Council of Europe Cultural Routes:

- The Routes of the Olive Tree

Greece Council of Europe Cultural Route:

- The European Route of Jewish Heritage
- European Cemeteries Route
- The Routes of the Olive Tree
- The Phoenicians' Routes
- The Iter Vitis Route

While Slovenia, Croatia and Greece are more developed countries in terms of tourism, Bosnia Herzegovina, Montenegro and Albania fall short in terms of their participation in the Cultural Routes programme. (Council of Europe, 2014)

According to the European Commission's concept of Cultural Routes in Europe, the

most urgent issues that countries like Albania, Montenegro, Bosnia Herzegovina need to address includes the development of better:

- transnational connectivity of the Cultural Routes network;
- co-ordination of the development and promotional strategies of the Cultural Routes at a European level;
- brand image and marketing strategies;
- quality and sustainable tourism standards development/implementation;
- human and financial resources of the Routes;
- expertise in the management of the networks;
- exchange of good practices; and
- network management and performance evaluation tools, all issues that at this stage Albania is lacking, and especially the Albanian Riviera where there is the need to develop a proper strategic plan in branding the area through sustainable tourism. (Khovanova-Rubicondo, 2013)

Developing Cultural Routes for the Albanian Riviera

Taking in consideration all the villages extended along the southern coast of Albania and the historic background of the southern villages linked to Greece, there is a lot of potential in fostering more sustainable tourism. Cultural tourism and especially cultural routes identified in the area can encourage complicity in increasing linkages between suppliers and consumers; creating contact with local culture; and emphasizing the everyday intangible heritage. On the other hand, there is the need to shift towards

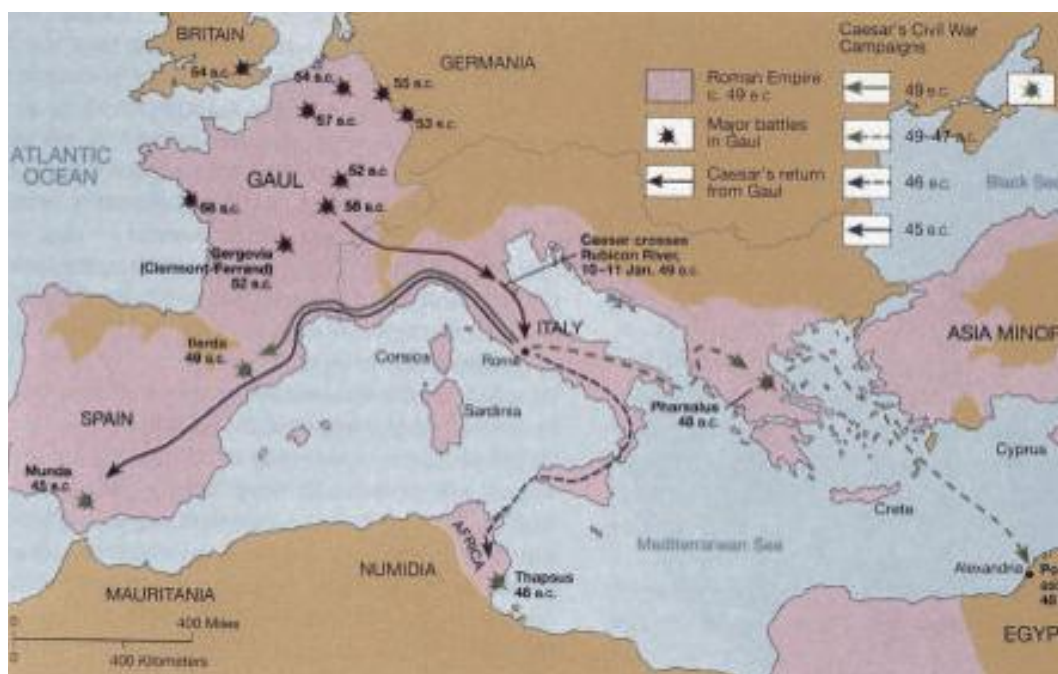


Fig4 / Map Showing Julius Caesar's Military Career in 49 – 47 B.C passing through south of Albania during his pursuit of Pompey / source University of Massachusetts Boston

promoting events as means of advertising places as more creative spaces for originality and user-generated content. The importance of cultural tourism is the development of a narrative about a place in which both locals and tourists dwell, but also its ability to develop narratives about the individual tourists who go through and experience interculturality in those places. The narrative of tourism therefore links place and journey, local and global, dwelling and mobility, host and guest.⁸ (International Tourism Consulting Group, 2013)

In the case study of the Albanian Riviera, the research focused on promoting the cultural tourism of the area through different interventions would have a positive effect through the fostering of economic growth of the southern Mediterranean villages. The entire Riviera was segmented in five main potential tourism targets, such as Cultural Tourism; Alternative Tourism; City Tourism; Family Tourism, and Eco Tourism, in the effort of reactivating the whole area.

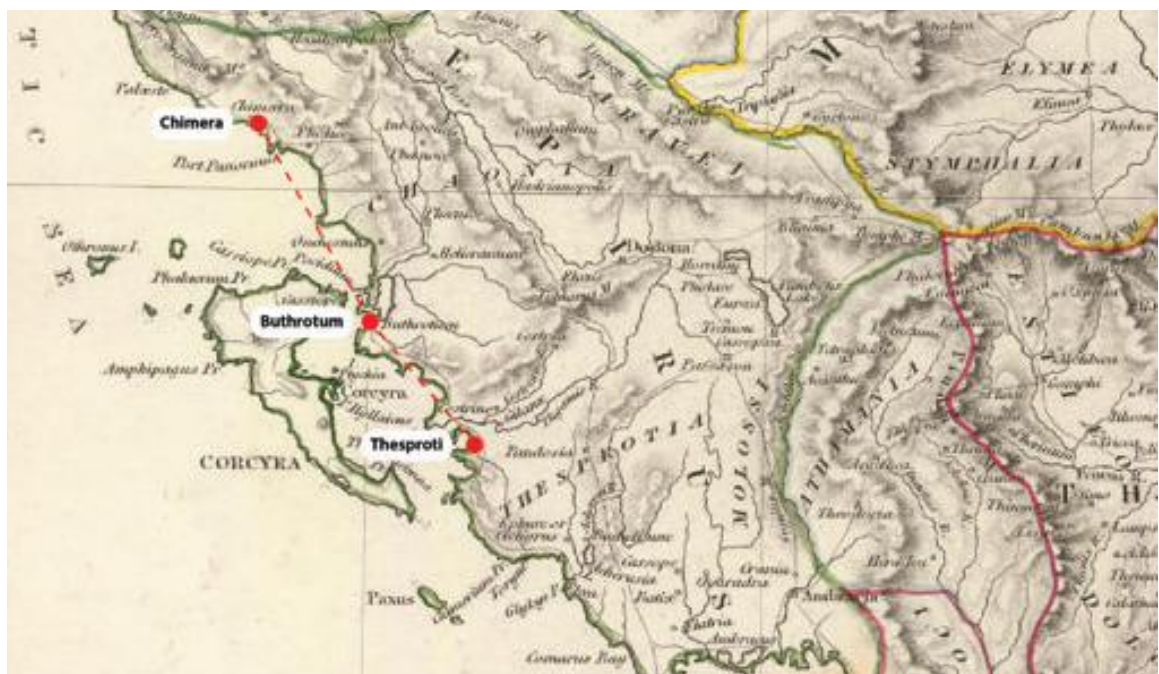
The objectives and challenges highlighted during the research were the importance of tourism in the Riviera; its environmental and cultural heritage including mountains and coastal landscapes; villages and local communities; traditions, and identities. Furthermore, the study aimed to develop a

sustainable growth based on sustainable tourism which means a low-impact development of infrastructures and facilities that still respects local people and travelers, cultural heritage and the environment, thus further promoting the concept of cultural routes in the area.

The cultural heritage found in the Albanian Riviera is one of the most crucial elements in building up and promoting Cultural Routes in the area. As previously mentioned, the only countries currently participating in a wider range of activities and present projects focusing on Cultural Routes are Slovenia, Croatia, and Greece, with diverse cultural routes programs. However, due to the historic background of the villages in connection to Greece and its culture, theirs is an optional gap in linking continuous cultural routes. The study conducted by POLIS University and the University of Ferrara attempted precisely to create and promote different activities in the Riviera for the course of the entire year, not only the summer season as it still happens; therefore, the yearly activities calendar of the area matches with the current focus of the Cultural Routes programme, such as: New ways/path of pilgrimage; Maritime and trade routes; cultural routes of industrial / military heritage; landscape and civilization; European routes of historical towns (Khovanova-Rubicondo, 2013)⁹.

8 / Cultural Routes Trends outlined by UNWTO World Tourism Organization, in their 2014 Regional Report Volume III, "Working Together in Europe – A Shared Leadership" Pg 99, 2014

9/ Information obtained from "Impact of European Cultural Routes on SMEs' innovation and competitiveness" from the European Commission publication, 2007 – 2013; pg 17-18.



The emphasis should not only be placed on the beautiful coastline that the Riviera has but also on cultural tourism as one of the most important components for better identifying the culture of a place. For instance, the Albanian Riviera extends between two major natural and cultural points, the “Llogara National Park” and the “Butrinti National Park”, where Mediterranean villages full of culture and tradition enrich the area even more. Along this segment, we can identify some major cultural routes.

Cultural Route 1: “Caesar’s Pass”

In addition to the breathtaking scenery and the diverse flora and fauna, the Llogara national park may also play a major role in hosting different cultural routes beginning from the Llogara National Park, “Caesar’s Pass”.

There is evidence that in 48 BC, during his pursuit of Pompey, Julius Caesar set foot and rested his legion at Palase (Koci, 2006). He continued onto Llogara Pass in a place later named Caesar’s Pass (Koci, 2006). “Caesar’s Pass” can be a highly profitable cultural route not only for Albania but also the neighbored countries, hosting pedestrian and maritime paths of the villages from Palasa – Dhermi, strengthening scenic routes and enhancing slow mobility. (National Tourism Agency, 2015)

Cultural Route 2: “Religious Cultural Routes”

Additionally, the town of Dhermi, besides its beautiful beaches and resort, can also host annual pilgrimage cultural routes

events due to numerous number of monasteries and churches such as: the Monastery of Shën Maria, the Church of Shën Todhri, the Church of the Ipapandia and the Church of Shën Mitri with its frescos dating from the 12th -14th centuries. Furthermore, the pilgrimage cultural route can also extend to Vuno (the Church of Shën Spiridhoni, built in 1778, the Church of Mesodhia with paintings from 1783), Himara (the Church of Shën Maria e Athalit, the Church of Cassiopeia, the Church of All Saints) and Qeparo (the Monastery of Shën Dhimitri) (Koci, 2006) thus connecting religious cultural routes with Greece. (Koci, 2006)

Cultural Route 3: “Chaonians Cultural Route”

The Chaonians were an ancient Greek tribe that inhabited the region of Epirus located in the northwestern part of modern Greece and southern Albania. Here, both Himara (Chimaïra)¹⁰ and Butrinti (Buthrotum) played a major role. The Chaonians Cultural route could connecting the town of Himara Albania (Chimaïra) with Igoumenitsa (Thesproti). (Koci, 2006)

Many countries in Europe are key cultural touristic destinations, with a great number of major cultural sites. However, Albania stands at a great distance from Italy or Greece in terms of cultural sites and routes, specifically from a management point of view. According to European Commission data obtained from PIKx (2009), there was a 5% drop in the number of city visitors (usually closely related to cultural tourism), compared with a 20%



Fig5 / Map showing Këmbë and Bouthroton towns within the region of Epirus. Two major centers of the Greek tribe of the Chaonians / source Archeological Map of Albania

drop in touring holidays and rural tourism, and a 15% fall in mountain recreation in 2009¹¹. (International Tourism Consulting Group, 2013). This statistics indicated that despite the study's suggestions carried out in the Albanian Riviera, there is still a need for implementing new trends of cultural tourism, such as

- creative tourism;
- educational tourism;
- gastronomic tourism;
- religious tourism;
- spiritual and holistic tourism;
- wellness and spa tourism;
- cultural volunteer tourism;
- roots of migrant tourism,

All new cultural tourism trends that the Albanian Riviera can possibly host and further develop for a better sustainable tourism.

The above suggested examples of potential Cultural Routes match the minimal interventions done to the area. In the case of the Albanian Riviera, the study focuses on sustainable growth based on a sustainable tourism, which means a low-impact development of infrastructures and facilities for a tourism which will respect both local people and travelers, foster cultural tourism by its cultural heritage and the environment. Moreover, the study also focuses on further rebranding the area by initiating the inclusion of a yearly calendar where the concepts of creative,

gastronomic, and religious tourism can attract visitors all over the year.

The possible benefits of Cultural Routes for the Albanian Riviera

Firstly, by participating in the "The Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes", Albania will establish and reinforce the potential impact of Cultural Routes in terms of cultural co-operation.

Secondly, this program will develop sustainable territorial development and social cohesion not only in the Albanian Riviera area, but also in other potential areas of the country; giving particular attention to the themes of symbolic importance for European unity. It will help encourage local people value their history, culture and values, and most importantly discover less well-known destinations. Thirdly, it will help strengthen the democratic dimension of cultural exchange and tourism through the involvement of professional networks and associations, local and regional authorities, universities and professional organizations. Most importantly, cultural routes programs contribute to the preservation of a diverse heritage through theme-based and alternative tourist itineraries and cultural projects for a country like Albania.

As previously mentioned, Albania is currently participating in "The Routes of the Olive Tree", in which countries like Albania, Algeria, Bosnia-Herzegovina,

10 / The town of Himarë is believed to have been founded as μ (Chimaira, hence the name Himara) by the Chaonians as a trading outpost on the Chaonian shore.

11 / Data's obtained from the International Tourism Consulting group for the European Commission in 2009.



Fig6 / Countries involved in The Routes of the Olive Tree Programme
source / Council of Europe

Cyprus, Croatia, Egypt, France, Greece, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Malta, Morocco, Portugal, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey share "The presence of the olive tree that has marked not only the landscape but also the everyday lives of the Mediterranean peoples.

A mythical and sacred tree, associated with their rites and customs and has influenced their ways of life, creating a specific ancient civilization, the "olive tree civilization". Inaugurated in 1998, and organized by the highly dynamic Euro Mediterranean Olive Tree Cultural Foundation based in Messenia (Greece) comprising a wide range of institutions, organizations, universities and Chambers of Commerce in Mediterranean and European countries. This can be referred as the perfect example in how to managing cultural roots and its main actors for the Albanian Riviera. (Council of Europe, 2014)

Conclusion

Albania is still new to the concept of sustainable tourism and especially cultural tourism routes. Tourism, one of the most important economical sources for Albania, especially for the southern Albanian Riviera, commonly recognized as the country's most valuable development asset since the 1990s, has been affected by many unfavorable phenomena that continued to prevail during the transition to democracy, along with new unfavorable developmental trends, such as unregulated urbanization, illegal building, sprawl development along the coast, directly affecting cultural and

natural heritage by frequently ignoring traditional urban/architectural patterns of the southern villages.

This paper explored the suggested alternative tourism categories that can be introduced to the Albanian culture, not only for long-term economic gain, but also the inclusion of SME – small and medium-size enterprises. It emphasizes the concept and methods of cultural routes, a concept promoted by the European commission since 1987, one that should be fully embraced by the southeastern part of the Balkans in order to create sustainable tourism and brand cultural tourism/routes. A concept that may be the perfect solution for further prohibiting the continuation of uncontrolled development in the Albanian Riviera noting cultural/natural heritage as main actors in fostering alternative tourism solution for the area.

The role of the government, however, is much needed in providing basic infrastructure and regulations, easing the process of sustainable development for tourism purposes. The studies carried out at Polis University and Ferrara can further influence the process of policies aiming to promote area, even from an economic development point of view.

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*Fig7 / Dhermi village
source / PhD international workshop students*

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Survey and architectural recovery activities of semi abandoned villages as strategic actions towards the sustainable development of local economies

keywords / architectural survey, recovery, vernacular, historic centers

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Abstract

During the last decades many things have changed and have been lost in small historic centers of many countries. People want to update their own houses with the most modern features and, in many cases, there is the urge to improve the living standards. In the most isolated villages inhabitants are trying to find more contemporary places for themselves and fit into new structures. While their love for these old settlements has not diminished, some of the residents have moved towards the main cities in search of a modern lifestyle and new job opportunities.

At the same time some municipalities are very keen on protecting this cultural heritage and they do not want to accept any modifications by the owners. In order to achieve the ambitious goal of giving new life to these forgotten vernacular villages, governments must be aware that changes in the physical structure of old settlements are inevitable (and have been from ancient times) but that there is also a dire need to control these changes driven by economic activities.

In addition, in many vernacular villages along the Albanian coastline, legislation and mechanisms are necessary in order to start a building by-law implementation able to explain what to do in order to preserve the original structures: there must be a subtle change strictly linked to business activities both able to retain the quality of the buildings and enhance the local economy through the use of those structures. It does not have to be development versus conservation: the two issues should work together. Although an uneasy paths, full of economics and cultural obstacles, it is still viable if we really want to preserve this important cultural heritage.

Vernacular inputs

Recently, many contemporary architectural projects from different parts of the world, have highlighted an important fact: the majority of the designers' advanced solutions is closely linked to the respective local realities. These local initiatives, which are defined as vernacular solutions (inspired by vernacular inputs), are inevitably and permanently tied to the geographic, topographic and environmental features of their land of origin; nonetheless, they have the capacity to showcase new approaches towards a more efficient energy management, especially in terms of natural light and

overheating protection¹.

This new architectonic regionalism is driven by solutions developed in dissimilar areas and mediated by authors whose creative capacity, designing skills and knowledge originated from vernacular traditions. An ecological approach applied to the study of vernacular buildings reminds us that the layout, construction, and use of human dwellings are based on a wide range of factors. They are related to lifestyles and values concerning the social organization of households and communities. In principle these buildings are both a tangible and intangible cultural heritage that needs to be protected and



Fig1 / Case studies distribution from west to east: Brazil, Croatia, Albania and Nepal
source / drawing by Luca Rossato

enhanced by keeping it in use.

A human ecology perspective stresses that adaptive processes for sustaining settlements are based on both ecological principles and cultural practices. No site of an existing or future construction should be interpreted in isolation from all these characteristics; therefore, studies and survey activities, protection and enhancement of vernacular villages can act as best practices regarding these aspects. In this framework, the next pages will explore several research activities, carried out by the author, which are of great importance for many countries, especially the developing ones and those transitioning from centralized to free market economies. The described case studies cover several different interesting situations in Brazil, Croatia and Nepal and could act as inputs for the regeneration of the Albanian coastline.

Paranaguà Bay Villages, Brazil: urban and regional planning proposals

One of the main problems of the territory of Brazil is the economic stagnation and the underdevelopment of the regions that are not part of the metropolitan areas. This polarization of the development and structural imbalance highlighted by the geographical and morphological characteristics of the settlements creates negative situations of high-density populations in large urban areas and

marginalization in medium-small size centers. Referring to the current trends, the activities carried out in the region of Curitiba (capital of Paraná State) by many small municipalities had the objective, (considering the Paraná Urbano² state program designed during the '90s) of enhancing the cultural and socio-economic life of small towns.

Isolated Brazilian settlements are facing high migration towards big cities with the younger population willing to find new opportunities and lead a more contemporary lifestyle.

The proposals included new thematic routes and the upgrade of maritime and rail paths to guide visitors (the vast majority from Paraná state) through Serra's mountain, the waters of the bay and the beautiful coast in order to rediscover the natural environments and settlements which, as a result of an imposed isolation have retained different cultures and traditions throughout the centuries. In this scenario, the example of preservation, renovation and re-appropriation of historical heritage elements of Antonina city and its economic development due to the resumption of activities at Matarazzo harbour, are essentials conditions for achieving the basic autonomy of these places.

After the identification of the main problems and strengths of the three municipalities (Antonina, Morretes and

1 / E.g., VEGAS, F., MILETO, C., GUIMARAENS, G., NAVALON, V., (2014) *Parameters of vernacular sustainability throughout the 20th Century architecture*. In CORREIA, M., DIPASQUALE, L., MECCA, S., *Versus. Heritage for Tomorrow*. Florence: Firenze University Press.

2 / See AAVV. (2002) *Programa Paraná Urbano*. Curitiba: Grafica Mikito.

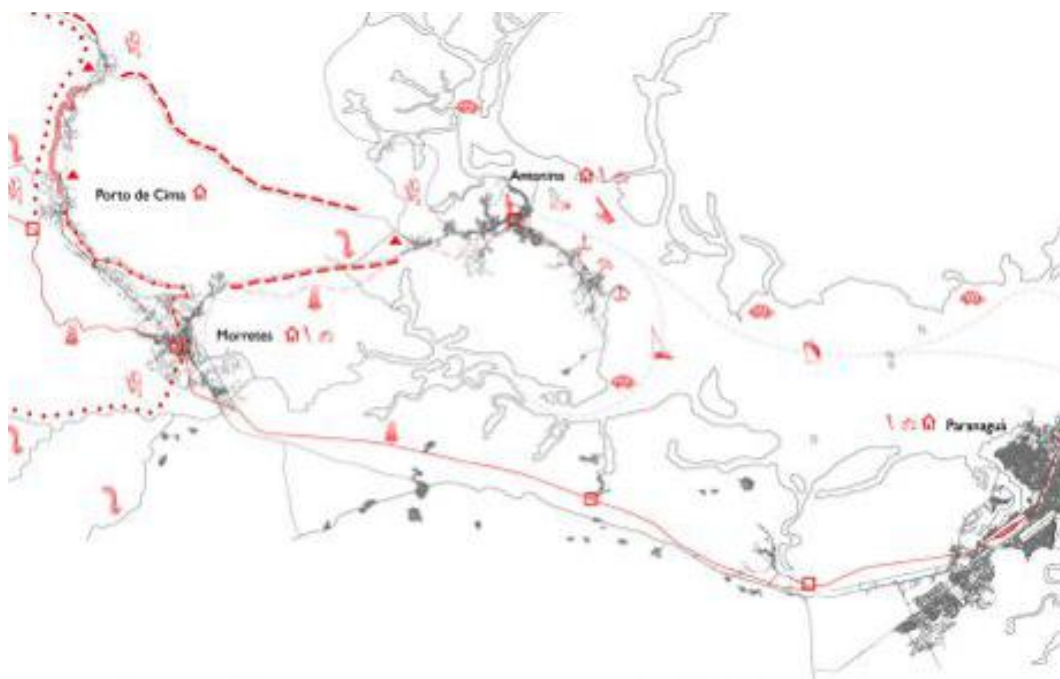


Fig2 / Regional survey for touristic activities enhancement
source / drawing by Rossato and Barbieri

Paranaguá) of the Paraná peninsula, a diagnostic study was carried out by the Architecture Department of University of Ferrara in order to structure a proposals focused on the presence of several interesting elements required to be analyzed at a larger scale (Brazilian unusual perspective).

An element of value is also the 120 km railway line that links the three centers to the capital of the state, Curitiba³; this important path, if used as in the past, would greatly facilitate the reduction of the problems related to the transportation of goods within the State to the exporting ports and would furthermore provide a suitable structure from a touristic point of view. The railway passes through a number of places of special interest and there are still about twenty of the old stations that, if specifically retrieved, may be used as touristic structures (info points, guest houses, handcraft shops).

A strong example of this opportunity is the Marumbi station, located within the boundary of a natural park that could easily be designed as an arrival point for whoever is interested in visiting the park and its amenities. In this circuit, there are some important coastal towns, the "Island of Honey" and Guaratuba (very famous from the point of view of the seaside eco-tourism) and others like Guaraqueçaba or the park of Superagui, which are almost inaccessible and unknown destinations today but of great value and interest.

The objective of the regional masterplan is to take advantage of this net of opportunities and potentials and identify them as driving factors towards the new

development and the re-discovery of vernacular cities like Paranaguá bay.

Lubence, Croatia: quick architectural survey towards restoration

Exactly opposite Valun, along the range of plateaus that rises on the central part of the island and chained to the top of the hill is where the village of Lubence is situated, bravely resisting storms and wind gusts. The Romans, therefore, named this place Hibernitia (meaning like Winter), building an unassailable fortress that rises on top of a 378m high cliff, sheltered from the east by a protective wall with two doors. Traces of the village's glorious past, such as the gun slits and the portholes built in the fortress walls, are still clearly visible.

Life in Lubence goes on continually since the bronze age. The strategic geographic position of the settlement was always important in the village's evolution and existence, because from there it is possible to control the traffic through the Vela Vrata pass and organize an effective defense in case of an enemy attack from the local mountain ridge⁴. A wall and two city gates, one leading to the settlement from the southern road and the other from the north gate, are all that is left of the medieval fortification system.

The research proposed by the Municipality of Cres in cooperation with IUAV University of Venice aimed at implementing the survey on the conservation of the urban fabric in order to propose an urban restoration plan of the whole village. Lubence has 40 buildings and only 24 permanent inhabitants.

The monumental vernacular architectures

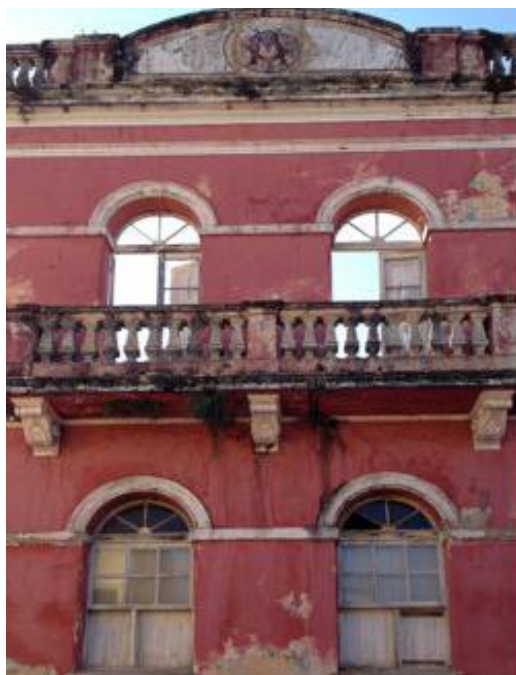


Fig3 / Abandoned vernacular house in Antonina (Paraná, Brazil) and the beautiful surrounding landscape / source Luca Rossato

with stone water reservoirs that are accessed by stone stairs are exceptionally well preserved. During the research, a survey on all the buildings of Lubenice was carried out: each building was inventoried with its own data, plans, elevations and photos and this data is made available to the municipality and the organizations involved in order to update the information. The survey has been implemented in the whole village and was carried out on each building taking into consideration the façades, their general condition, and the adjacent open spaces.

The data gathered through the survey had as a result a G.I.S. in order to better understand the main problems and issues. The survey form used during the research activity was organized into six parts:

- 1- information on the buildings;
- 2- information on the materials;
- 3- buildings categories;
- 4- evaluation of the façade conditions;
- 5- information on the roof and pertinences related to the buildings;
- 6- decay analysis.

The research group assessed the conditions of the external walls of the buildings in relation to their potential for restoration and re-use. The investigation was strictly visual only, and did not include testing of materials. However, the majority of the buildings appeared to be in fair condition structurally. After the quick architectural survey, each building was then redrawn using previous and existing

plans, all included into a new digital archive which will be a good foundation for a future restoration masterplan.

Based on site observations, it appears that the village would be a suitable candidate for restoration; the stone portion of the majority of the facades is in good condition and requires minor restoration.

Using the building's condition as an indicator, 3 groups of urban fabrics were chosen:

- 1 - Buildings in good condition (average restoration cost = 250 €/m²)
- 2 - Buildings in fair condition (average restoration cost = 600 €/m²)
- 3 - Buildings in a state of decay (average restoration cost = 1200 €/m²)

Following these 3 categories regarding the old buildings of Lubenice, a costs evaluation was completed in order to understand the amount of money needed for the total restoration.

After this research the village of Lubenice was included (2005) into UNESCO's tentative list regarding Croatia and it is awaiting the status of World Heritage Site.

Bandipur Village, Nepal: bringing town back to life

Bandipur was established as a point of commerce by Newar traders from Bhaktapur in the Kathmandu valley after it had been conquered in 1768. Originally a simple Magar village in the early 19th century, Bandipur developed into a prosperous trading centre and

3 / See NATANAE GRECO-FERLIZI, A.C., KUCZKOWSKI, F., (2010) *The train ride through the serra do mar*, Curitiba: Clube de Autores.

4 / Cf.: HOUSE S., HOUSE, C., (2004). *Mediterranean Villages. An Architectural Journey*. Victoria: Images Publishing Group.



Fig4 / Ljubenice old village, Croatia: empty streets and amazing views
source / Luca Rossato

a community with town-like features: substantial buildings with neoclassical façades and shuttered windows and streets paved with slabs of silvery slate. Bandipur had its heyday in the Rana times (1846–1951), when, as a measure of its power and prestige, it was granted special permission to have its own library (still existing)⁵.

In the 1970s, trading fell into a steep decline with the construction of the Kathmandu – Pokhara highway. For technical reasons it was logically built in the Marsyangdi valley, leaving Bandipur isolated up on the mountain. In addition, as a result of its poor accessibility, Bandipur lost some of its importance because the district headquarters of Tanahu were moved to Damauli. The tradesmen of Bandipur were forced to move down to Dumre and many even left for Terai; Bandipur turned a semi-ghost town. The Bandipur Eco-Cultural Tourism Project was funded by the European Commission in partnership with two European cities that have considerable experience in sustainable tourism practices to share with Nepal.

This project has taken a unique approach integrating architectural, cultural, and natural conservation, local capacity building training, and promotion in its overall tourism strategy for Bandipur that allows for growth and changes, while protecting the natural and cultural resources for the benefit of the local population.

Cultural tourism, especially rural tourism in the Southern Asian countries is a growing attraction for international and domestic visitors seeking to experience the simple

way of life. This growing phenomenon is a blessing to the social structure and the economy of these rural communities where there is a dearth of other economic activities. In today's competitive global market, the tranquillity of rural tourism offers an attraction that survives on its uniqueness and cultural identity, which makes its conservation critical.

Nowadays the Bandipur market is bustling, tradesmen are working and, most importantly, tourists are arriving. In addition to the Bandipur project, the Bandipur Development Committee made the decision to stop any vehicles from entering the city centre and also several crucial solutions were adopted: GaunGhar, a popular, eco-friendly hotel, was one of the first buildings in Bandipur to be restored. The restoration helped return the once dilapidated run-down building back to its traditional Newari style, setting an example for others to follow and take pride in Bandipur's cultural heritage.

Very often this heritage is aggressively attacked by what could be called the "hybridisation process". The transformations mainly concern the roof's materials, substituted with metal sheets, simpler to conserve and cheaper to buy than traditional tiles⁶.

Another important transformation is the painting of the doors, the windows and the other timber elements, originally in wood. The heavy hybridisations like new storeys or volumes are not widely present in Bandipur and therefore the city appears as it was originally built. Presently, after these initiatives, there is clear evidence of a greater understanding by the people

LUBENICE - CROATIA

Gis Analays: Evaluation



Gis Analays: Endowments



Gis Analays: Current Use



Gis Analays: Preservation Conditions

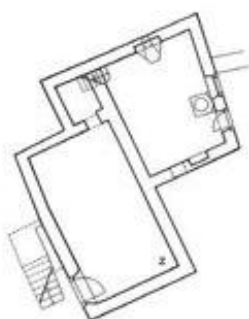


Fig5 / Graphic data extraction by G.I.S. of Lubenice old village
source / maps by Allori, Corino, Rossato, Soranzo

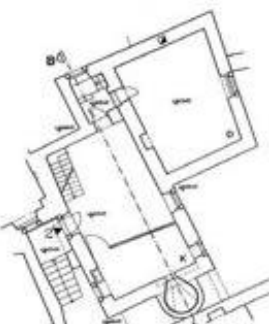
Plans:



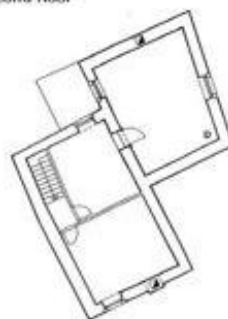
Ground floor



First floor



Second floor



Elevations:



East



West



South



North

Fig6 / Plans and elevations of one of the 40 buildings of Lubenice old village
source / drawings by Allori, Corino, Rossato, Soranzo

of this vernacular village specifically regarding the value and importance of their cultural heritage.

The funds available from all sources are sufficient for the conservation of the major monuments. In the meantime, a mechanism still needs to be developed in

order to provide financial support for the conservation and careful modernisation of the private houses, which form the bulk of the historic buildings and must be preserved if the integrity and authenticity of the village is to be retained. Conservation projects for a number of private historic

5 / See also KORN, W., (1998) *The traditional architecture of the Kathmandu Valley*. Kathmandu: Bibliotheca Himalayica.

6 / See GUTSCHOW, N., KOLVER, B., (1975) *Ordered space concepts and functions in a town of Nepal*. Kathmandu: Nepal research centre publications.



Fig7 / Vernacular houses and local traditions in Kathmandu Valley, Nepal
source / Luca Rossato

houses within the village should help encourage the practice of preservation and to recover some of the losses.

The Albanian southern coastline: a villages' net with high touristic potentials

Albania possesses unique ecological features that provide significant but under-utilized tourism potential, including coastal areas, mountainous terrain, rivers, parks, and protected areas (Kruja and Hasaj, 2010, p.5). The villages of the Albanian southern coastline are organically integrated in the landscape; indeed, the traditional villages of the region form a unique expression of vernacular architecture, distinctive for its locations and the use of local building materials. The visual features of these villages are an essential part of the attractive landscape of the area but they risk being ruined if local building traditions and materials are abandoned in favor of modern construction materials which are cheaper than the traditional stonework used to erect them. These houses of thick stone walls and tall windows are some of the finest examples of the vernacular style characterizing the Albanian Riviera's villages. The villages are a labyrinth of cobbled-stone streets but, despite their high tourism potentials⁷, currently it is estimated that only 10% of the original population living there after the Second World War still remains.

Most of the inhabitants who remained after the war relocated to the village during the Communist era or migrated to Greece in search of work.

In a future vision of sustainable local economic growth, tourism is the most

important source for the Riviera old settlements⁸. Its environmental and cultural heritage includes mountains and coastal landscapes, villages and local communities, traditions and identities.

In villages such as Palase, Dhermi, Vuno, Old Himara, Queparo, Piqueras, Ilias, the protection of the environment and the development of natural sources can be compatible only if based on a low environmental, economic and social impact of interventions.

Conclusions: eco-cultural tourism as possible economic source for Albania coastline

Conclusively, the objectives are the recovery and enhancement of semi-abandoned villages. These aims must involve the study of the process of human settlement in the territory over time, understanding the factors that have led to the changes taking place. If these sites could be effectively linked to each other in order to create a net of economic sources for the local residents, it would be possible to establish conditions for a market oriented and ecologically compatible tourism and the development of these places through contemporary types of tourism such as rural tourism, nature tourism, hiking, free climbing, biking, and so on.

Ecotourism is about uniting conservation, communities, and sustainability which entails the adoption of the principles below:

- Build environmental and cultural awareness and respect.
- Provide positive experiences for both



Fig8 / Views of Dhermi village, Albania: urban and architectural features that need to be preserved
source / Luca Rossato

visitors and hosts.

- Provide direct financial benefits for conservation and financial benefits for local people.
- Design, construct and operate low-impact facilities.

The relationship between culture, heritage, the environment and tourism has received a great amount of attention throughout the world. Individuals or organizations representing these special

interests should work together on a local, regional, or national basis to define their common interests and discover ways in which they can develop a strong and mutually beneficial working relationship that conserves natural, cultural, and human resources. There is a need to create stronger links between historic sites and monuments, indigenous people in the host community and those individuals seeking a quality ecotourism experience.

7 / See KRUJA, D. and HASAJ, A. (2010). *Comparisons of stakeholders' perception towards the sustainable tourism development and its impacts in Shkodra Region (Albania)*. Turizam. Vol. 14, Issue 1, 1-12.

8 / KRUJA, D., GJYREZI, A., *The Special Interest Tourism Development and the Small Regions* Turizam. Vol. 15, Issue 2, 77-89.

9 / See FALASCA, C.C., *Il recupero dei borghi montani terramari come azione strategia per lo sviluppo sostenibile del sistema economico locale*, in MAIETTI, F., (2008) *Centri storici minori*. Rimini: Maggioli Editore.

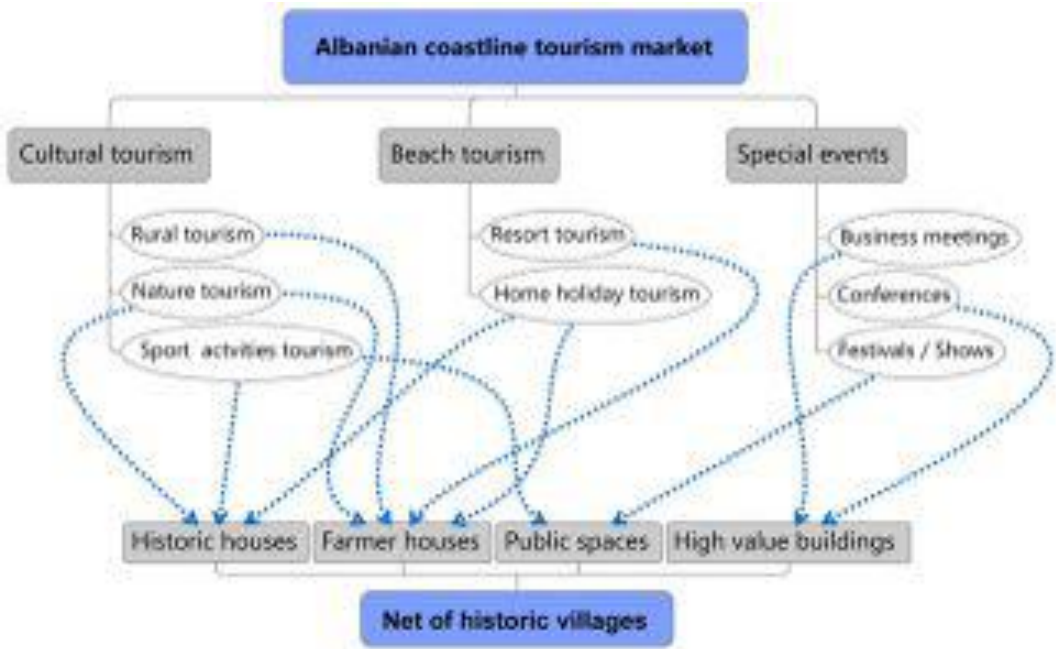


Fig9 / Possible interactions between local tourism and cultural heritage
source / scheme by Luca Rossato

Through this process, it is possible to also improve the life of indigenous people along the Albanian coastline but a very careful approach is required: at this time, most communities are more interested in attracting investments in tourism rather than in attempting to measure the environment and cultural impacts caused by a growth in the development of tourism. So, one approach involves the integration of ecotourism with cultural heritage tourism (travel with the aim of experiencing local traditions, arts, and heritage while respecting the host community and its surrounding environment). Cultural heritage tourism is an important phenomenon that should be part of all ecotourism products. People travel to see how other people live and to understand the natural environments that define their existence, culture and heritage which ultimately sums up a community's beliefs and values in a defined geographic area.

Reccomendations: a general methodology for a local economic growth of Albanian coastline villages

As shown in previous paragraphs, all the set of data, qualitative and quantitative, could contribute towards the understanding of the actual state of the places, in order to be able to define the potentials within the planning framework. The objective should be the obtainment of information through regional and architectural surveys, urban and social studies and SWOT analyses which might enable the systematization of all the available synergies. In this vision, the acquired data, particularly those relating to the villages stakeholders and

their accessibility help in defining the types and attitudinal profiles of individual settlements⁹.

In an effective plan the settlements should be classified according to texture and structural characteristics in distinct typological classes. Each settlement identified through this methodology must be further defined following the prevalent aptitude profiled in different categories of intervention, such as:

- consolidation / a set of actions aimed at the enhancement of inhabited settlements;
- resettlement / a set of structural measures aimed at encouraging the stable residential use of existing buildings;
- regeneration / which aims at the radical transformation of the model of use of the settlement's housing stock.

The display of attitudes of these categories of intervention could highlight the operative potentials of possible recovery projects in accordance with the criteria of compatibility and sustainability. The territory could be also divided into local development subsystems in which cells of integrated development would be identified and would contribute to enable the reactivation and subsequent proliferation of best practices totally or partially dedicated to different touristic activities.

Benefits could exist at both a local and regional level: on the one hand, at a local level there could be a more sustainable and endogenous economic development, population increase and building renewal, while at a regional level a positive influence on the development of the surrounding

area and number of visitors to the region (improvement of the villages' net) could be the result. Also, some impact indicators need to be identified in order to evaluate the effectiveness of a regional masterplan, as for instance the involvement of many experts and local stakeholders into the project in order to take it forward to the implementation phase and the consequent renewal of the buildings and increase in the level of dynamism and livability of the area. Among these, the most important indicator is very often the visibility of the results.

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Transhumances

keywords / tourist development, metabolist, scuola territorialista

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Abstract

IDAUP students contributed to preliminary analyses for a regional plan led by SeaLine and Metropolis. The plan proposes a scenario of cultural valorization and economic development along the breathtaking Southern Albanian coast from Vlora to Saranda, framed in the trans-national space planning of the Balkan coast. The cultural, ethnical and religious diversity of the surviving enclaves have been grounded by century-long territorialization processes engaging the Balkans, Greece, Corfu Island and Otranto across the strait. The landscape mosaic of tangible and intangible layers collapses into the seasonal settlements of transhumant pre-Ottoman shepherds: a pattern of pebble-stone wells shadowed by fig-tree woods along the shore. The text elaborates on the compatibility of geopolitical aspirations with the prerogatives of an architectural territorial vision and on the practical viability of combining principles from contradictory theoretical models of territorial development to deploy an effective plan.

'Albanian Riviera' Bid

The Re-Active Riviera is a joint project by Sealine and Metro-Polis developed upon invitation for the 'Albanian Riviera' consultation organized by Atelier Albania. Atelier Albania is an organization with a mandate from the Ministry for Urban Development and Tourism and the Office of the Prime Minister, with the institutional aim of exploring the possible future of the Albanian territory by means of 'research-by-design' initiatives. Numerous ideas and design competitions and conferences, attracting relevant international practitioners to collaborate with solid national design structures, have been promoted by Atelier Albania in the last years. The scope of the 'Albanian Riviera' consultation was that of composing an overall scenario, made up of different projects, for the cultural and economic development of the Albanian coast spanning from Vlora to Saranda. In order to come up with a collective final vision, the coast was subdivided in three

lots and each lot assigned as a design site to a couple of competing design teams. Although the primary aim of the initiative is set out by the promoter as "learning and perusing the existing peculiarities of the area", the competition bid seems to restrict this investigative perspective within a conventional preliminary analysis. Right away, the competition documents yield the practical request of scenarios for a mundane economic development of the area. In fact, the objective of the competition is introduced as the "improvement of the public space in the southern coast strip" in order to enhance the national and international tourist industry so it can be the "generator of the economy of the whole region". Local communities are described as the direct beneficiaries of the proposed improvement of the "urban condition", achieved through the intensification of the use of the coastal areas for tourist purposes in conjunction with the connection between coastal and mountain



Fig1 / Adriatic Ionian Blue Corridor
source / AKTP National Territorial Planning Agency

centers, both existing and new. It is clear that the general idea under-arching the consultation pointed towards a traditional model of territorial development, pivoting on economic considerations and aiming to implant a substantially conventional tourist industry in the southern Albanian Riviera. The bid questionably identifies the proposed concept of improvement of 'public space' and 'urban condition' with a plane? economic development of the region according to western models of unlimited growth, in spite of their having recently undergone a disruptive crisis and their presently being thoroughly reconsidered under disparate perspectives. Some alternatives to the unlimited growth model applied to territorial development scenarios, such as the 'territorialist' model and the 'grounding metabolist' perspective, are described and compared in Section II.

Blue Corridor

During an intensive design workshop

at Polis University, the IDAUP doctoral students were asked to contribute to the preliminary analysis phase of Sealine's and Metropolis' project for the central lot around Himara, spanning from Palase to Kakome. The project was based on a capillary reading of the territory and its multiple characters, in accord with the suggested peruse, as well as on a broader, exceptionally articulate, geopolitical vision. I am here using the term 'geopolitical' in its most colloquial meaning: say, pertaining to the interaction of political powers over a geographic distribution. Interpreting the role of the southern Albanian coast in the Balkan area and furthermore within the wider framework of the European space planning, the Re-Active Riviera project definitely feeds geopolitical space planning aspirations. The project is carefully framed within the 'Adriatic Ionian Blue Corridor', also referred to as 'Blue Highway', recently presented as a joint initiative of the governments of Croatia, Bosnia, Montenegro and Albania, under

the auspices of European Union observers, to create a motor mobility corridor along the Balkan coast. What in the institutional programs is mainly envisioned as a highway of European standards reconnecting Trieste in the North to Patras/Kalamata in the South (Fig1), has been presented as a possible extension of the Pan-European Transport Corridors, planned by Central and Eastern European countries, as well as of the European Union's Trans-European Transport Network (Fig2/3). The implementation of the Blue Corridor, defined by Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama as a "prerequisite for economic and democratic development", is presently trudging very slowly. The Albanian segment of the Blue Corridor is planned as a 350 km four-lane highway. Several tracks of the northern leg from Skoder through Tirana-Durres to Fier are completed, while the southern leg from Fier to Gjirokaster/Ioannina is totally untouched. Once Fier is passed, in Vlora, the planned route diverts inland detaching from the coast line and reaches the Greek border behind the first mountain range. The Re-Active Riviera project by Sealine and Metropolis is actually constructed as a geopolitically aware reinterpretation of the southern leg of the Albanian portion of the Blue Corridor. The original simplistic idea of a contained highway is turned into an articulated mobility bundle. The bundle is composed of three North-to-South axes: the Fier-Ioannina/Igoumenitsa inland axis, the Vlora-Ciflik intermediate axis, and the Fier-Igoumenitsa coastal axis, modulating mobility on, respectively, a fast speed North-South Corridor, a median speed Bypass Corridor and a slow speed Panoramic Corridor. The longitudinal axes are then interconnected through several transversal paths crossing the coastal mountain range. The overall bundle is deployed over an area of geographic scale, simultaneously embodying the analytical reading of a territorial entity while proposing a possible scenario for its evolution (Fig4).

Re-Activity

In its structure, the Re-Active Riviera project is conceived as a long-term phased program of interventions falling under four different categories according to their level of environmental impact. In this scheme, the discriminant factor is an idea of sustainability distinguishing among (quoting from the project's report and boards): "totally safeguarded areas", where interventions are limited to "solutions for improving accessibility and understanding of cultural and environmental heritage";

"low impact" intervention areas, subjected to policies favoring the regeneration of existing villages and structures; "seafront line" areas, devoted to the development of tourist facilities related to sea and land mobility; "urban areas", where new structural and infrastructural projects are strategically located on already anthropically impacted land. At the basis of the project and across all of the categories of decreasing protection levels into which the territory is subdivided, the enhancement of accessibility is a common character, deployed as an indispensable strategy. It is also explicitly regarded as a non-environmentally-impacting action. The idea of enhanced accessibility as the key factor to spark the expected territorial regeneration is explicitly conjugated in the chronological phasing of the interventions, where infrastructural interventions on land, water and air connectivity, calling in 'logistics', 'connections', 'paths', 'mobility', 'roads', 'airport', 'docking', 'wharfs', constitute the most substantial trunk of the vision in short, medium and long term perspectives. Much in line with contemporary practice, the Re-Active Riviera project shifts its emphasis from the material manipulation of the site to the programming of activities, marking an approach in favor of the intangible over tangible measures. Acting on the intangible fluxes of energy crossing a site, rather than on its material configuration, is adopted as a more efficient strategy to change the spatial quality of the place. The primary objective is in fact identified with the definition of the events and program of attractions for the area, to be combined with the secondary objective of the redesign of receptive structures in the service of tourism. Within the project, 'local communities' are regarded as a fundamental 'capital' to be activated and the central motor operating the overall apparatus and eventually the transformation. The centrality of this intangible social component is though prevalently oriented towards the economic exploitation of the territorial resources, rather than towards the enhancement of the cultural self-awareness of the communities. The enhancement of an "aesthetic sensitivity on public space" is attached to the project's "development approach" as a collateral and quite super-structural character. In fact, the action strategies remain bound to practical perspectives of economic development, such as: improving accessibility, developing interstitial gaps in urbanized areas, diversifying the tourist offer, building up marketing and promotion plans.



Fig2 / European Union's Trans-European Transport Network / source internet



Fig3 / Pan-European Transport Corridors /source internet

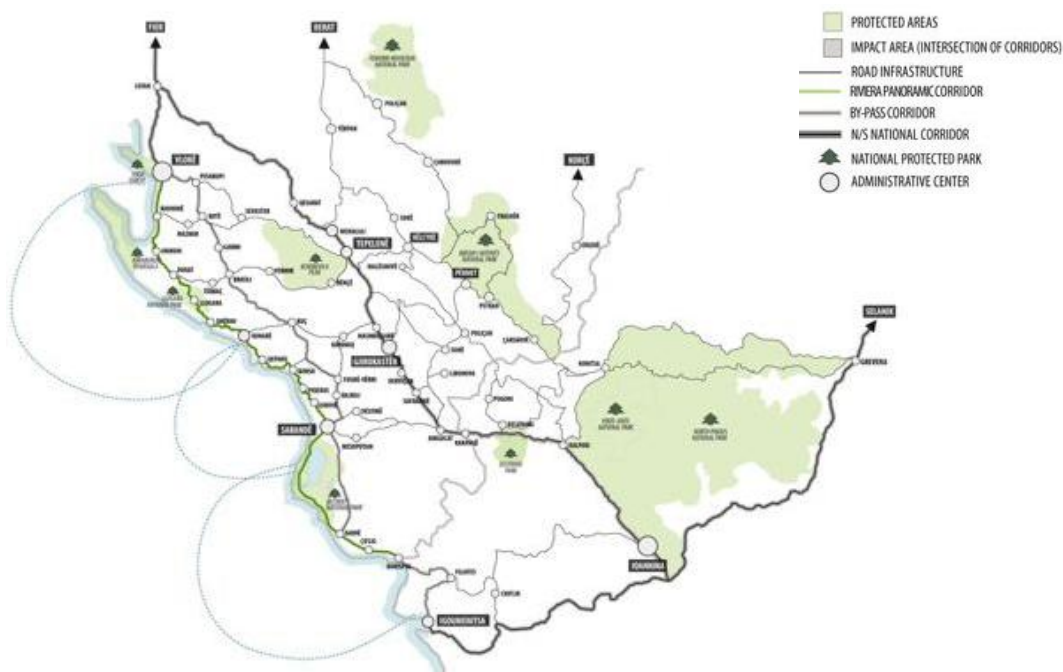


Fig4 / Re-Active Riviera, articulation of the Blue Corridor
source / Re-Active Riviera competition panels

Disseminated Bits of Structure

Practically conjugated into a multitude of networking strategic projects like disseminated bits of structure, the proposal is characterized by logistic and access improvement in Dhrle Beach, a Sea Plaza in Dhermi, an Event Catalyst facility in Vuno-Jale, a more complex regeneration in Himara, a Hosting Bay in Porto Palermo, a Wellness Park in Borsh-Qeparo, and sustainable mobility networks in Piqeras-Lukove. The aforementioned key actions are allocated along the coastline in five fundamental compounds spreading the tourist offer over an array of specialized themes ('cultural' in Palase-Dhermi, 'alternative' in Vuno-Jale, 'city' in Himara, 'family' in Qeparo-Borsh, 'ecologic' in Qeparo-Shenvasil-Kakome) with the programmatic goal of reforming the seasonal character of tourist activity so it extends over the entire year (Fig5).

The Geopolitical Burden of Region-Envisioning

The Re-Active Riviera project is framed within a series of extraordinary diagrams, exhibiting a crystal-clear reading of the Albanian territory, originally elaborated by Besnik Aliaj and Eranda Janku (Fig6) in order to illustrate the text Albania 2030 Manifesto (Aliaj B., Janku E., Allkja L., Sotir D., Polis University 2015). While the manifesto constitutes a platform aimed at prefiguring a broader scenario of territorial governance for the country, the geopolitical framing of the Re-Active Riviera project certainly exceeds the usual extent for a masterplan or a design proposal. This very

approach certainly makes the territorial reading of the region extremely sharp and articulated, but results unusually expanded in geographical terms and unusually 'political' for an entry in response to an architecture competition. When it comes to the very large scale, architects bring their spatial planning visions over a geopolitical field. But the geopolitical field is one where politics invites architectural prefiguration as nothing but vehicles for its loftier and cannier maneuvers.

The definition of any planning program of regional scale certainly needs a strong technical support, but actually represents a collective act that pertains to political precincts and involves a society and its institutionally representative agencies. The relevance of such a measure depends not only on its content, but at least in equal measure on the quality and comprehensiveness of the process of negotiation of which it is the culmination, involving institutions, stakeholders and groups: that is its capacity of being representative of the community dwelling in the region.

Heavily framing a regional design proposal into an autonomously generated geopolitical planning vision, which does not derive from any collective negotiation, runs the risk of paying a relevant toll. An autonomously generated geopolitical vision can be unbearable burden for an architectural plan.

A Quest for Territorial Development

A crucial theme to consider while analyzing the Re-Active Riviera project is the idea of territorial development and its possible

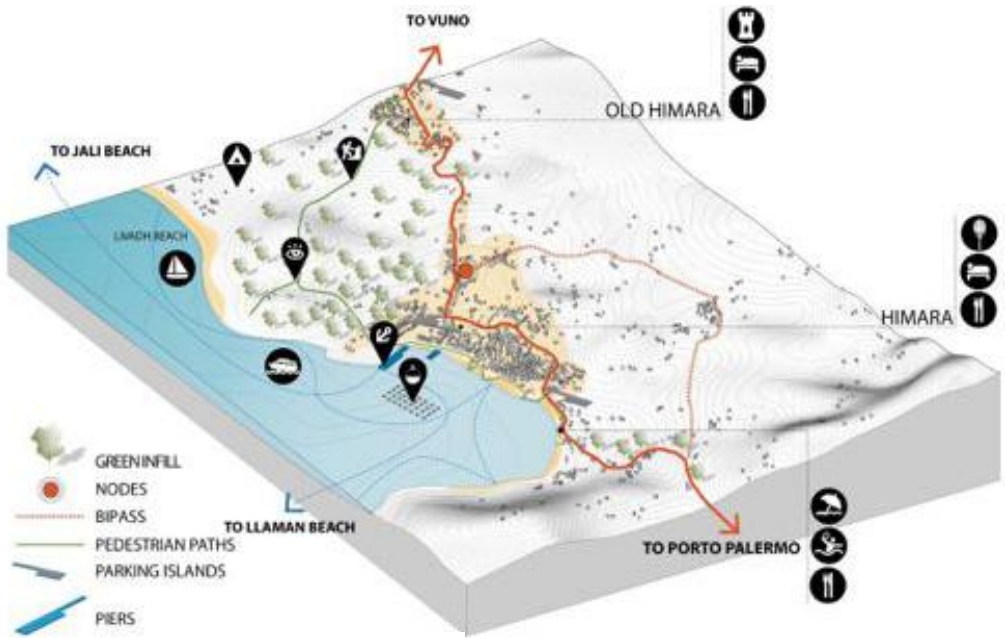


Fig5 / Re-Active Riviera detail from strategic interventions plan
source / Re-Active Riviera competition panels

The 'Territorialist' Alternative

In order to forge a more specific, articulate and adaptive paradigm, it is worth examining a couple of possible alternative models of territorial development in relation to the idea of sustainability with special attention paid to the management of accessibility. Alberto Magnaghi formulates a groundbreaking explication of Giacomo Becattini's concept of 'awareness of place', that lies at the basis of the work of the 'scuola territorialista' on the territory. The formulation refers to the "acknowledgement by the dwelling community of the value of the territorial heritage in the production of long-term wealth" (Magnaghi 2010: 299). As Luisa Bonesio notes from Magnaghi (Il progetto locale, Bollati Boringhieri, Torino 2000, p. 233 [translation from Italian by the author]), his 'awareness of place' model tends to "overthrow the economic perspective" (Bonesio 2002: 6) in favor of its replacement with "development styles based on the acknowledgement of sociocultural peculiarities, the care and valorization of local resources, and on inter-supportive non-hierarchical exchange networks between local communities".

The "value of existence" replaces the "value of use and trade" (Magnaghi 2010: 96). Although the Re-Active Riviera project is syntonetic to the acknowledgement of territorial peculiarities, the type of diffuse accessibility improvement that it proposes is clearly an alternative to the 'territorialist' model. In fact, on one hand, the project shows a prevalently extroverted character, with infrastructural micro-interventions

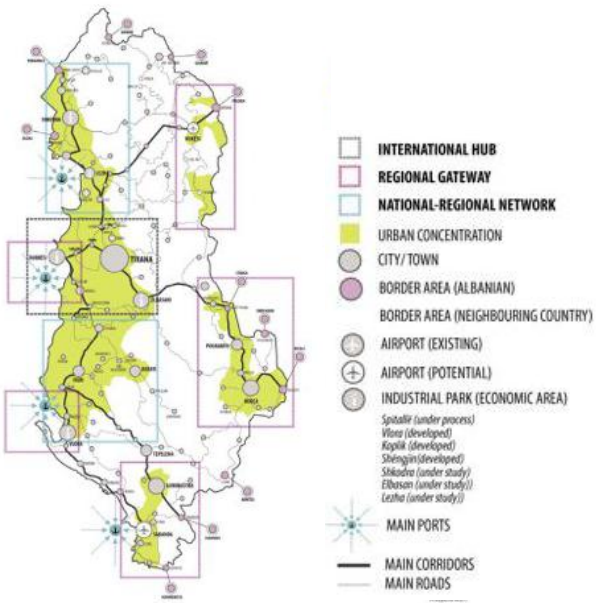
located at the perimeter of the territorial units to facilitate short-term entrance and to attract and capture economic resources from the outside. Such a model is built in clear opposition to the introverted valorization of local resources meant to function through the inter-local feeding of activities inside of the territorial unit. On the other hand, the Re-Active Riviera project is built on a clear multi-level infrastructural model, sharply framed, as we said, within a geopolitical vision of continental level, which constitutes again a clear opposition to the non-hierarchical exchange networks of the 'territorialist' model. In fact, the opposition between the two described models of territorial development revolves around the issue of accessibility and the different interpretations of the concept of sustainability. In the 'territorialist' vision, enhancing the degree of accessibility to a territorial unit attracting economic activity from the outside in the form of substantial tourism, means breaking the century-long 'structural invariants' and the consistent evolution of the territorial heritage. What has been regarded in conventional planning as a respectful economic valorization of the territorial resources, in the 'territorialist' vision is interpreted as both the depredation of the territorial heritage, as well as its simultaneous museification and congealment. The 'scuola territorialista' has been accused of building on regressive Heideggerian principles, such as those of 'tellus', 'territorial belonging by birth', insurmountable parochialisms, ethnic and even racist juxtapositions. Magnaghi, though, has always described the

'territorialist' model as a fundamentally open model regarding the care-taking of a territory: "in a territory inhabited by many cultures, by plural citizenships, it is the self-acknowledgement by part of the individuals who relate and associate for the care of the places that constitute the foundational act of elements of community (Magnaghi, 2006c); that is, the community is an opportunity, not an historical datum reserved for autochthonous inhabitants" (Magnaghi 2010: 134). It is certainly tightly connected to the idea of the dwelling of a community in a place, but that community is open to options of 'elective belonging' for non-native individuals who decide to become, permanently or temporarily, part of the local community-place unity.

That is undoubtedly different from the idea of implanting a tourist industry, even in spite of the evocation of some kind of sustainability which lies in the identification of some areas with progressive levels of protection, but allows, at the end of the day, the concentration of heavy constructions in the remaining parts. The more radical idea of sustainability that can be attributed to the 'territorialist' model is simply integral. It does not advocate the fixing of the territory in a determinate present state, but rather the identification of the 'permanent formal matrixes' of a place in the flux of the "unceasing adaptation and transformation process of the territory". The 'awareness of place' paradigm pursues actions of 'reterritorialization' prevalently through promotion of knowledge and self-awareness of the local communities (Magnaghi 2010).

The 'Grounding Metabolism'

A very different perspective on the theme is introduced by the recent publication curated by Daniel Ibañez and Nikos Katsikis *Grounding Metabolism* (Harvard 2014), issue 6 of the *New Geography* magazine. In fact, the idea of contemporary geographic configurations as traces of the action of anthropic forces has become the focus of PhD research on landscape and urbanism at Harvard since the debate on 'region formation' was started in the 'New Geographies' course taught by Hashim Sarkis first in 2006 (Sarkis 2011: 108). The conventional notion of territory is identified with a prevalently intangible system of fluxes, flows of energy and dynamic activities, regarded as a metabolism: "in a condition of socio-environmental transformation ... urban metabolism ... [suggests] an analytical basis for gauging the continuous flows of energy, material, and population exchange within and between cities and their extensive operational landscapes" (Ibañez and Katsikis 2014: 3). The 'grounding metabolism' perspective explores the material configuration of the space as a "geographical imprint" (Ibañez and Katsikis 2014: 3) of those intangible "metabolic processes" (Ibañez and Katsikis 2014: 3), but away from any "metabolic determinism in which conditions on the ground are seen as a mere reflection of metabolic processes" (Ibañez and Katsikis 2014: 6) it "interprets design as a geographic agent ... [and is] focused on the physical configuration of human occupation on the ground" (Ibañez and Katsikis 2014: 6). The 'grounding metabolism' perspective



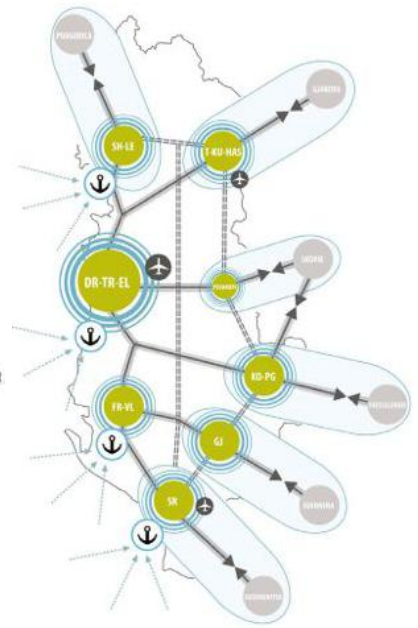
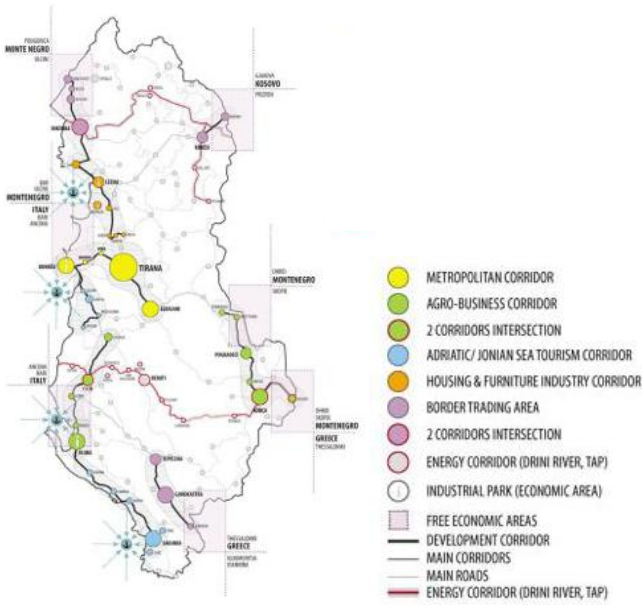


Fig6 / Territorial diagrams by Aliaj, B. and Janku, E.
source / Albania 2030 Manifesto

tries to reformulate three notions that not accidentally have to do with our critique of the Re-Active Riviera, but are, generally, rather central issues in the novel reconsideration of the geographical scale as the expanded field of architecture: sustainability, nature/society relationship, the geophilosophical. In fact, the 'grounding metabolism' perspective starts from "the recent paradigm of sustainable development [embodied by] the standardization of models and indicators, such as material flow analysis and urban footprint, [which] has contributed to an unprecedented statistical profiling of the metabolism of cities and regions" in an attempt to amend it of its blindness "to the underlying socioeconomic tensions associated with their geographical embeddedness" (Ibañez and Katsikis 2014: 5). The environmental determinism of flows and footprint analysis is thus merged with approaches deriving from "neo-Marxian urban geography and political economy" (Ibañez and Katsikis 2014: 5), instrumental in "reintroducing geography and overcoming the society-nature divide" (Ibañez and Katsikis 2014: 5), although "reluctant to supersede inherited territorial categories such as that of the city" (Ibañez and Katsikis 2014: 5). Therefore, while refusing any "morphological fetishizing of metabolism ... [and any] metaphoric interpretation of fluidity and organic forms", the 'grounding metabolism' model aims to reveal the "thick, heavy, lengthy process of metabolic reorganization of the earth's surface" (Ibañez and Katsikis 2014: 5): that is, it does away with the conceptual relics of

the urban age, the obsolete perimetrization dividing urban and non-urban spheres. The 'grounding metabolism' perspective is thus proposing a socio-environmental notion of sustainability which qualifies, at the same time, as post-Marxian (incorporating society and nature in a hybrid system) and post-geophilosophical (demising the positional constructs of the urban age in favor of a new planetary spatiality). In landscape aesthetics terms, this perspective is thus both anti-cognitivist (in reference to environmental determinism) and anti-formalist, while identifying in the aware as well as unaware design activity the agent which is responsible not only for the reading of space but also for the symmetrical shape-giving activity (research-by-design and design-by-research, we could say) on a geographic scale. The 'grounding metabolism' model, though, pays tribute with its own name to Peter Baccini's Metabolism of the Athroposphere (Baccini and Brunner 2012), who is also one of the significant contributors of the publication. The idea of being able to calculate exchanges of matter and energy over a complex field through a quantitative engineering calculus is inherent to the concept of 'metabolism' and inherently drifts towards determinism. But installing design, to any extent, atop a functionalist/determinist apparatus cannot avoid formalism. Therefore and in consideration of the summoning character of Ibañez and Katsikis' formulations, both their anti-cognitivist and anti-formalist claims conform more to an ideological manifesto, rather than to tested trajectories.



Diverse Ideas of Sustainability

In terms of what is sustainable, the 'territorialist' and the 'grounding metabolism' models seem to pin the antipodes of the concept of sustainability. If we view the evolution of a landscape as a trajectory in space, the former restricts the legitimate induced deviations to a corridor interpolating its historical evolution, while the latter, without any prejudices, orchestrates the sustainable balance of heterogeneous outer and inner forces. Both models though, as antithetical as they can be, find a common ground in a novel constructivist condition.

When Foucault asserts that if the XIX century was the epoch of time, the XX century was the epoch of space, he identifies time with 'history' (or the "long life developing across time") and space with 'juxtaposition' (or positioning, or "network that connects points", that is structuralism).

It results quite linear to then associate the latter (space/positioning) to the 'grounding metabolism' perspective, while the former (time/history) to the 'territorialist' model. But the 'territorialist' model performs its interpolation of the historical trajectory of the site, while incorporating substantial constructivist characters, enough to qualify as a product of the XX century. Without any doubt, it constitutes an "effort to establish, between elements that could have been connected on a temporal axis, an ensemble of relations that makes them appear as juxtaposed, set off against one another, implicated by each other - that makes them appear, in short, as a sort of configuration" (Foucault 1984).

Transhumances / Dozing Under the Shadow of Fig-Trees

One day while working on the territorial analysis for the 'Albanian Riviera' project, Sotir Dhamo told me a poetic story of transhumant shepherds communities still bound to pantheistic beliefs pre-dating the Ottoman era.

They used to descend from the mountains to camp in seasonal settlements on the coast and he would see them, up until about a decade ago, dozing under the shadow of fig-tree woods herding their cattle along the shore around Dhermi, Borsh, or Piqeras (Dhamo 2014). Those recurrent migrations have created patterns of pebble-stone wells disseminated amid the maquis and the orchards.

Since the introduction of the first tourist activities on the coast, those territorial patterns have been deserted by the groups who had created them across the centuries.

The wells survive now as archeological traces of a possibly extinct past. I don't know if the shepherds moved their grazes uphill to higher plateaus or if some of them abandoned their nomadic status to integrate in the new tourist economy. Certainly, from a 'territorialist' perspective this cannot be regarded as a sustainable form of territorial development. In the face of heightened diffused expectations for material improvement of people's life, the point is to discern if a westernized life-style of European standards is an indispensable prospect for the southern Albanian coast today or if the integrity of a certainly non-rich territorial heritage is a more desirable objective.



*Fig7 / Albanian Riviera
source / PhD international workshop students*

In favor of the Multifaceted Solutions

In our liquid time, none of the described models of sustainability can claim a primacy over the other ones, but all of them offer valuable aspects: the practical accountability of the conventional 'footprint' model, the cultural sensitivity of the 'territorialist' model, and the economic efficiency of the 'grounding metabolism' perspective. It is hard to imagine how disparate principles, proceeding from different sources and oriented towards different goals, might combine to orchestrate one novel theoretic paradigm. Even such heterogeneous principles, though, can be instrumentally used in conjunction for the practical resolution of a design problem. What appears impossible in the theory is often viable in practice. An unprejudiced approach to a multifold territorial design case could conjure up a multifaceted solution, dealing with the different parts in play using split-view perspectives. That is what an effective research-by-design is supposed to explore. If, for understandable political considerations, a novel model of territorial development beneficial for the future of Albania cannot prescind from equally and imperatively prefiguring the economic improvement of living conditions of local communities, it must also foreground the conditions for the return of the transhumant shepherds dozing under the shadow of the fig-trees along the shore.

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RIVIERA PANORAMIC CORRIDOR a Gateway towards the South Albania Landscape

keywords / sustainable development, panoramic corridor, multimodal gates

Mario Assisi
PhD researcher

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Traveling through the Southern Albanian Riviera is a journey full of contradictory feelings. An impressive juxtaposition of massively urbanized areas and small traditional villages, exploited beaches and unspoiled natural landscapes. Many scars as unfinished buildings, illegal dumps and quarries mark the urban and the natural environment.

In this contrasted territory between high mountains and the sea, we can find various topographic conditions that deeply influenced the position and development of the human settlements. Some coastal areas present a strong declivity, preventing urbanization and offering a sparse maquis vegetation while along the bays and the affluent rivers, some astonishing natural peculiarities can be found, such as canyons, waterfalls and underwater springs.

This incredible array of different landscapes lacks accessibility, preventing visitors to enjoy the region and its local qualities. Tourists are faced with interrupted paths, absence of signs and signals, scarcity of pit stops and other amenities expected from the region by western visitors.

In this scenario, the existing panoramic road that from Llogara touches all the beautiful sites of the Riviera, ending in Saranda, has the potential to become a backbone that can bring together this territory in its whole structure, where the different elements can intertwine with each other creating a unique system of recreational and natural amenities.

This scenic route can constitute a comprehensive body that takes maximum

advantages of the existing qualities of the site, while becoming a carrier of the new sustainable development.

The article will explore the possibility of a sequence of site-specific interventions along the Riviera's Panoramic Corridor, as important focal points for different programs and activities, and devices for orientation and introduction to the surrounding landscape. Each intervention should have its own identity offering opportunities for tourism and local economies and reinforcing the connection between the inland traditional villages and the sea.

The argument is inserted in a more strategic vision of the south Albania region that takes into consideration a different system of accessibility and distribution of services related to a global rethinking of the infrastructural network and the ways in which people approach and move through the site. This system is primarily constituted by three distinct and complementing corridors: the North-South corridor, connecting Durrës-Tirana to Gjirokastra and Ioannina; the bypass corridor which, starting from Vlora, goes to the inland using historical routes to reach Saranda; the panoramic corridor starting from Llogara and ending in Saranda. The three corridors, being complementary to each other, can be further connected through transversal routes that enable the differentiation of the offered services and accesses to the entire South of Albania. The local infrastructure is combined with a secondary water mobility system



Fig1 / Shift (1970-1972) project by Richard Serra
source / internet



Fig2 / Shift (1970-1972) project by Richard Serra
source / internet



*Fig3 / Linear Park between Caltagirone and Piazza Armerina, Sicily, Italy, project by Marco Navarra
source / internet*

constituted mainly of small boats and piers located in strategic parts on the coastline that can contribute to the lightening of the traffic load in the principal inland corridors, especially during the busier summer period.

In this vision, the Panoramic Road is interpreted as a landscape element (linear park) that while connecting the man-made environments of villages, castles and cultivated terraces offers a series of opportunities to structure activities and to open up vistas and trails that connect the visitors with the many attractions of the larger inland territory and the sea. The introduction of programs in strategic points (gates) is not conceived as a series of radical transformations of the sites but a clear framework that enables to restore, connect and activate the area starting from what is there. This site-specific intervention can act as a barometer for reading and enhancing the surrounding landscape.

In an article from 1984 Yve-Alain Bois and John Shepley explain, through the works of Richard Serra, the characteristics of the picturesque as an experience of perceiving the landscape by the introduction of specific devices that emphasize its traits and qualities:

"I wasn't sure what he was talking about. He wasn't talking about the form of the work. But I guess he meant that one experienced the landscape as picturesque through the work." Serra's interpretation of Smithson's remarks is based on one of the common places in the theory of the picturesque garden: Not to force

nature, but to reveal the capacities of the sites, while magnifying their variety and singularity. This is exactly what Serra does: The site is redefined not re-presented... The placement of all structural elements in the open field draws the viewers' attention to the topography of the landscape as the landscape is walked (Serra, 1982). For Serra the dialectic of walking and looking at the landscape establishes the sculptural experience. In one of his primal works, *Shift* is emblematic regarding the ways in which the internal structure of the work responds to the external conditions of the site, revealing the land's gentle undulations.

Shift's beauty comes from the provision of access to a visual pleasure that we had not considered and had not noticed in the empty fields in the surrounding area: its concrete forms provided a guide for our eye, allowing us to find and follow what had been all but invisible, the gentle topography of the landscape. The combination of Serra's structures and the land became a single whole; the more time we spent with the work, the more we saw and the more we understood how the land and the art worked together.

This attitude towards emphasising the peculiarities of the site while walking within the landscape sculptures of Serra could become a reference for a project that is sensitive to the various physical conditions of the ground and uses the perspective from the main road as the principal position of the observer.

The Riviera promenade built on the ridge of the mountain offers a panoramic views



*Fig4 / Linear Park between Caltagirone and Piazza Armerina, Sicily, Italy, project by Marco Navarra
source / Salvatore Gozzo*

on all sides, the mountains, the villages and the sea. Viewpoints, rest areas and a variety of programmatic possibilities can mark the path facilitating the orientation and transforming the experience into an exciting journey.

How can we reveal the landscape while creating singular experience along the road?

One strategy adopted by Marco Navarra in his project for the Linear Park in Caltagirone is the underlining of the surrounding territory's characteristics introducing a vocabulary of simple elements and devices. The intervention is part of a general master plan that proposes the reuse of a former railway track built in 1920-30 to connect Caltagirone to Piazza Armerina. The truck runs for almost 35km through different kinds of agricultural and natural landscapes. Four villages become connected through a soft infrastructure for recreation, tourism and biologic agriculture.

The suggested transformation entails making small but significant changes. The project is developed by the continuous intertwining of two parts: the material (rows of trees, gardens, colors, smells) and the creation of specific vistas, by the physical construction of devices that frame and interpret the existing landscape.

Over the years the railway has given rise to the formation of specific flora and fauna that has spontaneously diffused along the edges. The project evolves from an attentive understanding of this framework while re-proposing the logic

and strengthening the principles.

The agricultural and natural landscape are enhanced by the use of different principles and instruments: a more traditional one represented by the use of frames and horizontal lines and a more contemporary other such as the dynamic work and the sequences along the path.

These sequences and transitions between spaces with different qualities and vocations are marked with distinct colours and intensities: wider behind the open landscape, frequent when the path curves or when there is something important to underline. Light shells and steel structures integrate specific view points and rest areas.

The strategy that works with structuring spaces of transitions and pauses using small and simple elements that highlights the existing qualities of the site could be adopted and reinterpreted in the Riviera Panoramic Corridor. A vocabulary of signage, street furniture, lighting and public space arranged in key positions along the promenade could function as a system of marks between the different urban and natural areas which ties them together in a unique comprehensive hole.

As Piero Zanini says in his book, If we want to try to tie things together, or to understand them, it is necessary to rethink our relationship with the thresholds, as an experience of the limit, and this is a difficult and challenging task....Thresholds are elements that mark a passage, give it thickness, ritualizing it. To cross them in a conscious way means to be able to



Fig5 / Memorial in Portbou_Passages_Dani Karavan project by Walter Benjamin
source / internet

recognize the traits that characterize them and distinguish them from the surroundings. This is something that we learn while living and inhabiting a place. This is in the relation that we establish with it (ZANINI, 1997).

Site-specific interventions operating as extended thresholds could structure important programmatic points along the road and act as elements that sign and clarify the transition between urban and natural environments. These gates could be designed according to a specific landscape or scenery and be the starting points for trails that connect the road with different attractions in the surrounding areas. Open air activities, local productions and urban life could increase the touristic offerings and embed the possibility for a more extensive use throughout the whole year.

Where we can position these multimodal gates? Could they host a series of activities and events in relation to the seasons and based on the sustainable exploitation of the local qualities?

The various topographic declination structures a number of sequences that are different in morphology and character. Our territory could be seen as an in-between area, a mitigation zone where the natural elements create several distinct environments along the coastline. From the inhabited slopes of Dhermi to the fertile valleys of Borsh and Qeparo, we can identify six exemplary sequences that could have different programmatic

amenities in relation to their vocation and existing physical conditions: Dhermi-Palase (cultural tourism); Vuno (alternative tourism); Himare (city tourism); Porto Palermo; Qeparo – Borsh (family tourism); Lukove (eco tourism)

The first important natural gate coming from the north is the point in which we overpass the Mountain where the Llogara National Park is located. The meandering road moving from the mountain to the sea opens up incredible vistas operating as "windows" towards the surrounding landscape. The path has a so-called scenic quality.

Strategic signs acting as devices that emphasise specific traits of the place could be integrated along the path and one important viewpoint area can be implemented.

Moreover, the view from the road makes a fair first approach to landscape, which can be experienced, later in a wider and deeper sense, once the car is parked. Extreme sport activities like mountain biking, paragliding, rock climbing and hang gliding can be implemented.

Following the road we pass through the territory between the villages of Palase, Kondraq and Dhermi, once productive environments now subjected to strong urban pressure. The mountain moves smoothly towards the sea offering large terraces and gravel beaches while the road passes through the villages presenting important objects of cultural interest in the form of various religious buildings. In this context it is of fundamental



*Fig6 / Memorial in Portbou_Passages_Dani Karavan project by Walter Benjamin
source / internet*

importance to arrange an important public space that could function as a principal entry from the road and facilitate the orientation of the visitors to the many historic and recreational spots. An urban 'belvedere' that could integrate the necessity for parking lots with the demand for public activities and services.

The next important stop along our journey is the village of Vuno, where the road and villages are strongly separated from the coastline. By using and readapting the existing local houses, diffused hotels could be implemented, offering an

alternative model of accommodation. The abandoned water reservoir could become an important catalyst along the road, by its conversion and reactivation as a space for social events and music concerts. Its temporary structures could create a unique location for international festivals. As the road starts to descend towards the coastline, we start to approach Himare, a city that has the potential to become a service hub for the region. Himare is able to welcome more visitors than the nearby areas and thus the intervention could be more substantial. Improving significantly the quality of



*Fig7 / Memorial in Portbou_Passages_Dani Karavan project by Walter Benjamin
source / Serge Briez*

public space on the coast can give a new image of the waterfront and structure two important intermodal nodes along the Riviera Panoramic Corridor.

By doing this the waterfront could be imagined as a car-free promenade and diverse activities and programs could be realized. This is the most urban spot where the road touches the coastline and a transitional area where the two principal mobility systems interchange and connect with each other.

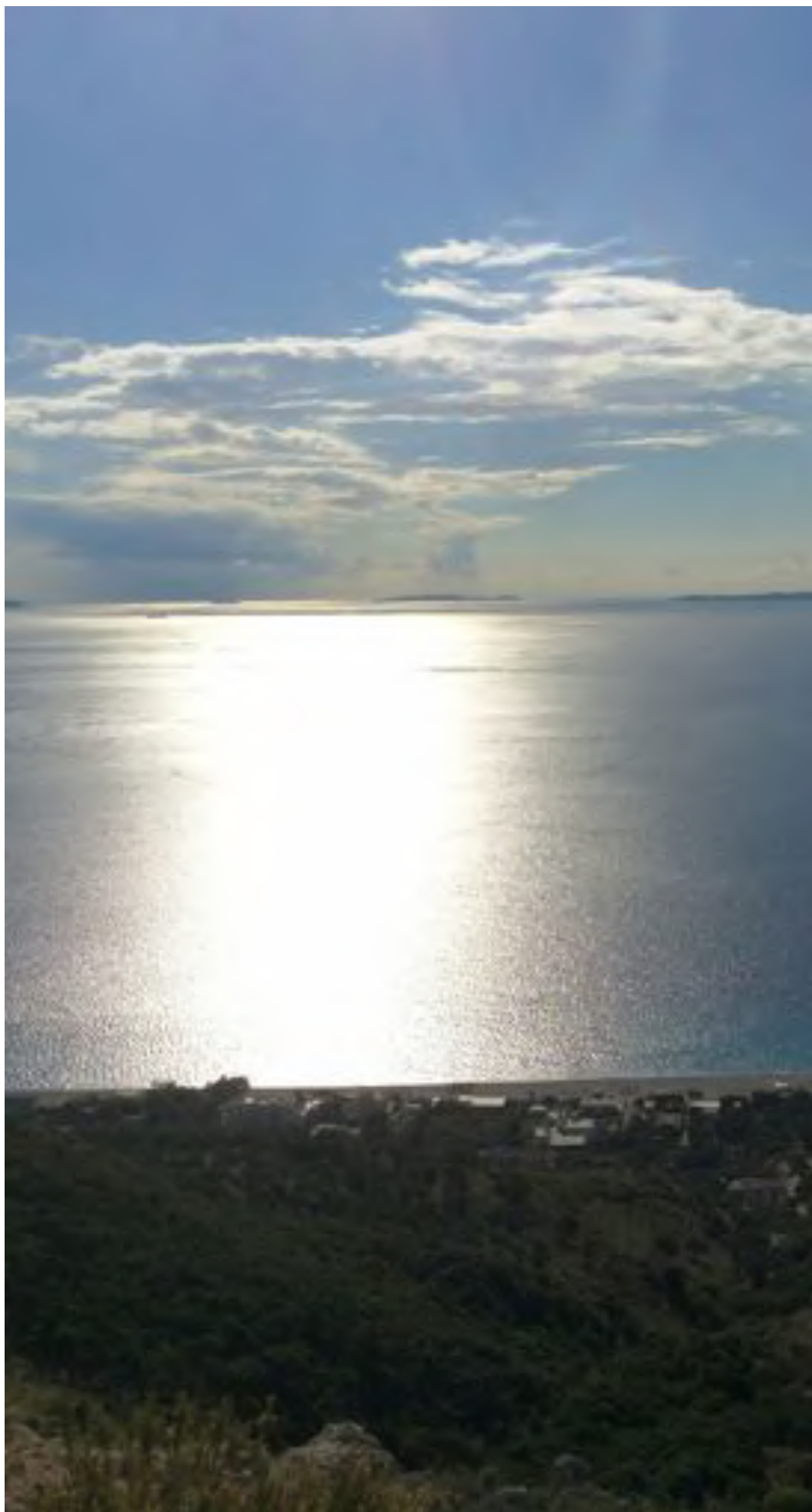
The second point where the two systems move one behind another is Porto Palermo. The Riviera drive crosses a naturally contrasted environment where high mountains directly meets the sea to create a unique protected bay along the coastline. The concept here is based on the preservation and enhancement of the strong historical and landscape values. A Cold War museum created by the reuse of the existing military camp and submarine tunnels and the implementation of a high quality eco resort could represent some of the proposed programs for the site.

Following the Riviera Drive towards Borsch and Qeparo, the landscape starts to change, the terrain becomes flatter and regularly cultivated with olives. The two valleys surrounded by steep mountains offer a dramatic landscape scenery with a great variety of environments such as long linear beaches along the coast, old villages and castles on top of the cliffs. The strong natural presence should be protected and the majority of the interventions could consist in implementing sports and open air activities.

All these landscape sequences require a common denominator that can keep them together in a unique comprehensive hole. The Riviera panoramic Road as a promenade of a linear park has the potential to become a backbone that could guarantee a continuity between parts while endorsing the singular experiences with the use of objects that reveal the landscape through a language of applied land art. Rather than a project incorporating the landscape, the landscape should become the catalyst that activates the project.

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Re-use and Revitalization of Military Bunkers in the Albanian Riviera

keywords / military bunkers, re-use, revitalization, albanian riviera

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Abstract

The Albania of today is littered with many used and unused buildings - such as bunkers, former industrial buildings - places and spaces which are the legacy of almost 50 years of communist rule. However, these structures are only part of the vision that dictator Enver Hoxha had for the future of Albania during The Cold War. The other portion of the story is partially or fully underground, hidden within subterranean bunkers and tunnels built to protect Albanians in the event of an invasion or aerial attack. Some of these reinforced concrete structures were created to shelter civilians, but most were designed for military training, storage and guns for the defense of the Albanian motherland. These were the most visible and substantial 'products' of the intensive industrialization program, today appearing like mushrooms dotted across the Albanian landscape. The reuse of these buildings in the Albanian Riviera is a major design challenge key to any larger agenda regarding Albania's emerging identity in terms of design and development, urban or otherwise.

Introduction

Industrial development arrived late in Albania. Prior to independence one hundred years ago – beginning of the 20th century - the country was essentially an agricultural economy and, while its few towns held a small, aspirant merchant class, exploitation of wealth and potential wealth in the new nation was largely confined to traditional farming and fishing, supplemented by similar activities such as salt manufacturing.

Late development does not, however, equate to unimportant development. Indeed, far from it. Albania is a young country but it is a country which already has a rich and vibrant history, one which is a microcosm of the often terrible history of Europe in the 20th century. Moreover, the path of this emerging nation can be charted through the growth, decline, and more recently, nascent revival of its

industrial economy. Indeed, Albania's industrial heritage is a tangible expression of its history since independence, evidenced by investment in the extraction of its raw materials¹ from the 1920's onward: infrastructural development under the colonial eye of Italy in the 1930's, wartime exploitation by hostile powers² in the 1940's, massive industrial expansion under Communism between the late 1940's and 1980's, and renewal of infrastructure since the 1990s.

This industrial heritage is one which is particular to Albania and its communities. A poignant example is that of Hoxha's bunkers, the concrete and steel defensive works which still dominate large parts of the Albanian countryside. Their manufacture, a major drain upon the national economy at the time of their construction, was only made possible by control of the supply of raw materials,

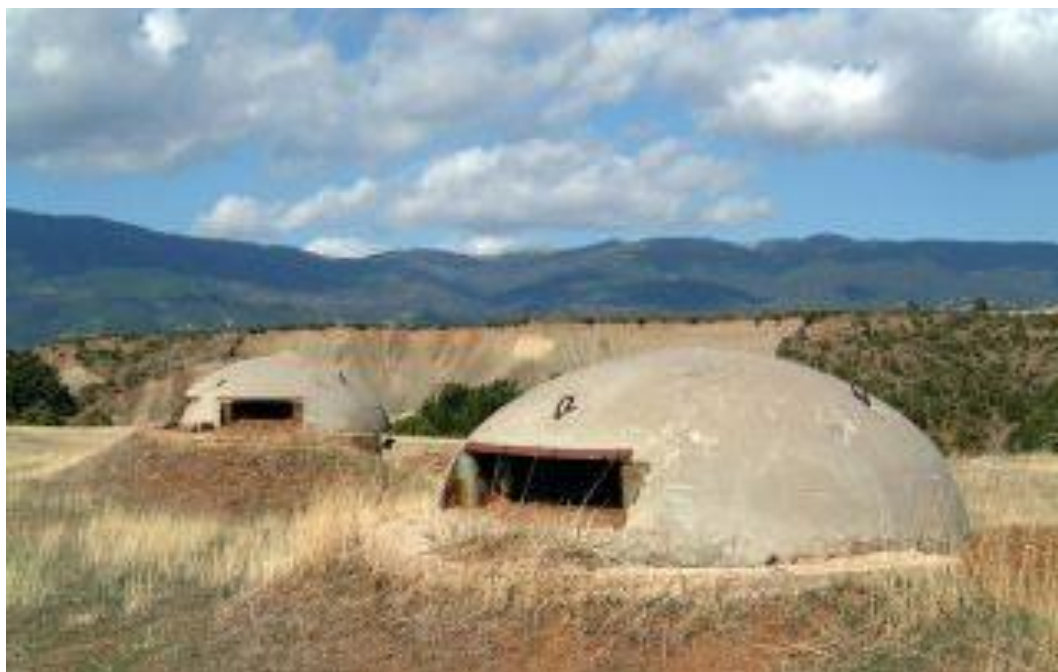


Fig1a / Bunker in the Albanian inland
source / theapricity.com

prefabrication in purpose-built factories, and distribution of the finished products, all organized as industrial enterprises. It is understandable that the continuing existence of many bunkers can be an affront to Albanians, bringing with them reminders of an all-too unloved, recent and painful past. However, their manufacture and construction was a stupendous remarkable national undertaking, one which engaged many members, a great portion of the community's population, and this investment of human concretized in the form factories and bunkers themselves, are certainly worth noting.

Such remembrance, essentially the intangible heritage of industrialization in Albania, created from the memories and meaning attached to industrialization, is certainly as important as the tangible heritage. Entire communities were forged through their links to this industrial activity and its physical manifestations. Many such industrial sites are now closed and derelict but the communities which they fostered continue to exist. These communities face pressures in the modern world as Albania continues to its adaptation to a free market economy. It is easy in such circumstances for communal roots to be lost but industrial heritage can assist the maintenance of social cohesion through a shared physical reminder of community origins.

Enver Hoxha initiated the 'bunkerization' of Albania during the late 1960s as a means of defense, but it also served to keep the population in fear of the outside world. The sheer number of bunkers and fortifications that were built created the most extensive level of protection Albania had ever experienced, although its effectiveness was never tested as the country was not invaded during the Cold War³.

Bunkers were installed as a response to a number of perceived foreign threats to the sovereignty of the country. This defense/paranoia reached its height during the 1968 Warsaw-Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia where the Soviet Union and her main allies successfully halted attempts for Czech liberalization. The Warsaw Treaty Organization was a collective defense treaty between communist states during the Cold War, of which Albania had been a founding member in 1955. Shortly thereafter, however, Albania severed ties with the USSR in 1961 and formed a new relationship with the People's Republic of China. Due to strained relations between Albania and other Eastern Bloc countries, Hoxha believed that Albania would be the next target of the Warsaw Pact under attack and thus prepared the country for invasion.

Initially, bunkers were produced and

1 / Raw materials such as copper, chrome, iron, coal, bitumen, etc

2 / Nazi invasion

3 / It actually was invaded once, in a minor way, by English spies running Albanian insurgents in an effort to overthrow Hoxha's government - see Ben Macintyre, *A Spy Among Friends: Kim Philby and the Great Betrayal*, pp.121-123. However, this "invasion" was quickly ended through Soviet counter-espionage.

installed on a relatively moderate scale, focused along land borders with Greece and Yugoslavia and the coastal border with Italy. Military zones, ports, towns and main roads were also protected with bunkers and gun emplacements for military use and to store ammunition and equipment. However, by the late 1970s and early 1980s Albanian bunker production went into overdrive. Concrete factories began to use large molds to prefabricate bunker parts which would be fitted together like a jigsaw puzzle during installation. This meant that bunkers could be created quicker than ever before and were installed across Albania's entire landscape. The vast scale of this bunker program consumed substantial amounts of state finances and labor resources at a time when the country's aging infrastructure and industrial equipment was in dire need of investment. This situation became more acute after Albania finally split with the People's Republic of China in 1978 and embarked on a period of self-imposed isolation without any outside protectorate for the first time (Fjalori, 2008).

The actual number of bunkers produced in Albania during this time is unknown and estimates can range up to as many as 1 million, although the amount usually quoted is somewhere between 400,000 and 600,000. Upon the death of Enver Hoxha in 1985, his bunker-building legacy died with him. Albania could not afford this costly expense any longer. After the Communist leadership finally collapsed in 1991, the bunkers were viewed as an obsolete legacy of an era that the country would best leave behind. During the 1990's and 2000's, Albania's bunkers were left to decay. They became overgrown and were viewed with suspicion for their connection to Hoxha's paranoid regime. The robust nature of their concrete and steel construction made them very difficult to destroy, and so post-communist life grew up around the bunkers and they became as embedded in the Albanian landscape as they were within the national mind (Fjalori, 2008).

Current situation

The legacy of Communism remains quite visible across Albania's countryside where over 600,000 concrete bunkers mark the landscape. Constructed by Enver Hoxha's regime over 40 years, these bunkers were intended to prevent a military attack on the country. While they were originally of modest defensive value to Albania, today they present a curious appeal to the country's visitors, their strange history

and form, as well as their sheer number, a singular case in the world. The bunkers have been built into the very fabric of everyday life in Albania. To understand why these bunkers were built is to understand the totalitarian, communist regime. Continuously suspicious of an invasion by a foreign supremacy, the Hoxha dictatorship mandated the construction of a defensive infrastructure so complicated that it would make it inappropriately costly for any would-be aggressor. Building hundreds of thousands of concrete fortifications, despite nearly bankrupting the country in the process, was his coping mechanism for this terror. However, when we consider that Albania was never invaded during Hoxha's tenure in power, one cannot but wonder whether or not his bunker-building campaign wasn't successful after all.

In more recent years, bunkers in some locations have been destroyed with heavy machinery to extract the metal reinforcements contained within them, leaving only a pile of concrete behind. Those bunkers that remain are often reused for practical purposes such as animal shelters or for storage and as places to brew raki and use as cooking sheds. Large and small bunkers that are located in tourist areas are often brightly painted or have been converted into beach bars or restaurants. The act of painting or reusing the bunkers makes a novelty out of these Cold War structures and reduces the level of fear that they once caused (Parangoni, 2010).

In inhabited areas, especially in large cities, the bunkers have been decorated, at times, to get rid of the militaristic image they still carry. The use of vivid colors contrasts with their degraded state.

The bunkers have also been the objects of quite a few graffiti writings, whether it artistic or political, and sometimes even commercial advertising has been sprayed on them. Some of the bunkers were transported and destroyed – the obvious approach according to many Albanians, but the fact remains that these bunkers, built to bear fire weapons, are almost unfeasible to destroy. Indeed, to do so is highly unproductive, as a huge effort is required to break apart just one of them, let alone 600,000.

Despite this, many have been destroyed, however difficult. The most diffused method of achieving this difficult goal is simply burning combustibles inside the bunkers until the temperature of the

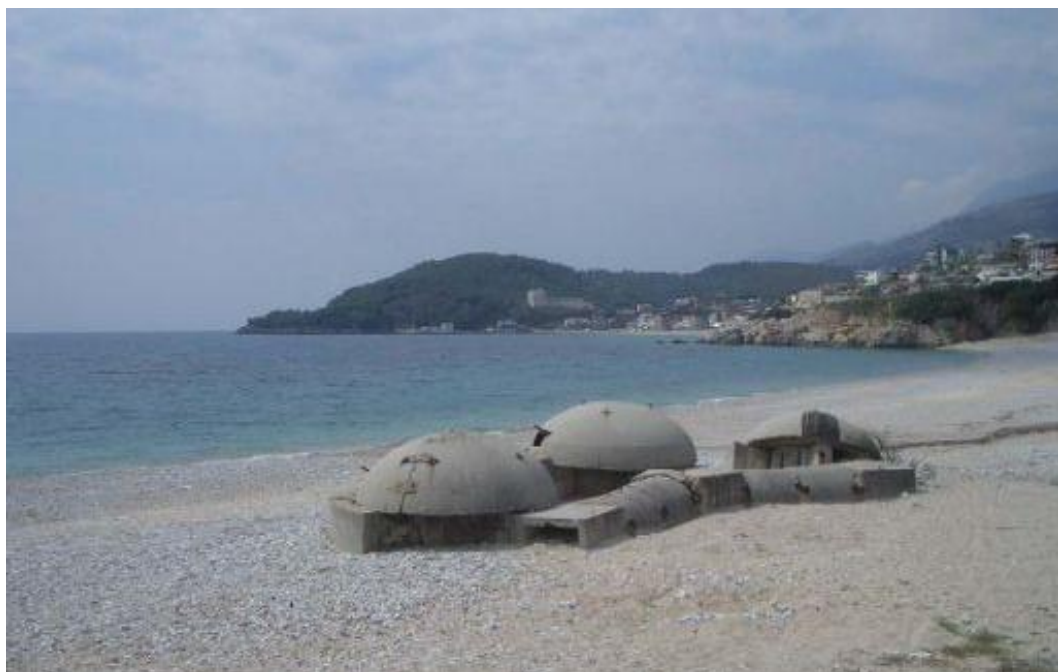


Fig1b / Dhermiu Beach Bunkers
source / bunkeralbania.com

concrete is sufficiently high and then immediately pouring cold water on the surface of the concrete until it breaks apart, the smaller pieces rendered easier to remove. This process is repeated until the bunker can be taken apart in pieces. An arduous process to be sure, this process is undertaken only for the most inconveniently placed bunkers (ACI)

The urban counterpart of the forgotten rural and mountain bunkers are the ignored ones. In the same way that the bunkers in the countryside are located in unexpected areas with little concern for the inhabitants of the area, bunkers in populated areas are treated like boulders: natural artifacts of little or no significance. Objects that are simply there - nothing more, nothing less (Stefa and Gyler, 2009).

The most significant issues for the future of the bunkers are: how might they be used in a present and future Albania, if at all? Taking in consideration that many of them are still surviving in different original sizes, and spread all over the landscape, with no regard to Albania's geography, they could be transformed either to cheap rooms for the travelers that are fascinated by their existence, or to useful functions according to their location. Are they an opportunity for professionals like architects, engineers, planners, artists, students, economists, politicians, and perhaps even non-professionals to express their ideas for a

future for the bunkers that might improve Albania's prospective developments and to break any sense of fear and isolation that bunkers might still hold.

Case study

Albania's bunkers can be found in all different shapes, sizes and colors. Some projects exist aiming to change the bigger ones into basic hotel rooms, while others have already been transformed by enterprising Albanians even into businesses like drink stands and burger shops.

In this paper, I will focus on the re-use and revitalization of the Dhermi Beach Bunker and Buneci Beach Bunker. These bunkers are of the same typology: triple series, strategic points, linear bunkers. This organizational typology is found along the entire coastline of Albania, with triple series of bunkers all along the coast, composed of groups of three small (1 soldier) bunkers (each accommodating a single soldier) connected to one another by a tunnel. The distance between each group of three is 150 meters such that they served the tactical function of "qendra zjarri," or "fire centers." The original function of this trio of bunkers was "Qendra Zjarri – Fire centers". These bunkers are objects which are produced as prefabricated elements with various geometrical shapes starting from the semi hemispherical to the cubic one. The shape depends on the primary function of the

4 / The medium-sized bunkers are originally designed to host a family or about four to five people. They are usually found in lowlands in huge amount of numbers, or in high lands. The third grouping of bunkers according to their size is the large ones, which are originally designed to host heavy artillery or armaments, or to host more than 10 people. They can be found in the highlands and lowlands



Fig2 / Buneci Beach Bunkers, the reuse process
source / bunkeralbania.com

bunker. These bunkers were transported and are assembled onsite through large machines built for this purpose, capable of lifting these reinforced concrete parts despite their heavy weights. Each bunker is a combination of three main components: a semi-sphere (or dome) of a diameter of 3 meters with an opening that serves as a gun turret; a cylindrical foundation below to support the dome that is partially embedded in the ground; and an outer wall with a radius roughly 60cm larger than the foundation cylinder that is filled with soil. It should be noted that these bunkers are, relatively, all small bunkers. These small bunkers were originally designed to host a single soldier. They are generally found in lowlands and are especially prevalent along the Albanian Riviera. In these areas, they usually exist groups of three, connected to each other by a tunnel (Stefa and Gyler, 2009).

Programme of re-use and revitalization of the Riviera's beach bunkers

A short period of time (1972-1984) and an enormous number of bunkers lead to a high level of unproductivity in Albania. This stagnation, starting in 1985, became painful for every Albanian. Albanians have spent much of the last decade doing their best to remove any reminiscence of Hoxha's dictatorship. But, even if Albanians could crash the statues and burn the photographs, they could not avoid perceiving something they coexist with, something that serves as a tool to fulfill various necessities, very expensive to remove and hard to destroy. Since the fall of Communism in 1991, bunkers have

lost their military duty to become the venue for lovers' trysts and, in the most desperate cases, homes for the thousands of internal refugees. Farmers use them for chicken coops. Neophyte businessmen have converted well-located bunkers inside the cities into kiosks, burger bars, shoeshine stands, even discos. Up close, most are crumbling and weed choked, memorials to an age of terror long gone by.

For almost seven - eight years, we have experienced a revival of several actors' attention regarding these areas and abandoned structures. The first is the private actor, who has begun to reuse some of the bunkers of the Riviera area. The second actors are local institutions and those studying urban issues. The third actors are the residents of the area who have an already greater awareness and care for life in the community and seek, claim, public spaces and structures for their social activity.

Many are used as trash baskets or latrines. But in an undeveloped land struggling to become modern in a hurry, the bunkers have also acquired some new, and unique, uses. Some very large, room-like facilities have been turned into the Bunker Restaurant. Others are painted with psychedelic colors to resemble large flowers.

The bunkers in Bunec, for example, has been re-used as restaurants with an adjacent campsite, one of several examples of the transformed and well-used bunkers in the Riviera zone.



Fig3 / Riviera Beach Bunkers
source / bunkeralbania.com

Despite such examples, however, most bunkers found in the Riviera area are not reused or revitalized and remain abandoned. These, then, might be re-purposed in similar ways to those mentioned above, or perhaps in other ways yet to be imagined. That is why we can forecast several possible ways of transformations

All kinds of bunkers, small, medium and large, can be found in the lowlands of the Riviera zone.

The small-sized bunkers which can be seen in lowlands can be transformed into info points, public WCs and kiosks.

The large-sized bunkers in the Riviera zone can be transformed into cheap hostels and café-restaurants. A SWAT analysis of this area and its bunkers would suggest the following⁵:

STRENGTHS: What new opportunities might we find in the Riviera beach bunkers?

- Spread all across this part of Albania, they are found in an abundance of sites and contexts; and can be found in abundance in all kinds of different typologies;
- Given the remote location of the Riviera, most bunkers here remain in good shape, ripe for re- purposing in any number of ways; There are many bunkers that are in quite a good state to be re functionalized;

- Uniformity of construction (self-similarity) of the bunkers along the Riviera lends to prototypical approaches to re-purposing and hence is economically viable. There is uniformity in their construction.

WEAKNESSES: What are the potential problems associated with re-purposing Riviera bunkers? What should be avoided?

- They are difficult to remove (in terms of labor and cost);
- They continue to carry the stigma of Hoxha's approach to communism/ communist era

OPPORTUNITIES: What are the interesting trends regarding bunker re-use?

- Tourism: they are extremely interesting to foreigners;
- Relative ease of prototypical re-use due to their uniformity;
- Durability: their life-span is essentially infinite...this suggests either 1) re-purposing to a program of permanence, or 2) re-purposing to programs that would change over time; they have a long life-span.

THREATS: What are the obstacles the Riviera and its bunkers face?

- Disregard of the Albanian people towards

5 / A SWOT analysis (is a structured planning method used to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats involved in a project or in a business venture. A SWOT analysis can be carried out for a product, place, industry or person. It involves specifying the objective of the business venture or project and identifying the internal and external factors that are favorable and unfavorable to achieve that objective

6 / The bunkers generally are prone of the Ministry of Defense, some of them are privatized and some of them are just used for private business



Fig4 / Riviera Beach Bunkers
source / bunkeralbania.com

the bunkers;

- There is no clear "ownership", not only for bunkers but generally in Albania⁶ which is also an obstacle for foreign investments and integration of the country.

Conclusions

Bunkers are a reality, a reality that Albania went through with challenges and barriers for a better one! Today, even though Albanians ignore them or have just forgotten about them, they are there, still trying to show their potential and disposition to be used. Bunkers seem to be happy about being born and living in Albania, and above all proud to be Albanians. But in fact their happiness masks an enormous sorrow tied to the past which would be healed by their contribution to Albania.

This research tries to give a personalized and acceptable solution to these critical topics and asks the following questions: What can be done with Albania's abandoned military structures, specifically the bunkers found along the Riviera? Can they simply be handed over to private stakeholders which do with them what he/she pleases and for as long as he/she wants? Do these structures still have any value in their context? Are they historical artifacts in need of preservation or, conversely, are they available for adaptive re-use? Could be they industrial heritage as are hundreds of such objects for other countries? These questions and those associated with them have been the leading lines of this research and this project. The touristic character of the

area and the residents deeply impacted the project program which includes and considers the relationship between the sea, the tourists and the Riviera Beach Bunkers. This project aims to enhance the military historic layer of the Riviera zone through the revitalization and re-use of these magnificent structures.

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*Fig5 / BED&BUNKER is a project of the University of Applied Sciences Mainz and POLIS University
source / workshop students*

Landscape project / Large-scale project

A reflection on green-structures and territorial networks as key-elements for the development of a sustainable Southern Albanian Riviera

keywords / territorial planning, green-structures, sustainable development

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Abstract

Within the conception of a multi-disciplinary and large-scale project like the one of the southern Albanian Riviera competition, it is fundamental to consider impacts and implications of landscape planning especially as an opportunity of valorization and requalification of the territorial framework. An integrated approach to these matters should be able to combine local heritage (both material and immaterial), natural features, urban settlements and landscape peculiarities, pursuing the aim of local re-configuration yet contextualized within a broader and shared vision.

Starting from the assumption that a large-scale project is a landscape project, this essay wants to stress the importance of ecology as the paradigm for the implementation of new local development policies in which territorial networks and greenways could play a fundamental role within the advancement of a greater vision grounded on environmental, infrastructural, and socio-economical relationships.

The competition area has shown remarkable potentials in terms of touristic development but the risks coming from enlarging the already existing gap between the coastal settlements and the inner ones -especially in terms of resources to be empowered and exploited- are to be carefully taken into consideration and managed during the whole planning process. This is where integrated strategies of large-scale planning and territorial networks must come into play, empowering the existing site characteristics in order to conceive a unitarian vision for a new sustainable southern Albanian Riviera.

Large-scale / landscape coastal projects

The “Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion” represents the third and latest EU macro-area, endorsed by the European Commission in 2012 after the Baltic Sea Region (2009) and the Danube Region (2011). It is composed by a broad seaward territory that stretches over eight countries -among which Italy and Albania- and various landscapes, offering both recurring features and many local peculiarities.¹

The EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR, 2014) has been jointly developed by the Commission together with the Adriatic-Ionian Region's countries and stakeholders in order to address common challenges; by aiming at creating

synergies and fostering coordination among all the involved territories, such strategy should go beyond the concept of large-scale project, developing a supranational, unitarian vision.

EUSAIR's general goal is to promote economic and social prosperity and growth by improving the macro- region's attractiveness, competitiveness and connectivity, also playing an important role in encouraging the EU integration of the Western Balkans. The whole strategy has been built on four main thematic pillars, such as:

- 1) enhancing blue growth;
- 2) connecting the region by working on transport and energy networks;
- 3) Improving environmental quality;



Fig1 / Countries and territories involved in the EU Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion / source / EuroGeographics Association for the administrative boundaries 2014

4) empowering sustainable tourism.

Nevertheless, for the wide range of existing situations (natural, urban, socio-economical, legislative, etc...) and for the relatively new development of such concepts and common strategies, the issues raised by the re-qualification of the macro-region's waterfront areas -for whatever purposes these may occur- are complexes and not surely limited to the re-generation of specific sites or relicts. There are important and broader matters related, for instance, to the modification of the coastal landscapes due either to processes of urban growth and sprawl (particularly intense in some parts of the Italian seaboard) or to the opposite phenomenon of abandoning the coast and its inland by the locals (as the southern Albanian Riviera case-study showed us), also enlarging the gap caused by the touristic seasonal impact.

This problem embodies a complexity that displays its effects on different levels, starting from the management of a multi-dimensional planning process, to the definition of strategies for large-scale projects involving a variety of topics: from urban re-configuration to landscape re-organization and environmental protection (Farinella, 2008).

The extended area that was object of

the "Reactive Riviera" project has been the focus of many studies and initiatives aimed at its re-consideration and relaunch especially in regards to touristic and promotional purposes, not least the Albanian Riviera design competition².

However, the risks of focusing primarily on the issues concerning the coastal strip, neglecting reflections and propositions on the inland -despite its great landscape potentials- could enlarge the already existing gap between these two parts of one and the same complex territorial system.

The coast -being the buffer between sea and mainland, in whichever part of the Adriatic-Ionian region we may focus on- presents a series of diverse situations that, in addition to the beach, involve different environmental emergencies that in the selected case-study of the southern Albanian coastline could be summarized as: the presence of underused agricultural lands that are no longer exploited for production (e.g. the beautiful terraces created during the dictatorship for the cultivation of citrous and olive trees); the existence of relicts of vegetation or specific areas of environmental relevance (e.g. the Llogara national park or the Porto Palermo gulf); the presence of lagoons and wetlands (as the UNESCO heritage site of

1 / For further information on the subject, see: European Commission Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy (2014), *For a prosperous and integrated Adriatic and Ionian Region*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

2 / The Atelier Albania mandated by the Ministry of Urban Development and Tourism and the Office of the Prime Minister has launched in 2014 an international design competition for the improvement and re-configuration of the southern Albanian coastal strip and its surrounding villages defined as RIVIERA (lot 1, 2, 3). The main aim was to generate original and visionary design interventions concepts for the southern coastal strip and the related settlements, working especially on empowering the existing peculiarities of the area (which can already be considered as a touristic site, good catalyst for the economy of the whole region especially during the summer).

Butrint); the flowing of rivers into the sea (or the traces of ancient ones, as the glacial delta near Pal asë); a built environment comprised of a constellation of small-size villages rich in history yet often degraded and partially or totally abandoned (e.g. Vuno and Dhermi), and so on.

Therefore, the coast could be considered as a composed and complex system, raising issues of environmental and landscape control as well as issues of territorial management of all the physical transformations. As Quaini reminds us (2006; 11.06.2015, Lecture at the XVIII SIU National Conference in Venice: "Coste/aree interne") when dealing with coastal systems, today we should go beyond the "linear model" that, for too long, chased the dream of modernizations which -for instance in Italy- produced only failures and ruins; effective large-scale projects are those able to focus on local issues, planning the territory for integrated systems and no longer pursuing a linear coastal development.

From this perspective, the concept of ecosystem (as the combination of the terms ecology and systems, defined by Schulze (2002) as the network of interactions among organisms and between organisms and their environment, within a limited space) could be used to represent the condition of inter-dependency between the seaside and all the other water and ground elements -natural or artificial- that create the territorial structure. This is an open system, living in a dynamic and active balance condition grounding on the peculiarities of its structure, its operation and its specific development (Farinella, 2008).

So the re-qualification of coastal landscapes needs to be evaluated within the framework of a complexity of interventions that should guide us towards a more integrated vision of the matters necessary for creating a new synergy among urban settlements, natural features and landscapes.

The definition of the Natura 2000 Network and of the European Landscape Convention (as will be later explained in this paper) have recently represented two great opportunities in redefining territorial development policies towards sustainability and biodiversity preservation and empowerment in Europe. Landscape problems connected to broad tracts are increasingly becoming reference points also for urban planning strategies both at a local and broader scale: these issues require the finalization of coherent actions also aiming at the valorization of local heritage involving natural, cultural

and urban assets that are no longer ascribable only to the image of the coastal settlements.

Amongst the goals of such a territorial and landscape approach, the enhancement of local awareness and the promotion of initiatives for landscape protection and valorization are to be stressed. Within this picture, the operative proposal should well represent and empower local Albanian landscapes at all scales, from the macro-regional to the municipal one, by enhancing the transformations undergone over time and the vestiges of their history along with the current dynamics, opportunities and visions especially the ones related to touristic development, innovation and sustainability.

The achieved and yet missed solutions to the wide topic of sustainable development (starting from the 1987 Brundtland Report³) are increasingly imposing the need of a critical reflection on local development models and on the so-called "ecological footprint". As is known, this metric measures nature's aiming at the territorial re-configuration and relaunch of the southern Albanian coastline, it could be used as an active tool for calibrate the environmental impact of future planning and design choices.

Within such a framework, the need for local development approaches to turn into policies of territorial government seems obvious, also grounding on the inclusion of the environmental variable within administrative decisions and on the adequacy of objectives, tools and actions on a certain area (Zaoli, 2014).

In order to better contextualize such a large-scale / landscape coastal project, it is useful to reflect on what has been happening on the other side of the Adriatic coast before the creation of the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion; on how, for instance, in Italy, planning approaches and management policies, from a legislative and operational point of view, have dealt and are still dealing with the regulation of territorial transformations regarding landscape projects.

The European Landscape Convention represented a fundamental step for reducing the existing separation between landscape projects and territorial management projects, meaning "landscape" as a "basic component of the European natural and cultural heritage". Adopted on 20 October 2000 in Florence (Italy) and come into power on 1 March 2004 (Council of Europe Treaty Series no. 176), the Convention ratifies an already existing but not yet enforced awareness that is clearly stated in article 2 (scope):

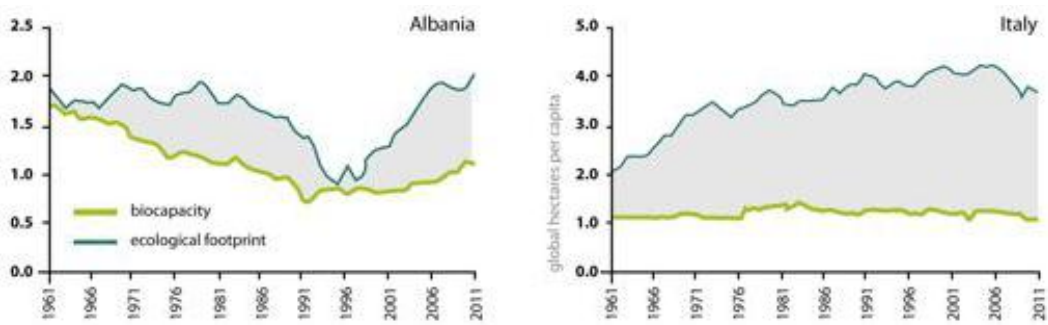


Fig2 / These graphs track the per-person Ecological Footprint and Biocapacity in Albania and Italy since 1961, both measured in global hectares. Biocapacity per-person varies each year with eco-system management, agricultural practices, ecosystem degradation, weather and population size. Footprint per-person varies with consumption amounts and production efficiency
source / Global Footprint Network edited by Elena Dorato

" (...) This Convention applies to the entire territory of the Parties and covers natural, rural, urban and peri-urban areas. It includes land, inland water and marine areas. It concerns landscapes that might be considered outstanding as well as everyday or degraded landscapes"⁴.

By signing this document, Italy has extended its provisions to the whole national territory, overstepping the problematic regulatory separation between State and Regions. In fact, despite the division between landscape and urban planning legislation, due mainly to the different jurisdictions stated by the Italian Constitution (landscape to the State, while urban planning to the Regions) and to cultural hangovers, the introduction of the Convention has greatly contributed to strengthen the mutual dialogue, along with enhancing co-planning and co-designing experiences among landscape projects and territorial planning's stakeholders. In this perspective, the most innovative Regions (among which Emilia-Romagna) have tried to integrate landscape and urban planning disciplines by stating that the whole planning system -at all levels- should embody, besides the subjects of local territorial and landscape management, also the matters coming from the national law, representing de facto the local landscape and territorial project in its entirety. In such virtuously

executed cases, where the whole planning system is well integrated, the landscape project -from whichever kind of initiative it comes from- needs to be brought into the planning framework, submitting to the rules and regulations of urban planning: ultimately, it needs to be integrated within the plan, otherwise the landscape project could not be implemented (Clementi, A., Di Mascio, V., Dorato, E., et al., 2014).

Such operational intricacy regarding landscape / large-scale is not able to guarantee a projects' quality if it conforms to the planning system and hierarchy. Furthermore, many are the risks undermining the landscape project implementation at this point; public administration's need for bureaucratic checks along the process could shift the focus from planning objectives to mere procedural congruence. Also, the times elapsing from a project's definition to its realization, with the great number of intermediate steps to be accomplished by the regulation, represent a real issue.

Moreover, there exists a pent-up danger within the necessity of combining the three main elements of sustainable development (economic, environmental, social fields): the loss of the strategic, overall vision in favor of the implementation of smaller local projects, unable to respond to the holistic vision and to a real sustainable development in the long turn. So, despite

3 / Also known as "Our Common Future," its targets were multilateralism and interdependence of nations in the search for a sustainable development path. The report sought to recapture the spirit of the UN Conference on the Human Environment (the Stockholm Conference) which had introduced environmental concerns to the formal political development sphere; Our Common Future placed environmental issues firmly on the political agenda, aiming at discussing environment and development as one single issue. Retrieved June 4th 2015 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Our_Common_Future

4 / For further information on the subject, see the "European Landscape Convention" and other reference documents at: http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/heritage/Landscape/Publications/Convention-Txt-Ref_en.pdf Retrieved June 12th 2015



A / Western hills and their woods offer the best conditions for free time and leisure in this region.
 B / steep hills which are not suitable for mechanized agriculture are often best for horticulture.
 C / Best areas for urbanization are on strategic clay-rich and high ground locations. These areas have a low agricultural value, but are very scenic and more advisable for human settlements.
 D / The valley is suitable for intensive agriculture on calcareous, productive soils.

*Fig3a / Ian McHarg, Great Valley Physiographic Region, Potomac river basin study 1965-66
 source /McHarg I.L. (1969) Design with Nature. Garden City / McHarg was an American landscape architect, one of the first to draw territorial views able to highlight the relationships between human settlements and the surrounding landscape elements.*

the differences among the Italian regions (and, generalizing, among all the countries and situations being part of the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion) the main problems related to large-scale / landscape projects' implementation are common and can be summarized as: fragmentation; separation; actualization of small, single projects where -for whatever reason- the global strategy has been lost (Zaoli, 2014).

The importance of territorial networks and green-structures within sustainable projects

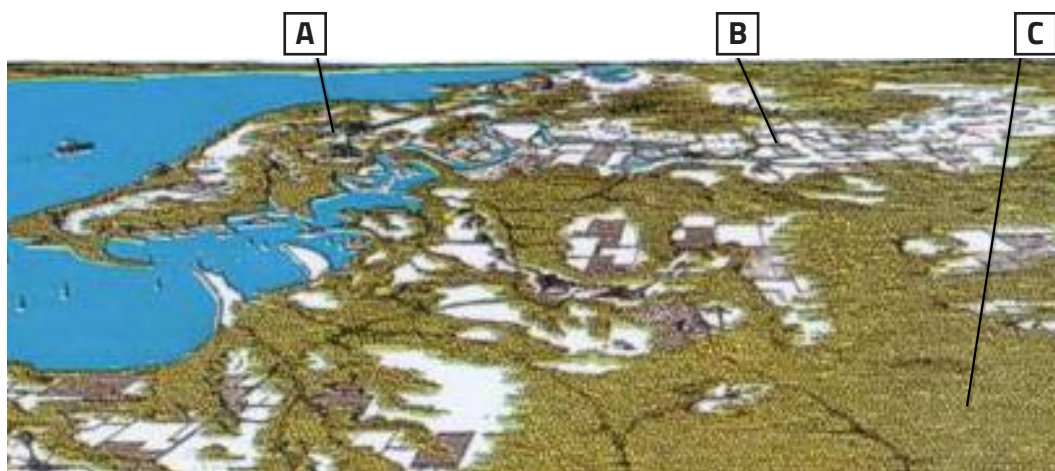
The Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP) first introduced the concept of ecological network in 1991 and, starting from the Netherlands, it quickly spread all around Europe. This term was conceived for representing a combination of protected areas connected among them by green corridors and embodies a new methodology, a new approach to environmental policies for safeguarding no longer isolated emergencies but whole eco-systems, dealing with all the involved issues in a broader and more global way. As far as landscape protection, in 1992 the Habitats Directive within the "Natura 2000 Network" were approved as the centerpiece of EU nature and biodiversity policies; each member state was asked to identify in its territory special areas for protecting natural habitats and their living species (for instance in Italy these have been actualized into ZPS-Zone di Protezione Speciale, ZSC-Zone Speciali di Conservazione and SIC- Siti di Importanza Comunitaria).

Yet "landscapes", in their natural being,

are dynamic and constantly evolving entities; their features are always changing, depending on many variables: first of all the human imprint. So along with this quite static idea of landscape safeguarding, ecological networks were introduced as operative tools for territorial reconfiguration, to be achieved by quinquennial plans. Such concept led to a new territorial planning approach also grounding on a more active conception of environmental, landscape and urban re-qualification of compromised areas; from this time on, the environmental issue gets directly tied to the social and economic ones, raising a growing international acceptance (starting from the 1992 Rio Conference on Environment and Development⁵), and leading to the creation of new instruments elaborated and enforced by international, national and local authorities.

Within this framework, there is a new instrument in the so-called territorial approach: the "territorial ecosystem⁶" as "a combination of the relationships between an environmental system and a human society which (...) finds in that very system the majority of the resources fundamental for living, developing culturally and producing a network of relationships, symbols, knowledges" (Saragosa, 2001).

These territorial networks -if focusing more on the environmental aspects than on the centrality of the human impact- have three main objectives: increasing biodiversity, reaching a proper level of landscape conservation, maintaining the global coherence of the network itself; the



A / On the alluvional plans there are limited sites for urbanization. For it's likely that such settlements have a touristic vocation, they should be kept close to the waterfront areas.

B / Alluvional soils grant the perfect conditions for agriculture. The estuary, tide plans, swamps, alluvional plans, bays and coves make perfect habitats for fish and wild animals. The forests and cultivated lands are rich terrestrial habitats.

C / Forests and woods are appropriate areas for the aquifers' recharge. They protect soils from erosion, support the fauna and represent a great element for leisure activities.

Fig3b / Ian McHarg, *Great Valley Physiographic Region, Potomac river basin study 1965-66*
source /McHarg I.L. (1969) *Design with Nature*. Garden City,

strategy is based on linking the relevant areas in order to create a continuous physical network. There are different elements to it, such as the core areas (as components of fundamental interest) connected by ecological corridors and the so-called nature development areas as re-qualification sites functional to the whole system.

Even though such networks appear to be highly rigid structures (also defined by their geographical extent: from local to large scale), the definition that Magnaghi (2009) gives of "urban bioregions?" tries to shift the vision from a hierarchical to a poly-central structure (same as the one envisioned by the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion), grounding it on several environmental prerequisites that define the functioning conditions of the region itself, as the balance of the hydrographic system; the balance between the urban network and open spaces; the connectivity of the regional ecological network; landscape quality; agricultural multi- functionality. All these systems' great potential lies within the meaning of "network" itself, spotting and rehabilitating

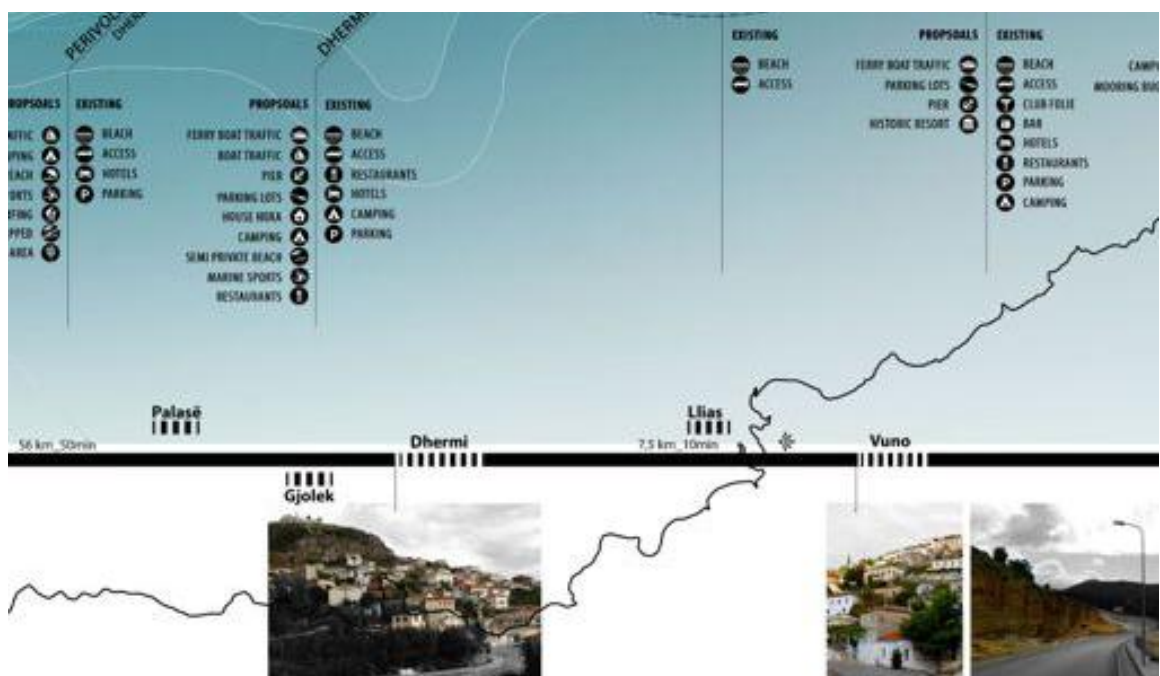
local emergencies by integrating them into a broader frame, generating a process that, if well managed, could induce new virtuous and more sustainable dynamics. Furthermore, ecological networks could be conceived as:

- variable and greater issues are represented by interferences between anthropic and ecological routes;
- systems of parks and reservations where core areas correspond to the parks themselves and the network acquires great importance within large-scale, territorial planning processes;
- a system of "landscape units" built through the re-connection of the most valuable territorial elements. In this case the network has the major intent to re-configure the peculiar and distinctive landscape features, aiming at re-creating a territorial identity perceivable in its whole. The reference scale is the local one;
- an eco-systemic, broad-spectrum scenario built by environmental elements and an interconnected sequence of territorial strips (as different agro-ecosystems) which invert the model of soil exploitation in a more sustainable way.

5 / For further information on the subject, see the "Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development" at: <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/conf151/aconf15126-1annex1.htm> Retrieved June 4th 2015).

6 / The concept of "territorial ecosystem," as Saragosa reminds us, comes from the study of the evolution of environmental, territorial, regional analysis, design and planning. The so-called "ecological planning" finds its roots in the english-speaking countries, especially in the USA where the Regional and Ecological Planning school met the Landscape Planning school. For further information on the subject, see: Gambino, R. (1991) *I parchi naturali. Problemi ed esperienze di pianificazione nel contesto ambientale*. NIS, Roma / Palazzo D., Treu M.C. (1994) *Glossario dei termini*, in Steiner F., *Costruire il paesaggio. Un approccio ecologico alla pianificazione del territorio*, McGraw-Hill Libri Italia srl, Milano 1994.

7 / An "urban bioregion" is made by a multiplicity of local territorial systems, organized in clusters of small and medium-sized cities each in ecological, productive and social balance with their territories. Magnaghi highlights how such model could be stronger than a regular center-suburbs metropolitan system, because it produces more prosperity through the valorization and the inclusion into the broader network of its elements and cores. Also, this model could avoid pollution, congestion, economical defect by reducing energy and environmental emergencies' costs; decreasing useless mobility and building "local eco-systemic balances" that could limit the ecological footprint.



From this viewpoint, ecological networks assume a strategic relevance not only within large-scale / landscape planning processes but also inside of urban and territorial policies, representing the framework for nature re-qualification in anthropic contexts, affecting issues like land use and soil consumption, territorial fragmentation, environmental sustainability and urban development. As already mentioned, all these issues are ascribable to the case-study of the southern Albanian coastal area that (for its very characteristics and for the goals that the Albanian Government wants to achieve in the near future especially in terms of touristic development) could represent an emblematic and potential example of using green-structures and territorial networks as key-elements for the development of a sustainable landscape planning process, capable of preserving local peculiarities and heritage while developing its potentials. Founded on the belief that a territorial ecological network represents first and foremost a policy of intervention (Clementi, A., Di Mascio, V., Dorato, E., et al., 2014), the whole process should start from the identification of the already existing networks and their residual elements, of the networks to be re-qualified in their entirety and from the choice of appropriate operative tools (according to the Albanian legislation) aiming at integrating and completing such territorial project. Strategical models and shared visions will need to be adopted beforehand, in line with the above-mentioned "EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region" (especially

referring to axis 3: improve environmental quality). Also considering the highly anthropic structure of the whole Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion and of the Albanian coast as a part of it, it becomes fundamental, within processes of large-scale / landscape planning, to establish new relationships between natural and cultural resources in order to strengthen and give more importance to the non-built areas of a growing and increasingly built-up territory. As Magnaghi reminds us (2000; 2008), the history of a territory represents the first step in the establishment of the rules regarding territorial and large-scale projects; we need to build (or rebuild, in the Albanian case) a "territorial patrimonial image" in order to consider the whole territory in which we operate as a heritage and common good. From this perspective, operating by promoting the realization of ecological networks and greenways becomes essential: the aim is to re-structure the local landscapes through the valorization of their cultural and natural components within a broader strategical vision. So mapping what Magnaghi calls "environmental prerequisites" represents the first step of intervention, which needs to be followed by the identification of local landscape peculiarities and emergencies. Along with specific interventions that will need to be defined for each site / territorial feature (e.g. the restoration of abandoned historical villages; the stabilization and recovery of ex-agricultural lands; the intervention on the existing mobility infrastructures and their implementation;

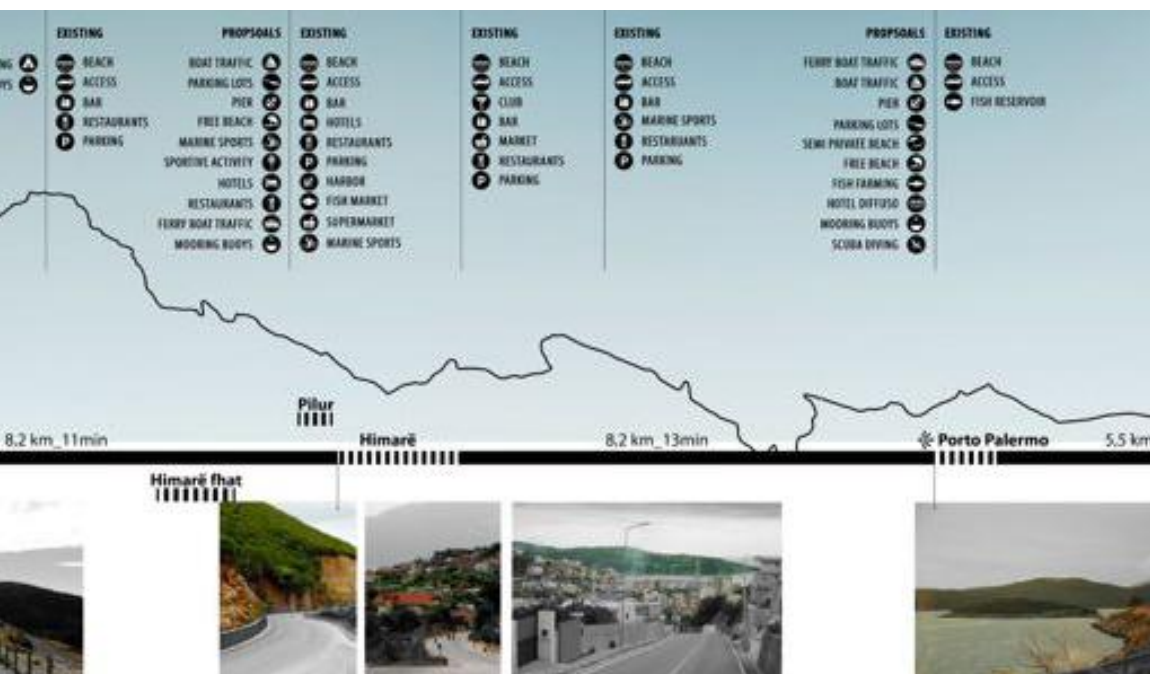


Fig3c / Extract of the southern Albanian riviera, its elements and its potentials source / Re-Active Riviera competition panels

etc...) the focus of the whole large-scale project should be the creation (or the re-configuration) of the ecological network itself, as the bearing structure of territorial organization. By detailing along the southern Albanian coastline what we have already defined as a "territorial ecosystem" -with its core areas, the nature development areas, the green corridors, etc...- local awareness could be increased, creating the basis for the formulation of flexible tools capable of adapting themselves to such a context (that, at least in the Government intentions, will be expected to be fast- changing), driving the future changes instead of compelling them.

The definition of such territorial network will represent the objective and shared framework on which each specific project will be based on, contextualizing local peculiarities and transforming current "emergencies" into potentials to be developed and exploited, if considered within a broader and interconnected network. So such a beautiful and resourceful site, tied to its history but eager to move forward, finally finding its place within the Adriatic-Ionian context, should implement local and sectorial projects only after having defined its own territorial network and always being aware of the existing macro-regional development vision: sharing its general objectives (which also means adjusting to the EU guidelines, in a forthcoming perspective for Albania to enter the European Union) by re-interpreting them in a local key, using ecological networks and greenways

as operational tools for landscape re-configuration and a territorial relaunch.

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Albanian Riviera / urban form and landscape, the core elements for a future metanational landscape

keywords / landscape, spatial form, metanational, territorial articulation,

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Abstract

The territorial relationship of the Albanian Riviera regarding its location relates to a platform that is investing by tradition in tourism, taking into consideration not only the economic values that tourism can offer but also a mission to maintain and transmit cultural and heritage values through time, extending the social and intellectual outreach of its civilization. This wealth of culture along the areas of the Blue Corridor can be emphasized in the Riviera so as to further develop sustainable tourism as a model structure of progression. As a South European and Mediterranean country situated on the Adriatic coast, Albania is an especially important part of South Eastern Europe, serving as an essential transport bridge between Western, Southeastern and Northeastern Europe. Because of its particular geographical position and spread, Albania has a demanding form. It is crucial to understanding the potential of the Albanian Riviera in the national and regional context, as a missing piece of the Blue Corridor of the Adriatic a clear Met National Landscape of immense value.

Landscape and its elements as a cityshaping factor / landscape characteristics

"Landscape characteristics refer to the unique aesthetic features that can distinguish one scene from another in particular time and space ranges. It is the expression of the unique aesthetic features of the landscapes" (Yu, 2008). Landscape characteristics are the result of heterogeneous aesthetics, which, in turn, express the types of landscape features. The case of the church of Saint Athanas in Dhermi village (fig1), which is like a queen's crown on the top of the mountain is one of the characteristic aspects of this village. Its shape, color and volume, as well as the materials used for the heterogeneous aesthetic features, which, in turn, exhibit the landscape characteristics.

Landscape aesthetic structure

"Landscape is a kind of objective existence. A scene, whether natural or human, shall

not be taken as the landscape if it cannot be or will not be understood by people" (Yu, 1997) Landscape aestheticism is a positive reaction that occurs in the dialogue between the viewers and the landscape. A single object might trigger different aesthetic responses from various viewers, similar to the famous western saying, "There are a thousand Hamlets in a thousand people's eyes." As such, this study organizes landscapes into an aesthetic group to lay aside individual characteristics of landscapes and determine the generalities of the group accordingly. The generalities resulted are used to construct the "composition relations and methods of the types of the landscape characteristics created in aesthetic activities by aesthetic subjects in the aesthetic system of particular time and space by means of the functions of aesthetic psychological structure of citizens" (Yu, 2006) In the case of the Albanian Riviera, the landscape is



Fig1 / The church of Saint Athanas in Dhermi village
source / internet

constructed by patterns, sculpted in time and space.

Temporal and spatial quality

"According to philosophers, time and space are the essential attributes of the existence of a moving object. Time represents the sequence and continuity of the object's movement, and space represents the extensibility and flexibility of the object's existence" (Yang, 1997) Thus, the landscape, when understood as a "moving object", also presents its existence and evolution in dynamic temporal and spatial systems. The historical and territorial features of landscapes are being represented by temporal and spatial dimensions, respectively. Temporal dimension: A landscape itself is an artwork of time, which has experienced constant evolution over the course of human history. Landscapes in the same region represent different external appearances and aesthetic sensibilities derived from various historical periods. Therefore, the discrepancies over time form the basis for the territorial features of the territory. The historical feature of such evolution and differences of landscapes over time is important in investigating the dynamic evolution.

Garrett Eckbo said that in any landscape we look for two features: one is an expression of landscape nature specifics, the other is development of maximum landscape opportunities for adjustment to the human being's needs.

To understand the current arena of urban spatial form in Albania, we should dig into Albania's recent history. A history that is

remarkably different from the history of Western European countries and the United States, on which most planning literature and theory are based. In Western Europe and the US, in a timeframe that starts just before the Second World War, we see a wave. The history of urban planning (and urban development) in Albania has passed through periods that are closely connected to its political developments and different historical milestones.

Urban form on the Albanian Riviera

Urban settlements in southern Albania have been continuously inhabited from ancient times down to the present day. Close to each other, they bear witness to the wealth and diversity of the urban and architectural heritage of this region.

Nature as a material to construct urban form and public space

The Albanian Riviera owns several interesting artifacts of historic fortified cities that are well preserved, and this is particularly true of their vernacular buildings. The urban morphology of this city is quite diverse following the two models of cities.- open city and enclosed city- The 'idea of city' means 'form' of the urban settlement, overall order of the urban construction while the main characters of each idea of a city refer to the underlying order structure, and to the dialectic between recurring and exceptional elements, incorporating more ancient influences at the same time. This way of life has respected Orthodox Christian traditions that have thus been able to continue their spiritual and cultural



Fig2 / System of the Acropolis
source / internet

development, particularly in Himara, in which the Christian influence dates since the 3rd century BC. Himara has signs of constant habitation for over 3,500 years beginning with an important castle and administration point for many important points of that area.

Following the system of the Acropolis (fig2), the settlements of Himara (fig3) – as well as certain Greek agora, Axis for example – are defined starting from the proxemics and topological relationship between the public buildings. The civil structures (in the particular case the church) establish long distance relationships, and reciprocal stresses were starting from the definition of a void like a break, spacing. Landscape is an determining element, where the spatial arrangement as in the Campo Dei Miracoli in Pisa, not only acts as the place where relationships form and take place but also as a way to include nature as a constitutive element of urban construction. In the case of the Greek Acropolis, the similar architectural space is the polar area. The relationship between the elements is not a conventional symmetry but a relation of interferences where different planes of arrangement, counterpoints, dynamic equilibriums coexist. Nature as a city-shaping element with the symbolic feature of the tree and water determines the functional use of space. In the case of Lukova and analog villages in the south of Albania which clearly demonstrate the influence of the Christian Orthodox tradition, grown during the last century, public space is defined by the tree – as Athens was created at the root of the Olive tree – possessing thus a symbolic

character since the plane tree (*Platanus orientalis*) is the most characteristic one in many villages of the Riviera and considered as “the noble tree of Epirus” (fig. 4), establishing the origin and being time-measuring scale. The dialectic syntax of the typology of a public square is defined by the tree, the church, and the market. The tree is shading and an element of measuring time, the church as functional – identity attractor, and the market as an economic, social factor define the genius loci and character of these areas. A relationship that has its source in the clear dialectic between territorial elements and human-made artifacts taking into consideration the vernacular approach and sensitivity of the social, historical, geopolitical and cultural aspects of this territory.

Old Vuno contains several remarkable examples of vernacular stone-built architecture houses (fig5), which date from the 17th century, but also more elaborate examples dating from the early 19th century.

Himara bears witness to a town that was fortified and open and for an extended period inhabited by craftsmen and merchants. Its urban centre reflects a vernacular housing tradition of the Balkans, examples of which date mainly from the late 18th and 19th centuries. This tradition has been adapted to suit the town's lifestyles, with houses on the slopes which are predominantly horizontal in layout, and make abundant use of the entering daylight.

Dhermi and Old Qeparo bear outstanding testimony to the diversity of urban societies in the Balkans, and to longstanding ways



Fig3-4 / The settlements of Himara and "the noble tree of Epirus"
source / internet

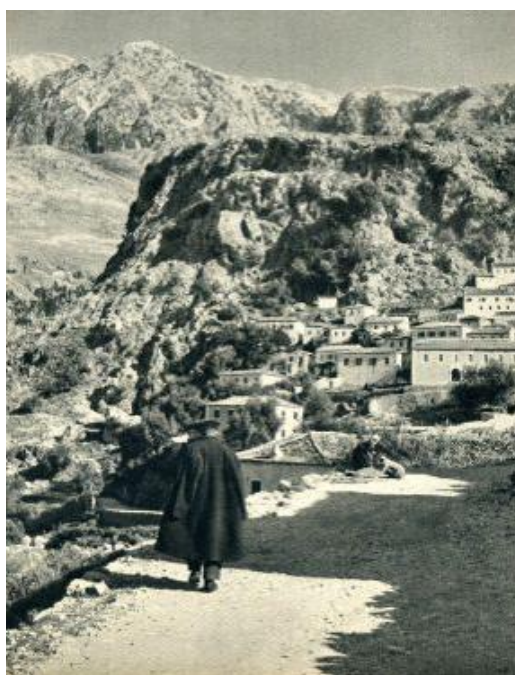


Fig5/ Vernacular stone-built architecture houses in the Old Vuno
source / internet

of life which have almost vanished today. The town planning and housing of Qeparo are those of a citadel town built by notable landowners whose interests were directly linked to those of the central power. Berat bears the imprint of a more independent lifestyle, related to its handicraft and merchant functions. Together, the villages along the Albanian Riviera bear outstanding testimony to various types of monuments and vernacular urban housing, in continuity with the various Medieval cultures which preceded it, and in a state of peaceful coexistence with a significant Christian minority, particularly at Himara and Dhermi.

The void/axis the material to construct urban form

As Antonio Monestiroli wrote (MONESTIROLI, 1994) The ancient city during its millenary construction proposed, ultimately, two basic models (fig6-7) for the development of public spaces understood as anti-poles, exceptions, recognizable figures in the background determined by the residential texture that represents the recurrence, the west of the city. These two conceptual models hypostatize themselves in the urban types of forum and Acropolis and, in this way, they recall two concepts of space described by Giedion (GIEDION, 1968). The

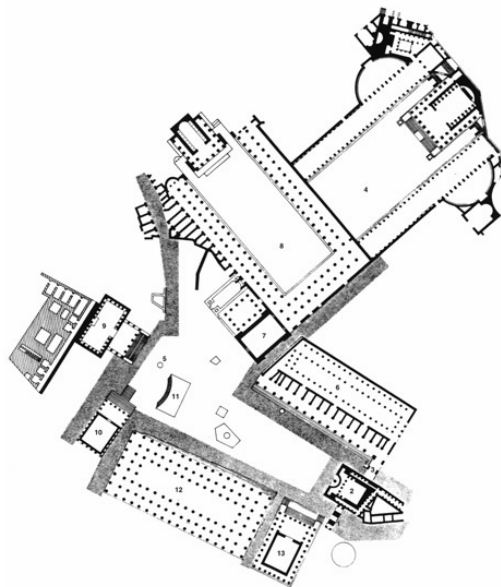
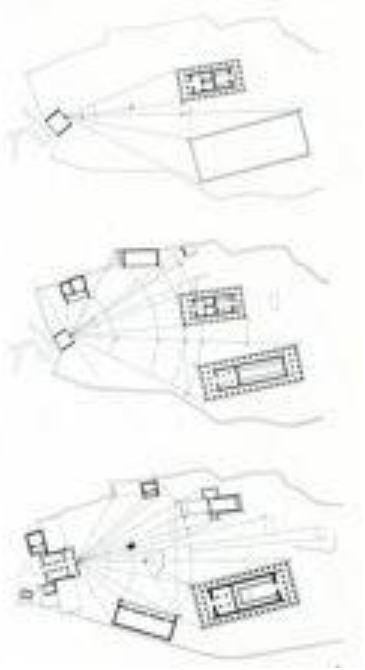


Fig6-7/ The two basic models for the development of public spaces: Greek Acropolis and Roman Forum / source internet

in which the most significant element is the void as the canvas transforming the building material into a frame for the landscape. The carved frets reach out and grip the infinite blue, the stove slender rail and enclose the sea, creating a sequence of infinity and shock.

Both of the abovementioned models can represent possible alternatives, not necessarily excluding, for a new beginning – with the appropriate re-significations of scale and sense – of the needed construction of public spaces in the contemporary city. The concise built-scape in the natural territory is creating indoor and outdoor rooms. "Rooms" that nature and human have perceived with a serial vision of walks and uniform pace.

A sequence, of solid, intermedium, and landmarks as an attempt to recapture in the unlimited and static medium of printed page a little of sense of discovery and drama that we experience in moving through the Albanian Riviera.

VLORA/THE SOLID PLOT (fig8) / the cubes, the drum, and the cones, are creating an unfolding drama of solid geometry, on top of old and future ruins. The unfolding of a mystery, the sense that farther on, more is revealed.

VUNO/THE INTERMEDIUM AND THE PORTICO (fig9 left) / a modest archway performs the office of diving the prospect into things, the street is in the place beyond, into which you emerge so that you move out of one environment into another.

OLD DHERMI / THE CULTURAL LANDMARKS (fig9 right) / the shifting interplay of church bells, spires and masts, all the intricacy of fresh alignments and

groupings, the shafts of penetrations and the sudden benching of emphatic verticals into a dramatic knot, these are the rewards of the moving eye, but an eye which is open and not lazy.

THE STREET / the typical narrowing structure of the built-scape achieves, through the crowding together of buildings forms, a pressure, an unavoidable nearness of detail, which is in direct contrast to the broad piazza or promenade but the square is the balcony and the panorama." In this articulation of the built-scape, narrowness exercises the definite effect on the pedestrian, inducing a sense of unaccustomed constriction and pressure". (Gullen, 1994)

from acropolis city structure to a self designed system

After the independence from the Ottoman occupation, on 28 November 1912, the rate of urbanization was small, Albania had poorly developed urban centres, and the development of the road infrastructure was limited. During the Ottoman period, the land was stated/considered property. However, there were three forms of state property: 1) regular state property land that constituted most of the country's surface, 2) land that was owned privately by feudal landowners and 3) land that was owned by religious institutions. During the Ottoman period, Albanian cities mainly developed as nuclei that were structured around Mosques and public buildings attached to open spaces. The residential areas consisted of low-rise houses, houses with vegetable plots and gardens and dead-end streets, an organization

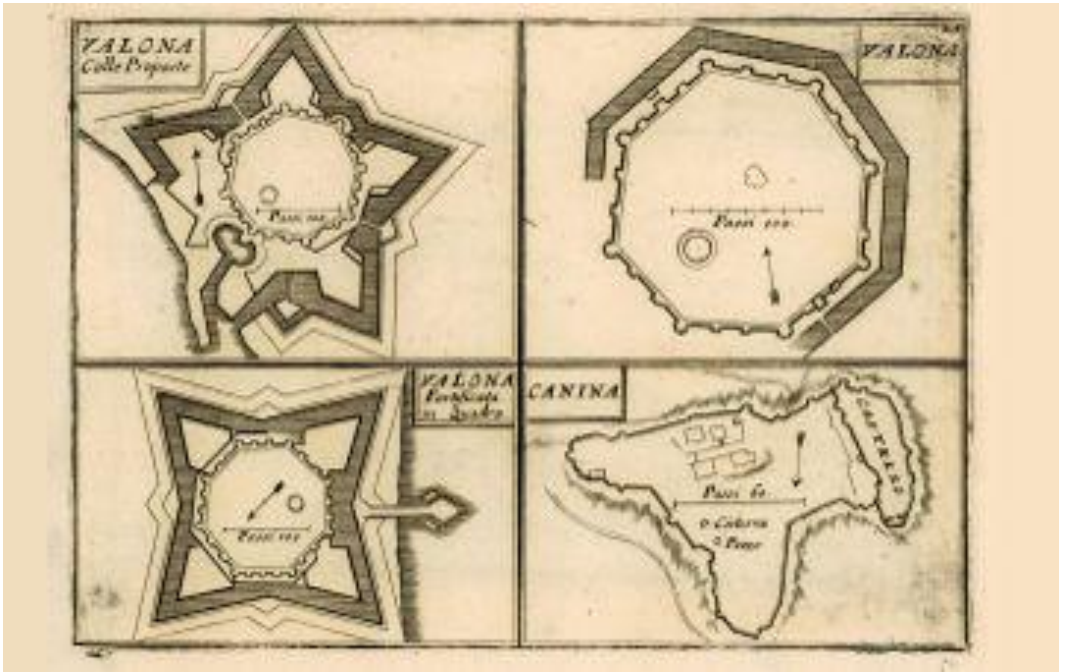


Fig8 / Old plans of Vlora Castel
source / Coronelli (1688)

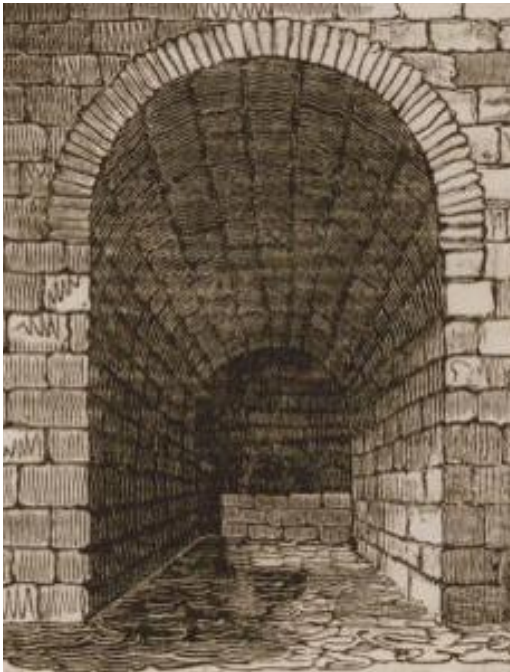


Fig10 left/ Drawings of Vuno / source Hughes, T. (1820) *Smart. Travels in Sicily Greece and Albania*
Fig10 right / The old village of Dhermi / source internet

forum, also an archetype of the European piazza, is based on the identification of a completed, ended and bounded void. The city breaks into this void and, here, represents itself. The principle axis, the public buildings of the city are unified and synthesized, as in the Pompei forum, by an architectural system on the perimeter: the portico (in other cases by the uniformity of the characters of the public buildings). This paradigm is similar to that of the architectural 'box-space' defined by its horizontal boundaries and the regularity of the internal space. A quite difficult typology evident in the Albanian Spatial typology is the case of Porto Palermo Castle (fig9)

that followed the social structure of Islamic culture, divided into family groups (Capolino, 2011; Aliaj, et al., 2012). Today the inheritance of urban design and architecture from the Ottomans is limited since many buildings were destroyed over time, especially during the Second World War. Tirana, Albania's capital, is an example where some Mosques and Churches (religious monuments) have remained, but the central function of the Bazar is not present anymore. Indeed, today it is hard to find further traces of Islamic architecture and urban design such as the structure of streets, the positioning of public buildings and its distribution of

graves and cemeteries (Miho, 2003). The declaration of independence from the Ottoman rule did not pave the way for further urbanization in Albania. Albania has been continued to be occupied by foreigners, and there were significant tensions with the Serbians, Greeks, Italians and Austro-Hungarians (Aliaj et al., 2003). During this time the people in power paved some streets and several buildings with administrative functions were constructed, but there was no clear Albanian urbanization policy in place. The slow pace of the urbanization process was considered to be the result of the lack of education and of the contrasting situation of war and independence both coexisting in the country (Miho, 2003). Despite this, it was the period in which the foundations for urban development instruments were developed. After the declaration of independence in 1912, the new Albanian state confiscated all state properties while private ownership was not affected. It should be specified that the process was not considered confiscation, but the land considered before 1912 as state property of the Ottoman Empire was declared as property of the Albanian state with the advent of independence. The land ownership system in Albania in this period was dominated by the land tenure system: peasants were obliged to contribute labour and produce either for a private landlord, for the state, or for religious institutions, or because peasant families have owned their inherited land. This traditional form of tenancy, with its roots in the Ottoman Empire, changed little until the Communists abolished it with the proclamation of the People's Socialist Republic of Albania in 1944 (Cungu & Swinnen, 1998; Miho, 2003; Wheeler, 1998). In coastal areas like Vlora and Saranda, many multi-storey buildings were constructed which function as second homes or are leased to tourists by the owners during summer season. The developer of these buildings provides only the structure and not the essential services such as water supply, sanitation, parking. This situation has led to the degradation of the coastal areas and reduced the value of the land. The entire Albanian coastline is built up in this manner. Outside the tourist season, the buildings are abandoned. In the era of globalization, cities are now experiencing a "characteristic crisis". The tension between "tradition" and "modernity" has generated two harmful trends in city construction and urban planning. Firstly, in urban planning and design methodology, various kinds of outstanding theories

and methods are borrowed and referred to frequently yet are not appropriately adapted to local conditions. Moreover, such designs fail to fulfill aesthetic Requirements of citizens. Thus, these designs might be considered "designer-oriented". The "designer", with obscured design languages, acts as the only creator who decides on the characteristics of the cities and their landscapes, preventing citizens from appreciating their cities and landscapes. Thus, citizens experience less "characteristic identification". These problems result in the "characteristic crisis" in cities where similarities among landscapes are found. In the case of the Albanian Riviera, a tension between the relationship of cityscape and landscape is quite evident. The Fundamentals of ARCHITECTURE like the captures space of louvred opening reveals the net dimension of the space and the window complete it, or the fundamental of the Arch /portico is emphasizing the street giving a functional in its open space, below which becomes alive and informal sparkles, conversation, tension and full blurring of the landscape typologies. The differentiation of the scales, from urban to natural, from architectural fundamentals to the emotional shock that the infinity is creating the chaotic and undefined urban form that is wrapping nature with the modest but powerful early vernacular touches are creating the inquiries of the Albania Riviera. While dumping movements between, The Ordinary, The Beautiful and The Powerful are drawing the contradictory but still picturesque sequence of "rooms" views and patterns. Writing about landscape is like writing for a across range discipline trip. Starting digging on history, art cultural geography, investigating the hybrids roof fields and drawing a creative and critical at the same time attention of future progressions. One question is rising now, whether it makes sense speak of a landscape scale, ask how landscape relate to the concept of land, form, nature, environment and place. Partially we in the Islamic influence areas the idea of the gardens; climates and regions are more salient than landscape it sells. In the opposite site of Riviera, a quite contradictory contexts lines of landscape inquiry are in the formation of a new landscape model for the 21 century. Not surprisingly there are many gaps between historical and contemporary concepts. But either to the most different approaches that may be oppositional, e.g., neo Marxism vs. romanticism, landscape ecology vs. political ecology, preservation vs. adaptive reuse, landscape is a drawing



Fig10 / Porto Palermo Castle
source / internet

machine of fascinating new and old cultural geographies."Today, the challenge for global is to innovate by learning from the world. Tomorrow's winners will be to create value by searching out and mobilizing untapped pockets of features and intelligent urban systems that are scattered across the globe, connecting and leveraging dispersed pockets of knowledge and features for future development.(Yves Doz, Jose Santos and Peter Williamson,"From Global to Metanational.

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Slow road to Butrinti / Time-based reflections for an emerging touristic territory

keywords / tourism, light infrastructures, mobility network, time-based approach

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Abstract

In order to enhance tourism, while preserving the landscape qualities of the Albanian Riviera, its mobility system needs to be improved according to environmental assessments, economic feasibility considerations and an incremental strategy. This contribution aims at highlighting the opportunities that rise from a multimodal approach to the infrastructure development in emerging touristic contexts such as Albania. Showing how different transport and accessibility systems could be planned and integrated to build a sustainable network enabling diverse time-based experiences of the coast.

Experiencing the slow trip

South of Vlora, the bus turns around the bay offering a view of the peninsula separating the Adriatic from the Ionian sea. A long climb starts passing through the crowns of pine trees with views back to the bay. Once it reaches the Llogara pass, a spectacular panorama unfolds: the bus continues the trip, slowing down at every sharp bend along the road. It takes the whole day to get from Tirana to Saranda stopping at some stunning beaches, high cliffs and quiet villages. A sequence of diverse and peculiar landscapes leads south towards Butrinti, passing through the National Park wetlands until the archaeological site located on a hill overlooking the Vivari Channel.

"Albania's rugged coastline, with traditional villages nestled in isolated bays and golden beaches lapped by turquoise waters, was a revelation when travellers first started discovering the country a decade ago. Since then Europe's last untouched beaches have changed almost beyond recognition, but there's still plenty of reason to come here and explore this magnificent coastline where the Adriatic and Ionian seas meet ..."

"...And yet, despite the Riviera's transformation, there are still idyllic and breath-taking spots along this craggy coast. Here are some of the very best."

The popular Lonely Planet guide goes on listing Palasë, Dhërmi, Himara and Borsh among the best beaches of the so called Albanian Riviera. The author describes them with adjectives such as 'rugged', 'traditional', 'untouched', 'idyllic'. So far the isolation of the area (due to, among others, its geographical location and history²) has somehow protected these features. He implicitly points out the potentials of tourism development in the Albanian Riviera as well as the threats from which the coast might suffer, losing the very qualities that make it so attractive.

The intrinsic paradox coming from these considerations is the same that the sociologist John Urry (1990; 2006) describes as 'romantic gaze': in this process, the will to discover an authentic and unspoiled 'elsewhere' ends up compromising these places, acting as a pioneer of other far less romantic forms of tourism. The Southern Albanian coast, facing the transition from being a local touristic destination to an international



Fig1 / the Albanian coast descending the Llogara pass
source / internet

one, has to deal with such paradox. Trying to conceive this territory's potential and the way its development can be sustainably managed³, the present contribution analyzes some recurring issues concerning emerging touristic areas, stressing the relevance of the temporal dimension in such a process. As 'time' and its perception deeply affect the traveling experience, 'speed' seems to be a key factor in addressing strategies' effectiveness and touristic models in the early stages of their development.

For such contexts, infrastructural planning represents one of the most challenging issues due to its impact on the landscape and the long period required for planning and implementation. In the specific framework of the Albanian Riviera, the following text reflects and focuses on the topics of accessibility and mobility. The idea of a 'light infrastructure', based on a multimodal network across the coastline, aims at developing an effective system within a short period of time, allowing different time-based experiences of the coast. According to this vision two possible ways of travel are suggested and explored as they effect the landscape and the touristic offer itself: 'slow-motion' and 'time-lapse'.

Emerging touristic areas: recurring issues

Since 1990, when Albania shifted from a centralized economy to a liberal one, tourism has significantly increased. According to the Albanian Institute of Statistics (INSTAT), arrivals of foreign citizens have almost doubled in recent years (from 1.855.634 in 2009 to 3.672.591 in 2015) overtaking national tourism in terms of hotel overnights (260.000 versus 199.000). The pressure for touristic construction has constantly grown, boosted by public policies based on economic forecasts of their potentials in creating direct and indirect employment (Albania Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Telecommunication, 2007). Especially along the coast, the result has been the growth in private investments regarding hospitality and facilities, through both formal and informal development processes. Particularly, during the last few years public authorities are pursuing the establishment of a proper policy with the aim of preventing construction violations and preserve the historical, cultural and landscape heritage of the coastline (AKTP, 2014).

As Minca (1996) underlines, the attitude to of opening up investments while simultaneously fencing in, trying to

1 / MASTERS, T. (2015) *The best beaches of the Albanian Riviera*. Lonely Planet. [Online] 15th May. Available from: <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/albania/southern-albania/travel-tips-and-articles/the-best-beaches-of-the-albanian-riviera> [Accessed: 6th June 2015]

2 / Especially during Hoxha's monocracy until the 1990's, the Albanian southern coast was a sort of militarized border: a defensive line against foreign attacks and, above all, against Albanian citizens' attempts to escape from the country.

3 / Such reflections come from the International workshop 'Albanian Riviera. A new characterization of the southern landscape' that was held in Tirana at the Polis University from October the 24th to November the 9th, 2014. The authors, participating in the workshop, elaborated a proposal whose general premises are elaborated here. Where written sources and data fell short, they had to rely on the local experts' knowledge as expressed in the workshop.



Fig2 / Bunkers on the beach, Albanian Riviera
source / internet

preserve the local heritage, is symptomatic of emerging touristic destinations. In fact, entering in a worldwide competitive market where thousands of other regions have solid positions, these territories attempt to resemble their own stereotyped image although, at the same time, they have to change in order to construct all the basic structures which will contribute to a successful and effective hospitality model (accommodation system, commercial activities, infrastructural networks, etc.). In this way, such emerging touristic destinations drift away to a kind of "schizophrenic dualism" (Minca & Oakes, 2006) causing chaotic development. In this context, as a 'late entry' in the Mediterranean touristic market, present Albania has the chance to learn from other countries' mistakes and avoid them, governing tourism development rather than suffering from it.

A comparative analysis of the development processes that have characterized many Mediterranean coastal destinations during their transition towards a tourism-based economy points out some general recurring issues concerning, in particular, territorial governance and spatial planning. The study of existing literature on this topic underlines the importance of focusing on three main interconnected factors that should also be considered for the southern Albanian case, in order to give effective answers and choose appropriate strategies of intervention to manage the current transition phase.

The first factor deals with a lack of control in procedures related to developing hospitality and new touristic settlements.

The growth of a touristic destination generally starts from specific cores through an informal or under-regulated process of space saturation; such process involves an urban growth tied to the construction of hotels, holiday houses and hospitality-related services. Indeed, concerning Albania, some studies (Hysa, 2012) indirectly prove the existence of a considerable number of private individuals offering hospitality without being officially registered. This situation is the same with that of many Italian regions (such as Emilia-Romagna, Marche, Veneto and Liguria) which, starting from the 1970s, was regulated and transformed into an affordable hospitality model based on boarding houses and small hotels capable of satisfying a national and international mass-tourism demand.

Normally, in a following phase, as a destination's attractiveness increases, so-called 'environmental bubbles' are created to provide 'global tourists' with standard and average facilities: those protective, familiar and reassuring places they expect to find everywhere (Cohen, 1972). In other words, basic 'spatial and functional units' - featuring post-industrial touristic experiences (branded hotel chains, golf courses, amusement parks, beach resorts, etc.), rigidly organized according to the travel industry's encoded rules (Salazar, 2010) - make their first appearance and deeply reshape the original context, producing a new 'dystopic landscape' in a very short time.

The second factor of touristic transition in 'booming' territories deals with "domestic competition". Neighbouring towns



*Fig3 / Riccione beach in the Italian Riviera Romagna
source / internet*

frequently end up competing, offering the same services because of a lack of marketing strategies, spatial coordination and supervision. Each single location tends to act on its own, relying on the similar amenities to boost its attractiveness. A visible effect of this phenomenon is a sort of runaway repetition of hosting typologies, formats and sometimes aesthetics references that, over time, end up evening out the touristic offer, thereby increasing competition between destinations oriented to the same target-groups and users.

Certain territories have converted this attitude into a successful model: the Italian Northern Adriatic Riviera is an example of how repetition, if taken to the extreme, can foster the development of a mass-tourism-oriented offer. This conurbation, strictly organized into a rigidly striped layout, spreads out with minimal variations almost seamlessly along the coast. Administrative boundary, city centres and, in general, any variation are barely perceivable by users whose touristic experience is limited to a restricted segment of the system where they can spend their entire holiday: just think about the sun-and-beach vacation with its repetitive rituals between the hotel and the beach.

Nevertheless, during the last decades, such mass tourism model has resulted hardly adaptable to market changes and the difficulties encountered in updating such a repetitive system demonstrates the necessity of planning more flexible and hierarchical contexts to satisfy the constantly changing touristic demand

(Emanuelli & Lobosco, 2010).

The Albanian Riviera, being at the first stage of its touristic development and also due to its morphology, is still characterized by a clear distinction between bigger and smaller urban centres. Various use modes coexist and succeed in diversifying the main spots on the coast according to different types of tourism (aimed at families, young people, 'backpackers' and other groups). On the other hand, some phenomena as the already mentioned proliferation of holiday homes and vacation properties, are now undermining such multiplicity with the risk of flattening the overall touristic offer.

A third factor concerns the ambiguous role of infrastructures in touristic development. As one of the essential components of tourism strategical planning, according to the scheme proposed by Laws (1991)⁴, this role should be tackled and planned at the very beginning of the process in areas undergoing touristic transitions. Actually, the way infrastructure has been planned in touristic areas often disregards this principle, in particular overlooking the different aspects of the concept of 'time'. Most probably, the main consequence of this default affects the way in which the infrastructure is 'sized' and its efficiency evaluated.

Areas undergoing touristic transitions often start to actually face infrastructural issues when the networks are loaded beyond their capacity. At that point, existing (or new) infrastructure is upgraded (or built) in order to respond to an increasing demand of basic services by the growing number of visitors. As the

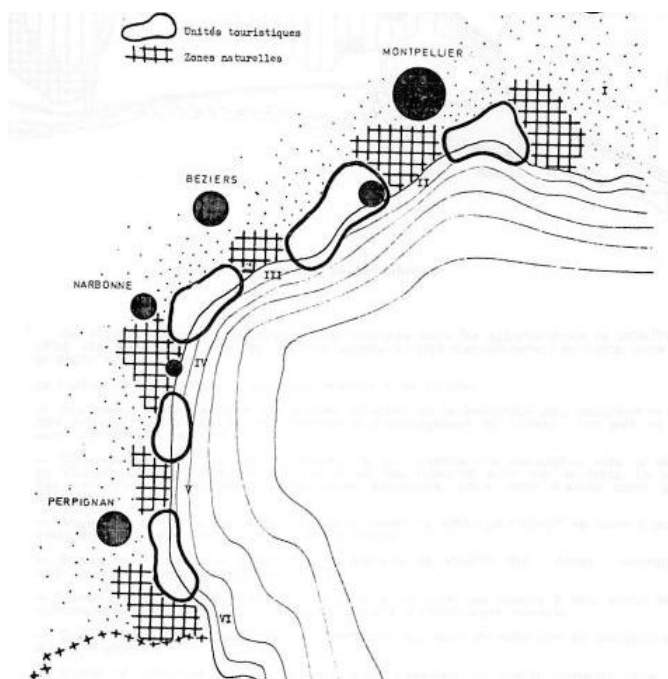


Fig4 / Map of the five 'Touristic Units' laid down by the Racine's Mission
source / internet

mobility and energy demands rise, new works are built in a very rapid manner. Focused on catering for the increased demand, they are often planned with almost no attention to the relationship with the surrounding environment and landscapes.

Looking back at urban history, there are only a few circumstances in which touristic settlements have been developed with a longer-term temporal perspective; the 'Mission Racine' (the Racine's Mission), in these terms, is probably the most exemplary case.

Between 1963 and 1983 the 'Mission interministérielle d'aménagement touristique du littoral du Languedoc-Roussillon', promoted by the French Government and led by Pierre Racine (who provided the name for this initiative), brought to the completion of five 'unités touristiques' (touristic units) aimed at intercepting the touristic flows towards the Spanish littoral, simultaneously balancing Côte d'Azur's over-development. Such program pursued two other main goals: tackling the contemporary economical employment crisis in the regional wine industry and satisfying the increasing demand of affordable touristic destinations for the middle-class.

The Mission, probably the last European example of new town development⁵, is extremely interesting in terms of the principles applied to the planning (Racine, 1980) in order to 'size' the five touristic destinations and fit them into the territory. In a virgin territorial context of 180 km of wetlands and inhospitable beaches, the strategic choices concerning the

settlements' placement and dimensions were made on the basis of a clear vision regarding infrastructural needs, efficiency and potential in setting a brand new landscape. The towns were arranged so they could be reached by sailing within one day from one port to another: 9.000 moorings were distributed in 12 marinas integrated by 20 more landings along the coast. No settlement was allowed in between the towns; instead, reforestation was undertaken creating new natural areas. Urban areas were dimensioned proportionally to the seaside's carrying capacity: from 500 to 600 tourists per every hectare of beach. At the end of the process, the entire system was supposed to host about 263.000 tourists.

Nowadays the 5 touristic units include 8 destinations (Port-Camargue, La Grande-Motte, Carnon, le Cap d'Agde, Gruissan, Port-Leucate, Port-Barcarès et Saint-Cyprien) offering more than 500.000 beds. Although the social and cultural contest behind the 'Mission Racine' is far away from the present situation with even the way mass-tourism phenomena impacts society totally changed, some basic choices/concepts and the general approach to accessibility developed during that experience should be taken into account today for emerging touristic areas.

In fact, the key aspect of this French example is the strategic role that mobility and accessibility networks play in a large-scale area, addressing, at the same time, sustainability and environmental challenges.

The management possibilities of this kind

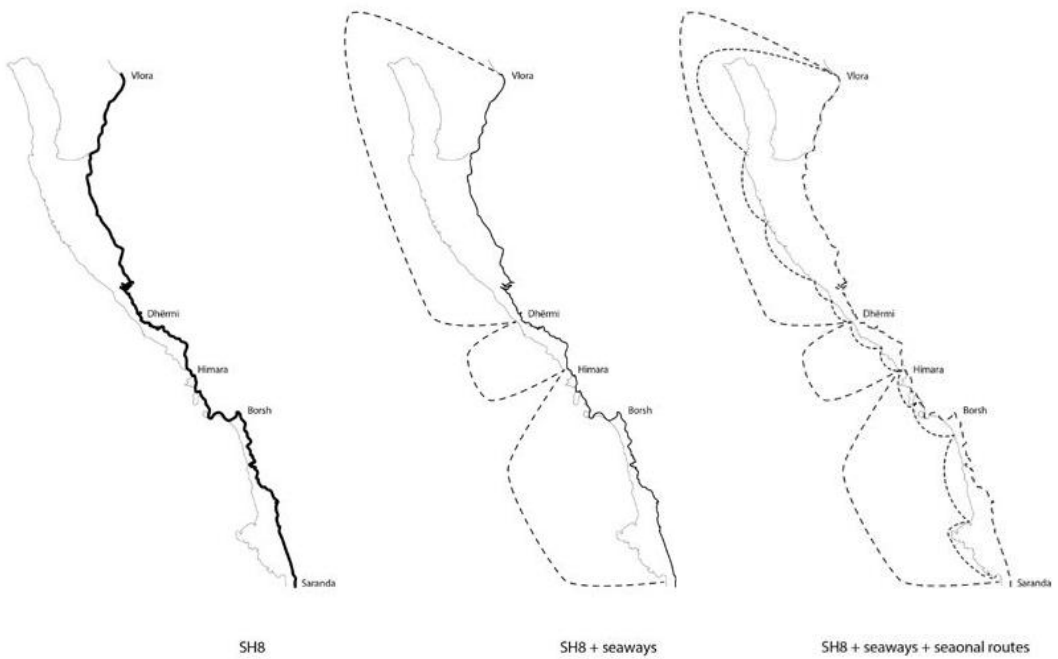


Fig5 / the 'light infrastructure' proposal for the Albanian Riviera
source / drawings by Lobosco and Lang

of process should consider the increasing unsteadiness of tourism itself, mostly due to its pertinence to a global market. As tourism impacts territories through uncontrolled leaps, exponential growth and brief visitors' peak periods or sudden crises can be generated by unexpected events (social, economic, natural, etc.)⁶. So the inadequacy of current planning tools, at least in terms of reactivity, in facing tourism-related economical and market factors, is more evident in many situations. Imbalances may often occur between the actual speed of change and the responses' timing: an adequate solution could be ineffective if it becomes operative after too long a lapse. From this perspective, a possible way out is to adopt strategies that deal with timing first: being quick, light, reversible (Erhard & Stünzi, 2011).

Only a "light and reactive" framework can face all these fast-changing needs: touristic transitions have to be managed in time, adapting to shifting needs. Specific conditions of the Southern Albanian Riviera, including its morphology, can help elaborate a new approach to the topic starting from a different strategy in space and time (Lupano, Emanuelli & Navarra,

2010).

In fact, the situation along the Southern Albanian Riviera is reaching a critical point. Time to intervene is limited as certain uncontrolled settlement developments are irreversibly changing or threatening the landscape quality⁷. The potential of the Albanian Riviera mainly lies in its natural and historical heritage. What makes this territory special is the perception of uncontaminated landscapes next to authentic settlements. A clear, operational vision of the framework within which its development must take place is required; it should involve choices about tourism flows and models and environmental priorities.

The infrastructural system, especially its mobility components, has the potential to face these topics if designed to hierarchically structure the territory by regulating accessibility. It also could help addressing planning issues on vocational tourism-related services of the different Riviera destinations, avoiding repetition and the risk of internal competition between adjacent localities.

Since mobility infrastructure may play the role of steering tourism development and modes, its efficiency and immediate

4 / Tourism Components can be understood as the Demand in Tourism Industry. Urban Design has the role of supplier, creating and providing supplies for the demand of tourism industry. By understanding the demand, Urban Design Components can be categorized into 3 groups: 'Primary Component' (visitor attractions), 'Secondary Component' (accommodation, catering, etc.) and 'Transportation Component'. There is another component affecting the tourism industry: 'Local Community'. These four components are interrelated and important in creating a successful tourism city.

5 / The Racine's Mission aimed at creating six new touristic settlements: each including one or more former villages and a new urban development.

6 / Among others, one example can be mentioned. In 1989, the northern Italian Adriatic coast was 'under attack' by mucilage (plant slime) in bathing areas with considerable repercussions on tourism economy. The media impact generated a 'ripple effect' that took years to subside. In the meantime some destinations reinvented themselves shifting their tourist propensity from bathing to amusement (by boosting clubs, theme parks, sport events, etc.).

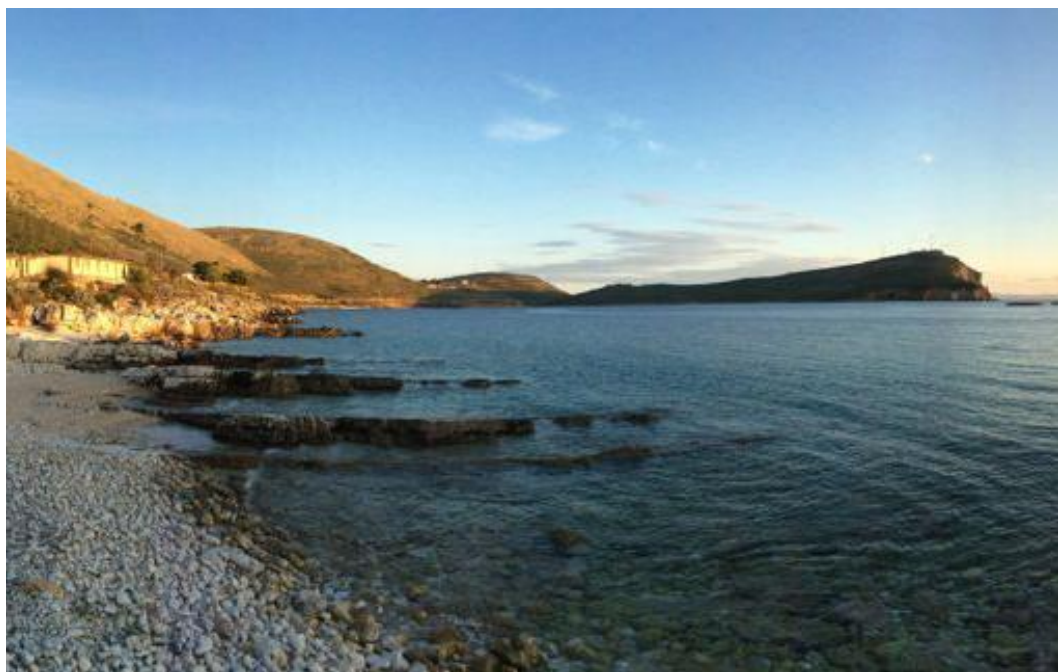


Fig6a / the SH8 road running along the sea in Porto Palermo bay
source / Thorsten Lang

workability should become the central issue of the whole planning process.

Slow-motion road & Time-lapse seaways

"Slow-motion: the operation or speed of a film using slower projection or more rapid exposure so that actions etc. appear much slower than normal. (The Oxford Concise Dictionary 8th ed., 1990)⁸"

"Time-lapse (of photography) using frames taken at long intervals to photograph a slow process, and shown continuously as if at a normal speed. (The Oxford Concise Dictionary 8th ed., 1990)⁹"

The actual use of the scenic road from Vlora to Butrinti -the SH8-, especially during high season, from June to September, reflects a peculiar way to experience the coast by Albanian tourists. They usually rent a house or book a hotel-room¹⁰ in one of the main villages (Dhërmi, Himara, Borsh, etc.) moving by car almost every day to reach a different site along the littoral. The frequency of such movements generates a permanent chaos along the road and next to the beaches.

The fact that these movements can take place only via the SH8, overcoming its operational capacity, involves a series of fallouts that should be tackled. The environmental and landscape value of such a panoramic road should be conceived as a resource. It constitutes a unique experience on its own and, if exploited in this sense, it would be able to diversify the Riviera's touristic offer (for bikers, camper users, trekkers, etc.).

In fact the SH8 should not be interpreted merely as a regional infrastructure but as an important component of attractiveness: it

should be the primary field of 'an empirical relationship between a tourist, a sight and a marker (i.e. a piece of information about a sight)' according to the definition of tourist attractions provided by the sociologist Dean MacCannell (1976).

This relationship should underlie a new vision for the road, enabling a slower but therefore more intense touristic experience, so that the road can be seen as a sequence of landscape experiences similar to a slow-motion effect. Practically, this means the SH8 might be developed through specific interventions aimed at slowing down the travel experience rather than accelerating it.

The main objective should be to maintain the road's qualities while solving traffic-related problems, whether they are due to intense traffic during high season or transportation of supplies. This dual aim could be achieved through the development of alternative routes and by-passes (land-based as well as maritime).

As stated above, this scenario needs strategical choices regarding the whole regional mobility system but also a program to be implemented following best-practices carried out in other countries. There is a vast range of initiatives all over the world (such as the 'Scenic Byways' in the USA, the 'Romantische Straße' in Germany and the 'Les Routes des Vins' in France) that have been developed by governments and public administrations in order to meet the ambition of creating new national touristic attraction thanks to panoramic roads.

In particular, the "National Tourist Routes" project in Norway is the one that best



Fig6b / the SH8 road running along the sea in Porto Palermo bay / source Thorsten Lang
Fig7 / National Tourist Routes Index, Norway / drawings by Lobosco and Lang

demonstrates the value of a similar approach in terms of process and strategy. Such a project was commissioned by the Norwegian state, then carried out by the Norwegian Public Roads Administration; starting with a pilot project (implemented in the period 1994–1997). With the aim of making Norway a more attractive destination, the project was expanded promoting local business activities and strengthening rural life. Today, the National Tourist Routes attraction comprises 18 routes through Norwegian landscapes. The roads' layout is enhanced by architectural interventions and artistic works at designated viewpoints and stop areas (for picnic, refuelling, restaurants, etc.); the selected routes are diverse and travel through landscapes with unique sceneries, along coasts and fjords, mountains and waterfalls. These routes are intended as alternatives to the main roads, and the drive itself is meant to be an enjoyable 'slow' experience.

Following such examples, the Albanian Riviera panoramic road could be the milestone of a national strategy capable of mixing infrastructural needs, landscape heritage, and tourism opportunities. From this perspective, an overall re-consideration of the infrastructures' role becomes necessary in order to build new travel experiences based on a different awareness of time and duration.

Such an approach should involve the implementation of alternative routes capable of catering for excessive visitors' flows while simultaneously providing a different travelling modality.

As stated before, the way the Riviera is experienced right now by tourists reveals an attitude to move along the coast daily exploring new spots, in search of different beaches, entertainments, more exciting locations. As this typical touristic experience is far from the linear journey idea, it can be described through the 'time-lapse' metaphor: an addition of detached key-frames whose distance in time and space corresponds to the transfer from one place to another.

How is it possible to take advantage of this 'time-lapse touristic attitude'? Can it be applied in a new mobility model? What are the strategies that can cheaply, effectively and sustainably improve such a touristic experience along the coast?

Most probably the road alone it is not flexible enough to face all these issues. The analysis of how visitors move along the Southern Riviera shows that, informally, some transfers already take place through maritime transportation. In fact, some private boats offer by-call services, using existing docks or directly landing on the beach. Although not yet developed, this system suggests a different way to approach mobility from the sea.

7 / Since 2013, the Albanian Government started a hard campaign against illegal developments, also on the coast, putting in place a strong politics of expropriations and demolitions.

8 / CONCISE OXFORD DICTIONARY OF CURRENT ENGLISH (1990) *Slow motion*. 8th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

9 / CONCISE OXFORD DICTIONARY OF CURRENT ENGLISH (1990) *Time-lapse (of photography)*. 8th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

10 / Average night staying in hotels for 2010 was 2.5 (INSTAT).



Starting from these considerations, the development of an alternative sea-based mobility system has to be seen as a tool to enhance the 'time-lapse' experience. A similar system can be found again in Norway where the Hurtigruten ferries complement the road infrastructure. It can be described -persisting with the cinematographic metaphor- as the Riviera 'editing tool': maritime terminals and pleasure boat facilities should mark the key-frames by which several coastal fruition sequences can be 'edited/cut'.

The mobility network grounds on nodes whose design and strategic location determine the network's inner hierarchy. The location choice has to be carried out also following contextual criteria: first of all a preliminary analysis of specific sites conditions based on fetch dimensions, offshore winds and wave climate¹¹; then, careful assessments of environmental impact minimization and initial investments, the preservation of landscape qualities and the touristic offer diversification.

The network should be developed starting from the improvement of existing quays and then integrated with new structures in strategic locations. These new interventions may be classified into two main categories: maritime terminals (mainly for tourist transportation) and mooring sites. Combined together, these will enable additional accesses and different fruition? sequences of the coast. Considering technical needs of charter and pleasure boats, as well as passenger vessels, maritime terminals might be developed with a 'step-by-step' approach:

following an incremental complexity of interventions related to accessibility parameters and the typology of services provided in every node. Some landings might work seasonally, being temporary and reversible, while others within the urban context, might be equipped with recreational services and integrated with beach facilities. The resulting scenario can be described as a pulsating network: a few lasting 'seaways' connecting main urban areas all year round, with larger vessels for collective transportation (such as cruises, ferryboats, hydrofoils, etc.); some seasonal routes allowing connections with crowded sea sides and recreational areas; a multitude of short 'sea trails' with small rental boats, allowing minor groups to reach outstanding sights and remote beaches inaccessible from the inland.

A last level of the water network can be implemented in order to better facilitate pleasure boats and private users. Potentially, the coast can be highly attractive for the development of the marina, but currently the few harbours host a limited number of moorings. Instead of creating high-impact civil infrastructures, a light and reversible system based on mooring fields could be implemented: a kind of a 'smart' harbour system, sustainable for its detachment from the coast, for being temporary and built low-budget in a short time span.

Mooring sites are composed of buoy fields and other reversible structures such as floating jetties and breakwaters that must be arranged in selected areas, avoiding extreme wave exposition to guarantee safety and comfort conditions. Partially



*Fig8 / the Albanian coast from the sea
source / Alberto Pedrotti*

depending on amenities and facilities in existing harbours, they have a very low environmental impact and allow the programming of nautical development in a more flexible manner and with lower investments. Operating these light infrastructures may also affect a wider scenario at macro-regional level, where some existing and very structured marinas could have spin-off satellites in other coastal areas (even across the Adriatic sea) using local suppliers for services such as water, food, fuel and waste.

Such 'detached ports' represent a more flexible model both from an economical and a management point of view. Different market formats can be planned: as mobile harbours, their location could change every five to six years; otherwise they could be clustered offering customers seasonal alternative locations. Thanks to their 'lightness' they represent an effective development tool for unknown and under-equipped touristic areas, boosting their competitiveness in a profitable business like that of yachting.

The overall seaway system aims, finally, at integrating the panoramic road in order to possibly build, across the Southern Albanian Riviera, a multimodal infrastructure which should be able to offer, in peak-periods, an alternative to inland-based mobility through more sustainable collective sea-based transportation. Such system would increase the permeability

of coastal areas, allowing the discovery of normally unreachable landscapes (rural coastal zones, wild environments, protected natural areas, etc.). By identifying intermodal nodes through which users can be sorted to different paths and itineraries, it could also balance out overcrowded areas with under-frequented ones, activating an infrastructure at a territorial scale in a shorter time compared to inland-based ones which have higher impact, are more complicated and need longer execution times. The network development could furthermore act as a 'recycling' device for empty, dismissed or over-dimensioned existing structures such as piers, harbours and military zones. In conclusion, such a model has the potential to set informal tourism practices into an organised framework on which to develop a singular offer opening up the Riviera to new touristic procedures: more sustainable, diverse and adaptable to a fluctuating international demand.

Time-based vision

The planning of main infrastructures requires to the facing of several issues concerning their immediate effect on emerging economic sectors especially in dynamic countries as like Albania. Tourism, due to its rapidly changing character as a socio-economic phenomenon, needs to be approached by flexible strategies, especially in a country at the very beginning

11 / The sites examined in this study have been: Dhërmi, Jala, Himara, Porto Palermo and Agavia in the Himare Municipality, Piqeras and Kakome (located north of Saranda, near Cape Qefalit), in the Lukove Municipality. The next step of this study should be a full wave hind-casting analysis in order to gain a reasonable assessment of route and quay downtimes, as well as safety and comfort conditions at the mooring sites.



Fig9 / Buoys field in New Bullards Bar Reservoir, Yuba County
source / downwardscausation.com

of its touristic development.

The infrastructure topic, as sustained in these paragraphs, is a fundamental component of this process and therefore it has to be arranged in time. The present contribution has explored just a portion of the matter, dealing with accessibility and mobility, but other issues need to be tackled as well -such as energy and water supply, waste management, hydro-geological risk (Eftimi, 2003), etc.- looking for adaptable and more sustainable devices.

In general, working on a 'light strategy' means facing these issues regardless of bigger and long-lasting decisions that will be effective later on. It also means operating on a more pragmatic and time-based vision through incremental steps, even making mistakes, then fixing errors and improving the system as long as bigger choices turn to be operational. That is even truer when one considers the infrastructure whose time of accomplishment is normally much extended.

In the Albanian Riviera context, the discussed proposal of a multimodal mobility system is represents an application of this concept. Its attitude at being progressively upgraded by low cost and quick interventions could really steer the development and further enhance the potential of the coast in a short time: creating a market, offering new perspectives in order to engage private assets and initiatives, influencing forthcoming political and economic choices.

The strategic goal is to provide the

Riviera with a feasible instrument for tackling contemporary challenges in the framework of a highly competitive and global tourism market. From these perspectives such mobility, accessibility, and light infrastructure have to be seen as a proactive tools whose basic value relies on system's tight involvement with time:

- . in terms of period: given its ability to accommodate different seasonal usages and incoming flow rates;

- . in terms of duration: thanks to the ease with which the network can be 'scaled' (enlarged or reduced) according to tourism growth (or decline) scenarios;

- . in terms of rhythm: as far as it can act as a catalyst of diverse travel experiences fulfilling a vast range of tourists' expectations;

- . finally, in terms of timing: enabling fast decisions and accelerating the implementation process.

Thus, the general role of the infrastructure's development should be re-considered (Emanuelli & Lobosco, 2015): conceiving such interventions no more as definitive answers to incoming (or increasing) needs, but as a kind of landscapes 'producers'; in other words, adaptable devices aimed at steering, in space and time, territorial alterations related to large-scale phenomena, such as tourism.

Attributions

The paragraphs entitled "Experiencing the slow trip" and "Time-based vision" have been mainly edited by T. Lang. The paragraphs entitled "Emerging touristic areas: recurring issues" and "Slow-motion road & Time-lapse seaways" have been mainly edited by G. Lobosco.

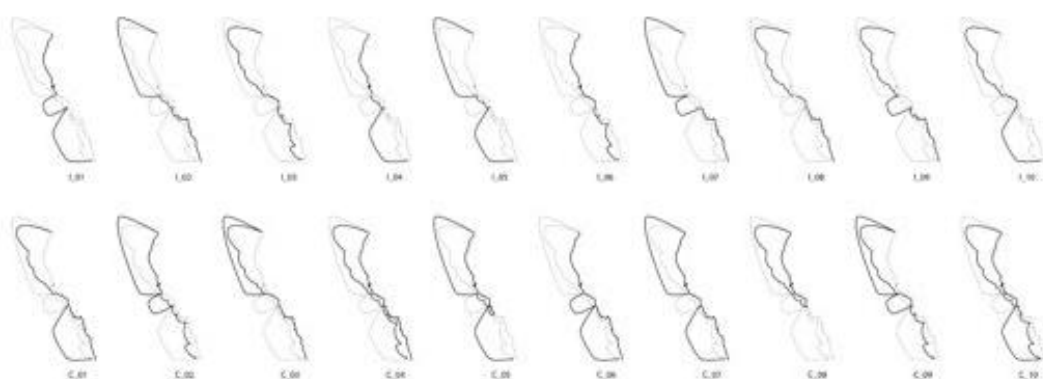


Fig10 / Different uses of the proposed mobility network in an index of potential routes
source / drawings by Lobosco and Lang

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Taking measures regarding the invisible dimension of the landscape

keywords / landscape, syncretism, religious, sublime

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Abstract

The Albanian landscape is an essential part of the elusive European landscape, intimate, fragmented and apparently culturally pluralistic. The term sublime was applied to the landscape during the conclusion of the 18th century and the 19th century, the time of Romanticism and Greek independence, during which the curiosity for the Orient was overwhelming. Sublime, a word that seems especially appropriate for the Albanian landscape. This landscape possesses profound historical and cultural reasons, archeological echoes of past modes of human existence, which to contemporary eyes are of a widely romantic appeal. This paper is an attempt to examine the invisible matrices of the landscape made by signs, layers, patterns formed in time and space, filled with multisensory information regarding the cultural dimension that the landscape owns.

Landscape on time and image

The 19th century was the golden age of landscape painting in Europe and America. Three aesthetic concepts established during the Romantic era divided the natural world into the categories of Pastoral, Picturesque, and Sublime (Rabb, 2009). The first two represent Nature as a comforting source of physical and spiritual sustenance. As Edmund Burke articulates in his *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757), the idea of sublime refers to the thrill and danger of confronting untamed Nature and its overwhelming forces. Views of Albanian Territories' depicted in the picturesque paintings of Lord Byron and French Painter Robert Denham reveal quite a "scenic" and "scopic" aspect of landscape inquiry, bringing to life a unique insight of the natural and multilayered territory. Paintings and now photographs have always been a storytelling machine. Within them, a rare ability of self-expression and creative thinking express the processes of interaction

and mapping ideas. Albania is a multi-patterned territory which has evolved in time. With the implicit and explicit association that "place" is constructed over time, evoking different "ways" of seeing and understanding and underlying, interrelations, they attempt to create different realities. If we refer to Clement (2011) that "landscape is what we see after observing", in the case of the Albanian Riviera it can be quite the opposite, landscape is what we feel without having to see. According to Edward Lear, there is 'luxury and inconvenience, on the one hand, liberty, hard living and filth on the other'. Edward Lear's travels through Albania in 1848 and his "Journal of Landscape Painter" catalogue describe the mysterious and often misunderstood land of Albania.

Sublime as a humbling reminder that humanity is not all-powerful, images of Albanian Landscape like pictures of humankind as a small and impotent point in front of the intimidating mountain



Fig1 / Palasa and Dhermi, Eduawrdc Lear 1848
source / Edward Lear Journals of a Landscape Painter in Albania, London 1851

of Tomor, in front of the dizzying cliffs and canyons of Osumi River, ferocious animals, and violent storms. The people in paintings are small but proud, stressed in "their dresses (the most magnificent in the world, consisting of a long white kilt, gold worked cloak, crimson velvet gold laced jacket and waistcoat, silver mounted pistols and daggers)" (Lord Byron). These works are uplifting but also deeply spiritualize the unknown and wild territory, a territory changed through the passage of the years where still the same trace can be found on the journey towards the divine. The British poet, Lord George Gordon Byron (1788-1824), set out on a grand tour of the Mediterranean in 1809, visiting Albania in the autumn of that year. The country made a lasting impression on him, reflected in the second canto of the poem "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage," that catapulted him to fame as a writer in 1812. "Land of Albania!" (Byron, 1812) he proclaimed in "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage"... "Let me bend mine eyes / On thee, thou rugged nurse of savage men! / The cross descends, thy minarets arise, / And the pale crescent sparkles in the glen". Byron uses his undeniable talent to craft an image of a land he held in high esteem, an area that truly was part of the Western imagination, manifesting a rather syncretic character of this region, a fusion of different cultural and spiritual systems, creating a new interactive system. With the fall of the religious practice, Albanian territory lost its ability to be activated by rituals and events of each religious system, in which nature and human were the celebrating elements.

Now, the concept of "measuring" landscape has changed. The contemporary approach, in contrast with the romantic and picturesque approaches of the 18-19th centuries, divides the landscape into categories, space, and nature. "Earth's topography flattens out to a canvas upon which the imagination can inscribe grandiose projects at an imperial scale" (Corner, 1996).

On the legacy of communism

After this romantic perspective of the Albanian Landscape, during the 20th century, the point of view changes. Using its formerly picturesque characters, rocks become symbols of power, water of distance and green of military camouflage. The territory becomes transformed into a language of defenses and shelter for the thousands of bunkers lying on it which turn the landscape into a weapon of war. Because of communism, nationalism led to a refusal of aid from other communist countries, but the influence of the former Soviet Union on ideology and planning models is undeniable. The territory starts being marked by landmarks of power. In a comprehensive context these legacies raise questions about a socialist landscape and aspects of equity, environmental quality, and modernization of the way the scene is conceived as an open space for experimentations while the post-socialist landscape has been characterized by the discontinuity between the different typologies of the landscapes. Large factory complexes and public building facilities remain in the urban landscape. The removal of elements of the built



Fig2 / Mountain scenery, Gulf of Aulon
source / draw by H. W. William

environment and accompanying symbolic forms has been taken to be emblematic of the change of the political and social system from state-socialism to various forms of emerging capitalism.

As Lefebvre (1991) notes, every society produces its own space or landscape, while Levinson (1998: 10) argues that "those with political power within a given society organize public space to convey (and thus teach the public) desired political lessons." Mitchell (2000: 109) develops the link between power and landscapes when he notes that "Landscape[s] are incorporations of power. They are made to represent who has power, but also to reinforce that power by creating a constant and unrelenting symbol of it." Landscapes are thus ideological in Mitchell's (2000) argument. The landscape is therefore an essential ingredient in constructing consent and identity for the projects and desires of powerful social interests" (Mitchell 2000: 100). During communism, the landscape was used as a canvas to express political and ideological expressions. Porto Palermo and its well preserved castle, originally created by the Venetians as star fort triangle in 1662, has the status of Protected Landscape, a landscape that with its communist history, quite overwhelmed by the underwater war facilities, demonstrates the ways in which landscape and its adaptability is the foundation of carrying out both dreams and nightmares, frustrations for a better future and illusory dreams. Porto Palermo Bay, previously hiding inside the submarine station of the Albanian military,

today is a potential that can be used as a secret ingredient for the development of tourism. Massive concrete expansions, huge abandonment actions, could be the keywords that define the transformation of the Albanian Riviera. Similarly, the mountain of Tomor was used as an open canvas for propaganda with the name of the dictator written-Enver and later translated by Armando Lulaj into Never, landscape a space to express a clear statement of freedom. Once again there are several ways of thinking about landscape and time, from landscape archeology to historical geography and heritage conservation.. Whenever there is a WHAT, borrowed cross-cultural items have to be adapted. Otherwise, the new and the old do not match and in some instances the two patterns are completely contradictory. Some aspects of the fixed features of space are not visible until one observes human behavior. Edward Hall in the "Hidden Dimensions" (Hall, 1990) defines spatial experience as not just visual but multisensory. No matter what happens in the world of human beings, it occurs in a spatial setting, and the design of that setting has a deep and persisting influence on the people there. Everyone receives all information about the environment through his or her senses. For example, spatial and functional distribution of the old bazaar in the city of Gjirokastra reveals precisely the cultural division of the social groups in this community. The Christian Orthodox community practices its professional activities in the same building that facilitates its private space. Public and private space are conceived



*Fig3a / Nomad and Myslim tombs and Graves, near Shkodra
source / Giuseppe Massani 1940*



Fig3b / Interior of the ruined church of Vuno / source Eranda Janku



Fig3c / Lukova center / source Eranda Janku

essay on "Fraternal Love" in his *Moralia* (2.490b). He cites the example of the Cretans, who compromised and reconciled their differences and came together in alliance when faced with external dangers. "And that is their so-called Syncretism." (Britanica, topic, religious syncretism)

Traces of the paganistic rituals and spiritual experiences in the Riviera area are partially evident. In the Albanian society, religious practices are very much influenced by the landscape, also affecting religious rites. The fusion of cultures in this region has its origins in the era of Alexander the Great (4th century BC)(Lofflin). His successors, and the Roman Empire tended to bring

together a variety of religious and philosophical views as a strong tendency toward religious syncretism, while the influence of the Ottoman Occupation drafts another cultural layer on this territory.

In the area of Himara and Palasa, the second language for the Drimadhiotes is a vulgar form of Greek. A hypothesis for this is that Himariotes are a Greek minority. Another hypothesis is that Greek was adopted as a working language during Turkish attempts to occupy the place and the Himariotes were forced to flee to the neighboring Greek islands for trading reason especially with the island of Corfu.



Fig4a / Porto Palermo submarine station / source internet
Fig4b / TXT / source internet



as one system with several functional sub-systems within, differently from the Muslim community which has a strict and clear territorial division of the professional/public and private life. This territorial division is a clear statement of the invisible boundaries which separate culture and its subcultures. The theories regarding the relationship between culture and landscape describes that neither culture nor landscape could exist without the vivid interaction that makes them equally valid to human society.

What would we consider time, motion, culture in the case of landscape? Moreover, which is the influence of culture on nature and the opposite?

Syncretic landscape

Recapitalizing on the words of Lord Byron, we can suppose that the hidden character of the Riviera territory and Albanian landscape is composed of the matrices of different cultural and religious signs marking the landscape. Symbols and rituals reveal a collective memory of the rather blended social and cultural groups of this territory. Thus, the landscape possesses a quite syncretistic character created by combining different, often contradictory beliefs, with various schools of thoughts. Syncretism involves the merger and analogizing of several originally distinct traditions, especially in the theology and mythology of religion, thus asserting an underlying unity and allowing for an inclusive approach to other faiths. The Greek word –Syncretism – occurs in Plutarch's (1st century AD)

An interesting fact supporting this second hypothesis are the songs, specifically mourning ones, are held in the Albanian language.

Orthodox Christianity, although influenced by other religions, generally looks negatively at claims of syncretism, but in the case of Riviera, syncretism could be connected with contextualization, the practice of making Christianity relevant to a culture. The coexistence of various religious communities creates an especially sacred landscape in the Albanian Riviera. Southern Riviera is a string pocket of the Orthodox community in the religious demographic map of Albania.

As a characteristic example of the syncretic use of the territory as part of the past and present, where landscape is a medium for religious belief, stands the village of Fterë. The villages of Dhermi, Himara and the complex of the villages Vouno, Ai Vasilis, Lukova are t evidence of the Greek Orthodox practice revealing the ways that the landscape has been articulated according to their ritual and practices. The city formation and the use of space are signs that show that "Territoriality is usually defined as behavior by which an organism characteristically lays claim to an area and defends it against members of its species". (Hall, 1990).

The inhabitants of the region are converted Christians since early times. It is reported that Himara had its own Bishop in the IX century. All the autochthonous inhabitants are Greek Orthodox Christians



*Fig5 / Never by Armando Lulaj
source / internet*

while religion practices were observed even in the atheistic period of 1967-1990.

An interesting fact here is that Drimadhes has numerous churches, about 35, one in about 20 families. There are three major monasteries, two big churches, of Saint Harallambi, and Saint Spiridon refurbished in 1967. However, the major part of the villages' churches are small, built mostly by the emigrants returning from abroad. The churches of Saint Stephens and Saint Dimitri, according to the text of the History of Albania contain some of the oldest afrescos of Albania (XII century). Reports of the XVII century give evidence of the efforts of the Catholic Church, through the Basilian order, to convert the Himariotes and especially the Drimadhiotes. The most celebrated religious events are Assumption Day, Christmas, Orthodox Easter and Blessed Water Day. While the Kanun of Leke Dukagjini was famous as the local governing Code in Northern Albania, Himara abides by an unusual variant of the Code called the Kanuni I Papa Zhulit. The contemporary religious practice of Albanians has never strictly adhered to many religious duties and practices. Prohibition of alcohol was never observed by Albanian Muslims, daily prayer was ignored and ritual fasting hardly noted. Of course, they kept the Koran in their house, helped the poor, performed the rites for the dead, and visited the tombs of Muslim holy men. There are numerous accounts of Christians and Muslims visiting the sacred sites of each others' congregations. If we judge by the ex-voto on the walls of shrines, a Christian custom also adopted

by Muslims, miracles are believed as never before. Not only are these practices still observed today, but some religious celebrations are becoming festive occasions for the Albanian family. People in modern-day Albania attend religious ceremonies regardless of which faith they belong to, as a form of social gathering. Therefore, it might be assumed that a common spiritual substratum exists for all four religions in Albania and that a typical Albanian form of religiosity developed (Doja, 2006). On the other hand, Kuzum Baba, is located in the Eastern part of Vlora, about 30 meters above sea level, is a terrace carved out by sea waters, about 200-300 meters long. On top of the hill is the Kuz Baba Tekke, the religious center of the Bektashi sect in the Vlora region.

Bektashi is the mystical order of Islam that probably best exemplifies a transformational pattern involving all theological, ideological, cultural, social, and political aspects. Heterodox religious movements and the institution of new forms of religion, as in the case of mystical orders of Islam like the Bektashis, are decisive for understanding the history of religions, verifying the existence of this particular syncretism system in the Southeast European area. Many have continually portrayed the Bektashi doctrine as pagan, an observation that is not altogether accurate. Bektashi attitudes in this regard can be more correctly defined as being panentheist, a belief that maintains that while everything in existence is an emanation of God (part of God Himself), the Divine is far greater in



Fig6 / Gjirokastra old city / source Joana Dhiamandi



Fig7 / Religious traces on the Landscape / source Eranda Janku

His Reality than His creation; everything is God, but God is not everything.

The religious manifestations do not always show the real political dimension that such a system extends to the social territory. According to Albert Doja, religious conversion and politics, as showed elsewhere, relate primarily to a collective history, which embraces social and cultural communities, or more precisely, members of a lineage, family, a village community or a larger territorial group. Collective representations and beliefs, rites, customs, and ceremonies are considered part of the official religion – Christianity or Islam accordingly – of a given local community or social network, irrespective of whether a particular cultural trait does or does not form part of the world religion in question. They are categorized collectively not as religious features of an established world system but as 'an ancestral legacy of traditions and customs'. Belonging to a religion means belonging to a social group/network, pursuing a collective memory. Although the individual may share group prejudices towards other religious groups, the essential group values are defined by a system of kinship and alliance, of solidarity and hostility, of status and social position, as being common to all Albanians.(Doja, 2006)

An extraordinary example in the role that architecture has played in the religious social and urban structure is the old city of Gjirokastra and, in particular, the Old Bazaar area. The element of symbiosis between Christian orthodox and Muslim

inhabitants is very obvious by simply observing the architectural and functional structure of the houses and shops in the area of the Bazaar. The space organization of the Orthodox merchants allowed them to position their living spaces above their workspaces and shops in comparison to the Muslim merchants who had a separate structure between working and living, positioning their houses away from their shops in the Bazaar, to the more intimate areas of the old city of Gjirokastra.

Invisible pluralism

Landscape influences religion and religion shapes the landscape. Signs, rituals, aetiological myths, theonyms, and epithets, as well as human artifacts are creating a web of ciphers and symbols that make up the sacred landscape of a place, creating the narrative of the sacred landscape. Religion has no evolutionary functions, is rather existential and moral sentiments constitute a cognitive invention. Human manipulation is a process we can recognize in many periods, like Delphi's gradual transformation from a natural sanctuary to an architectural sanctuary. Mountains, rivers, and springs were 'sacralised', and associated with myths, heroes, and deities. The hidden dimension of the landscape is organizational, created by space and different systems of communication, spatial aspects, architecture and city planning. This statement is essential to understanding the cultural landscape. Ruggles (2009) had it right; humans are always striving to find their place in the cosmos. Complex landscape problems call



*Fig8 / Albanian Riviera panorama
source / Joana Dhiamandi*

for a pluralistic and syncretic approach, expanding the range of possibilities for people and places. The creation and re-interpretation of the landscape can become fundamental aspects of people's identity.

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Albanian Riviera / Creative Tourism Transcending Local Expediency

keywords / Albanian Riviera, creative tourism, cultural events

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Abstract

The paper explores the concept of creative tourism and its role in the development of touristic destinations. The case of the Albanian Riviera is analysed in its current situation in terms of tourism offers and the main objective is identifying potentials of the destination towards the development of creative tourism. What creative tourism is and how relevant Albanian Riviera is from the perspective of creative tourism's growth, based on authenticity and in accordance with the new tourism market trend, are the two main questions to be elaborated.

Creative tourism as a new form of cultural tourism is experiencing a recognizable growth in the recent years, providing new opportunities of development for touristic destinations. Marques (2012) describes creative tourism as an aspect of the renewed interest in creativity, where creativity achieves added value in a range of different fields (economic, social, political and cultural). These trends show a phenomenon in which creativity has become embedded in many fields, ranging from innovation to urban regeneration and tourism development (Richards, 2011). The Albanian Riviera as a touristic locality with rich cultural heritage and tradition shows possibilities for new offers that can respond to the trend of creative tourism. In these terms, it is important to understand how existing resources can be developed into creative products, offering new experiences for tourists and opportunities for the local community.

The concept of creative tourism

Creative Tourism is a relatively new notion. The idea originated in the mid-1990s from EUROTEx project, an European project with the intention of supporting local enterprises through marketing

craft production to tourists (Richards, 2005). The project incited discussions between local producers and tourists which resulted in the development of craft experiences involving visitors in the process, either by seeing or learning. As a term, Creative Tourism was defined for the first time by Richards and Raymond (2000, p. 18) as "Tourism which offers visitors the opportunity to develop their creative potential through active participation in courses and learning experiences which are characteristic of the holiday destination where they are undertaken". UNESCO (2006, p. 3), adopted the definition of Creative Tourism as "Travel directed toward an engaged and authentic experience, with participative learning in the arts, heritage, or special character of a place, providing a connection with those who reside in this place and create this living culture". As a form of cultural tourism, it is attributed to local's culture of living and cultural heritage, thus incorporates a wide range of a region's potentials. The question on the main difference between cultural tourism and creative tourism is based on 'experiencing' rather than 'contemplating' (visiting museums, galleries, concerts, performances and



*Fig1a / Panoramic view of Saranda
source / internet*

the like), hence the mutual interest of both, the local community and tourists, is considered (Pine and Gilmore 1999).

The preferences of many tourists are changing, from conventional tourism based on cultural sites and package tours to more experience-based tourism. The importance of using tourism to support the identity of the destination and to stimulate the consumption of local culture and creativity, is continuously increasing (Richards and Wilson, 2007). Creativity as a contemporary demand is growing among not only creative professionals but also among developed societies in general. It offers stimulating experiences as well as enables the participants to develop themselves through those experiences (Richards, 2009). Richards also points out the movement in society towards 'skilled consumption', including education, self-development and creative activities, which depend on developing individual skills and creativity.

According to Rudan (2012), creative tourism as a special form of tourism, creates a new dimension that meets the modern traveller's need for creativity and participation in various workshops, educational programs and a variety of creative activities (arts, heritage, nature, the destination's peculiarities), and thus creates a true, authentic experience of the destination. Richards and Wilson point out the role of creative tourism in the involvement of the tourists in the cultures cape of the destination, where they take part in different activities – crafts, arts,

culinary and other creative events, thus building a close link between the tourists, the local population, and its cultural heritage.

Approaches towards development of creative tourism

The economic benefits of culture and creativity as instruments for innovation and social integration as well as accommodating the needs of tourists, are becoming prominent. Today there are examples of developed creative tourism activities provided by creative networks aimed at linking tourists and locals (Richards and Marques, 2012). Every touristic region tries to adapt to new tourist demands and stand out through the development of innovative products (Stipanovic and Rudan, 2010). A creative destination is able to generate profits from innovation, culture, research and artistic production, and thus strengthen its own distinctiveness (Sepe and Di Trapani, 2010).

According to Rudan (2012), the following facts have a direct impact on the development of creative tourism of a region: a) the destination stakeholders' own creativity is essential for creative tourism; b) the development of tourism must not destroy the cultural and natural values and resources, i.e. the development must have a sustainable basis; c) even destinations that do not have enough cultural resources can develop creative tourism; and d) this form of tourism is an upgrade of the destination's existing touristic product.

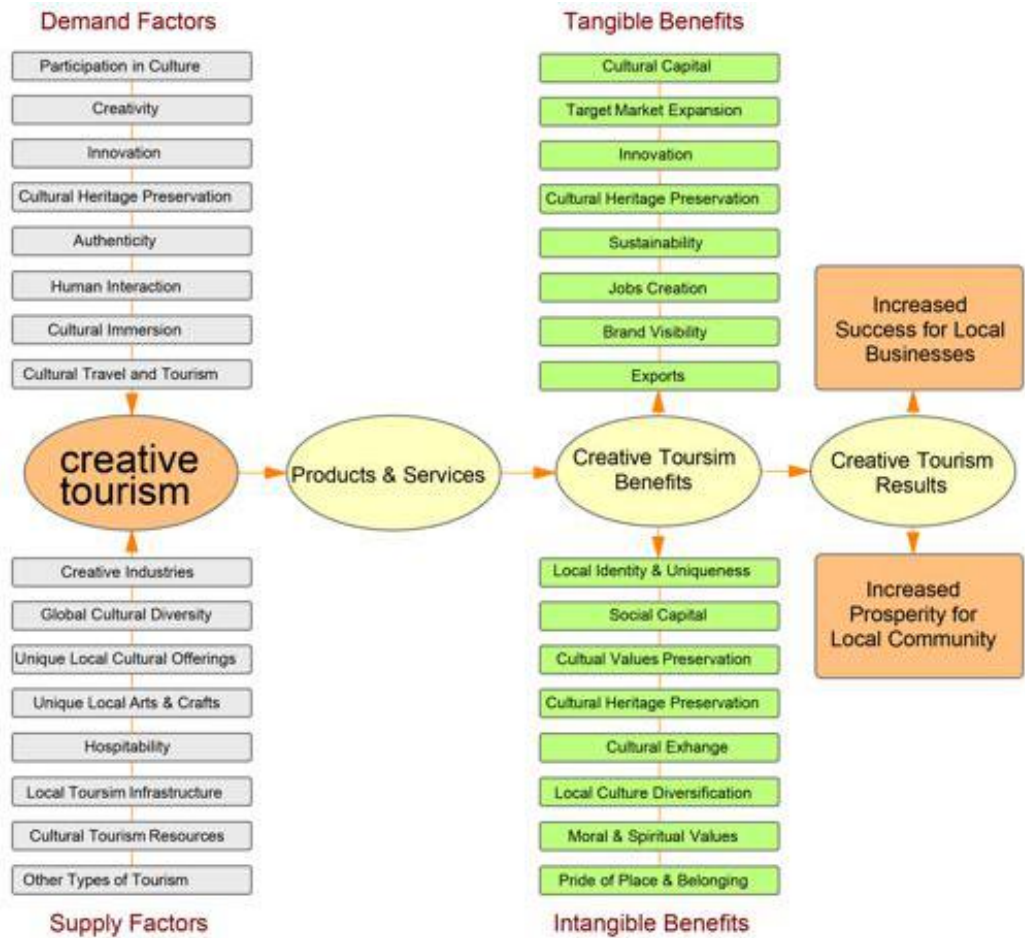


Fig1 / Creative Tourism Business Model
source / Ohridska-Olson and Ivanov 2010



Fig2 / Albanian Riviera.
source / Arta Januzi-Cana

Richards (2009) has described the following factors that support creative tourism from the view of consumption and production:

- The increasingly skilled consumption-society is driven towards 'skilled consumption', including self-development, education and creative activities as more interesting and directly practiced, increasing the level of challenge and the excitement of the activities rather than just meeting basic needs and offers
- The experience economy - where competition based on producing goods or services has been replaced by competition to produce experiences that will allow the consumer to use their own creativity; and
- Shift to intangible tourism resources - such as the image, the stories or atmosphere of the places, where creativity is needed to turn these into experiences and products for the tourists. Small-scale places such as local bars, or restaurants serving local food, markets selling regional products are becoming types of places where tourists hope to encounter 'authentic' culture rather than visiting museums, art galleries, monuments etc.

The growth of creative tourism is related to the potential of services and products the touristic region can offer, hence different models of tourism provide frameworks for sustainable tourism development. Ohridska-Olson and Ivanov (2010) have developed a Model of Creative Tourism Business, which claims a community's local economy improvement by stimulating creative industries. The model presents key demand and supply factors which support a sustainable development of creative tourism, providing tourism benefits through products and services toward the growth of local economy and prosperity. Five groups of elements (demand and supply factors, tangible and intangible benefits, and financial results) provide the strategies for developing creative tourism products that should come from the tourism business rather than EU or governmental policies (Ohridska-Olson and Ivanov).

The importance of this business model resides in the fact that it provides possibilities of profit from creative tourism of any cultural tourism destination. Therefore, the Albanian Riviera which already possesses the assets for the development of creative tourism, can use the advantages of the respective model.

Albanian Riviera: analysis of the current situation in relation to creative tourism development

The Albanian coastal Riviera is located in the southwestern part of Albania, running along the Ionian Sea with a climate that is dominated by Mediterranean and continental influences. It belongs to the county of Vlorë and comprises the region of Himarë and Lukovë. The coastline is spread along 144 kilometres, from the national park of Llogara in the north to the village of Lukovë in the south and is characterized by rock formation and pebble beaches. It consists of 16 settlements that spread throughout the region and has a population of about 70,000 (World Bank, 2007).

With the improvement of the access, the Albanian Riviera is experiencing a growth of foreign visitors especially from the neighbouring countries. Although the destination's tourism is established in an unintentional manner, the private sector has responded to the market demand impulsively while acclimating to these demands. According to statistics from the County of Vlorë (Albania. Këshillii Qarkut Vlorë, 2013), approximately 98.000 tourists visit the Riviera each year. From the total number of foreign visitors in 2010, about 68% came for "sun-and-sea" holidays (Kruja, 2012), a trend that continues in similar fashion and indicates the high seasonality of the Albanian Riviera tourism. A high increase of tourism through years is detected, although it is necessary to develop tourism on the basis of sustainability in accordance to the new market trends.

The National Strategy Plan for Development of Tourism in Albania 2014-2020 (Albania, Ministry of Urban Development and Tourism, 2013) does not address the development of creative tourism as a potential for the improvement of regional tourism. This means that creative tourism as a potentially driving force is still not well recognized.

The plan distinguishes three following key aspects of the success of cultural tourism in general: Coastal tourism- (as a key product defined in the 'sun and sea' tourism and is the main purpose of tourists visiting coastal destination); Cultural tourism- (with a diversity of cultural in regarding the tourist offer and the variety and quality of cultural contents, events and traditional values); and Natural/ECO/rural tourism- (rural areas provide surroundings for ecological, sporting and outdoor activities). In the framework of the workshop on the

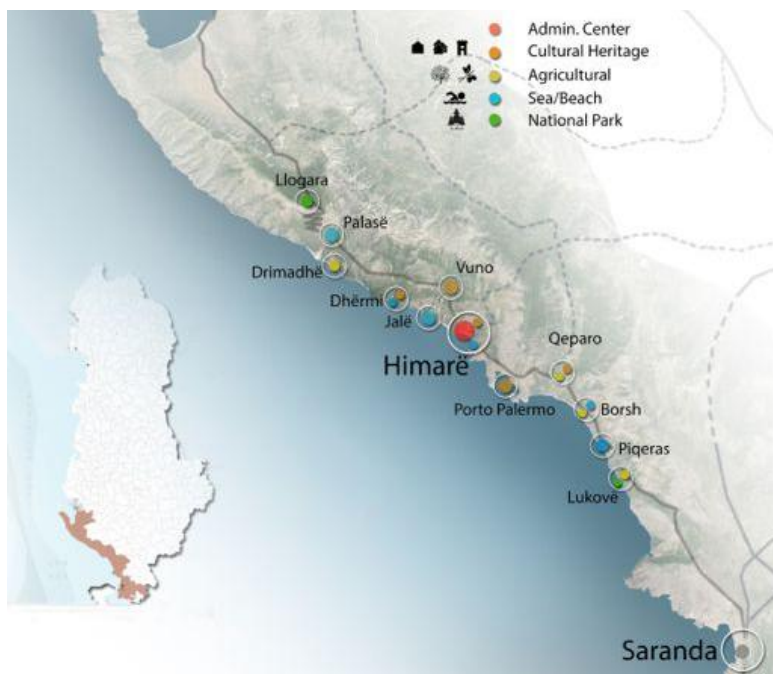


Fig3 / Albanian Riviera: Overview of the existing creative tourism potential
source / Arta Januzi-Cana

development of the Albanian Riviera, an analysis of the current situation of the destination within a context of tourism has been made. Based on site visits in the area, analysis and discussions of the team's researchers, and the Integrated Coastal Development Study and Plan (Albania. Government of Albania. PAP/RAC - SOGREAH Consortium, 2005) the potential of various forms of cultural offers and activities that support creative tourism is recognized. However, most of them are not managed or coordinated as creative tourism and are not included in a platform of the planning organization and of the authorities in charge of tourism policy.

The rural communities of the Riviera embody rich spiritual hereditary values, traditional customs, mythology and folklore, which are transmitted from generation to generation and symbolize a strong local identity. Most of the villages are only 30- 50% inhabited throughout the year (Albania. Government of Albania. PAP/RAC - SOGREAH Consortium, 2005). The elderly reside and live from remittance from the next generation since a constant trend of emigration, especially by the younger generations, has characterized the region since WWII and particularly during the '90's. Families that are absent most of the year usually return during the summer season to tend to the incoming flux of visitors.

Except for the village of Borsh which has a community of Muslims, the Orthodox Christian religion is predominant in the region, characterized by a significant number of saint days (each village boasts

its saint). A large number of historical monuments such as late antiquity basilicas, medieval churches and old citadel foundations attest to the rich cultural heritage of the region, (e.g. only in Dhërmi village there are 27 churches and monasteries). The remains of Borsh Castle, Church of Palasa, Church of Holy Mary in Dhërmi, Spiridon Church in Vuno, Church of St. Mary Kasopitra and Castle foundations in Old Himarë, Monastery of St. Mary in Kakome, Monastery of St. Mary in Krorëz, Ali Pasha Castle in Porto Palermo with its submarine tunnels constructed before WWII during which it was used as a military base etc., are among the monumental sites of the region.

The architecture of the villages of Old Qeparo, Vuno, Dhërmi, Old Himarë etc. is characterized by a dense spread of houses next to, and above each other, with very little space in between, providing a view of the beach from each structure. At the same time it provides an impressive view of the main village façade complex from the main road (Albania. Government of Albania. PAP/RAC - SOGREAH Consortium, 2005).

The houses represent a valuable architectural ensemble, authentic way of traditional living and aesthetic style that is promoted within the framework of family-owned tourism and preservation of a traditional rural identity. Approximately 30% of the structures are abandoned in various stages of neglect and ruin and some new, out-of-character construction has taken place within the confines of the old village (Albania. Government of Albania.

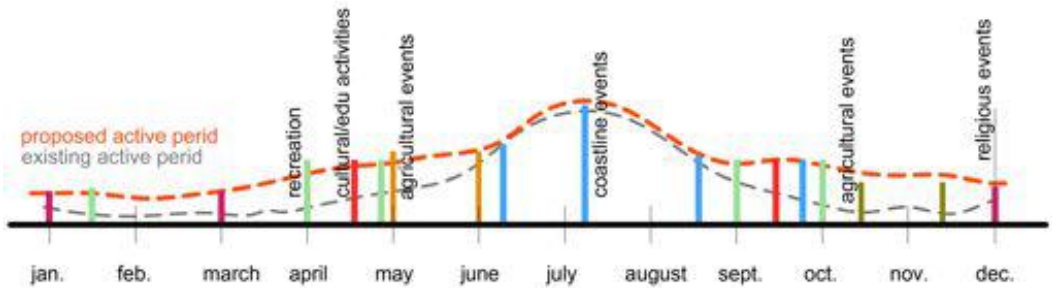


Fig4 / Extending the active period throughout the year
source / Joana Dhiamandi and Arta Januzi-Cana

PAP/RAC - SOGREAH Consortium).

The villages of Lukovë, Shën Vasil, Nivicë, Kudhës, Palasë are accentuated with olive groves and fruit orchards terracing on the surrounding hillsides. It is a common practice of the villagers to hire workers from northern Albania to look after their gardens, olive groves and to harvest olives and citrus fruit. Local communities strongly hold on to old traditional customs, culinary and apparel that are vibrant and unique. However, there is a lack of related events and festivities that could promote these values.

Seasonal camping and art workshops are the main alternative youth recreational oriented events that take place on the beaches of Dhërmi and Jalë. These spaces host diverse creative event-sand are progressively attracting young foreign visitors. Recreational and sports activities (rafting, sky jumping, mountain biking, fishing, trekking, cliff climbing, hiking, etc.) are also prominent.

It can be summarized that creative tourism is only present on a small-scale. Creative programs of individual destinations do not constitute a significant component of the destination's overall tourist offer. Certain forms of cultural offers are present (urban core, religious buildings, monuments, concerts, events, traditional customs) including some temporary forms of creative provisions that are not only meant for tourists but also for the local population. Development strategies with the involvement of the local community and partnerships with relevant policymakers are needed.

Albanian riviera: a creative tourism development approach

The vision for Albanian tourism (Albania, Ministry of Urban Development and Tourism, 2013) is to fashion touristic destinations as attractive, authentic and welcoming in Europe, based on utilization of natural, cultural and historical potential accessible for the international market. The Albanian Riviera with its potential for creative tourism development could remain vital without further exploitation of the landscape and respecting the local cultural heritage and environment. Well-planned and managed activities can yield economic profit with the help of branding the destination, cultural heritage and local community products and, thereby, attracting national and international tourists and investments. The destination with its strong cultural identity as creative potential can serve as a powerful network bringing people and new ideas as well as fostering cultural, business and educational relations.

Creative tourism can extend the current active tourism period (June to August) to yearlong tourism by providing interesting alternative events that are not necessarily related to seasonal tourism and integrate the inactive areas of the destination. The elongated employment would also stimulate the local community to self-engage, interact and improve their skills, which would assist in a decrease of the villages' abandonment.

Diverse creative offers that highlight the potential of Albanian Riviera as creative destination can be the following:

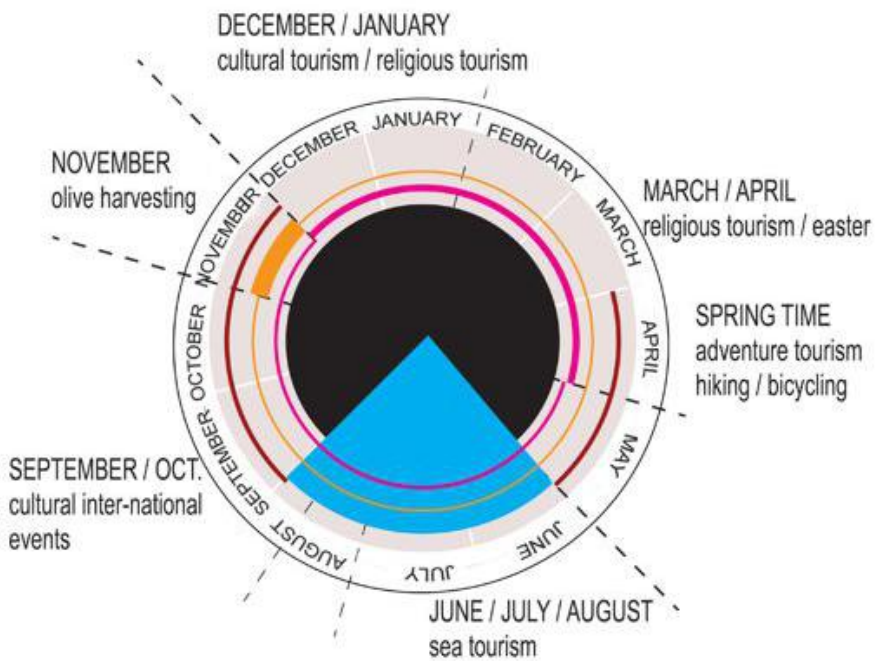


Fig5 / Existing yearly calendar of strategic activities
source / Joana Dhiamandi and Arta Januzi-Cana

- Coastline activities: (Lukova, Bunec, Borsh, Qeparo, Llamani, Filkuri, Himara, Livadhi, Jalë, Gjipe, Dhërmi, Dhralë): scuba diving, fishing and culinary courses, camping, festivals and workshops (art, music, film, 'do it yourself' local crafts), sport and recreation etc.
- Village activities: (Shën Vasil, Lukova, Pigeras, Borsh, Qeparo, Jalë, Vuno, Dhërmi): religious events, national seasonal educational trainings/workshops on olive harvesting, traditional cooking and honey production, festivals and workshops, etc.
- Himara as an administrative centre: international festivals, educational trainings and tourism in the historic castle of old Himara
- Porto Palermo: Cold War tours, traditional products fair, herb harvesting international political and VIP events etc.

In Figures 5 and 6, an annual calendar is depicted that shows existing recreational and cultural activities which are organized in the Riviera and the proposal that highlights these activities. Applying principles that support creative tourism would increase the strength of the overall offer of the destination

Based on the analysis of the current situation and prospective new opportunities, supporting measures that enable the development of creative tourism can be summarized as following:

- Recognition of the potential of cultural events as the main infusion of creative tourism for the national interest;
- Development of a structure as a driving force by professional teams that would raise the awareness of the significance of events for the local community;

- Development of a plan that would predict economic benefits from new events, and satisfy a wide range of tourists;
 - Create relationships with similar event associations organized internationally as new opportunities for self-marketing and branding in international markets;
 - Offer high quality, distinctive and promotional creative events;
 - Utilize online social and cultural event networks as a key promotion to the (inter) national market;
 - Engage communities in groups of events practicing competitive advantages;
- The promotion of new opportunities and stimulation of alternative tourism with the purpose of increasing the number of local and foreign visitors subsequently extending the touristic season and thereby creating a more sustainable development of this sector, could be achieved by highlighting the features, values, characteristics and strengths of the specific areas along the Southern coast line.

Conclusion

The Albanian Riviera as a touristic sector is a very important asset for the country. Even though tourism has been growing through the years, it is still in its early phase of development. This study shows that the concept of creative tourism has not been applied to the region. Some creative activities are present but they are related only to a few individual micro-destinations. Natural and cultural preconditions are appealing, but the intangible resources (identity, narratives, atmosphere, way of living) need to build up into new quality

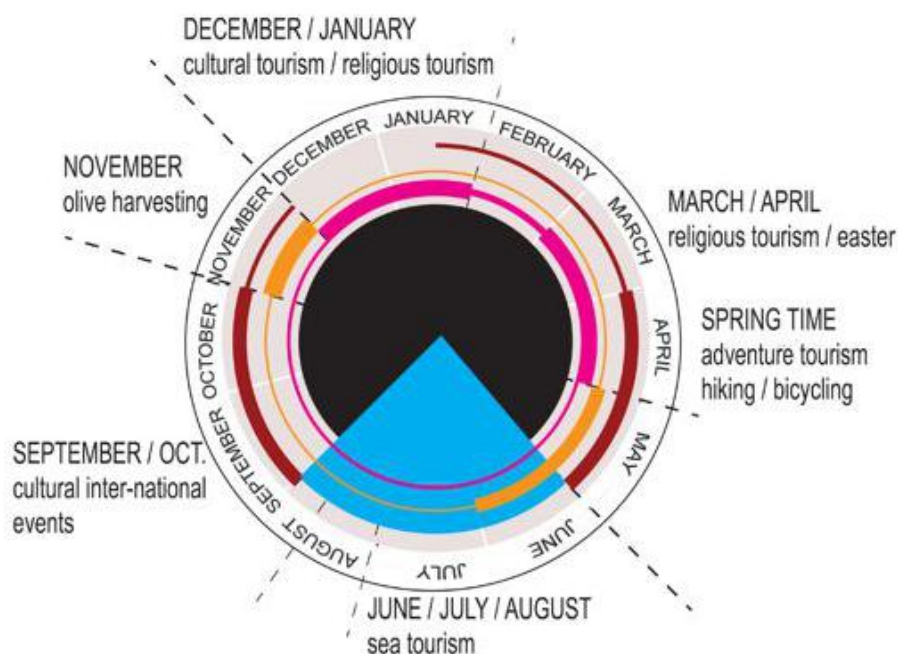


Fig6 / Proposed yearly calendar of strategic activities
source / Joana Dhiamandi and Arta Januzi-Cana

experiences for locals and visitors. Through creative educational, recreational and cultural activities (workshops, fairs, authentic culinary events etc.), Albanian Riviera has a unique opportunity to effectively develop creative tourism. An integrated study with a broad perspective will be needed first. Development strategies need to be innovated with the involvement of local community and partnerships with relevant policy makers. A solid interaction between tourism and culture can be fostered to help locations intensify their attractiveness to tourists, as well as increase their competitiveness as locations in which to live, visit, work and invest.

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Olive tree as a way of life in the Albanian Riviera

keywords / Albanian Riviera, olive trees, handcrafts

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Abstract

The olive tree has a long historical tradition in Albania and is central to everyday life, particularly in the Albanian Riviera and in the southern region of the country. The tree is even believed to be sacred. This paper explores the centrality of the olive tree, its origins, multiple functions and symbolism in the Albanian Riviera. Through observation in the countryside of the Albanian Riviera and in-depth interviews with the local community, this paper provides insights regarding the various approaches towards the olive tree in the current dynamics of the Albania Riviera in terms of: symbolism, handcrafting and DIY, multi-functioning and landscape and, architecture. The research demonstrates that the status of the olive tree as sacred is transmitted orally from a generation to another as part of the cultural heritage elements including traditions, customs, values and norms. In addition, olives serve many functions in the everyday life of communities in the Albanian Riviera, from nourishment to health and beauty. Moreover, the olive tree is embedded in architecture and landscapes from home gardens to graveyards and churches. Handcrafts and furniture made of olive tree is becoming rare due to the difficulty of working with the wood. The research shows that given the centrality of the olive tree in the everyday life of the Albanian Riviera, it is necessary to develop appropriate protection practices and enrich the cultivation of the olive tree.

Research background

Albania is a Mediterranean country where the olive tree is thought to have originated. For more than 3,000 years olives and olive oil have been the most celebrated food products in the Mediterranean basin. Furthermore, they represent a traditionally valued source of healthy nourishment (Mehmet, Hyka, Jorgji & Postoli, 2001). The olive tree represents one of the most common trees in Albania. It is principally used to produce oil and other related nourishment and it covers an estimated 8% of the land in Albania. As shown in Pic. 1, the Albanian olive production zone covers the entire coast from Saranda (South) to Shkodra (North) and inland river valleys in the districts of Peqin/Elbasan, Berat/Skrapar, and Tepelene/Permet (USAID, 2012). In this sense, the entire country can identify traditional and cultural as well as

natural links to the olive tree. In addition, the olive tree is important in economic terms as the olive and olive oil sector represents an important segment of the agro-business and production in Albania. Considering the deep economic reforms to move from a centralised economy to a free market economy, trade liberalisation and European Union integration processes, the olive and olive oil sector in Albania have undergone significant structural transformations. These transformations of the olive sector can also be interlinked with other social phenomena such as migration, urbanisation, property issues, construction and environmental degradation. According to a study on the olive sector in Albania, the number of planted trees is nearly 5 million and is rapidly increasing as a response to sustained demand, good prices and government subsidies for



*Fig1 / Olive tree is the main landscape future, unique spacing form colours
source / Erida Curraj*

expanding the production base (Kapaj & Kapaj, 2012: 496). The olive cultivation is a well-established and old practice in Albania. Most of the studies focus on olive cultivation, olive oil production and olives in the national or regional markets, mostly strictly related to economic terms. This paper attempts to look at another aspect of the olive tree in Albania, i.e. the legacy of the olive cultivation as art and the current patterns of the multiple functions of olive trees with a particular focus on the Albanian Riviera.

Research aim and methodology

The aim of this paper is to investigate the mainstreaming of the olive tree in the Albanian Riviera as a way of life by looking into the various approaches from nutrient to an inspiration for artists and motivation for architects. The main objectives of the paper are:

- a) to explore the historical background of the olive tree in the Mediterranean basin;
- b) to analyse the centrality of the olive tree in the Albanian Riviera in terms of historical tradition and cultural heritage as well as cultivation;
- c) to shed light into the various approaches to the olive tree in the current dynamics of the Albania Riviera in terms of: symbolism, handcrafting and DIY, multi-functioning and landscape and architecture.

This paper adopts a qualitative methodological approach by applying the methods of observation and in-depth interviews as well as secondary resources. The analysis of the historical background of the olive tree in the Mediterranean basin is conducted through desk research

and use of secondary resources such as articles, reports and policy briefs on olive tree cultivation. The centrality of the olive tree in the Albanian Riviera is explored through the adaptation of both secondary resources and in-depth interviews. The main secondary resources used are reports by the Ministry of Agriculture, Albanian Olive Association, and the USAID Programme on Rural Development as well as journal articles and studies. In addition, the field work included in-depth interviews with 27 locals in the selected villages and towns in of the Albanian Riviera. What is more, the investigation of the various approaches to the olive tree in the current dynamic of the socio-economic and cultural development of the region is conducted through the observation of the olive trees locations and usage as well as the perspectives and opinions of the locals interviewed for this study.

The fieldwork was conducted in two phases of five weeks: three weeks between the end of April and mid-May 2015 and two weeks in August 2015. The observations were conducted in the Albanian Riviera and included these main locations: Llogara (Dukat), Palace, Dhermi, Himare as seen in Pic 2 below. The sample for the in-depth interviews were 15 locals, 8 women and 7 men, with an average age of 55 and 12 young locals with an average age of 30; 6 young men and 6 young women. The in-depth interviews with young people were conducted in August, which corresponds to the period of summer holidays during which emigrants return to their homes in the Albanian Riviera. The average population in this area is relatively old

the southwestern Mediterranean (Iberia, northwest Africa) where winters are mild. Recent studies (Besnard, 2013) demonstrate when and where the olive tree was domesticated and how it became the source of today's edible olives and olive oil. The cradle of the first domestication of the olive tree is in the northern Levant (Eastern Mediterranean) followed by dispersals across the Mediterranean basin in parallel with the expansion of civilizations and human exchanges in this part of the world with

the main centre initially located in Greece (Besnard, 2013: 11). Archaeological studies have demonstrated that the olive was established in Greece in the period preceding Minos (3500 BC) (Zohary and Hopf, 2002). This may prove that the wild olive tree has begun during the Palaeolithic or Neolithic ages (5-10 000 BC) (Zohary and Hopf, 2002). During their colonization of the Mediterranean (6th century BC) the Greeks transmitted their culture, their alphabet, their temples and, independently from the Phoenicians, the

and thus the fieldwork was conducted during two time periods. The timeframe for the fieldwork constitutes one of the limitations of the research as well as the lack of quantitative data. However, the focus of this paper is on the exploration of the mainstreaming of the olive tree in the Albanian Riviera as a way of life and part of cultural identity rather than the reaching of universal conclusions. Therefore, the qualitative approach through observation, in-depth interviews and secondary resources is appropriate compared to a more quantitative approach.

The observation looks at: the usage of the olive tree in art, handcrafts, landscape and architecture. The in-depth interviews explored the perspectives, knowledge and attitudes of the locals regarding the olive tree. The main elements of the in-depth interviews were: experience with the olive tree; knowledge of the tree's legacy and current development; centrality and symbolism of the olive tree. The analysis of the data gathered through the qualitative study is presented in three main sections as follows: (i) the olive tree in the Mediterranean basin from a historical perspective; (ii) the Albanian Riviera and the centrality of the olive tree; (iii) from a sacred tree to an inspiration for artists and architects.

Origins of the olive tree in the Mediterranean

In the Mediterranean region, the olive tree is deemed as sacred and a symbol of high virtues and goods. Historically for the Mediterranean, olive oil has constituted the main source of nutritional fats, therapeutic ingredients, and has always represented a valuable export product. Therefore, it has become a way of life and part of the Mediterranean identity, i.e. an embedded cultural dimension (Loumou & Giourga, 2003: 89). Also olive tree represents one of the most typical forest species in the Mediterranean region (Zohary and Hopf, 2002). The olive tree belongs to the zone of broadleaf evergreen, also known as the 'olive zone'. The earliest evidence for the domestication of olives comes from the Chalcolithic Period, specifically the archaeological site of Teleilat Ghassul in what is today modern Jordan. Farmers in ancient times believed that olive trees would not grow well if planted more than a certain distance from the sea; Theophrastus gives 300 stadia (55.6 km or 34.5 mi) as the limit. Modern experience does not always confirm this, and, though showing a preference for the coast, they have long been grown further inland in areas with suitable climates, particularly in

cultivation of olive trees (Zohary and Hopf, 2002). However, olives are nowadays cultivated not only in the Mediterranean basin, but also in the Arabian Peninsula, south Asia and parts of China.

Characteristics of olive wood

The olive tree has a long life. It can last centuries, multiplied by a "minjolle", pieces of rows or twigs (Albanian Encyclopaedia, 1985:1134). The growers, who are mainly community based and family-owned, plant the trees and harvest them for table olives or olive oil. Olive trees are evergreens with pale grey bark and gnarled trunks. Their wood can also be used for furniture. The 5-year old olive tree can bear fruit. In the Mediterranean area, two types of olive tree (Voulgaridis, and Passialis, 1995: 8) can be distinguished and both of them can be found in Albania: (i) the wild species (*Olea europaea* var) *oleaster* DC or *Olea europaea* var. *sylvestris*; (ii) cultivable species *Olea europaea* var. Olive trees can reach heights of fifteen to twenty meters, but are usually pruned to only four to five meters (Lipshitz, et.al. 1991: 445). The wood is hard and close-grained, and it is not only suitable for woodworking but is also termite resistant (Lipshitz, et.al. 1991: 445). Production generally starts 5-6 years after planting (Zohary and Hopf, 2002:137). Once established they can bear fruit for decades or even hundred years. Olive wood offers impressive design with close rings, but no smell (Voulgaridis, and Passialis, 1995). In the Mediterranean basin and beyond, the significance of the olive tree rests upon its historical and cultural heritage, its symbols and its economic relevance for the livelihoods of the households. In the following section, the centrality of the olive tree in the Albanian Riviera will be explored.

The albanian riviera and the centrality of the olive tree

Olive trees are planted in Albania at a certain distance from the sea, particularly in Saranda, Fieri, Vlora, Lushnja, Berati, Tirane, Kruje, Durres and Shkoder where winters are mild. Olive trees can withstand some cold: in fact, they need it to a certain extent or they will not produce fruit. They are not, though, trees meant for a real winter. Cultivated at 200-300 m above the sea but, in some places, it grows also at 600 m above the sea. The Albanian Riviera lies along the Ionian Sea; it starts at the foot of Ceraunian Mountain and ends at the Lukova seaside. In 1944 1.5 million olive trees were counted. The first enterprises are located in Vlore close to the Albanian Riviera. In 1983



Fig3 / How different churches in Albania Riviera have their similar landscape, whiteness of the walls is a peaceful background of the contrast of greens, olive tree and dark cypress's leaf / source Erida Curraj

5.27 million olive tree covering 2327 ha were counted (Albanian Encyclopaedia, 1985: 1134). During this period, large olive plantations were established in the Albanian Riviera. During the privatization of farmland in 1991 and 1992, 45,000 hectares of olive groves were distributed to 110,000 households, resulting in a highly fragmented olive production. Although historically considered to be sacred and well protected by laws, olive plantations suffered massive destruction caused by civil unrests in the early 1990's and the number of trees decreased to 3.5 million by 1996 (Mehmet and Postoli, 2001). In 2000–2006 the annual number of new trees planted increased from 86,000 to 235,000. 8 from the 9 most commonly grown varieties are native to Albania (Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Protection).

The olive tree blossoms at the beginning of summer and its fruit ripen about the time of the early rains in October. The fruit, which is rich in oil, is first green, but later becomes black. Modern landscape architecture is using the green-grey and white flowers of olive tree as a contrast of colours. The tree is full of beauty and, during spring, the olive tree is covered with many small whitish flowers, especially when laden with fruit. Olive images are found on ancient Greek vases, Etruscan friezes, impressionist paintings and modern textiles. Finally, the combination of decorative surfaces and turners led to the construction of integrated and highly attractive small furniture, which not only can utilize olive wood, but also feature it (Lipshitz, et.al. 1991: 450).

Olive trees grow in any light soil, even on clay if well drained, but in rich soils they are predisposed to disease and produce a lower quality oil than in poorer soil. Consequently the rocky ground needed to enrich with new layer and then to mix until a necessary deep suitable for the roots. As a result of this process, cultivating olive tree represented a challenge, not many families could follow the dream to have olive tree. According to one of the interviewees, only the strong families could. Due to this hard work not many families could support to achieve expanding their territory. Most well-known families were – Dunaj, Gjikopulos (Kumi, 2015, Dhermi). According to one of the interviewees: "olive oil was a good reason to be or not to be – the main existence of the area". This implies the centrality of the olive tree in the Albanian Riviera. In this sense, certain olive trees in Elbasan and Berat are considered as natural monuments such as the 'Olive of pleasure' (Ulliri i Qejfit) in Elbasan situated in the olive grove of the city whereby residents go to relax or the Droboniku Olive Tree in Berat.

Symbolism of the olive tree as a sacred tree

The olive tree has held a special place in human culture for 8000 years. Ancient Greeks crowned the victors of Olympic Games with wreaths of olive branches. The Romans used them in rites. To Romans, the olive tree did not have as much symbolical meaning, although according to the legend, Romulo and Remo, founders of Rome and descendants

of Gods, saw the first light under the branches of an olive tree (Monteiro, 2013). In the Hebrew and Christian religions, the olive branch has always symbolized peace and brotherhood. Two such olive branches at the side of the candelabrum symbolize the State of Israel, because "an olive leaf" symbolizes peace (cf. Gen. 8:11). There are also many references to the olive in the Quran: In Surat al-Mu'minun, Allah says "And a tree (olive) that springs forth from Mount Sinai, that grows oil, and (it is a) relish for the eaters" [al-Mu'minun 23:20]. In Ancient Egypt, it was common belief that the creation of olive trees and the knowledge to produce olive oil was a gift from Goddess Isis (Montero 2013). Picasso's image of a dove with an olive branch is the international symbol of peace.

It is proved historically that olive tree is cultivated in Albania since 3-4 century BC and thus its symbolism can be traced in Albanian cultural heritage. Illyrian has a developed culture of planting, growing and cultivation of the Olive tree. The oldest olive trees in Albania region are in Albanian Riviera as seen above. Cutting an olive tree in Albania was prohibited historically as they were considered as sacred. The interviews in the Albanian Riviera demonstrate the existence of many legends about olive tree as sacred: "the prince of Riviera has ordered not to cut neither a branch from the olive tree, and during the night he sent his own horse and killed it meanwhile it was eating some olive tree, an example that was not followed from nobody". Also in the City-State of Sparta, cutting down an Olive tree was punishable by death or exile. Maybe this is one of the reasons that we do not find any witness of ornaments or asset made in olive wood.

During the observations in Albanian Riviera and through the in-depth interviews, one can easily observe the different traditions of the cultivation and multi-functioning of the olive oil. Coffee times are perfect occasions to discover the centrality of the olive tree in this area given that in all in-depth interviews, the olive tree was introduced to the researcher as crucial and always thought as a part of their life.

Another element that demonstrates the status of the olive tree as sacred is the tradition to plant a new olive tree for any new birth. Also, the interviewees confirm that every couple on their wedding day should plant 10 olive tree roots. It is said the same for the north Riviera with the difference to plant 2 olive trees. The tradition mentions that Skanderbeg since

the XV-th century has applied the rule for every couple to plant some olive trees on their wedding day. The interviewees argue that the traditionally only a very rich men could afford to have a grave surrounded by olive tree planks called Stranica from Dukat's habitants. It was believed that this grave would last for a long time due to the strength of the olive tree. These examples demonstrate that the status of olive tree as sacred is transmitted orally from a generation to another as part of the cultural heritage elements such as traditions, customs, values and norms.

Handcrafting and do-it-yourself practices of olive tree

The in-depth interviews show how olive tree has been used in multiple ways in Albania. The interviewees argue that olive oil is used for various maintenance purposes such as to polish or remove water or alcohol spots from a furniture by mixing olive oil and lemon; or if the door hinges shout during nights, the solution is some drops of olive oil on it. Olive tree has also been used as an exchange tool instead of currency. It has also been used to produce various crafts by hand, as precious objects of local Albanian tradition in the Riviera. In this sense, we can argue for the multi-functioning of the olive tree from nourishment to health, to housing and maintenance, to beauty and small ornaments and furniture.

Architecture and landscape

The observation of the landscape and architecture in the Albania Riviera demonstrates that olive tree is widely used in churches and graveyards in addition to cypress, which is the most used tree in the Mediterranean area in churches. In this area, the celebrations of religious rituals are particularly pursued and olive tree constitute a central part of this traditions and practices as shown in the pictures below.

Nano says: "olive wood is very expensive, now days technics can make any wood to look like an olive wood, this wood is hard, needs more time to take a shape consequently the cost is higher". Many churches' icons or their frames are carved from his father in Albanian Riviera, on his 30 years' experience he affirms: "working with olive wood is becoming rare".

Sharp white-grey rocks, green trees, peaceful endless sea make a beautiful scene for the entire artist, this is how the way from Llogara lay down to Palace.

These pictures from the observations in the Albanian Riviera are evidence of the central role of the olive tree in the



Fig4a / Olive tree is the main landscape future, unique spacing form colours
source / Erida Curraj

landscape in south Albanian close to the seaside, but also more inland.

Olive cultivation is an important part of the entire agriculture sector in Albania. The fieldwork shows that the challenges faced in the olive cultivation in the Albanian Riviera are: the small farm size, poor quality of inputs, outdated technology, insufficient post-harvest facilities (Cela et.al., 2010: 59). The Albanian Government has improved the Agricultural Policy framework and the aligned the Albanian legislation to the *acquis communautaire*. The two main strategy documents related to agriculture and rural development are Agriculture and Food Sector Strategy 2007-2013 and Rural Development Crosscutting Strategy for 2007-2013. However, both documents need to be assessed in line with the new National Strategy for Development and Integration 2014-2020.

Regarding the olive cultivation, one of the priorities has been to increase the area planted with olives, for instance not less than 0.4 ha for individual farmers and not less than 1 ha for groups of farmers, comprising 50 % of the project's value, but no more than 3,100 EUR/ha (Cela et.al., 2010: 57). Also, attention is paid to the drip irrigation on olives as well as on establishment of wells for irrigation on olive trees. In addition, European Union support has been received through the Instrument of Pre-Accession for Rural Development (IPARD).

The detailed elaboration of the impact of improvements in the policy framework and the IPARD funds on the olive cultivation would be the focus of an entirely new

research project.

Conclusions

Olive tree is a symbol of civilization and culture all around the Mediterranean area. Dominant element of Mediterranean evergreen hardwoods zone produces two of the most popular products, olive oil and olives. Olive tree, its cultivation, multi-functions and symbolism in the Albanian Riviera, which have transformed the olive tree into a way of life of the Albanians in the Riviera rather than a simple fruit. Drawing from the history of the olive tree in the Mediterranean and its historical and current symbolism, the paper explores the positioning of the olive tree in the Albanian Riviera. The cultivation of olive trees for table olives and olive oil represents one of the major economic activities of various households and small businesses in the Albanian Riviera. Other functions of the olive tree relate to the use of olives and olive oil for health, decorations and beauty matters. In this way, the olive tree has become multi-functioning. What is more it has gained the status of a sacred tree, whose symbolism is inherited from generation to generation via oral history, cultural norms and traditions in the south of Albania.

As far as the potential utilization of olive wood as a raw material for carpentry, this paper reports that crafting olivewood is a rather difficult and time - consuming process mostly due to high density and hardness, but provides unique final products. A combination of decorative panels and curved logs presented by this paper consists a potential utilization of



*Fig4b / Olive tree is the main landscape future, unique spacing form colours
source / Erida Curraj*

olive wood as a raw material for carpentry. However, olive trees are largely used as decorations for landscapes and in architecture such as in home gardens, in hotels and restaurants, public spaces as well as in graveyards and churches. The olive tree is inseparable from the landscape of the Albanian Riviera and from the daily life of households and businesses in this part of the country, but not only. The utilities of the olive oil, its multifunction and symbolism is spread all over Albania, making it one of the most important trees in the country, which deserves particular attention and protection policies from both the government, the private sector and environmental stakeholders.

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4.1

hyperNatural Vlora / competition
description

Metropolis / Sealine

4

vlora competition

hyperNatural Vlora / competition description

Metropolis / Sealine

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consultant team Sealine / Prof PhD Roberto Di Giulio, Prof PhD Luca Emanuelli, Prof PhD Antonello Stella, MSc Gianni Lobosco, MSc Mario Benedetto Assisi

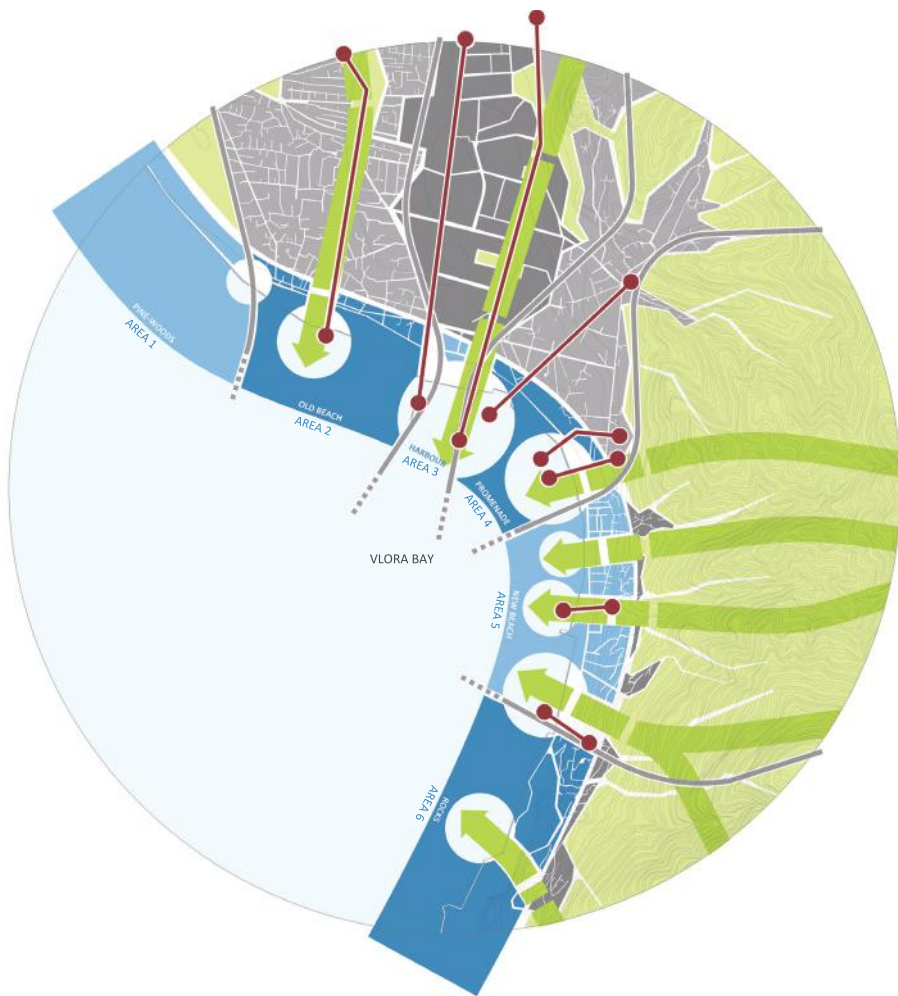
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First Prize Winner local team

The project is developed around the idea of the hyper-natural. Hypernatural refers to artificial environments capable of generating new landscapes, new habitats, sustainable scenarios of radical growth. We consider as hypernatural the interventions whose aims are extremely functional, pragmatic and eager to blend, blur and build new relationships with the environment. All over the world the production of new territories is increasing, specifically the speed with which they are continually processed thanks to technological improvements. Human pressure on the coasts (due to global phenomena such as tourism, transportation of goods, etc.) is developed through a growing urban densification and requires infrastructures to connect, control and manage these areas. In this context, it is useful to distinguish between natural and artificial. The continuous arguments centered on the dichotomy between these terms only leads to confusion. The concept of the hypernatural overcomes this opposition.

In general, one of the main features of coastal systems is the extreme changeability of borders. The urbanized territory is actually extends beyond the shoreline and continues, sometimes more and sometimes less clearly, even across the sea. Performing a mapping of the elements that compose it, above and below the water level, it is possible to highlight a very complex system infrastructure, communication routes, and regulated functional zones. Marine habitats are involuntary generated by human intervention. The extraction platforms for example are the most visible elements, but not the only ones: observing the sea even under its surface it is possible to detect the presence of networks (geotubes, pipelines, etc.), unloading areas, protection systems such as the submerged barriers, the artificial reefs of tetrapods, etc. Moreover, the appearance of coasts changes over time: the protective structures from erosion alter the solid



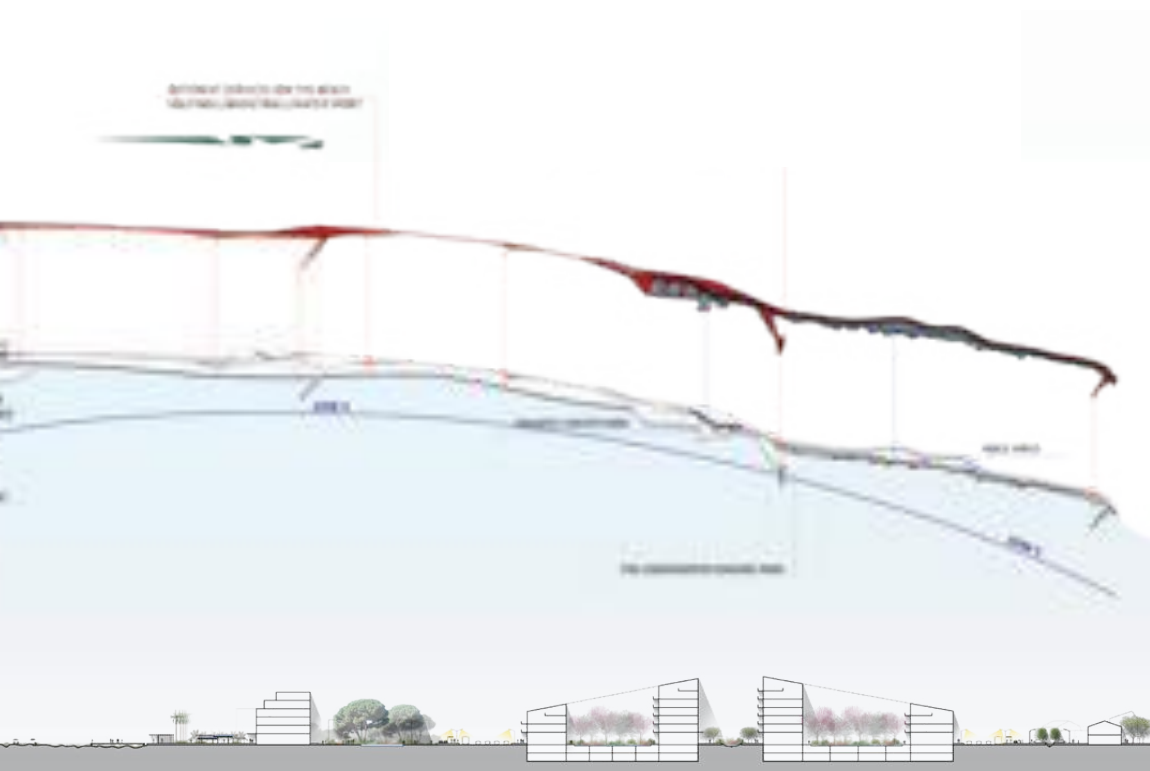
VLORA WATERFRONT VISION



THE PORTRAY OF VLORA

Fig1 / the new vision for Vlora
source / HyperNatural Vlora competition panels



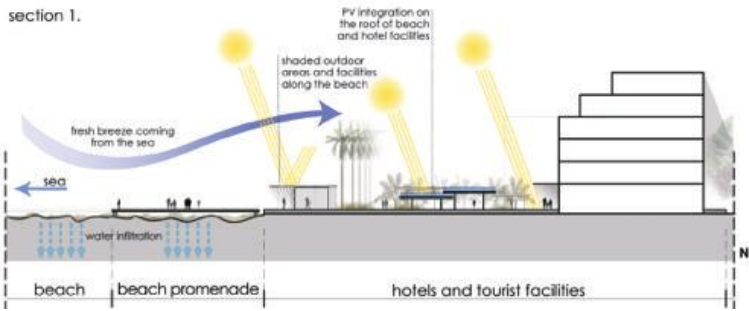


*Fig2 / Axonometric view of Vlorë waterfront
source / HyperNatural Vlorë competition panels*

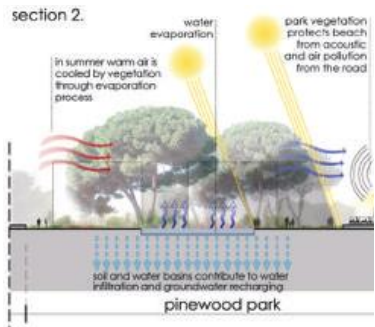


*Fig3 / View of Vlorë waterfront
source / HyperNatural Vlorë competition panels*

section 1.



section 2.



HARBOR AND PROMENADE_BIRD VIEW

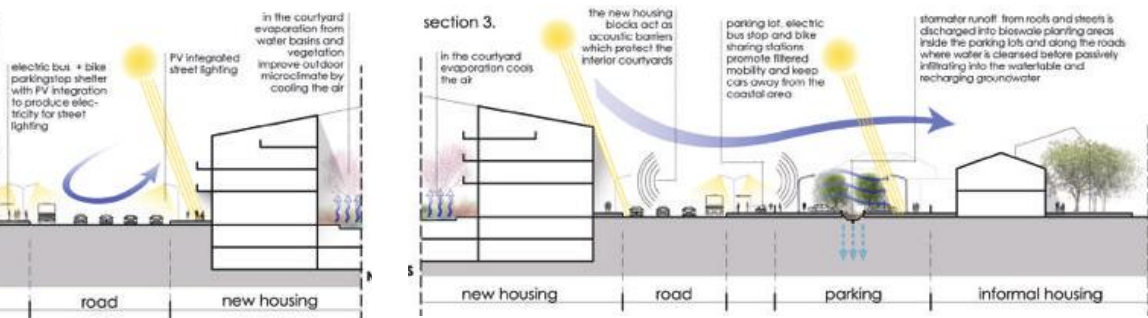
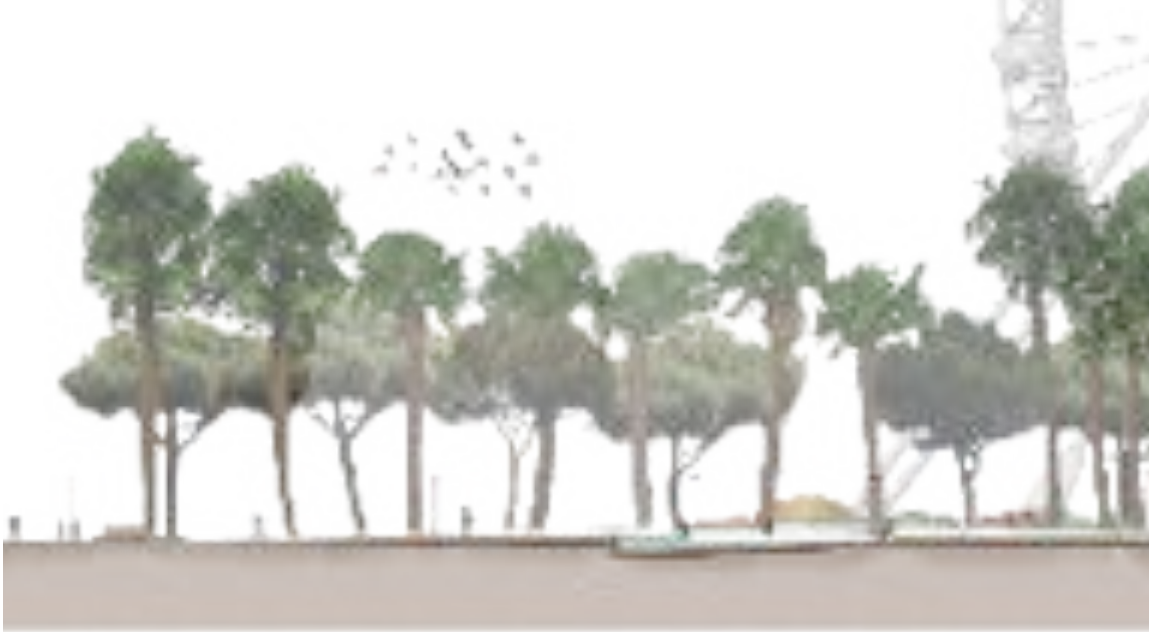


Fig4 / Bioclimatic solutions
source / HyperNatural Vlora competition panels



Fig5 / Masterplan and axonometric view
source / HyperNatural Vlora competition panels





transport of sand and accumulation points; the beach nourishment intervenes to restore the depth of eroded beaches, sometimes also increasing the amplitude also for tourism purposes. This series of “action and reaction” also impacts marine habitats in sometimes surprising ways. The artificial elements in some situations may encourage biodiversity: platforms, sea barriers, submerged reefs, and also shipwrecks are often colonized by marine flora and fauna which, without the presence of these elements, wouldn’t find a suitable habitat for their existence. The project for Vlora takes this theoretical premise to the extreme, basing it on research that the working group has carried out for years in the Mediterranean area, and tries to identify in the specificity of the territory a model of the evolution of the landscape according to the mechanisms of hybrid synergy between artificial and natural. For this reason, the strategic choices that drive the masterplan focus on the idea of the hypernatural and on the creation on sea of a unique urban landscape, explanatory of a new approach.

“Hypernatural Vlora” proposes to approach the theme of the waterfront considering it an infrastructure. Thus an infrastructure able to absorb and exploit scenario variables within a time frame not defined a priori, to build relationships, attract interest, adapt to needs always in evolution. The redevelopment of the waterfront of Vlora makes it possible to reason about a system on a larger scale. With its history, geography and attractive

potential, the city is able to assume a key role in the strategic revitalization of the whole area and to become an advanced example at an international level in terms of balanced growth.

In this context, the waterfront project represents the design of an infrastructure in function of the local, regional and macro-regional nets, and at the same time the design of a new type of landscape. It compares and relates itself with the urban reality of the city, and becomes an opportunity to broaden the boundaries somehow, the territorial influence, multiply the fallout over a vast territory. It forces us to rethink the relationship between the urban environment and the marine

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Fig7 / Masterplan
source / HyperNatural Vlora competition panels





Fig8 / View
source / HyperNatural Vlora competition panels

5.1

Strategic Spatial Planning / A Vision for Saranda

Sust_Lab / Laboratory of Sustainability

5
saranda vision

Strategic Spatial Planning / A Vision for Saranda

keywords / cohesion, vision, strategic planning, coastal development, territorial development

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Introduction

After the fall of the totalitarian regime, Albania undergone several reforms with the aim of achieving its long standing objective of joining the European Union. However, the weak role of the state in territorial control and development combined with unfinished and incomplete reforms have led to a highly complex panoramic view of the urban and territorial landscape.

The impacts of the different reforms are also felt to a great degree at the local level as well, where the authorities face the increasing demand of citizens for better services and territorial cohesion. This paper discusses some of the main changes following the reforms in territorial planning and administrative reform by using the municipality of Saranda as a case study. The drafting of the strategic plan is a key moment for resolving some of the main challenges that the newly formed municipality faces.

The paper is divided in three main parts which firstly concentrate the discourse on two main reforms, territorial planning and the administrative reforms, secondly in analysing the challenges that Saranda faces as a coastal municipality and the responses provided by the strategic plan.

Territorial Planning overview in Albania

Planning in Albania has traditionally focused on urban areas. The process and aim used to be mostly physical and

concerned with the aesthetics of the city and its technical design rather than larger scopes such as achieving economic development, social cohesion and environmental sustainability. According to Duhr et al (2010) a complex mixture of factors such as historical and cultural conditions, geography, constitutional and administrative arrangements, levels of urban and economic development as well as political and ideological aspirations had led to a large variety of systems with different objectives, instruments and techniques for planning spaces.

In the case of Albania, the path dependency from the totalitarian regime was carried over even also after the 1990s. The planning practice was mainly focused on urban issues and it was mostly regulatory. The system was also very slow in trying to respond to the increasing demand of citizens who now enjoyed a greater degree of freedom of movement as well as private property.

Planning culture according to Faludi (1999) is defined as the collective ethos and dominant attitudes of planners regarding the appropriate role of the state, market forces and civil society in influencing outcomes whereas Friedmann (2005, p184) defines it as 'the ways, both formal and informal, that spatial planning in a given multi-national region, country or city is conceived, institutionalised and enacted'. As can be seen from these definitions, 'culture' is an integral part of planning

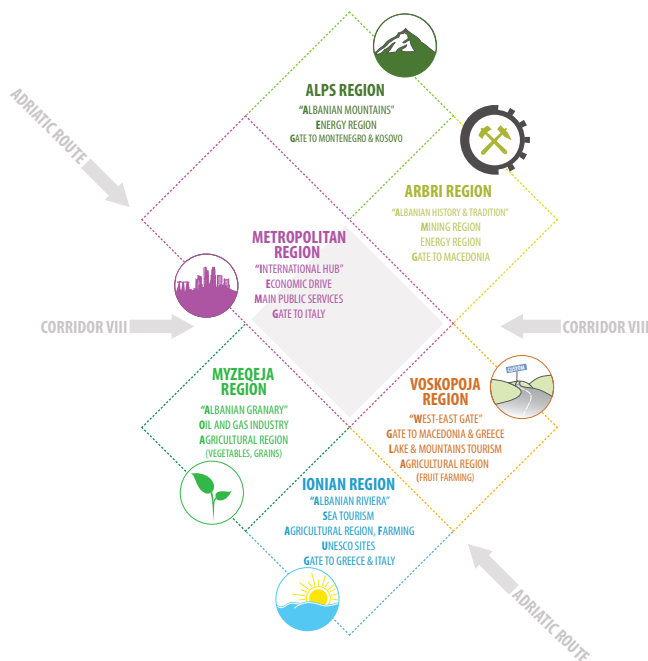


Fig 1 / Economic Region
source / Albania 2030 Manifesto

systems as it reflects accumulated attitudes, values, rules, standards and beliefs that are shared by planners and other actors.

The accumulation of the above has come to date through different historical processes, hence it cannot be separated from the whole country's background. Therefore, 'culture is manufactured and acquired by definition' as argued by Knieling and Othengrafen (2009 p4). Culture plays an important role in the way that a people perceive reality, and this reality becomes culturally rooted, hence becomes a type of social construction (ibid).

What the above means is that a planning culture can never be static. It undergoes continuous change as the domestic and foreign situations change. The latter can be set to be affected mostly by processes of Europeanization and Globalization (Friedmann 2005, Duhr et al 2007). It is herefrom deductable, that the cultural change of a country is a slow process, contrary to the legal change which can occur quite quickly, even overnight.

Hence in 2006, affected by the European Integration processes but also from strong "internal" shocks, the Albanian Government decided to initiate a process for reforming the planning system. The decision was to switch from an "urban planning", rigid, physical, technical and aesthetic process towards an integrated, comprehensive and strategic approach. According to Albrechts (2004) strategic planning is "a public-sector-led sociospatial process through which a vision, actions and means of implementation are produced that shape and frame what a place is and

may become". As it can be seen from this definition, the strategic approach includes some of the main qualities that were required at the time to move from the inflexible land-use planning.

Firstly, strategic planning is more inclusive and allows for the involvement of different stakeholders. Secondly, it uses a foundation of strong evidence and takes into account the different strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges; it allows for the inclusion of different trends and external forces that may influence the area. In addition, such planning makes use of images, visions and maps which allow for a better understanding of the area, as well as develops long-term strategies and perspectives at different levels (Albrechts 2004). Also, it focuses on decisions and implementation and allows for monitoring, feedback and revisions. To sum up, strategic spatial planning is an open, continuous process, very close to the problem which makes use of different tools and approaches, allowing for long term-strategies and visions.

Theory shows (Roland G, 2004) that legislation can change quite quickly, even overnight, whereas culture undergoes a very slow progress of change. One of the reasons for such a slow change is the fact that culture is learned, not inherited. In 2009, law 109 111 "On Territorial Planning" was approved and set to enter into force in 2011. The 2-year period between the approval and the entering of the law in force, was expected to accommodate an increase in capacities and prepare the different levels of government to adapt to the new system. However, for several

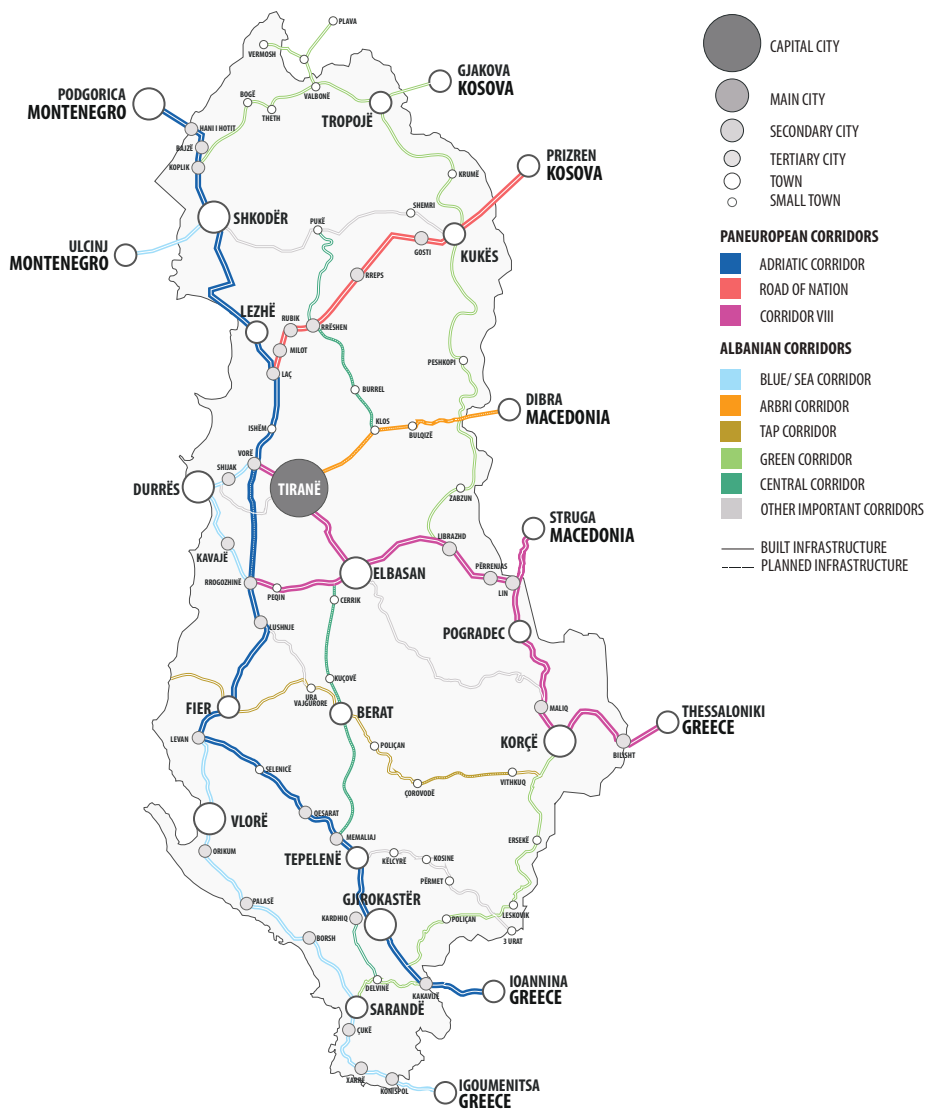


Fig2 / Main National and Pan-European corridors
source / Albania 2030 Manifesto

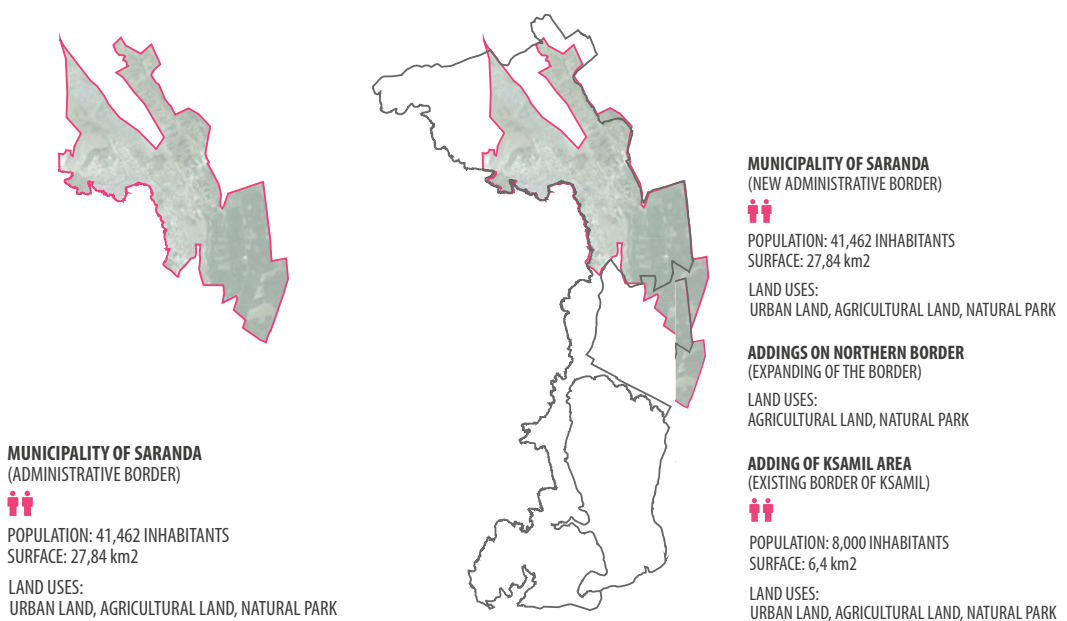
reasons (which are not the real purpose of the paper) the new system never managed to become fully functional. No longer being considered a political priority by the central government, the continuous changes of the law and its bylaws, as well as the low capacities at the local and central government level, led to a malfunctioning of the planning system and to a stale mate. The planning process from a positive and promoter of development turned into an inhibitor and development obstacle. Hence, many people continued to opt for informality.

Meanwhile the change of governments in 2013 put planning back into the political agenda. The law was reviewed and its bylaws were drafted. In addition, the process for drafting the General National Plan and the Integrated Coastal Plan were initiated with the aim of providing a framework for territorial development to local authorities. However, the operationalization and functioning of the

planning system is dependent on several other reforms that the government has been undertaking simultaneously. Hence, the impact is yet to be seen and analysed.

Territorial and Administrative Reform and Impacts in Saranda

Decentralization in Albania has experienced different phases since the fall of communism. In 1992, the Council of Ministers introduced changes to the administrative-territorial organization of the country, based on article 1 of law nr.7572, dated June 10, 1992 "On the organization and the functions of the local government." This law prescribed 36 districts, 44 municipalities, and 313 communes. Local councils were established at the municipality and commune level with members elected by the citizens. The mayors and the heads of the communes were also to be directly elected by the people. Later, law nr.7608, dated September 22, 1992 "On the



ADMINISTRATIVE BORDERS - NEW ADMINISTRATIVE BORDERS

*Fig3 / Saranda Municipality before and after the territorial reform
source / Saranda 2025, a new vision for sustainable development in the Saranda-Ksamil region*

prefectures" mandated the establishment of 12 prefectures as units headed by the prefect who is appointed by the Council of Ministers.

During 1992 – 2000 several partial changes to the administrative-territorial organization of the country took place but without any major structural changes. In 2000, Albania had 36 districts, 65 municipalities, and 309 communes. In 2000, law nr.8653, dated July 31, 2000, abolished the districts (rrethet) as administrative units and re-established the regions (qarqet). Starting from 1992, the municipalities are established only in towns. With a few exceptions, they might include a town and a few villages. The communes, as a rule, include only villages. In rare exceptions a commune might include a town. Currently, Albania has 12 regions (qarqe), 308 communes, and 65 municipalities.

In 2013, the government set as one of the main priorities of its program the undertaking of an administrative and territorial reform, with a view towards increasing the efficiency of local public services and strengthening the power of local government units. On May 16, 2014, the Minister of State for Local Issues, relying on the adopted criteria, presented a proposal based on five variants of the new administrative and territorial division map. In the end, the option for 61 Municipalities was accepted and approved by the parliament.

Presently, the newly formed municipality of Saranda has a population that totals 50,000 inhabitants (based on data from Census 2011) while the total area of the

territory under its jurisdiction reaches about 60 km². In the last ten years, Saranda and Ksamil have experienced an increase in population by about 17% which indicates the growing importance of this territory in recent years.

The new municipality of Saranda has been formed by the joining of the municipalities of Saranda and Ksamil. Presently, the central administration is settled in the city of Saranda. Its capacities are primarily focused on planning within the urban setting, predominantly regarding the old municipality whereas now new conditions demand increasing capacities in agriculture as well as management of natural resources. Hence for a better management of the human and natural resources, it is necessary that under the new conditions created, Saranda takes a leadership role by developing a vision which comes in response to the needs of its inhabitants.

The territorial reform in parallel with changes in planning legislation increasingly dictate the need to develop a local comprehensive plan. Under the provisions of Law 107/2014 "On the Planning and Development of the Territory" local governments have a legal obligation to draw up general local plans within a deadline of 2 years from the law's entry into force. Consequently, Saranda, wants to take an important step in this context, being one of the first municipalities which initiates the process of drafting the GLP, and thus turning into a model to be followed by other municipalities in the drafting of their GLP.

Snapshot Saranda / Geographic Position

The municipality of Saranda is situated in the southern part of Albania. It is in a very favorable geographical position, in communication with other urban centers within and outside the country such as Vlora, Gjirokastra, Corfu, Igoumenitsa, Ioannina and other centers in Greece. It is situated 285 kilometers from the capital of Tirana, 124 kilometers from Vlora and 61 kilometers from Gjirokastra.

The main geographical advantage of Saranda and its territory is the strategic position. Its strategic position at the crossroads of trade, tourist and most important marine routes in the Adriatic-Ionian region plays an important role. The presence of the port, although not used at the highest and best of its capacities, is a key factor in the position of Saranda in the South-West region. Saranda's port plays an important role in city revenues related to trade, tourism and fisheries.

Saranda is one of the most urbanized centers in the South-West region of Albania and plays a key role during the summer touristic season. In the framework of the territorial reform, the Saranda Municipality has undergone significant changes in the surface of the territory and of its population, where the main element is the unification of the territory of the administrative unit of Ksamili. The Saranda municipality consists of the cities of Saranda and Ksamili and the villages of Çukë, Metoq, Gjashtë and Shelegar.

Saranda has a high diversity in terms of its territory's morphology. The municipality includes a big territorial diversity that combines mountains, valleys, fertile plains with water elements which provide an interesting landscape. The presence of a variety of forms within a small territory is a particular advantage of Saranda, one which must be used in its strategic vision.

Snapshot Saranda / Urban Development and Population

Saranda along with Ksamili constitute an important urban agglomeration for the entire region. Saranda is a primary center for the region and provides some of the most important public services such as hospitals and educational institutions. Continued urban expansion, has created the possibility for the city to accommodate a considerable number of hotel structures which have transformed Saranda (together with Ksamili) in one of the most important tourist destinations during the summer season.

The registered population of the Saranda Municipality approximates 50,000 people. Due to the fact that the number of people

registered in the municipality of Saranda is higher than the resident population, combined with the fact that the process of population migration and immigration of rural population is not updated in city records, the population in the census is around 41 000 people. Meanwhile, the Ksamili Municipality has a registered population of 8,000 inhabitants. The total population of the new municipality reaches 50,000 people, a significantly large number.

The population density is higher in Saranda and in Ksamili. Meanwhile, in other areas we have a lower density and more features of rural development. From 1989 to 2011 the population of the municipality of Saranda has witnessed a declining trend by about 9.6%. The movement has been mostly directed towards the Tirana-Durres centers, while there has been a reverse movement in which residents of rural areas or smaller urban centers move towards Saranda. This phenomenon is also evidenced by the high number of empty housing or by the fact that we have a difference between the resident population and the one registered. Many people, even though they may have left Saranda, continue to maintain ownership of their apartments as second homes. A great impact on the population decline of Saranda was played by emigration abroad, mainly to Greece.

Saranda and Ksamili have experienced a significant increase in urban areas during the past 2 decades. Urban areas are developed mainly for residential purposes and tourism. Mostly there has been a tendency for development along main roads. Ksamili, especially during the 2001-2011 period, has undergone a "boom" in construction for residential and turistic purposes.

The informality phenomenon is visible in the municipalities of Saranda and Ksamili. Saranda has three informal settlements approved by ALUIZNI, with the largest located in the sixth neighbourhood with an area of 20.2 hectares. While the two other informal areas are 6.2 ha area and 7.2. Ksamili has a greater dispersal of informal areas with a total of 109 ha. This is an area of considerable size relative to the small town of Ksamili.

From the analysis carried out and taking into account the samples of different urban structures in Ksamili and Saranda, results that there are some major types such as individual houses developed in organic form. This form represents the main characteristic of rural areas, as well as a part of Ksamili, developed in recent years.

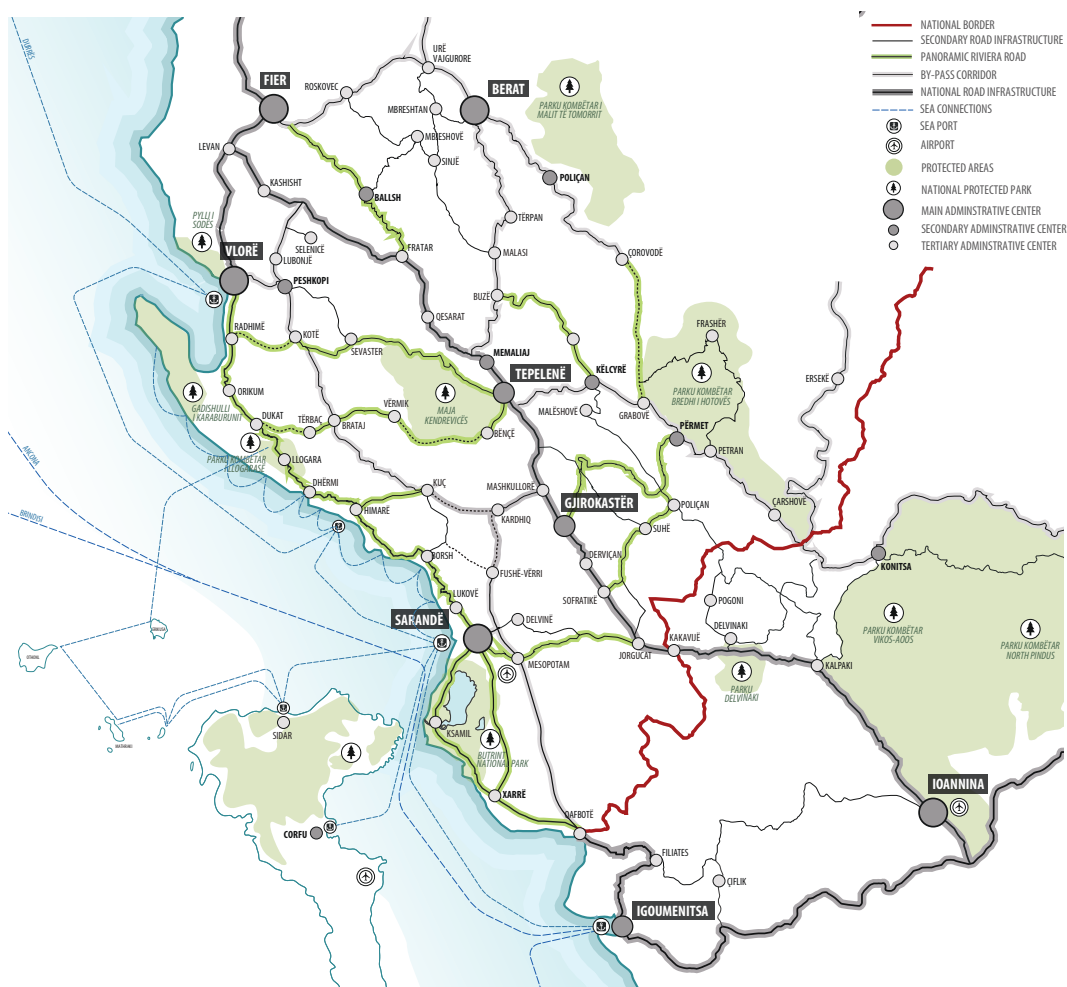


Fig4 / South region - ecosystems and infrastructures
source / Saranda 2025, a new vision for sustainable development in the Saranda-Ksamil region

Meanwhile the center of Saranda presents a variety of urban structures. It includes the development of several different periods of the city, starting from historical developments, with the Italian period. Other developments are those which relate to the dictatorship period, characterized mainly by post-modernist architecture and in some cases prefabricated apartment buildings. Also, the development of infrastructure facilities has failed to move with the same speed as the construction sector. As a result, many roads are not completed in order to fully service Saranda with infrastructure. The situation is even more critical if we refer to Ksamili, Gjashtë and the rural areas of Metoqit, Shelegarit and Çukës. Because of the informal developments, there are some areas which lack access to good roads. Meanwhile, it is worth noting that considerable investments were made in national and regional road axes.

Snapshot Saranda / Economic Development and Welfare

The main branches of the economy in Saranda and Ksamil are agriculture, the light industry and services. Services in Saranda and Ksamil are closely linked

to the tourism sector while the industry is more associated with food products such as oil processing, processing of citrus fruits, and processing of livestock products. It is worth noting that Ksamili has a more developed agricultural sector, while Saranda preserves the features of the urban economy. This, also due to the fact that many administrative functions have remained in Saranda. Port and fishing also play an important role in the local economy.

Agriculture The municipality has an extension of 2784 hectares, of which 1404 hectares are arable, 455 ha of pastures, forests and the rest urban and rural areas. In recent years, rapid growth of the construction industry also took place, including different services, fishing activities and agribusiness. Within the administrative unit, around 30 companies, 1850 various branches of budgetary institutions and private entities exercise their activity, a significant increase compared with only 630 operating in 2002. There is an inventory of about 50 small medium fishing vessels and on average 15-20 thousand quintals of mussels are cultivated annually. It is also

► DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

AGE GROUPS

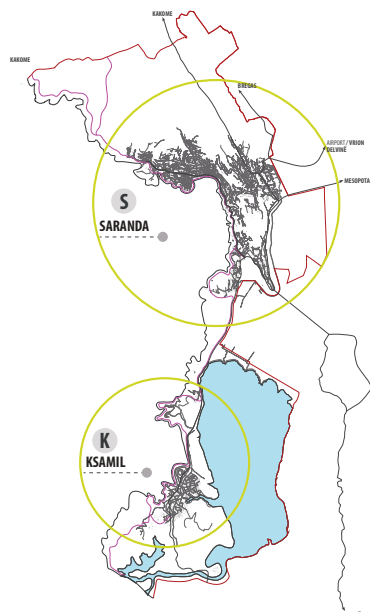
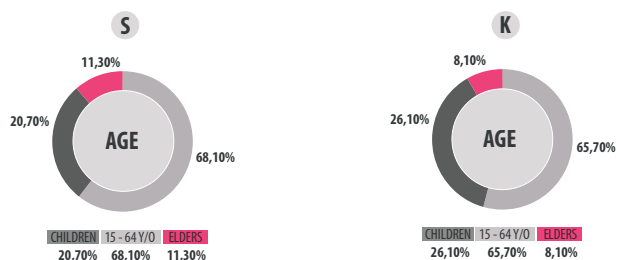


Fig5 / Demographic data

source / Saranda 2025, a new vision for sustainable development in the Saranda-Ksamil region

important that the agricultural sector has an annual output of about 10 million dollars, mainly in crops, vegetables and livestock-producing.

Tourism Tourism plays a very important role in Saranda and Ksamil. As mentioned above, the main section of the economy is focused on services, mainly tourism services. The number of tourists has been increasingly showing a good economic impact during the summer months. But nevertheless, the seasonality of tourism is worth mentioning, which means that this sector largely operates only during the period of June-September and then creates an enormous vacuum in the domestic economy during the rest of the year. Saranda and Ksamil tourists come mainly from the territory of Albania and other regions with Albanian population like Kosovo, Macedonia and Montenegro. Also, a significant number of tourists from European countries such as the Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia have begun to visit Saranda and Ksamil in recent years.

Unemployment Unemployment in the municipality of Saranda is currently estimated at 18.1%. Meanwhile, even more critical is the situation in Ksamil where unemployment has reached 53.2% according to INSTAT. These relatively high figures come as a result of seasonal employment in Saranda and Ksamil. High unemployment figures may be the result of the informal labor market, where individuals are not declared as employees for tax avoidance reasons or in other cases are self-employed. Another

element is the seasonal migration, during which many people emigrate to Greece or other countries abroad to perform seasonal work. However, the situation is more troubling when looking on at the youth unemployment. Saranda as well as Ksamili have very high levels of unemployment, respectively 41.7% and 67.3%. This situation is extremely critical.

Conclusions

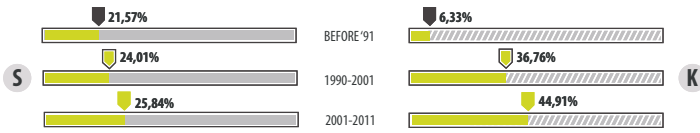
As a conclusion, it can be said that the new municipality of Saranda faces several challenges which need to be addressed by the territorial development strategy. Firstly, in Saranda the phenomenon of the "triple city" may be witnessed: -a/ the formal city in the city of Saranda; an informal city in Metoq-Cuke-Berdnes and Ksamil; a summer city- in Saranda and Ksamil. Each of these "cities" has different needs and require a different approach in terms of interventions. In order to create a strategy for a comprehensive plan, a challenge is also the integration of environmental and social concerns with the pressure for economic development in terms of touristic services. Meanwhile, agriculture needs to be integrated into the main economic activities as one of the potential sectors for the municipality.

Scenarios for Saranda

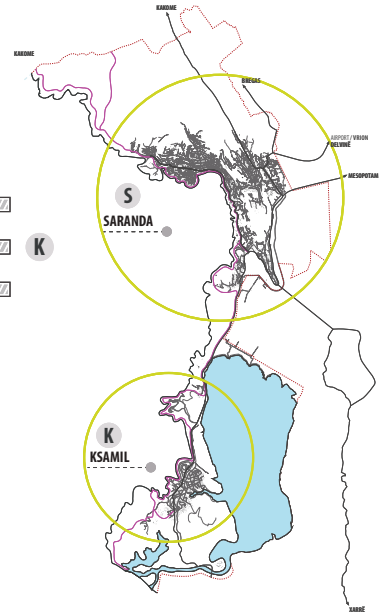
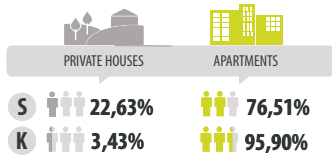
Scenario A / Linearity The territory will be developed in linear form along the main road axis. This kind of development would create a linear city between Saranda and Ksamii while other settlements such as Metoq, Gjashtë and Cuka will be overlooked and excluded, creating social

HOUSING

DEVELOPMENT FOR HOUSING PURPOSES

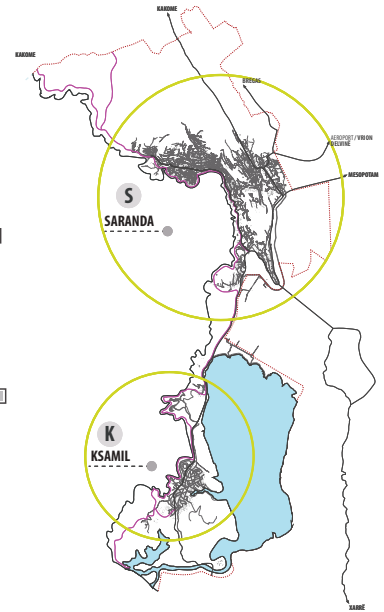
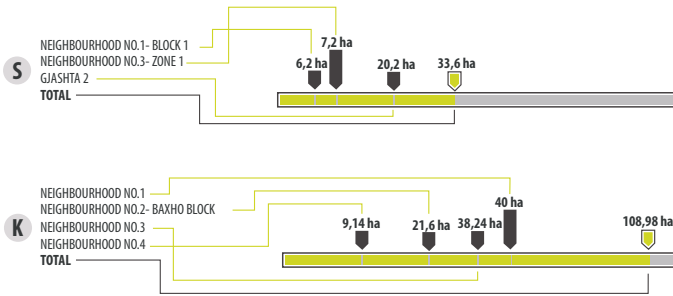


HOUSES



INFORMAL DEVELOPMENT

LAND, INFORMALLY DEVELOPED LAND IN (ha)



TOURISM

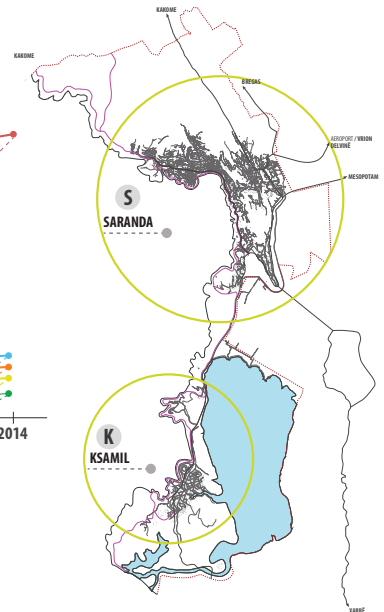
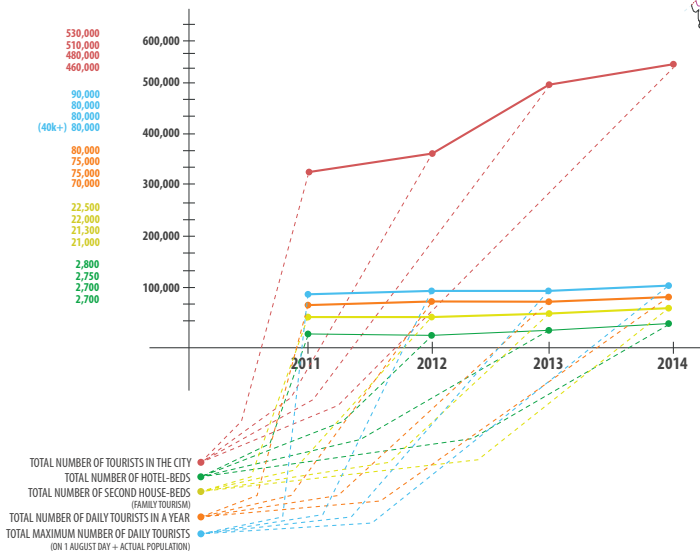
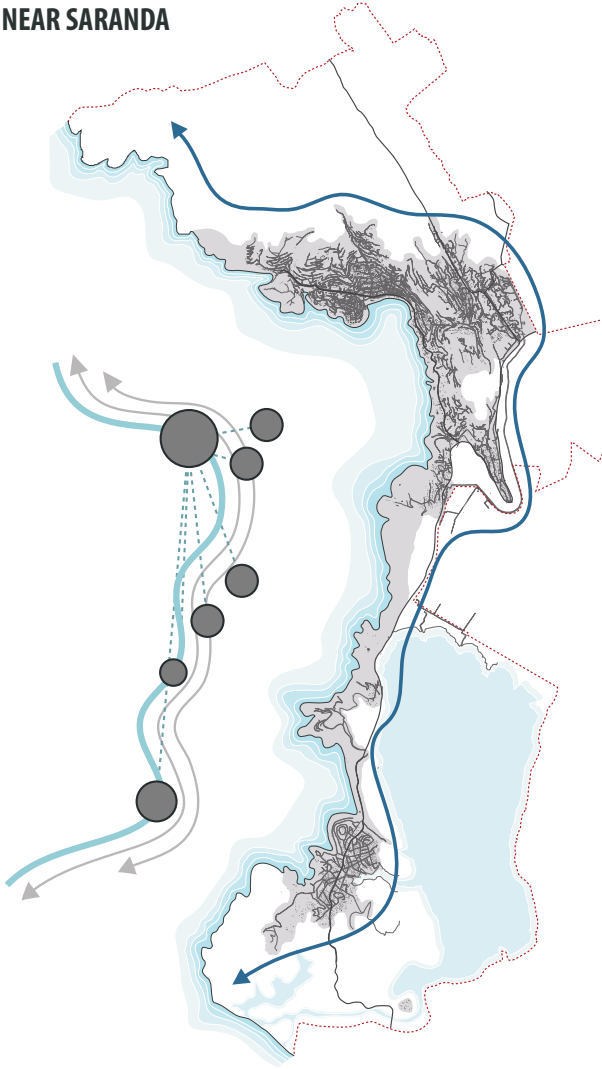
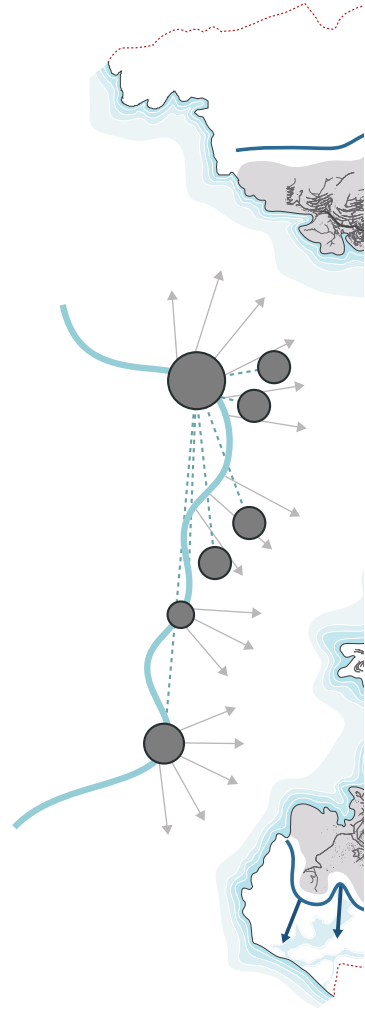


Fig6,7,8 / Housing, Informal Development and Touristic data source / Saranda 2025, a new vision for sustainable development in the Saranda-Ksamil region

SCENARIO 1: LINEAR SARANDA



SCENARIO 2: SPRAWLED SARANDA



segregation situations. The infrastructure will be provided along the main road that connects Saranda and Ksamil with touristic development focusing along this road.

Scenario B / Sprawl The municipality will not continue to develop in a well-planned and controlled manner. It will continue to expand into the suburbs of the municipality, affecting the integrity of the natural resources and agricultural lands. Difficulties and costs for the provision of a decent and functional infrastructure will be enormous. The economic development will be affected and the difficulties of achieving economies of scale will reduce the Municipality's opportunities of achieving strategic objectives.

Scenario C / Polycentricity This scenario aims at creating new centralities in the new territory of the municipality. In this way, the efficiency for the provision of infrastructure will be achieved and the quality of life will be improved by increasing accessibility to services and public spaces. This scenario allows the protection, and good management and

valorisation of natural resources and agricultural lands. Also through this scenario, the opportunities for growth are real and territorial cohesion is possible. In addition, the green belt of Saranda will be created, limiting the spread of settlements as well as increasing the capacity of the municipality. The green belt will serve as a tool for creating compact centers which are well connected to each other.

Vision for Saranda

In the next 10 years, the municipality of Saranda will become a model for the development of coastal areas. It will promote a polycentric structure which aims at mitigating the urban pressures and a new relationship between rural and urban areas. The main pillars of economic development will be tourism, services and agro-industry.

Saranda will turn into an important regional center, with good liaisons at a strategic national and international level and decent services and infrastructure for its citizens and visitors. Special care will be taken to protect natural and cultural

SCENARIO 2: POLICENTRIC SARANDA

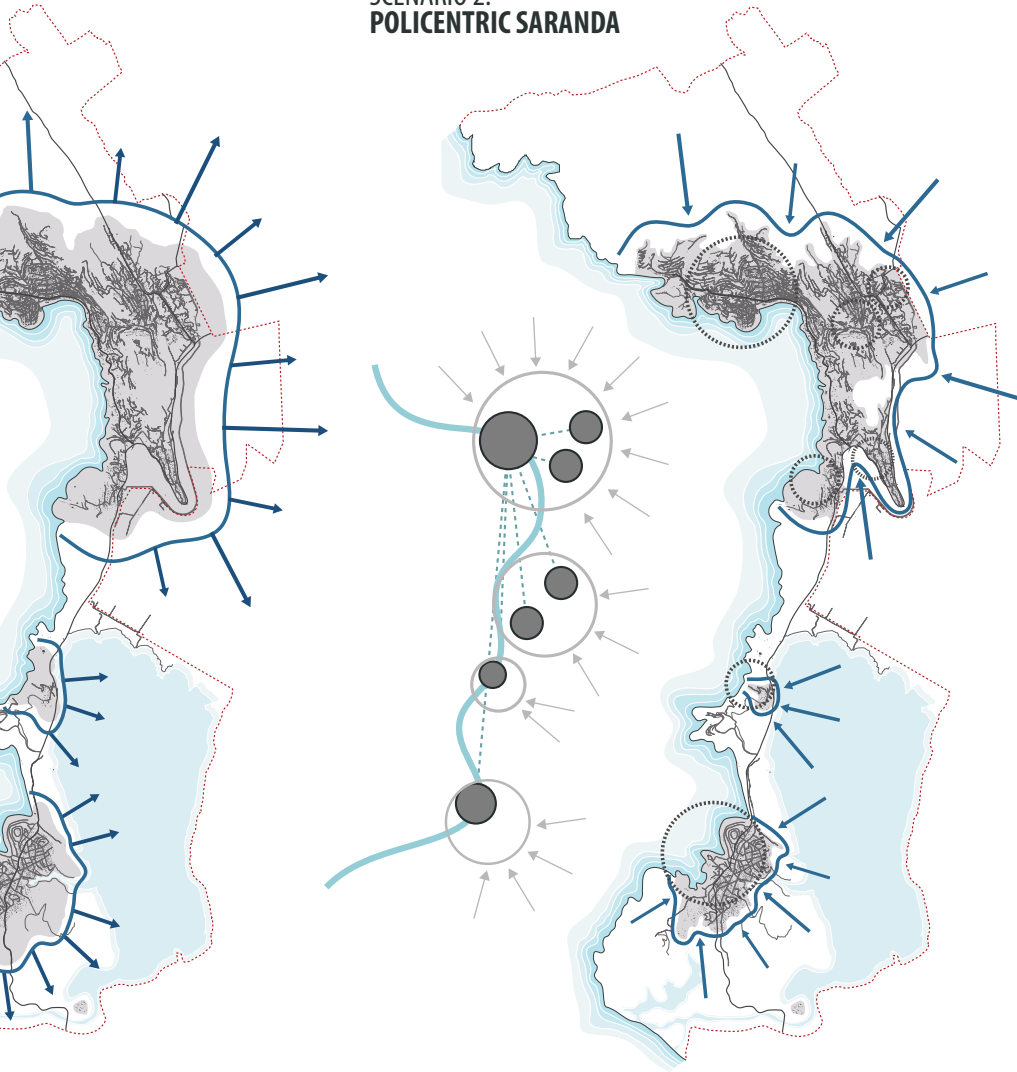


Fig9 / Development Scenarios for Saranda

source / Saranda 2025, a new vision for sustainable development in the Saranda-Ksamil region

resources, and enhance urban quality in the municipality's existing settlements.

In support of the vision for territorial development a number of strategic objectives have been raised which will ensure its implementation in the territory:

- SO 1- Ensure the well-planned and well-designed development of the territory
- SO2- Support economic development with sustainable levels and diversified products
- SO3- Maintain and improve the natural environment by reducing the impacts of development of environmental areas and preparing for climate change adaptation
- SO4- Promote a transportation system which allows access to services and reduces traffic by allowing multi-modality
- SO5- Saranda as a regional center with a high quality of living.

Interventions

To achieve the above vision, interventions in the Municipality of Saranda are conceived in three different categories. The first category, districts is associated with areas that will improve through

the various functions. Category II, linear systems, is mainly related to infrastructure and mobility systems in the Municipality of Saranda. Meanwhile, the third interventions category is directly related to strategic projects, namely point interventions, but has a great impact and serves as a catalyst of development in the municipality.

Saranda 2025- Districts

With a broader territory and new entities, the Municipality of Saranda will aim to create the new centralities in order to achieve supply of the best possible services, social cohesion and economic development. Creating new centralities, and the application of the concept of polycentric development, will increase the functional relationship between the various urban areas by linking them more with each other and creating a large functional entity. In order to develop the concept of polycentrism, it is necessary to establish a complementary relationship between different centers. Each center should provide basic services for citizens

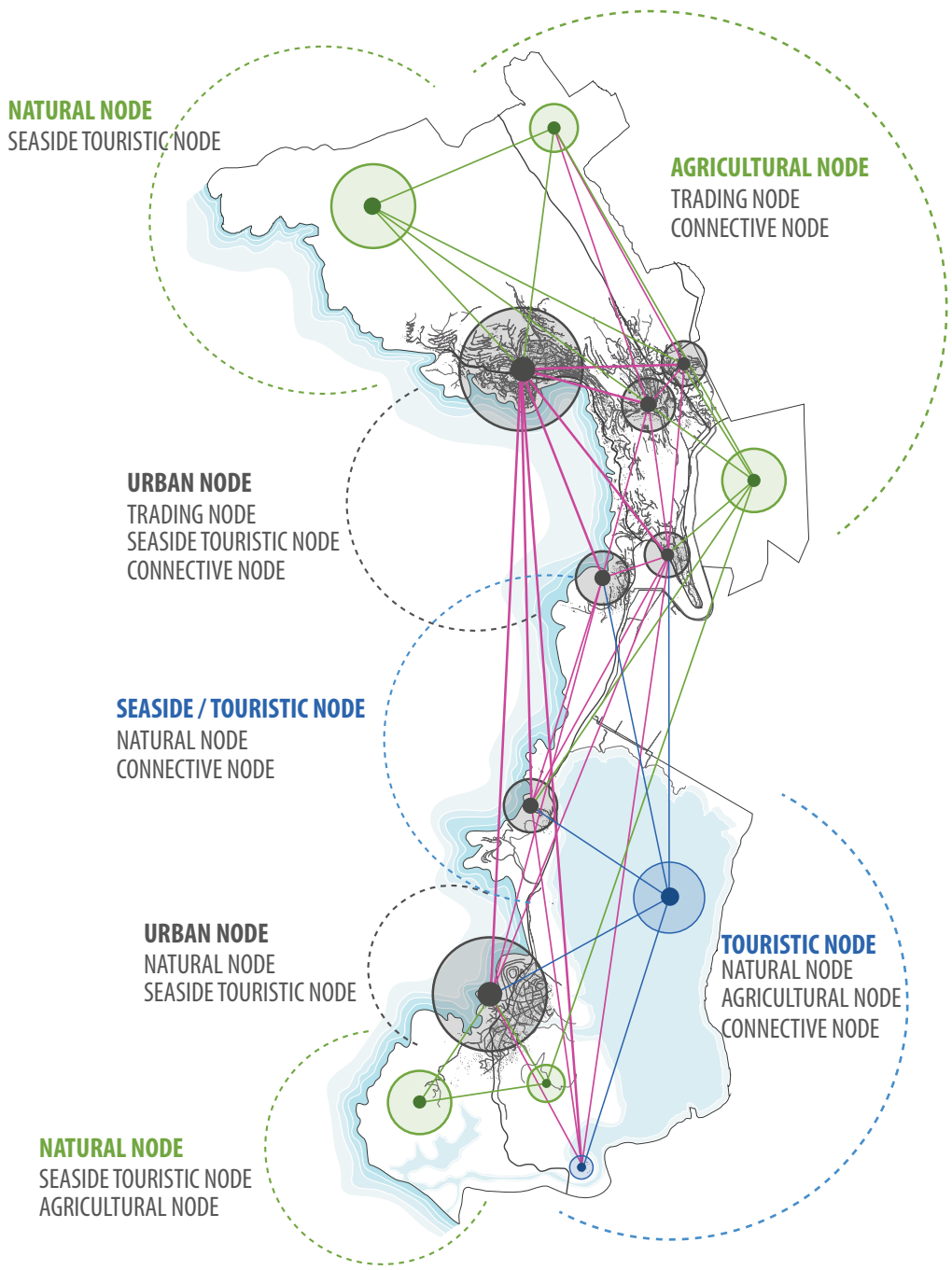


Fig10 / Vision of Saranda
source / Saranda 2025, a new vision for sustainable development in the Saranda-Ksamil region

in order to reduce the need for car movement. Also, based on territorial characteristics and urban development, each will specialize based on strong and competitive advantages. Creating a great functional entity, beyond providing quality services to the citizens of the Saranda municipality, will increase its competitiveness also at a regional and national level.

The new centralities are:

- a - The City of Saranda
- b - The City of Ksamilit and Manastir
- c - The Urbanized area of Metoq-Gjashtë
- d - The Urbanized area of Çukë-Berdnesh.

Because of its density development, Saranda will be the subject of policies

for improving urban areas. Special care will be taken for the creation of the city's new image. The first interventions will be about the colors used in building and the improvements of the infrastructure. Secondly, family tourism will be supported. Also, an important role will be played by the economic activities associated with the port of Saranda.

As the center of the second largest urban area in the municipality, the city of Ksamil will play an important role as a center for family tourism. Ksamili is perceived as a garden city because of the density of development. The infrastructure will improve and the waterfront will be regenerated in order to be more accessible

by tourists and residents. Ksamili will be focused on the provision of services for family tourism, while its islands will be used in an environmentally prudent way. The Metoq-Gjashtë centrality will rely heavily on agriculture. The creation of different markets with agricultural character will help in the promotion and marketing of local agricultural products. Also, this area will serve as an agricultural products collection point. In addition the bus terminal will be located in this area with connections within Albania and abroad. This terminal will be later connected to the urban areas of Saranda and Ksamili via public transport.

Çukë-Berdneshe will play an important role in the development of tourism. Its natural features and strategic position can be used to create an elite tourism development zone (elite tourist complex). This kind of development will be associated with the training of local residents and their employment in tourism. Also, this area will assume a special importance in agricultural development where Cuka will play an important role. In this context, agricultural products will be directly related to tourism. Beyond urban development and improving the quality of basic infrastructure and services, taking into account the purpose of the vision to convert the municipality of Saranda in a model of tourism development and place the city in an increased competitiveness with other tourist destinations, the creation of four districts (zones) with priority development of tourism and accommodation facilities represents another objective.

Tourist Zone 1, will be located in the north-west of Saranda Municipality. Tourism will be promoted through campsites. The beach will be characterized by the right ratio between public and private spaces. The relationship with nature will have a special significance and this area should be linked to the natural park which will be placed within the green belt policy.

Tourist Zone 2, will be located in the area near Berdneshe. This area will be characterized by elite tourism and will provide decent facilities for the development of this type of tourism. The area will be developed with resorts scattered in the territory, with low heights and density which offers a high-quality service. A marina for yachts will also promote the development of water sports such as diving, surfing, etc. Beaches will be mostly private, but there will be open spaces for day tourists and some will be reserved as public beaches.

Tourist Zone 3, is north of Ksamili. It is a natural area where development has

already begun. Tourism in this area will be developed with hotels with low heights which will minimally impact nature. Since the area is also close to the Butrint National Park, it should be treated with great attention and care. The area will also have space for camping. Beaches will be a combination between 80% private and 20% public.

Tourist Zone 4, located southwest of Ksamili. This area will have a similar development to zone No. 3. The area will have space for camping. Hotels will be of a very low height and tending to have as low of an environmental impacts as possible.

Saranda 2025- Linear Systems

Beyond being an urban center, Saranda is the junction of several corridors of national and international importance. Thus Saranda, is affected by significant corridors such as: a) the Adriatic Ionian Corridor b) the Regional Ring between Gjirokastra, Saranda, Igoumenitsa, Ioannina c) the marine Interconnection Saranda Corfu.

Saranda seeks to play an important role at the regional level. It serves as a center for the entire southwest region. One goal is to develop an airport (seasonal) which will serve during the summer to increase the access of tourists. These two strategic interventions will be linked with other areas of the municipality through a public transportation system. Particular importance will also be devoted to improving access to border areas and border crossings.

Although there has been considerable investment by the municipality of Saranda and by the Albanian Development Fund in terms of urban and rural road infrastructure, they remain problematic. A considerable number of urban roads in Saranda needs maintenance, paving and lighting. Considering the fragmented road network in major urban centers as a consequence of (informal) urban development, one of the municipality's aims is the completion of this network. It is important to create an urban road system where hierarchies conform to road standards.

The municipality aims to reduce traffic and increase accessibility. It will create two new public transport lines, one of which covers the entire territory of the municipality in the form of loops starting from Saranda-Metoq-Gjashtë-Çukë-Berdneshe-beaches, and one which creates a fast link between Saranda and Ksamili along the beach. Their frequency will change according to the season. During the summer, both lines will move every 20 min, while during the

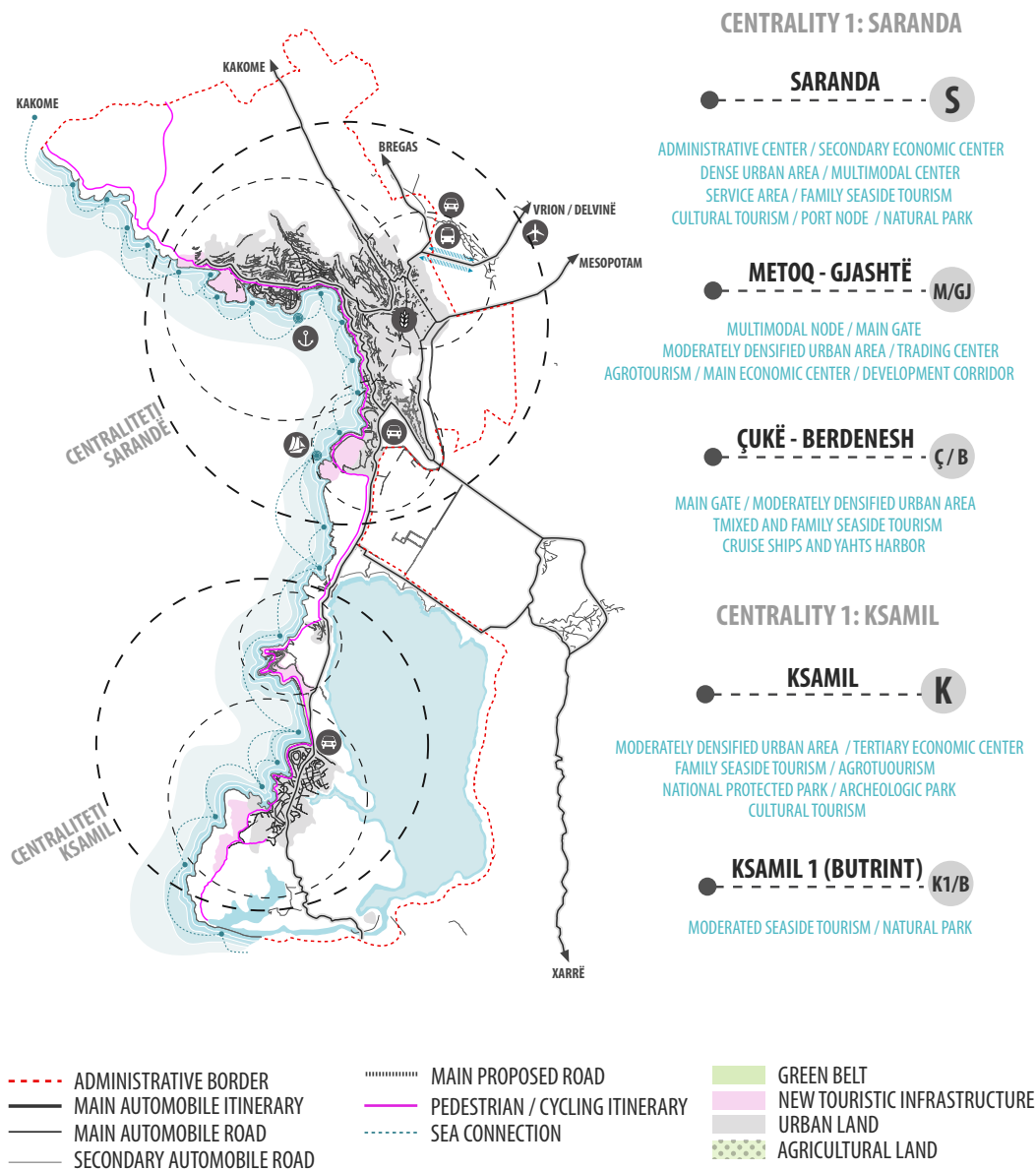


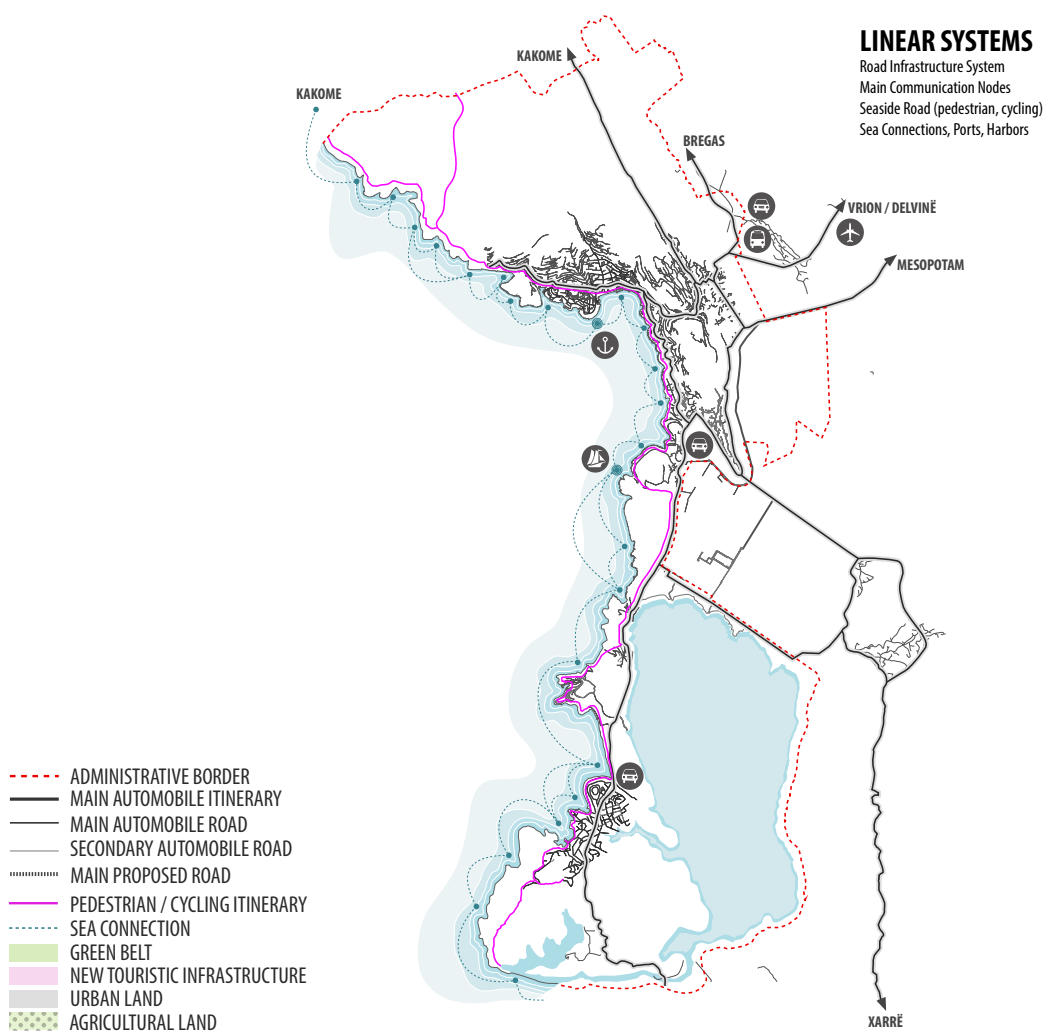
Fig11 / District main centralities
source / Saranda 2025, a new vision for sustainable development in the Saranda-Ksamil region

winter, the lines will be unified into a single one and will move every 30 min. During the summer, the municipality will ensure, through public-private partnerships, alternative transportation by water. There will be a public line which permeates the entire coastline of the municipality of Saranda. It aims to reduce car traffic in the days of the tourist season.

The city will promote the movement on foot and bicycle. New roads should create adequate space for pedestrian mobility and cycling, while the existing ones have to adapt to new requirements. Also, with regard to the green belt policy, the latter will be equipped with pedestrian itineraries. Finally, the intervention will be carried out in urban city "steps" to improve pedestrian accessibility. Ksamili will also be subject to the application of pedestrian roads and a regeneration of coastal line. The municipality is determined to improve

the character of the roads which should be of the highest possible quality. In order to improve the movement on foot and readability of the city, a specific program will be developed for planning the signs leading across the borough. As a municipality with a focus on tourism, it is very important to develop signs and maps to create an easier movement in the city. These should be developed so as to represent the creative character of the municipality and create tourist attractions for visitors. Through competitions, the municipality will try to promote the creativity of young people by establishing programs with the goal of improving road signs and indicative maps, as well as street art.

A green belt will surround all the urbanized areas of the Saranda Municipality. The green belt will have a thickness of 250m-1000m and will serve as a buffer



- ADMINISTRATIVE BORDER
- MAIN AUTOMOBILE ITINERARY
- MAIN AUTOMOBILE ROAD
- SECONDARY AUTOMOBILE ROAD
- MAIN PROPOSED ROAD
- PEDESTRIAN / CYCLING ITINERARY
- SEA CONNECTION
- GREEN BELT
- NEW TOURISTIC INFRASTRUCTURE
- URBAN LAND
- AGRICULTURAL LAND

LINEAR SYSTEMS

Road Infrastructure System
Main Communication Nodes
Seaside Road (pedestrian, cycling)
Sea Connections, Ports, Harbors

Fig12 / Infrastructural Linear Systems

source / Saranda 2025, a new vision for sustainable development in the Saranda-Ksamil region

zone between urbanization and other uses such as agriculture and natural character. It will be shaped according to the terrain morphology and perform various functions such as walkingin, cycling, small parks etc. In some places, characteristic trees of the area will be planted. Yet another important function of the green belt is the interconnection of national parks system.

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*Fig13 / Saranda waterfront
source / Saranda 2025, a new vision for sustainable development in the Saranda-Ksamil region*





*Fig14 / Saranda residential area
source / Saranda 2025, a new vision for sustainable development in the Saranda-Ksamil region*

6.1

Conclusions and recommendations

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6

conclusions

Conclusions and Recommendations

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Albania has huge potentials in terms of tourism development and the country's hopes of economic growth greatly rely on the development of this sector. The number of visitors has increased at least 10-15 times compared to 15 years ago. However, the number of visitors in the coming 10 years must double, at least, in order to reach its objectives and complement/compete with the experienced neighboring countries in the region.

During the last years, the Albanian government has shown an increased interest in applying intelligent strategies for improving infrastructure and services as well as a new marketing and branding campaign. The existing government has even organized several international planning and design competitions to generate ideas and undertake the necessary improvements to boost tourism and economic development. This aim and effort includes, among others, the region between Vlorë and Saranda, known also as the Albanian Riviera in South Albania, which is one of the last pieces of the European coast that is not yet touched, not to mention the high historic and landscape values there.

This goal corresponds to the academic and scientific research of Polis University and its partner Ferrara University, Italy and the respective specialized units: Studio Metro_POLIS (urban landscaping design) and Sealine Laboratory (coastal planning and development).

During 2014, this coalition participated in

two international competitions focused in this region, reaching the position of finalists and/or winners. Indeed, this work has not been a mere design and planning exercise, but a pure scientific project in the framework of the joint International PhD between POLIS and UNIFE. The analysis, findings, conclusions and graphical illustrations are summarized in this publication with the purpose to document the research and disseminate it for scholars, professionals, broad public and authorities. We highly appreciate the commitment and passion of PhD researchers and staff. Some of the main findings and recommendations are stated below.

1. Albania has an amazing natural landscape and natural potentials. Some of these places are virgin, undiscovered, and unknown to Europe and the rest of the world. Nowadays, as the country is classified globally as one of the top 10 touristic destinations, a high risk exists that such areas might be developed under the growing pressures for construction and infrastructure. However, time-consuming expensive plans here do not help much. Instead, an intelligent process of planning through programming of strategic interventions might also prove to be more useful and achievable also in terms of the government's political mandate.

2. However, if the country destroys the existing landscape-natural potentials because of aggressive investments, it will lose once and forever the most important asset which constitutes precisely what



*Fig1 / Porto Palermo panoramic view
source / internet*



attracts visitors and tourists. Although contradictory in appearance, it is of absolute priority that any development implemented there must be aware of and aim to protect and promote the existing natural values. This is of enormous strategic importance.

3. Yet, such areas cannot remain totally isolated and ignored as it would be a waste of opportunity. Despite being amazing landscapes, they are also important economic assets for the wellbeing of the local communities and for the country in general. Therefore, it is essential that any intervention there must be strategic and based on the logic of acupuncture. While Access must be ensured through a network that allows easy communication (both motorized/sea and biking/pedestrian) but maximally protects the existing territory and its landscapes. In the meantime, certain strategic developments can happen in the intersections of such networks to energize services and boost sustainable development.

4. It is clear that access must first serve the sea-sand tourism and expand further towards cultural, religious, agricultural and mountain tourism. This can increase the chances of socio-economic impact, improve the absorbing capacities of the coastal areas, and expand the tourism industry towards inland areas. From this perspective, the government must make strategic and hierarchical infrastructural investments and let development happen according to the networking logic and sustainable concepts mentioned above.

5. The area must be seen as a network of 'settlement islands" scattered in the territory, but still forming at least 5 main territorial morphologies, with individual identity and historic traditions of cooperation. These "islands" can also create a critical mass of people and efficient services for tourism. Then, the access network of roads, paths and natural itineraries must make sure to connect 3 levels of settlements: i) the existing villages and towns; ii) the coast and beaches; iii) historical villages, castles and archeological ruins usually up in the mountains or on top of the hills.

6. The islands must be connected with the existing national road, while each "island" must consolidate normal internal communication and access. Within each "island" there must exist a set of public spaces, meeting squares, paved streets or vertical stairs and so on, to encourage a normal and attractive life within the existing settlements. This can relieve coasts and beaches from encroaching and help the revival of historic and existing villages/towns.

7. The intervention in Riviera must also consider a good horizontal public transport that connects all the main living centers. The road must be improved but not transformed into a highway. It must maintain its natural character and not encourage the private use of cars but, instead, have a well-scheduled public transport, accompanied by cable cars or pedestrian pathways connecting the main villages with the coast and/or historic



*Fig2 / panoramic view of Ksamil Bay
source / PhD international workshop students*

village and castles. In addition, most ports and existing beaches must also be connected via sea transportation. Than main cities, Vlora, Himara, Saranda must also be connected with main ports of Corfu and Igoumenitza in order to integrate the area with the neighboring Greece, Italy and Montenegro. The port of Vlora can be more focused on military transportation of goods as well as ferries. Himara could be a port used mainly for visitors in the summer and goods in the winter, while Saranda can be focused on the fishing industry and ferryboats for tourism. A network of yachting ports and boats can boast more life and diversify/prolong the stay of victors.

8. The new blue corridor highway can pass behind the mountains (Vlora river valley) and connect Vlora, Borsh, Saranda for an easy and quick access which would also relieve coastal roads from traffic pressures. Connection from Borsh to Tepelena and Gjirokastra can be further improved to shorten the travelling time for visitors and local communities. A regional airport can also be implemented in Saranda for direct international travelling, perhaps in cooperation with the existing Corfu airport, improving also the sea transport.

9. The mountain regions and inland can serve as an economic support area for backing up and feeding coastal region with all necessary agricultural productions, labor force and services. Cultivation of local and bio products, combined with traditional culinary and local customs-cultures will increase the chances for

the diversification of touristic menus. These steps need to be followed by a capacity-building program to train the local population, and credit schemes to encourage in-line entrepreneurship. Establishing professional schools of agriculture and tourism can help build such capacities. Seasonal cultural, sport and conference events can enrich "vacuum" seasons and keep busy the area all year long. Planning events like these is essential for the success of the development of tourism.

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