

Introduction

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POLIS University (www.universitetipolis.edu.al) and its origin Co-PLAN Institute (www.co-plan.org) are pioneering institutions that 'reinvented' planning practices and legislations in Albania after the collapse of centralized economy. Moving slowly over 25 years from initiating 'grassroots' based projects toward assisting local and national authorities, they created a body of experience that is now replicated and disseminated via scientific research, pedagogy, practice, and consultancy.

The project - *Rurban Sequences: Inquiries on Dropull's States of Liminality*, part of the Observatory of the Mediterranean Basin (OMB) Series, emerges from the annual International Workshop organized in the framework of the Joint International PhD Program between POLIS University and UNIFE Ferrara University (Department of Architecture). A year long project, builds upon the work done over a span of 3-years by the staff and students of POLIS University and the staff of Dropull Municipality, at South Albania, for the drafting and approval of the territorial municipal plan, otherwise known as PPV Plani i Pergjithshem Vendor (GLP General Local Plan).

POLIS University and Co-PLAN Institute have innovatively developed over the years a methodology and vision for the national spatial development plan of Albania, materialized by two main documents: i) Albania 2030 Manifesto; and ii) Regionalization of Albania. Since then, together with UNIFE, U-POLIS and

Co-PLAN are detailing such national development vision with research visions and territorial development plans at the regional and local scale. In this way a collection of projects/publications are prepared, and thus figuring out each piece of the puzzle, by demystifying the planning and development agenda in Albania (see: <https://ombresearchseries.org/>). These projects hopefully serve not simply as a planning instrument for the Albanian authorities, but they might also help as a marketing tool for Albania and its regions in the context of international relations. This experience is also very useful for the professionals, students and researchers of the spatial/territorial planning sciences.

So far, in addition to the national vision, specific publications and detailed development plans are also prepared for the Durana region, Riviera region, Semani region, Shkodra region, and Gjirokastra region (in Albania), Prishtina region (in Kosovo), and Tetovo region (in Macedonia). The Dropull one is currently the last in the series of projects and publication. In this way, throughout the years we have developed together creative metropolitan, capital, inner land, urban-rural, and cross-border planning practices, as well as watershed, river, lake, coastal and valley planning practices. These form the base of a unique territorial/spatial planning publication series that benefits both Albania and the neighboring region.

Rurban Sequences: Inquiries on Dropull's states of Liminality is a scientific, intellectual and professional speculation

lead by a team of scholars of U-POLIS and UNIFE, based on: i) the GLP General Local Plan - drafted by Prof. Besnik Aliaj, Dr. Sotir Dhamo, Dr. Eranda Janku, Prof. Sherif Lushaj, Dr. Godiva Rembeci, Dr. Amanda Terpo, Dr. Ledian Bregasi and Dr. Dritan Shutina; ii) the International PhD Workshop - directed by Prof. Besnik Aliaj, Dr. Loris Rossi, Dr. Laura Pedata, Dr. Llazar Kumaraku, and Dr. Sotir Dhamo. The International Workshop consists of 2 weeks of site visits and field work in Dropull and Tirana, and one year of independent research and publication work.

The GLP Plan offers professional, legal and administrative procedures developed over the span of 3 years, involving also local population, and local/regional/national authorities. This project also includes research work developed in the context of PhD research that relates to the theoretical and interdisciplinary basis underpinning this research, as well as accounts of U-POLIS's involvement with '100 villages' project initiated by the Albanian government to develop methodologies for acupunctural interventions and local economic development.