



# BOOK OF PROCEEDINGS

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE  
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ISSUES OF HOUSING,  
PLANNING, AND  
RESILIENT DEVELOPMENT OF  
THE TERRITORY  
Towards Euro-Mediterranean  
Perspectives

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# **Issues of Housing, Planning, and Resilient Development of the Territory Towards Euro-Mediterranean Perspectives**

## **Conference Theme and Rationale**

Albania, along with other Western Balkan countries, has undergone significant economic, social, and political changes in recent years. As a result, housing, planning, and the resilient management of territorial development have emerged as critical issues. This is because these regions face significant challenges in providing affordable housing, addressing the impact of urbanization on the environment, fostering evidence-based decision-making on the territory, and bringing forth the commitments towards climate neutrality.

The organizers use the term “multi-modality” to define complex situations (in matters of territorial planning, management, architecture, housing, public space, technology, etc.) that have historically encompassed Western Balkans and Mediterranean cities in a logic of coexistence and value co-creation. A combination of knowledge and heritage that throughout time and history have given life to civilization in this region of Europe. The active involvement of Albania in the existing network of the Mediterranean Basin and the EU, through a joint action plan with UN / UNECE, and the Albanian and regional authorities, including reputable scientific bodies such as the Academy of Sciences of Albania, makes this conference even more intriguing to explore fascinating areas of research. The conclusions, to be considered as a stage for open innovation, will include recommendations for further scientific and applied research, projects, and events.

The geographical focus of the conference covers three dimensions: i) Albania; ii) the Western Balkans; iii) Euro-Mediterranean countries. POLIS University aims to focus on the above-mentioned research areas that are of common interest to both Western Balkans and Mediterranean cities, including, but not limited to: housing policies, urban history and architecture typology, innovation and digitalization in urbanism, energy efficiency, resilience and environmental sustainability, governance and smart technologies for city management, education and gender aspects in urban planning research.

In this regard the main aim of this international conference is to bring together scholars, policy-makers, and practitioners to examine the pressing issues of housing, planning, and land development in these regions, in a context of transition fatigue, climate challenges and post-pandemic realities.

# **Issues of Housing, Planning, and Resilient Development of the Territory Towards Euro-Mediterranean Perspectives**

## **Conference Aim**

The main aim of this international conference is to bring together researchers, policy makers and practitioners to examine the urgent issues of housing, planning and land development in these regions, in a context of transition, climate challenges and post-pandemic realities.

## **Objective**

- Consolidation of the cooperation network between Albanian and non-Albanian researchers, lecturers, managers, with the aim of participating in joint research projects at the regional and international level;
- Support of local authorities with contemporary data, on the state of housing issues, planning and sustainable urban and environmental management, as well as representatives of public and private institutions operating in this field.

The conference is organized by POLIS University (U\_POLIS) in cooperation with the Academy of Science of Albania, and supported by other local and international partners.

In the framework of resilience, the main conference theme is devoted to Issues of Housing, Planning, and Resilient Development of the Territory from a Euro-Mediterranean Perspective, including Albania, Western Balkans and the Mediterranean Basin. This event aims to bring together academics, policymakers, researchers, experts, practitioners, and stakeholders from diverse backgrounds to discuss and address critical challenges related to housing, urban planning, and the development of resilient territories.

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# **Dealing with the future of the emergent settlements in the absence of full property recognition. The case of Kashar and Astiri in Tirana, Albania.**

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## **Abstract**

Intro: According to the National Cadastre, In Tirana, more than half of the built environment lies in informal areas, approximately 2506 ha from 4100 ha of the total urban area. The more we go outside the city, the more it would be the absence of property recognition. However, this condition, of being informal, without proper property recognition, has not stopped the process of property substitution. From an orchard land to a highly densified area, the Kashar and Astiri areas are the best examples to represent and show the substitution process.

Research Question and Objectives: The research aims to identify the substitution process, in Kashar and Astiri neighbourhoods, measure it, and get into the primary factors of the bargaining process of the substitution processes. The comparative methodology used in this paper speaks about the partial development of the agricultural land made by 200x200 meters, with a fast process of substitution along the existing pathways and a slower process inside the agricultural land. In this substitution process, three actors play an important role: the primary inhabitants (single family), the investor with multi-family buildings, and the public administration.

Results: The substitution process from the primary inhabitants has happened informally, in common understanding and over a long period. These common forms of understanding and sharing consist of signs (communication), resources (construction materials), and development rules (distances). The substitution process by the private investors has happened there where there was a higher degree of property recognition. Instead, the public administration has set in a process of eradicating the informal settlements, without understanding the two processes of substitution mentioned above and by interfering in the substitution process.

Conclusions: Both inhabitants, the first, and the new struggle for primary urban rights, such as water, mobility, and energy access and the substitution have not changed radically the property recognition situation - on the contrary, it has complicated it.

Keywords

Emergent Settlements, Comparative Methodology, Housing Transition, Substitution, Housing Rights



## **Introduction.**

This article deals with key questions and aspects concerning the development of Tirana in the last 30 years. It does so through the thematic lens of emergent urbanism and the tension between statutory planning activities, informality, and loose property rights. Though its relevance is not limited to the contextual case of Tirana, it provides insights into the issue of emergent urbanism and possible ways to formally deal with it without hampering its beneficial spontaneous forces.

With the fall of the communist regime in 1992, after almost 50 years, Albania opened the development of its territory to market logic and the recognition of private property rights. This transition gave rise to a rapid urban expansion process and, according to many, a chaotic development that often generated grey legal situations. Such a transition was based on two main reforms. Firstly, the Law n. 7501 (1991), allocated and distributed national land to farmers for agricultural purposes at a “family scale” (around 2 ha). Secondly, a national program, (2005), for the “legalization, urbanization and integration of the informal settlements”. Since then, a series of planning issues are still largely unresolved, and deeply contrasting development forces are in place. On the one hand, several informal, emergent settlements built in the last decades, still lack formal recognition and are unprotected by the State. On the other, several urban development projects promoted by the municipality are taking place often in substitution for the already existing informal settlements. Such a process of substitution cannot but raise important ethical concerns, and constitutional. Existing households are often displaced but not fully reimbursed, neither physically (with a new apartment) nor financially. Also, some neighbourhoods are going through a process of demolition and reconstruction via large-scale projects which seem not to fit into the longstanding spirit and spontaneously generated character of the place. Under these conditions, important ethical questions arise concerning the future of these settlements (not the research question, ethical questions): How is it possible to govern the process of substitution and densification of these settlements? How should planners treat the already existing households despite their loose property regime?

This article proposes an evolutionary approach in the analysis and exploration of two relevant case studies – namely, the Kashar neighbourhood and “Astiri”. The goal is to unfold the complexity of these settlements by investigating their morphology, and the property regime process in substitutions under (spontaneous) rules, architectural types, and main social aspects. The ambition is to critically reflect on this phenomenon and come up with strategies that can effectively deal with existing tension from the substitution process.

### **The problem: informal urbanism and property rights.**

Before the XX century, most settlements were “emergent”. While today emergent urbanism is associated with informality, in the past emergent development processes were the normality: within a frame of simple rules (urban codes), small initiatives took place and gave rise to incremental and organic urban tissue. Emergent urbanism, however, must be intended not as an illegal or informal practice per se, but as the development process that happens within a certain statutory framework (such as planning rules and land-use planning, as well as the design of collective spaces) or, in certain cases, in the absence of it.

The role of background conditions in the absence of statutory planning activities is essential in emergent practices. To generate emergent forms of urbanism, (spontaneous) orders, the local community should share certain common rules for the maintenance and construction of their houses, as well as find ways to produce certain collectively relevant spaces and infrastructures (streets, etc.). These rules or procedures are not always agreed upon by the local community. Of-

ten, they emerge spontaneously over time from the stratification of local practices. These rules start to take the status of habits, traditions, and norms. Their peculiarity is that although they are not protected by the state, the local community voluntarily obeys and complies with them. These rules indeed are somehow self-emerging, self-imposed, and self-surveilled by its local community. An important aspect of emergent forms of urbanism is the role played by time. The process corresponds to an incremental juxtaposition of new actions, one after the other, where the first “structures/influences” the second which, in its turn, will structure/influence the third, and so on. In this development process, nobody can anticipate or know the final state of affairs, but like in all trial-and-error processes in society, the outcome will be the unintentional results of the stratification of multiple small actions, altogether generating an order which was not designed by anyone specifically. This type of development has some main advantages: bottom-up approach, human scale of the developments, and the ability to get to any cultural dimension and use of the spaces. But it can also give rise to some problems if the minimal background conditions are not respected: lack of infrastructure and services (streets, sanitation, garbage, etc.), disrespect of other people’s rights (accessibility to houses, views, privacy, etc.) and a loose and vulnerable property rights configuration.

The loss of property rights, or housing tenure, is a process that has happened continuously from early 1990 to today with the substitution processes. This process has taken place in the urban peripheries of the cities, where the emergent urbanism occurred, and in the substitution process. In some cases the property right was unclear from the beginning, with the first inhabitants, in other cases, the substitution process created new inhabitants without a property right – those living in the multi-family buildings. As estimated by the National Cadastral Office, more than 2/3 of 320,000 informal buildings cannot be legalized – and this represents the first layer of inhabitants without a property right. Instead, the substitution process has created new inhabitants without property rights. Many of these inhabitants live in apartments without a property certificate. In most cases, this is attributed to the nonaccomplishment of the building standards of the municipal planning codes - although single apartments have been sold in the real estate market. The loss of property rights affects more than 1 million inhabitants in Albania, see (ALUIZNI Agency, 2016). From this national perspective, half of the population is considered secondary citizens, without basic human rights, such as water supply and sanitation, energy, heating, and cooking, or the recognition of the workplace. The loss of property rights affects not only the human rights on the individual scale, listed above but also the ability of the municipalities to keep territorial equity of the wealth distribution, such as education, health, workplaces, and other primary services on the local scale.

The loss of property has negative effects, i) on individual human rights, ii) on the institutional level for the delivery of territorial equity by primary services, and iii) has negative effects on the social and economic terms of the substitution process. The loss of the property has negative effects also the capital invested in the territory, iv). Our research will focus on the capital invested in the territory and its effect that has loos the property rights and try to find good practices of substitution that have occurred in the neighbourhoods of “Kashar” and “Astiri”. In some territorial areas of “Kashar” and “Astiri” the fast substitution process has encouraged the inhabitants toward a continuous, but slow, process of upgrading settlement. Some of the reasons stand on the desire to get into a better bargaining process in case of substitution. Although the new buildings lack standards and consequently a non-recognition of the property, 15 years of emergent transformation shows that the bargaining process between the first informal settlers and the new building has occurred

massively in the neighbourhood.

Now, the key question is? Of what nature, and form, are the bargaining process regarding the invested capital in the territory when the substitution happens? (Research Question). “Kashar” and “Astiri” neighbourhood shows that the substitution has occurred by financial means, and by design issues on the landscape. These last forms of communication and bargaining are the focus of our research. Some are made by signs in the territory and on the landscape others are common rules created by the inhabitants.

## The case study.

### *Main key policies and laws since the transition from a communist regime.*

Emergent urbanism took place outside the “yellow line”, in an institutional vacuum of planning practices. The state was the only owner of the land. Although the agricultural reform of property transfer was occurring in early 1990, the process never saw a full recognition process of the property transfer for agricultural issues. Law 7501 will distribute the land at a family scale for the only purpose of agricultural production. This first reform can be considered a first attempt to stimulate the inhabitants in the rural areas after the fall of the communist regime. The reform didn't give the desired purpose, agriculture, and it paved the road of the informal market of land – mainly for urban purposes.

In the second half of 1990, the process of property transfer became the driving force of the new economy that was taking form after a long period of state control over the property. Informal prac-

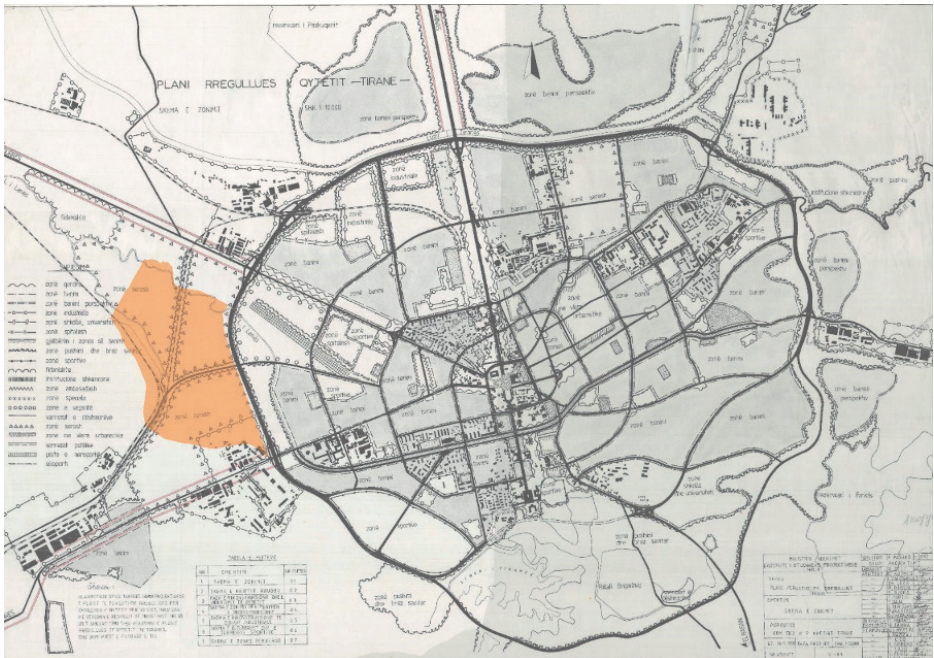


Figure 1 The land use from the Regulatory Plan of Tirana, 1990. (font: Polis University Digital Archive).

tices of land and building purchases will occur among citizens interested in the new housing solutions on the outskirts of the main cities. Nowadays we can find on agricultural land different owners by documents and different inhabitants, or farmers in reality for the same parcel of land. This is what in Albania is commonly known among inhabitants as “property superposition”. The case of “Kashar” and “Astiri” shows that the transition from agricultural use to urban passed through the Orchard Agricultural Cooperative operating in the area. Figure 1, shows the Regulatory Plan of Tirana in 1990, and the future land use for the area of “Kashar” and “Astiri” - surrounded by dots on the left side of the map.

While in some informal areas planning practices will take place with new pilot projects, following participatory and communicative tools, new informal practices will occur outside the informal areas declared by law, getting spread into the consolidated areas and in the city centres as well. Emergent urbanism will spread all around the cities of Albania and will become an economic and housing reality not only for single families but also for building developers – raising informal high-density buildings and selling apartments out of the regular market. Soon these two informal housing realities, the single-family housing, and the builder of the multi-family dwellings will get into bargaining conditions for the property transfer. Different cases of early 2000 speak out that in some cases single families have received high percentages of reimbursement in apartments for the property transfer from the building developers, respectively at 40% - the highest degree till nowadays. (References from the Field Interviews).

In 2005, the new right-wing government will open a long institutional process toward a full recognition of the informal settlements, called legalization. In the beginning, it started only with single-family dwellings, and only in 2014, the law included also the multifamily dwellings. With this new process of legalization and the opening process for ‘building permission’ beyond the “yellow line”, the housing market will face a shock in real estate value. Dwelling built without ‘building permission’ will be under-evaluated in the real estate market and from housing agencies.

Nowadays the real estate market is made totally of multi-family dwellings with ‘building permissions’, although various forms of informal renting and owner-ships are present. Most of the single-family dwellings built informally nowadays are out of the real estate market – which makes them more vulnerable to future transformations. The “open possibility” for the informal single-family dwelling to get into a financial bargaining process with future urban developers is no longer possible, since 2014. What remains to do is to see on the territory there where are the problems deriving from the substitution by bringing out the urban practices and common rules, and solutions that reduce the conflict.

## **Overview of Tirana.**

1) an overview of the development process of Tirana.

Nowadays, in 2021, the urban area of Tirana has tripled since 1991, and so happened for the number of the population. Figure number 2 shows in mid-grey colour the urban area before 1991, and in light grey what happened after, till to today. The division of these two colours signifies not only a historical point toward the private market but also an administrative limit. Deep is also the division of the territory created from the “Great Western City Ring”, which is planned and projected with the aim of connecting the south part of Tirana with the exit toward the city of Elbasan. This last area, marked with dark grey in Figure 2, developed in the last 15 years, represents a unique form of housing in the Albanian territory. With a price of up to 1200 euros for a meter square these

apartments have additional monthly costs for the maintenance of the collective spaces, such may be gardens, pools, and other forms of amenities. Seen from the big scale there are three patterns; i) the first, historical and administrative role, in the city centre; ii) the second, developed in the northern part of the city as an urban extension from the first pattern in an informal way, and iii) the new pattern developed in the south last years, imposing a modernist grid and architecture. The existence of three big agglomerations in housing stock by different characteristics of the development, mixed with big interventions by the state and municipality, by policies and projects, has increased further the social tension. The difference between these three housing agglomerations consists of; housing tenure status, affordability degree of the housing costs, materials of construction, accessibility, and different cultural activities of the economic sphere, social and demographic. The first lesson coming from these readings by patterns is that the geographic conflict is not only social, and economic but also spatially distributed in the urban continuity of Tirana. The primary factor of this spatial distribution is not only the political factor, which has passed in various periods in shock conditions – such as the loss of property rights but the factors are rooted in the urban morphology of the city and its historical development.

Till 2014, with the introduction of law 107/2014, and government changes, the process of property transition was an 'open will' of the stakeholders to bargain the price and the retribution – mainly



Figure 2 Urban expansion of Tirana. Layers of the social and economic tension on housing affordability in Tirana. (font: Google Maps. Map illustration: by the author).



with apartments. In the middle of 2000, the retribution was 40% of the new development, over the years this percentage dropped to 20%. Nowadays this informal practice, of 'open will' among actors to bargain, is impossible due to the intervention of the state with the Inspectorate created to track, stop or demolish where informal settlements have been raised. The construction of the "Great Western City Ring" is one of the examples that show this historical transition of the property transition process. As the two case studies show in the "Astiri" area process of property transition has occurred with an open will to bargain with the stakeholders the future developments, in the urban area of Kashar the urban transition with the intervention of the state and the Municipality of Tirana.

## 2) The ongoing macro-urban issues.

The change of the bargaining conditions by state rules and interventions has left little possibility for the inhabitants to get into a peaceful substitution. However, there are cases, urban forms, practices and common rules that exist in the territory that contribute toward a softer substitution process, by reducing the conflict and adding communication among the inhabitants. Some rules stand on the exchange of material means, beyond financial, while others stand on common rules and communications. The exchange of material means is often a neglected issue by the institutional planning system but is very evident in the territory. It affects mostly those material means that are denied to the inhabitants by the state, such as alternative land use, the common wells, common materials of construction, common semi-private roads and squares, common lightening by night, common parking, and many other forms shaped in the territory and that in certain circumstances are even co-managed. In other cases, the bargaining conditions that make the urban substitution stand not on material means but rather in communicative practices and urban shapes: such are the bricks thrown in the land lots, showing that there's an interest expressed in the urban development even before building in, or for example the hidden economic activities showing arrows and other forms communication to the local inhabitants.

## **The two areas: Kashar and "Astiri".**

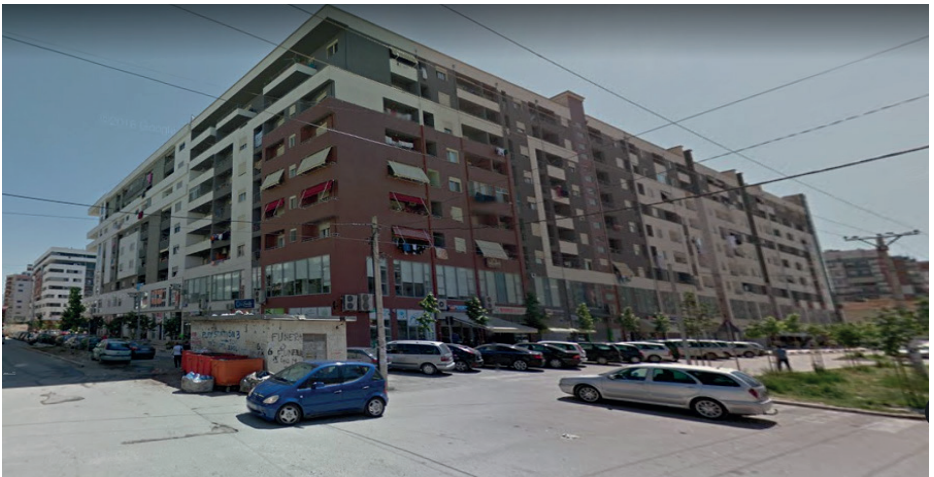
### 1) Presentation of the area.

The area of "Kashar" and "Astiri" is one of the last neighbourhoods added to the city administration of Tirana Municipality after the territorial reform of 2014. Our focus in Kashar and "Astiri" is going to that urban area that is continuous and attached to the city, intending to look at the deep territory of the west that brings to the agricultural land. In this perspective, the limits of our territorial focus are the Great Western Ring and the city edges. Our area, in the northern part, is confined to the Lana River, and in the south Rruga e Kavajës. In 2002 the new Mayor of Tirana pushed the building interest of the city outside the administrative borders, to Kashar Commune. From 2002 to 2004, more than half of the empty agricultural land will be filled with big building blocks. Most of these building constructions will be settled on the primary road, following the old agricultural lands, without a regular permit. Slowly new processes of bargaining processes will take place, singular informal family houses will be substituted by multi-family dwellings - big urban blocks. In many cases, these territorial substitutions have configured the land partitions, occupied, fully by those actors, and inhabitants engaged in a financial agreement. In other cases, the land configuration has happened partially. For a better understanding of the substitution process that has taken place, we should look at different property regimes and not only. In some cases, the substitution process has occurred also in the infrastructural network, in some partially, and in others. Figures number 3 and number 4 show two different pictures, each of which focuses on the extreme contradiction of the substitution process. Figure 3, shows two different forms of housing

typology, in the same neighbourhood, co-existing at the same time and with different land configurations. Figure 4, shows the main boulevard in the Kashar area, where in the middle of the crossroad there is an electricity supply cabin. The substitution process, from a water canal, into a path, and later to a paved and designed process from the top down gives a complex and different result on the territory and land configuration.



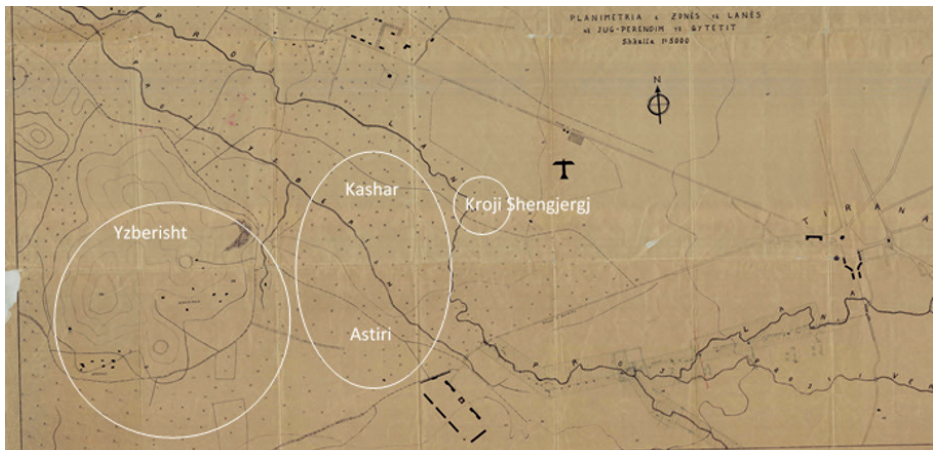
*Figure 3 Kashar area, two different housing typologies inside the same urban block. (font: Picture by the author).*



*Figure 4. Kashar area, two different housing typologies inside the same urban block. (font: Picture by the author).*

## 2) Why these two areas?

Beyond the territorial contradictions, the area of “Kashar” and “Astiri” keeps many forms of common rules that make the process of substitution from top-down to bottom-up initiatives. A historical village named Yzberisht has been on the feet of the hill, west part of Kashar, and the downfield with Lana River was used since the middle ages for agricultural purposes. Only after 1990, the area will be affected by the first settlements as a continuity with the city of Tirana. A historical church named “Kroji I Shengjinit”, destroyed during the communist regime, was one of the only buildings in the area in that period. Some of the water canals were following the direction of that building. The area of “Astiri”, brings the name of one of the first shops in 1990 selling colours and varnishes for the new buildings in the neighbourhood. Since that day locals, and not only, call the southern part of Kashar that name, “Astiri”. Both areas share the same history as many other informal neighbourhoods developed after 1990 in many big cities. See Figure 5. The similarity of these neighbourhoods is the primary factor that brings our territorial focus research to Kashar and Astiri. The other factor stands on the maturity degree of the area with the informal settlements, which are dated by historical moments of being the first areas to be developed informally.



**Figure 5. River Lana in 1928, and the case study identification. (font: Polis University Digital Archive. Map illustration: by the author).**

One of the last reasons that explain our focus area in the Kashar and Astiri neighbourhood stands on external properties of the area, such as the geographic position. The area is limited on the north and the south from two main boulevards that connect the city centre with the interurban network, such as the SH2 highway with its extension, Rruga Durrësit, to the city centre, and the southern SH56 with its extension, Rruga e Kavajës, to the city centre. Being in the middle of these two infrastructural networks put the area of Kashar and Astiri under high mobility pressure. The area shows a high appeal to have various forms of land use and property configuration.

## 3) Research Limits.

The research focus is on a spatial configuration, considering forms and common rules that shape the territory. The research is not going to focus on transaction planning from the substitution process, but rather on communication tools, formal a not formal. As emergent urbanism happens, the substitution process flourishes. The area of “Kashar” and “Astiri” shows that the process of



substitution which has occurred between two housing typologies, and less on the infrastructural network, has created various forms of land configuration. Most of these new land configurations are a product of common rules. Our research focuses on these conditions in “Kashar” and “Astiri”, in the section “voice from the field” with various urban forms and architectural dimensions that explain better the situation when common rules shape the substitution process. The methodological limit is the historical developments of each condition, shown in the last section. The substitution process will be described on the neighbourhood scale but without showing the detailed substitution process for each condition in different stages.

### **Description/analysis**

The first historical building in the Kashar and Astiri neighbourhood had a mono-function of land use – that of housing. Even though mono-function land use the area shows various configurations of property regimes. Figure 6 shows our area of interest, in 2002, approximately 160ha. The black marks the buildings, spread following the water canals and the pathways on the side. The water canals had a standard distance of 200x200 meters following Lana River, coming from the city centre, as Figure 5 shows, toward the vast agricultural field of west Tirana. Most of these buildings will be settled in the middle of the agricultural land, others right on the crossroads of the pathways along the water canals. Later these different positions will lead to complex use of the land and the property regime but also the accessibility issues toward the houses built in the depth of the agricultural land. These new complex conditions in most cases are made of common rules among the inhabitants. The land occupied and fenced, signed with dark green in Figure 6, is a static factor of the property use, but what makes more complex the property configuration is what remains outside the built and occupied land. Some of these areas speak about partial development of the agricultural land made by 200x200 meters, with a fast process of substitution along the existing pathways and a slower process inside the agricultural land. In another case the process of substitution has changed the property regime of the householders, transforming the area from a complex configuration of property regime made by the single-family houses into rational planning of multifamily dwellings.

For a total of 36 agricultural lots, made of 200x200 meters each, in 2002 there were 10 lots with few or no buildings in them, all the other land lots were filled by single-family houses, see Figura 7. In 2021, see Figure 8, four of these land lots, will be transformed from agricultural areas to multi-family dwellings, respectively lots nr 10, 15, 27, and 31. The other 6 lots will remain till nowadays for agricultural purposes. The rest of the land lots that were built in 2001 were 26. The total substitution process of the housing typology will occur in only 6 of these land lots, and partially in 20 of them. The land lots involved in the substitution process are closer to the Great Western City Ring and less on the edges of the city. From this perspective, we understand that the multi-family dwelling has been located partially on agricultural land and partially on the existing urban layer of single-family houses.

The substitution process happened there and the legalization process was unclear for the inhabitants. These areas were close to the great western city ring but less in the internal consolidated area on single-family houses – such as lot number 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 19, and 21 – this last located along the Lana River basin at the north. For a better understanding of the uncertainty that the inhabitants of the informal areas face regarding tenure rights, we should see the size of the land and the dimensions of the building, see (Kacani, 2018). On some land, these configurations and

building dimensions are designed and used by various local practices and voluntary actions of the inhabitants shared and accepted commonly. Figures number 6 and 7 show on the map not only the land occupied by the single-family houses but also those land parcels shaped for common use and access. These land parcels cannot be legalized but at the same time are a common resource for the inhabitants living in these lots – respectively 1, 2, 5, 8, 9, 12, 13, 17, 21, and 23. These land lots are also those where the substitution process did not occur. In the next session, voices from the field, we will find out that the common resources and rules have maintained these settlements consolidated for more than 30 years.



Figure 6 Kashar and Astiri in 2002. (font: Google Maps. Map illustration: by the author).



Figure 6 Kashar and Astiri in 2002. (font: Google Maps. Map illustration: by the author).  
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Figure 7 Kashar and Astiri in 2021. (font: Google Maps. Map illustration: by the author).

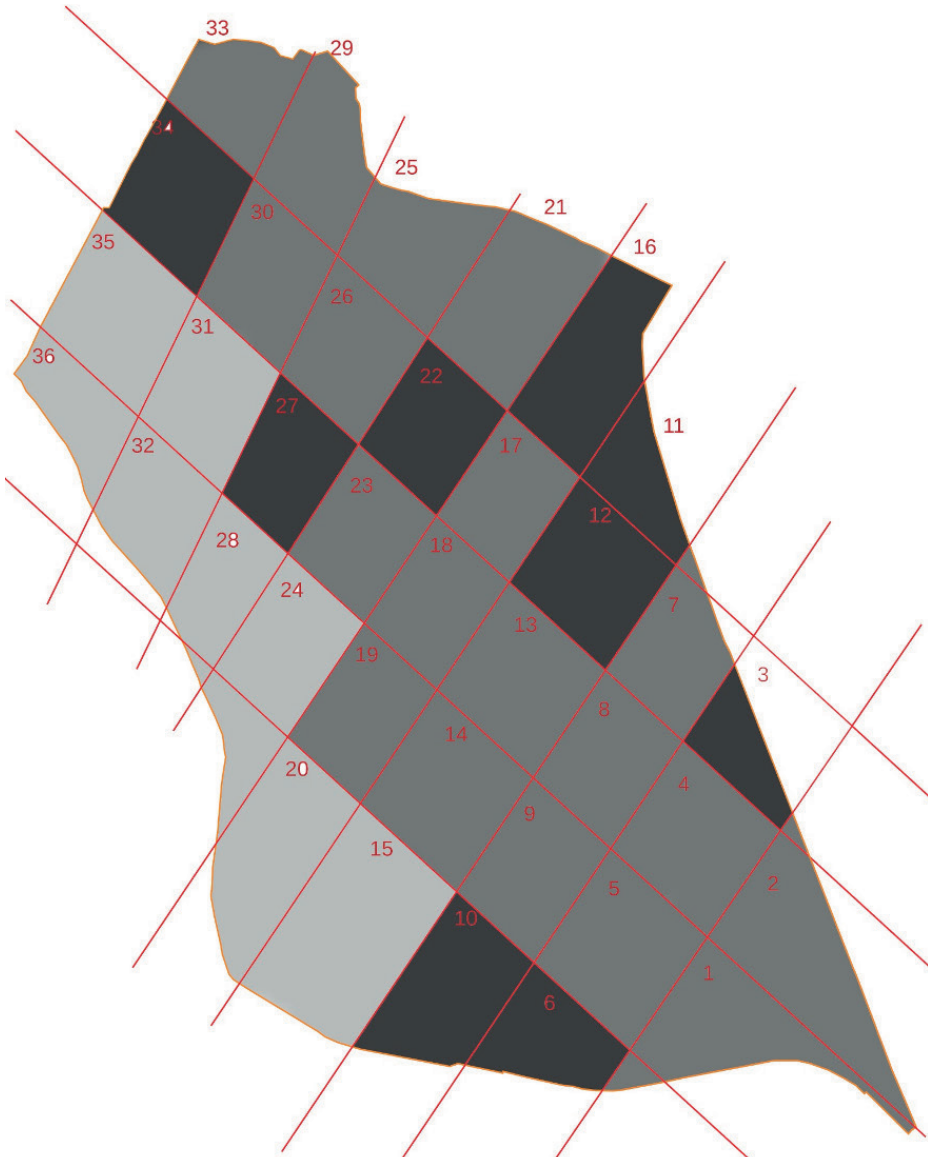


Figure 8 Reading the urban transformations and substitution processes in the "Kashar" and "Astiri" neighbourhoods. (font: Google Maps. Map illustration: by the author).



## The ongoing process of substitution

In this part, the new developments in the substitution of the old urban tissues should be presented analytically. We could also select 2 or 3 relevant examples for each case

Lot number 1, 5 and 23 are the most significant areas where the substitution process had occurred partially, but not and the centre of it – where single-family houses are consolidated. These lots are significant because they are a good representation of the spatial substitution process, what we are looking for, and at the same time areas where common resources and rules are shared among inhabitants.

## Voices from the Field

Starting from the map, and the identification of the lots in substitution, the pictures below show how the cases in which inhabitants have shared common resources and rules. Figure 9 shows how land is used for common purposes, such as a long pathway passing through the land occupied by single-family houses. The two rocks at the beginning of the street signify common rules of reference. The other case shows that land has been preserved for trustworthy newcomers, such as relatives of local inhabitants.



Figure 9 Kashar and Astiri in 2021, Signs and community references from Lot 23 in Figures 6, 7, and 8. (font: Picture by the author).

The other cases below, from lots 8 and 9 in Figures 6, 7 and 8, show that common resources, such as land and local materials of construction are a reality for future constructions and houses. The first case shows how soil consolidation happens before new constructions will take place. It's local knowledge based on the common rules and acceptance degree. Happens that when inhabitants do not accept the new practice the bricks are removed. This case shows the beginning of the process of land occupation. The other case shows local materials, saved from the previous constructions for new ones. The next cases from lots 1 and 5 show that common rules give the possibility to create different economic activities and mobility networks. Sometimes hidden to nonlocal inhabitants these places offer the needed affordable service and the ability to move into the private land occupied. The first case shows a shop covered by the main street but opened if you follow the left entrance. This design issue permits the shop owner to maintain common rules and a certain selection of his clients. The second case shows a corridor 15 meters long created by the inhabitants



Figure 10 Kashar and Astiri in 2021. Common resources from Lot 23 in Figures 6, 7 and 8. (font: Picture by the author).

to pass through the single-family houses to the urban block of multi-family dwellings and later to the western city ring.



Figure 11 Kashar and Astiri in 2021. Common rules and services from lot 3 in Figures 6, 7 and 8. (font: Picture by the author).

## **Discussion: main problems and what should be improved.**

Beyond the existence of alternative common resources for the inhabitants, more affordable, and more connected to the local solutions and knowledge, the area of Kashar and Astiri misses a broader scale of management of the common spaces. Many are the “urban pockets” where the common land is seen not as a resource – this due to low accessibility or omniscient design from the top down created by the real estate market of the multifamily dwellings. Missing a larger scale of management means at the same time losing the ability to be recognized institutionally – which might mean getting primary needs and services, such as water sanitation, adequate energy consumption, education, and health. Although some of these needs and services are commonly created and shared among the inhabitants the area remains not integrated with the rest of the city.

What remains to be done is to understand further the complex common rules and resources that have been created in the territory find out whether they exist or not in the other informal areas and prevent the social tension created by the substitution process.

For more than 20 years, the spatial transition of Kashar and Astiri has generated financial and spatial substitutions. The financial substitution process has generated a competitive situation to get into better situations of bargaining. Instead, the spatial substitution has generated common rules, resources and territorial signs and identifications for better mobility and more affordable economic activities. However, the informal situation, coming with the new transformations the substitution has created a neighbourhood without primary services and with a low degree of housing adequacy.

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