5.2 Unlimited Tirana(s) – New Dimensions

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Motivating context

As many cities around the world Tirana is a multifaceted city. At the first glance one can catch the lack of continuity or incoherence of the urban text, but observing it more carefully this can be interpreted as diversity and richness of the urban contexts. This characteristic that can be equally found at the small and big scale (starting from architecture), and the absolute "freedom" of the built form (from any context), requires a degree of unconventional mindset to understand and to propose hypothesis for solution at different scales of urban hierarchy: architecture, city and metropolitan level. Despite these facts that make Tirana so different from many other western European cities, I will try to apply on this specific context some well known theoretical concepts. For the purpose of this paper, I will start by describing Tirana(s) and the main "pieces" the city is made of. I will count at least "5 Tirana(s)", amongst which the study area. Further, the main characteristics of the study area, especially those considered as problematic, will be given in a positively re-framed version, trying to argue how these features can contribute to preserve the original character of the area. The all-inclusive approach is the underlying philosophy, so the recommendations given at the end try not to be deterministic and to leave an open framework.

The 5th Tirana

Tirana was not the same ...

Tirana 2: "the ideal city" founded during the kingdom period (20's and 30's of the last century), and later extended in "Tirana e re" developed under the influence of the official Italian architecture during the fascist period ('39 to '43), is still clearly visible in the today's urban fabric. The 2nd Tirana was partly imposed over the organic city (the 1st Tirana), and partly founded a new one. Tirana was not any more the same ...
Tirana 3, the one I call "the proletarian city" (from '45 up to late '80s), guided by ideological dogmas and projected towards a communist society, where there were no rich and poor, was another experimental and despotic imposition on the city. Historic bazaars, religious centers, villas for the bourgeoisie, and many other things were considered to be the evil for the city and

compromising for the new society. Instead, modest proletarian "satellites" considered as important incubators for the new proletarian life to come developed around the new industrial poles in the periphery of the historic city which was meant to be diluted. Gradually new pieces of proletarian blocks mushroomed on the ashes of the organic capitalist city which had to go away. A new city was about to come, and together with that a new "human creature", supposed to live in a collective life, deprived from the luxurious pretentions, clean from the vicious of the capitalist city, a "real superhero", was envisioned. The objective of the 3rd Tirana "almost" fully achieved: the everywhere present ghost city deprived of any free spirit expression, lost the fascination that may come from any kind of differences. Again, anemic as it was at that time, Tirana was not the same ...

Tirana 4 (starting from early '90s), the one I call "the vaporized city", a second return to the organic city, is a shapeless structure that started to grow in peripheral areas surrounding the existing one. After the return to an organic logic, Tirana was like living its resurrection. The city started to reborn from the hidden / latent layers after being frozen. Evidently, the "proletarian city" did not fully succeed to sterilize the human and the city energy. The life invaded again the city. Tirana drastically changed ... It was absolutely not the same.

This city which initially used to be called "informal city", continued to be extend in endless ramifications at that point that in many cases they created certain degree of independence from the central core, despite the gravitational tides produced by Tirana 1,2,3,4. The system is dismissing. It is resulting in an always bigger, shapeless and unstabilized organism. Tirana 5, 6, 7, (n+1) ... are just some of the numbered cities which proliferated from this ongoing formation process of the metropolis. This fact, of a metropolis in formation has been observed in Tirana since 2004 from the Berlage Institute (The Berlage Institute,

2004)[1] . The newly (fluctuating) entities are also creating their specific image due not only to the natural features of the areas they spread, but also to the differences in the "architecture" and urban expression, social structure and life style. These areas range from the massive informally built residential areas, high-rise apartment blocks, and gated communities. At this point a reflection about the degree of "urbanity"[2] in different parts of the city may be needed; however I will come back to this issue in the next paragraphs.

Tirana 5: The one I call "the triangular city", is confined by three main national axes: Tirana Durres Highway which connects the capital city with the main port in Durrës; the highway directed to north of the country; and the highway which connects with the airport. Tirana 5 is a ramification of "the vaporized city" developed in former agricultural land around some preexisting villages, small towns and former state agricultural centers - *kooperativa*. Tirana 5 resulted from the "jokes" of gravity interplayed between Tirana, historic city of Durres with the main port; International airport located in the middle of this area; a number of second level satellites, small or mid-size towns such as: Vora, Kamza, Fushe Kruja, Kruja, Kashar, etc. that even in terms of population are considerable, they lack a service and civic core; and groups of "asteroids", small villages such as: Laknas, Domje, etc. which are continuously extended in low rise and low density housing / dormitories.

This triangle can be also envisioned as part of Tirana that aims to play an important role in the region. A similar idea to turn Tirana one of the most forgotten cities in Europe, in an important factor in the Balkan region was first lunched in the vision "Ti-

1 Berlage Institute (2004), Tirana Metropolis – Tirana: a modern European capital, research report under the guidance of Zenghelis, E.; Aureli, P.V. and Tirana Summer Academy park projects.
2 Xaveer de Geyter Architects (2002) After Sprawl, research for contemporary city. NAI Publishers, Rotterdam; deSingel International Art Center, Antwerp

rana Metropolis" (Berlage Institute 2004). This vision drew a possible future for Tirana within the scenario of some important international infrastructure projects such as the Pan European Corridor number 8 (Bari to Black Sea through the city of Durres and Tirana). Despite the fact that this corridor was never developed within the Albanian territory, the same logic can be implied within the framework of another important transcontinental infrastructure project potentially crossing in the proximity of the project area: TAP (Trans Adriatic Pipeline): a pipeline that will allow gas to flow from the Caspian Region to European countries. It is not the case here to enter in details of geopolitical constellations; however I brought this fact just to argue that potentially Tirana 5 can play an important role not only at national or regional scale, but also at a larger region.

Is it a city? - will Tirana 5 continue to be victim of psychological impasse?

After trying to understand the historic, territorial and strategic positioning of Tirana 5 in a complex universe of relationships, it is worth to address another important issue: what kind of urban condition is that of Tirana 5? Can we use some criteria to "measure" the degree of urbanity there? These are some theoretical questions that we tried to address also during the design process of Tirana 5. Different approaches to these questions can drive to different proposal developments. To overcome the current planning and design impasse, psychologically we need to prepare professional community to a new mindset.

We can start from a very basic reflection: what is a city? There are many answers to this question. With city often we understand physical artificial phenomenon quite different from each other. Trying to answer this question in the book "The city shaped", Kostov (1991)[3] refers to two definitions from 1938; for L. Wirth, a city is "a relatively large, dense, and permanent settlement of socially heterogeneous individuals." For Mumford, a city is a "point of maxi-

mum concentration for the power and culture of a community" (in Kostov, 1991) . C. Aymonino (2000) in his book *"il significato della citta"*[4] brings some other important premises related to our question. According to him, the city is a place where the accumulation of energy and capitals create the condition to jump from the basic needs to more opportunities. In this regard the city is a place where each époque try to leave its traces through architectonic representation (monuments) and to go beyond the conventional limits, towards what can be considered almost impossible.

These quotes provides valid premises to understand many things which are still under process in the study area: heterogeneity (understood more in the sense of diversity); the city as place that creates the condition of growing opportunities is the main reason why most of this people from poor areas settled there, near the main economic sources, grasping some new opportunities. This endless process in this part of Tirana is still at its infancy and the inhabitants are still satisfying only the basic needs. Despite the very low quality of architecture in the area (including public buildings and public space) signs of aspiration for architectonic representation can be distinguished, even this is not yet there. This is brings another evidence that the entire system, all Tirana(s), is still in formation.

To enrich this vision related to the "theory of the modern-day city" (De Cauter in Xaveer de Geyter Architects, 2002, pp. 9) it would be worth to "submit" the study area to the "test" of urbanity. In the book "aftersprawl" is presented a list of urban features based on the thoughts exchanged between the Belgian cultural philosopher Lieven De Cauter and Xaveer de Geyter Architects (2002, pp. 9-11). First, de Cauter grants to urbanity the sense of suave, courteous and refined ... he refers to a "kind of indifference" that forms this courteousness (Xaveer de Geyter Architects, 2002, pp. 9). In a later section De Cauter comes with a long series of urban features: "The city is a machine that connects and disconnects ... detaches people from their traditions, creating anonymity ... reduced social control, and thus the freedom to be different. In the modern world the city is a shelter for anarchists, communists, socialists, gay man, lesbians, artists, feminists, the poor,

3 Kostof, S. (1991) The City Shaped – Urban Patterns and Meanings through History. Fourth printing 2003, Bulfinch Press AOL Time Warner Book Group, Boston, New York, London

4 Aymonino, C. (2000) Il significato della citta, by Marsilio Editori, Venezia

migrants. Urbanity signifies estrangement in a positive sense, the blessing of anomie. The city is a hybridization machine where all manner of influences coalesce." He summarizes the basic qualities of urbanity in the following three: Theatricality, Hybridity and Density (Xaveer de Geyter Architects, 2002, pp. 11)

From this De Cauter suspects that sprawl is not urban. Instead for De Geyter and De Boeck sprawl is simply the urban condition of today, but in order to avoid the outdated contradistinction between center and periphery and to overcome this notional opposite, they no longer talk about sprawl, but about after sprawl (Xaveer de Geyter Architects, 2002, pp. 11). But most importantly, beyond understanding the status of the urban condition in our project area and listing what is lacking there, which would require further field research, something can be made clear from De Cauters' list: the wide range of trends still under process and that are expected to create a stronger urban condition of the area. As part of De Cauters' list, it would be worth mentioning here processes such as grandeur as part of theatricality, or de-traditionalization, courteous indifference, tolerance, etc. Related to hybridization, and critical mass, plurality, diversity, mix related to density. All this is happening in Tirana, including Tirana 5.

Specificities of the Albanian Sprawl: layers of a new coming city

So far I defined the phenomenon of spreading suburbs around Tirana, and the creation of the new nucleus / towns around the urban core, with the term of "urban sprawl". At this point it is important to understand some similarities and distinctive characteristics in the occupation patterns of what we are considering here as sprawl and the European one. Previous references related to this question are missing in the Albanian literature; however some evidence that needs to be further explored can be listed.

The general distribution patterns in Tirana show characteristics which for the most coincide with what is considered as the negative, global and generalized idea about sprawl: chaos, lack of structure or demonstrable catalysts. However there are big variations in the distribution patterns at dif-
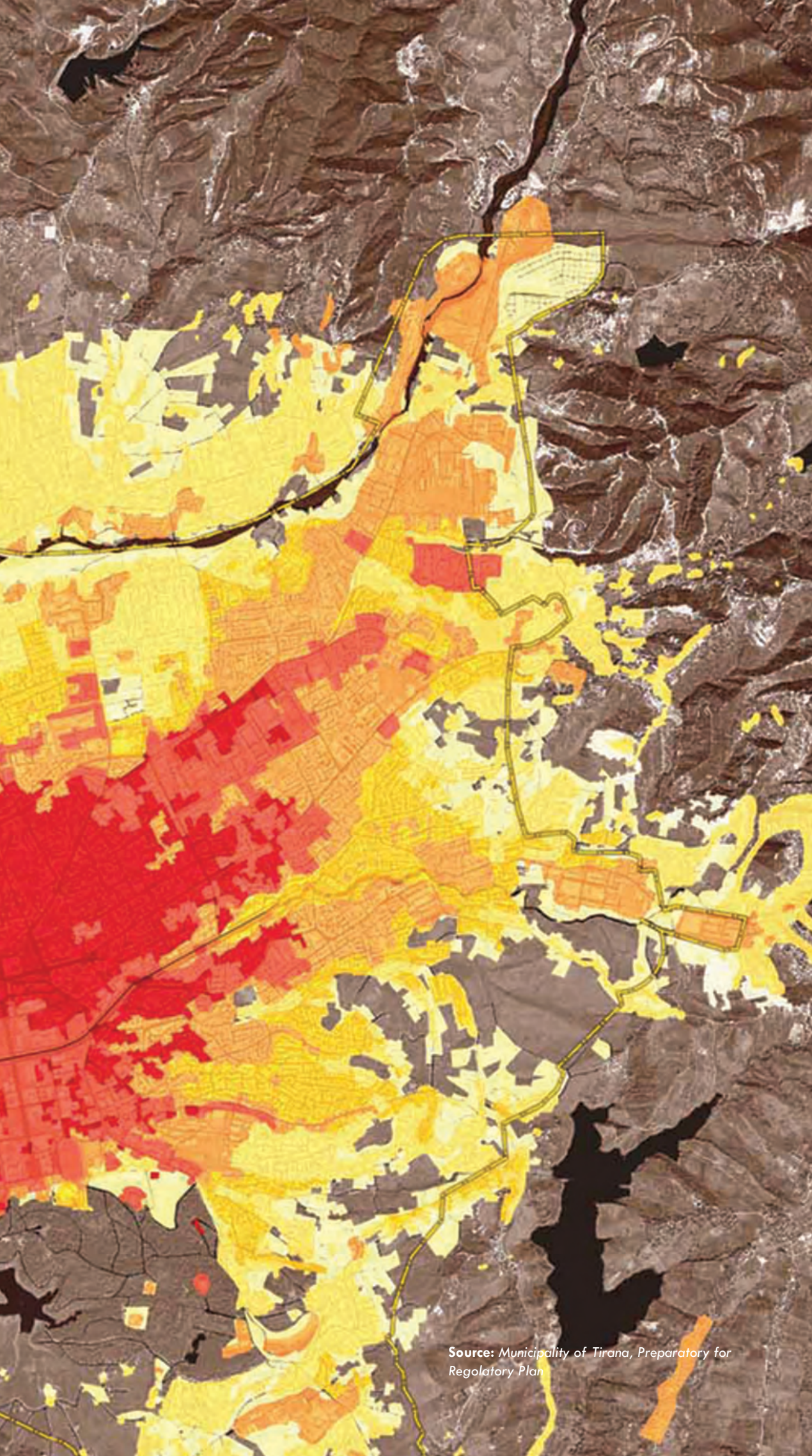
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ferent places (Xaveer de Geyter Architects, 2002, pp. 21). Looking more positively at the phenomenon, if we set aside the urban rural contradistinction in the advanced state of dissolution, this situation may be seen as an opportunity for experimentation. In the case of the European "Blue Banana" sprawl is characterized by separated fragments that are interconnected by a dense network of infrastructure. Under these conditions, increased mobility has introduced a freedom and a choice that covers the whole territory and the inhabitants can compose their own city; the sprawl areas are no longer peripheral but have become poles of attraction; Sprawl is dominated by condition of nearness of elements that bear no relation with each other. This form of development is no longer compact, or continuous, but marked by different densities alongside great voids; fragments obey its own logic and each area has a distinctive character (Xaveer de Geyter Architects, 2002, pp. 23, 24).

The differences in Albania stay first of all in the different socio-economic conditions that sourced and motivated sprawl as a phenomenon; second, the occupation pattern is also result of the specific socio-economic local conditions, including institutional culture, lack of operational planning system, un-clarity of land property and total un-respect towards the rule of law. In relation to that, there is an important conclusion: sprawl in Albania, especially in the first period (1994-2000) started as a phenomenon of the poor people and still it is this stratus of the society which is feeding new sprawl contingencies. This sprawl, mostly informal, combined with other natural and urban-rural elements of the site, is undergoing through an organic consolidation process. Only during the last five years sprawl is also emerging as a phenomenon of the rich people (second houses) that are abandoning the congested center in exchange to the "safe isolation" in gated communities around the periphery. This phenomenon is expected to be increased in the next coming decade. These two typologies of sprawl differ not only from the density and quality of space, but most importantly from the quality of life, especially access to all kind of services and infrastructures. Evidently, Tirana 5 is not a sprawl caused by rich people; it is at most an informal sprawl. In this respect, in order not to consider sprawl only from a negative stand point we can con-

sider all these developments as an added layer in a process of a city that still has to come. This logic makes a difference in approaching a more conscious urban condition in the area.

Internal space in Tirana 5

Tirana 5, as it is now, is part of the dissolved city in the vastness of former agricultural land fragmented by some mega-scale textures such as the airport, or some still resisting former agricultural infrastructures (drainage and storm water canals) former dairy production farms, mine and material extraction industries, and natural elements such as river streams with still a lot of green in the river beds. Despite the fact that this kind of "informal sprawl city" still has the "luxury" to enclose a lot of "free" space in it, it is difficult to make a distinction of what is really public, or what is the space that the "community" (if we can use this term) can access, and what is perceived simply as "not allowed space". First surveys in the area bring evidence that most of the "free space", including river beds, huge areas of former dairy production farms, or former mine industrial buildings, and other important former public assets, are totally outside the attention of the local authorities, and consequently far from any massive frequentation of the community. Contrarily, even the "free" areas in the nearest contact with the residential areas, are perceived by community as a kind of "prohibited space". The sense of "culpa" is especially more perceivable when an "outside visitor" penetrates in the intimate visceral parts: typical are the river beds, or gated former public assets. The reason for that is multiple; amongst other, lack of security to frequent the space (the sense of scare), hidden interests (to be further investigated) such as illegal activities within the isolated areas, or interests to illegal property development, etc. This process of illegal land subdivision and sprawl started after '90s occupying indistinctively private or public agricultural land. What was left, mostly access roads, drainage canals, river beds and their adjacent areas, or some agricultural parcels, etc. are a potential for "public space", but not used as such. This "free" space (except the main access roads) is almost empty: it is quite difficult to describe Tirana 5 through elements traditionally we use to analyze

a city, such as roads, squares, parks, etc. This creates a "bizarre" and peculiar character that will be described in the coming paragraphs. This kind of pseudo autonomy over the land use isolates Tirana 5 in a kind of "self governing entity". The lack of exchanges between the residents of Tirana 5 or other "numbered cities", and the "core city" reinforces even more the perception of these areas as inaccessible, not only physically (lack of infrastructure) but most importantly psychologically.

"Typology" of images

It is important now to list some unique characteristics that produce the unrepeatable image (physical, psychological, perceivable, positive or negative, etc.) of Tirana 5. Each of these typologies is branded by a key word and the sensations linked to it. These may be important vehicles of transformation towards a more conscious urban condition.

Between a fairytale and a nightmare

"Bucolic": a combination between the intimacy of the private gardens and the free open spaces; Flat landscape crowned by distant hills and mountain ranges, necklaces of trees along the river beds, houses hidden by high vegetation and bordered by vernacular fences, fruit trees within the private gardens (apples, pears, khakis, oranges, plums), unpaved former agricultural road services sheltered by big trees which create "perspective tunnels" towards open spaces.

"Alice in wonderland": discovery of unexpected / hidden facilities such as pedestrian bridges crossing over the river, discovery of experimental agricultural parcels / laboratories, discovery of small woods along the river, curiosity to watch on the other side of the "wall" when you face visual or physical barriers (walls, doors, fit green, etc.) and you know something is behind;

"The day after": absurd combinations between former industrial / mining industry and current informal occupations; images of isolated young people using the abandoned structures for fun and leisure;

Visceral-ity

"The secret core" – the sense of hidden, intimacy, secret, challenging danger, curiosity, and the perception of inaccessible; there is always a motive to explore the un- exhaustible core.

"Chateaux": former public assets enclosed by walls: former dairy production farms protected by walls currently abusively occupied by illegal activities or housing; Agriculture university campus and experimental parcels (the sense of isolation and protection);

In the middle of nowhere

"Proletarian cities": apartment housing areas built during the communist regime in the middle of agricultural land, indifferent and no relation with former and existing territorial elements, in a high status of degradation;

"Science-fiction within the townscape "[5]: the airport represents a relatively alien structure in the middle of this mixture. It reminds us the freedom to experiment with a futuristic approach not only at architecture but also with sustainable community models, etc.

Grids and contrasting textures

"Agriculture grids": areas where agriculture still resists, preserved or leftovers: along the runaway strip of the airport, around former mine industries;

"Sprawl city": Here we find a wide collection of different housing typologies, mostly one to three stories houses, ranging from the "king's houses" to the "farmer's houses". Side by side they create an irrational and bizarre image.

"Extreme mix / out of scale": textures created by natural and artificial elements with different scales; contrasting fragmentations: huge and small spaces together: one story houses facing a huge field, or facing the run away strip of the airport; mega-fragmentation of the former agricultural land, or former industries, or natural leftovers (river beds, hills, etc.), facing tiny grains of formal / informal individual residential housing;

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5 used in another context by Rowe and Koetter in "collage city"

A matrix of open issues: challenge for the conventional planning

The aim of this paper is not to give a definitive answer (solution), but to trigger new directions and to explore unconventional solutions. Related to that we can start by listing some important issues: What kind of planning approach is needed in the area (if we can still use the conventional term planning)? Could conventional zoning / master planning instruments be effective in this case? Could a conservative restrictive approach bring more order in the area? What could be the impact on the local economy of the area in this case? What combination between conventional and alternative approaches needs to be applied? How Tirana 5 and the rest of "numbered cities" will enter in a new type of relation with each other and with the core city? Do we want to change the character or the image of the area? If yes, to what extent? What is the fundamental DNA to be preserved and to guarantee that the area will not be sterilized? How this will be introduced in a new genetic code? How the list of unique images can be used and interpreted in an opened combinatory matrix? What kind of natural and historic / human / legal restrains exist in the area? Can Tirana 5 be a promoter to influence a new life style in the entire system? In order to make this happening what programs should be introduced in the area?

The above indicates the degree of flexibility needed to be applied if we want to avoid unrealistic planning / projects.

Fitting sprawl into the category of urbanity – enabling coexistence

Tirana 5 can be an opportunity for courageous experimentation, a laboratory to test an open framework of opportunities where the strategy of "chance" is not completely avoided like in conventional planning … if we don't want to risk the traditional Utopian dream (Xaveer de Geyter Architects, 2002, pp. 17). Positivity and inclusiveness, often mentioned in urban studies but rarely used as transformational catalysts, may be the key to an organically regulated approach,

where the freedom of creativity can still be enjoyed without creating chaos. This can start by discovering and interpreting without prejudices and taboos the existing situation, including the stigmatized areas or the "bizarre" character. This is a real challenge for a country where the only successful form of planning is considered to be the authoritarian one applied during the communist regime.

In the view presented in this book, Tirana 5 is not going to be a typical modernist extension around the existing core, or a typical (marginalized) suburb; is not going to be even the ideal / perfect continuation based on the relations type, city, and territory. The so far existing developments push far away these options. Tirana and the entire urban system are developed based on an "eclectic" logic at all levels of urban hierarchies. In the same way, future developments and regulations in Tirana 5 will not be based on the application of a single planning and design principle. But, whatever the solutions proposed may be, what is the most important under these circumstances, is to recognize the reality as a starting point and envision a strategy that can enable an incremental process apt to transform this reality.

Reframing chaos in complexity without eradicating the layers of the real life is vital to avoid Utopian approaches. This positive kind of reframing requires a new approach to planning and design: creative application of planning regulations giving credits to the local particularities in order to enable life to unfold. In this respect Tirana 5 can be considered as a still fresh palimpsest where other layers can be recorded and more programs that are still missing not only in the area but in the entire metropolitan system can be located. This palimpsest contains not only the traces designed according to the organic human movements (mostly the recent ones), but also the former grids designed according to different territorial, agricultural, or industrial projects, and the traces of decomposed pathological structures almost not existing. Creating more legibility from reconfiguring undiscovered "traces" and the "emptiness" of decomposed spaces, may be a way to give a new meaning and identity to the entire sprawl system which is not yet a city. At first glance it seems there are a lot of divergent things in the area, but a spatial and design plan for Tirana 5 can be effective only within the specific condition of enabling coexistence.

All-inclusive - theoretical references

We find this kind of all-embracing inclusiveness approach to reality, people and their creativity in many authors. In the following paragraphs there are some theoretical references that go in a similar direction. Despite the fact that most of them have been written in different reality and different period they constitute important fonts of inspiration.

Venturi is one of them. He recaptured the mechanism of a more complex architecture that valued freedom over norm. He was arguing that Reality architecture is not simple and that we cannot ignore the multiplicity of factors which is architecture duty to address[6] (Venturi, 1977) ... I like elements which are hybrid rather than "pure", compromising rather than "clean", distorted rather than "straightforward", ambiguous rather than "articulated", ... I'm for messy vitality over obvious unity. But an architecture of complexity and contradiction has a special obligation toward the whole: its truth must be in its totality or its implications of totality. It must embody the difficult unity of inclusion rather than the easy unity of exclusion (Venturi, 1977 pp. 22-23). Even this was written as a denunciation of the ideology of modern architecture we can use it as a "denunciation" against any form of technocratic form of planning, design and architecture.

An all-embracing inclusiveness towards things, people and their behavior is expressed by De Geyter in the book After Sprawl - research for contemporary city (2002) which I referred and cited above, and also in the book Tirana Metropolis. In both cases, these are visions beyond planning.

Tirana Metropolis (The Berlage Institute, 2004) is a strategic vision for definition of a more intelligible metropolitan geography. The city is seen as an archipelago: complementary centralities outside the city center. This vision consists on projects that propose to reinforce of what already exists by following a super contextual approach;

6 Venturi, R. (1977) *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture. Second edition, 1977; The Museum of Modern Art, New York*

amongst other: "Fine and tuning" that propose to discover in the existing urban tissues spatial devices that have sustainable effect on the city; "Reinforcing patterns and structures" attempting to radically transform the urban experience through small scale design instruments; "Structuring Tirana in Formation" proposing the exploitation of the city existing natural and urban assets centered on a backbone across the entire topography; "Modes of Concentration" dealing with the configuration of the strategic centralities discovering the latent local conditions; "Parallel Tirana", a mirror ring city, offering a vision that reflects on the epidemic of sprawl of the urban condition in Tirana; "Durana" an imaginative foresight about an eventual fusion of Tirana and Durres in a new Metropolis with a green hart between two cities. (The Berlage Institute, 2004, pp. 21, 22)

There are also some other important ideas and principles we can learn from "collage city", a research work carried by Rowe, and Koetter[7] (1978), as an anti-Utopian theory of urban design based on a revisionist version of Modern Movement. Analyzing the end of the city of the modern architecture, they raise some dilemmas and argue for more open and inclusive approach as the alternative of the abstract purity of modern proposals, for sanitation of chaos through collage technique: eclectic, hybrid, juxtaposition, and layering are presented as formal correlatives conducive to urban life. Can we find solutions that favor the coexistence of different models? Related to that they argue that the situation to be hopped for should be the one which might allow for the joint existence of the overtly planned and the genuinely unplanned, of the set piece and the accident, of the public and the private, of the state and the individual (Rowe and Koetter, 1978, pp. 83). From their rigorous formal analyses, contrasting figure-ground images of architectural and urban modernist proposals with the rich and continuous texture of historic urban contexts, they bring into attention some important design principles such as: this of an urbanistically active model, meaning responsive to the close context and at the same time stipulating an ideal world engaging empirical circumstances, reconciling themes of self-conscious order and sponta-

neous randomness, conferring value upon both new and old (Rowe and Koetter, 1978, pp. 68); or analyzing Asplund they speak about the use of multiple design strategies: simultaneously the empiricist reacting to site and the idealist concerned with normative condition, he responds, adjusts, translates, asserts to be passive recipient and active reverberator (Rowe and Koetter, 1978, pp. 72, 77). These strategies can be used to provoke the lack of sensitivity and the total absence of human touch and inspiration in the Albanian technocratic approach. This requires amongst other a different education for architects and urban planners.

Another urban design approach relevant for the area is the one based on the perception and experience of the specific places. Gordon Cullen's optic on townscape, opposed to the rationalism of modern theory, while may be the tendency to see his position as picturesque, illustrates a theory based not on images but on visual relationships that evoke a broad range of human responses (Cullen, 1961, in Watson, D. et.al, pp. 3.1-1)[8] . We can try to unlock the surplus of vision to evoke memories and responsive emotions which have the power to disturb the mind. He argues that this happens in three ways: Concerning the optics, which examine the serial visions that divide the environment in here and there, and create the drama of juxtaposition of existing and emerging view; Concerning the place, which is concerned with the sense of position of our body and the experiences from the impacts of exposure and enclosure; and concerning the content, which is concerned with the fabric of the town / landscape: color, texture, scale, style, character, personality, uniqueness (Cullen, 1961, in Watson, D. et.al, pp. 3.1-2, 3.1-3, 3.1-4). Tirana 5 embodies a series of characteristics that may be treated under the townscape optics of the … "accident" … the tendency to provide sensation without plan, to appeal to the eye not to the mind … sponsoring a perceptual world[9] (Rowe and Koetter 1978, pp. 33)

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7 Rowe, C. and Koetter, F. (1978) Collage City. The MIT Press Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England

8 Cullen, G. (1961) Introduction to townscape. In: Time-Saver Standards for Urban Design, Editors Watson, D. Plattus, A. Shibley, R.G. McGraw -Hill, credits: the article is reprinted from Townscape, Architectural Press, London 1961, with permission of the publisher.
9 Cited from Collage City

Conclusions: interstitial city – reframed Tirana 5

What to do with the city of sprawl? It has nothing similar with the city of modern architecture, nor with the traditional historic city. It is a dissolved city with a lot of interstitial spaces formed by a mixture of natural, agricultural, or all kind of uses in between.

The challenge would be to create a more legible urban condition in Tirana 5 and to conjecture a "form" with catalytic role in favor of public consciousness. This interstitial stripe model, enriched with catalytic programs such as "forests" of social instruments, can feed the dream of an "ever-evolving return to nature" (hired from Rowe & Koetter, pp. 51). Thus the sprawl city can be considered a transitory status where the nature and the city are hybridized. This can be an inspiring concept to cure the classic dichotomy center and periphery.

This interstitial system and the specific elements within it may be the structuring formula or the backbone for rationalization of sprawl and re-aggregation towards new urban foci. They will be the urban containers to incubate social interaction which is an important element for urban condition. The labyrinth structure of the existing units will be one of the specific patterns to be reinforced maintaining the character of deviating perspectives, closing internally the space and creating this internal intimacy the creation of hidden "private Eden". At the same time Tirana 5 will be an alternative to the mono-block building schemes which is typical for Tirana and cities in general.

In conclusion we go to some important issues: will the architect or the urban planner be the protagonist for a new social and cultural integration of the Albanian society? Will architects and planners finally show that they are seriously trying to help the society for a better life and rehabilitate their position in the Albanian society (they are under accusation for the current territorial disaster)? To overcome these architects need to overcome the conformist taboos and appeal the force of the mind to reframe the degraded / stigmatized existing situation in a new identity. In this respect it is worth to see how the architect and urban planner can act as a "facilitator" and can positively influence changes in the society. As Bandler and Grinder (1982) argue, all behavior takes place in some context. The meaning that any event has depends upon the "frame" in which we perceive it. When we change the frame we change the meaning (Bandler and Grinder, 1982)[10]. Framing is another word for contextualization, and reframing is re-contextualization. Similar to the facilitator, the architect helps others to "see" a new / different point of view and take other factors into consideration. Reframing is also crucial in the creative process through the ability to put a commonplace event in a new frame that is enjoyable … this has to do with the ability to simultaneously associate an event in two separate and different contexts, as Koestler calls it, *"bisociacion"* (in Bandler and Grinder, 1882).

10 Bandle, R. and Grinder, J. (1982) – Reframing, Neuro-Linguistic Programming and the Transformation of Meaning – edited by Steve Andreas and Connirae Andreas, Real people Press, Moab, Utah.

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