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Architettura
Ferrara

BOOK OF PROCEEDINGS

2nd INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON HOUSING,
PLANNING, AND RESILIENT DEVELOPMENT OF THE
TERRITORY

TOWARDS EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PERSPECTIVES

OCTOBER 16th-17th, 2025

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2nd International Conference on Housing, Planning, and Resilient Development of the Territory

Towards Euro-Mediterranean Perspectives

Conference Theme and Rationale

This conference returned for the second time within the Albanian and Mediterranean academic context, aiming to build a tradition of collaboration centered on scientific research and academia. Following the success of the first edition held on October 13th-14th, 2023, where proceedings were published in the Book of Proceedings, Albanica journal, and various international academic platforms, POLIS University and the Academy of Sciences of Albania relaunched this important event. The 2025 edition focused on housing, urban planning, and resilient territorial development, offering a platform for researchers, policymakers, and experts from the region and beyond.

Albania and the Western Balkans have faced major transformations in urbanization, spatial planning, and environmental management. Demographic changes, economic pressures, and environmental challenges created a need for new strategies in architecture, planning, and governance. This conference brought together diverse voices to explore these themes and promote resilient and sustainable development.

Key topics included architecture and the city, with emphasis on urban form, housing typologies, and the role of cultural heritage in modern urban design; urban mobility, addressing traffic challenges, public transport, and the use of technologies like GIS and AI in planning; and new housing models, focusing on affordability, energy efficiency, and innovative materials.

Discussions also covered demography and economy, exploring territorial governance, smart cities, social enterprises, and digital technologies such as AI, VR, and the Metaverse in urban management. Finally, the urban and natural environment was addressed through topics like pollution, adaptive planning, and nature-based solutions for climate resilience.

Through this conference, POLIS University and the Academy of Sciences of Albania aimed to foster a broad interdisciplinary debate on these pressing issues, combining academic and practical perspectives to offer concrete recommendations for future urban and territorial development policies and projects.

Organizers' Announcement

The International Scientific Conference on Housing, Urban Planning, and Resilient Territorial Development: Toward Euro-Mediterranean Approaches was held on October 16th-17th, 2025, in Tirana, Albania. Organized by POLIS University in collaboration with the Academy of Sciences of Albania and supported by national and international partners, including the University of Ferrara and Co-PLAN, Institute for Habitat Development, the event brought together researchers, academics, policymakers, and professionals to address key challenges in urban development, with a focus on resilience and sustainability in the Euro-Mediterranean region. The first day of the conference took place at the Academy of Sciences, while the second day was hosted at POLIS University.

The conference explored five main themes:

- I. Architecture and the City, which investigated the typological and morphological dimensions of urban form, the evolution of collective and individual housing types, the relationship between architectural design and urban identity, and the role of historical and cultural heritage in shaping contemporary cities;
- II. Urban Mobility and Resilient Cities, which addressed traffic congestion, infrastructure challenges, and public transportation, while also promoting the redesign of public spaces – such as streets, squares, and pedestrian zones – to improve accessibility and mobility; it also explored the integration of digital technologies like GIS, AI, and simulation tools to enhance planning, automation, and infrastructure management;
- III. New Housing Models, which examined innovative approaches to affordable and social housing in response to demographic shifts and technological change, along with energy efficiency strategies, passive energy systems, and the application of new sustainable materials and construction technologies;
- IV. Demography and Economy, which focused on macro-regional and national dynamics impacting territorial development, including urban governance, disaster risk reduction, and the rise of smart and inclusive cities; it also explored how emerging technologies – such as AI, VR, and the Metaverse – along with social enterprises and circular economy practices, could foster more equitable and adaptive urban systems; and
- V. Urban and Natural Environment, which analyzed environmental degradation in urban settings, including air, water, and soil pollution, and promoted nature-based solutions, ecosystem-based planning, and adaptive strategies to enhance environmental sustainability and climate resilience.

The conference was conducted in English and Albanian (with self-translated texts where applicable) and was free of charge, with all registration fees fully covered by POLIS University in support of open academic exchange. Key deadlines included abstract submission by June 15th, acceptance notification by June 30th, first draft of papers by September 15th, and final submissions by October 31st.

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Urban Planning in the Polycrises Era as “The Substance of Things Hoped For”

Research, Teaching, and Spatial Design at POLIS
University, Albania

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Abstract

This study considers urban planning not only as a technical exercise, but also as a collective act of hope. The paper, inspired by Edoardo Persico’s idea of architecture as “the substance of things hoped for”, analyzes how universities, especially Polis University, can serve as active platforms for shaping the urban future. The research analyzes teaching, city design / urban planning strategies, concluding with an analysis of the methodology of scientific research carried out at Polis University. The discussion is based on experiences from the PhD program in Architecture and Urban Planning that Polis organizes in collaboration with the University of Ferrara in Italy, where scientific research, teaching practice and spatial design are intertwined. The research also focuses on the analysis of how Polis and its research staff have faced a series of crises such as earthquakes, sustainability, climate and social crises, which have been addressed in articles and publications over the last 10 years. The analysis highlights the concrete contributions of Polis University to urban studies, pedagogical innovation and research, treating each as a distinct but interconnected form of knowledge. The paper argues that urban space should not be seen simply as a product of projects, but is a dynamic field of action where education, research and cooperation with non-academic institutions enhance spatial quality and nurture a shared hope for better living environments. In conclusion, this paper aims to start a dialogue on the transformative role of higher education and urban planning in an era of overlapping crises such as war, climate change, social tensions and migration, which shape the cities of today and tomorrow.

Keywords

POLIS University, polycrises, resilience, research, teaching, urban planning

1. Introduction

In the period we are living is clear a panorama of overlapping crises, starting from geopolitical conflicts and climate change to social fragmentation and migratory pressures. In this situation of *polycrisis* urban planning is not simply a technical discipline, but a cultural and ethical response to uncertainties. “Immersed” in this condition, academic institutions that deal with architecture, spatial design and urban planning must provide a framework through which hope can be reimagined as a practical force that guides collective action in times of instability.

The research question that structures this paper is “*How teaching practices, scientific research and spatial experimentation in universities can contribute to shaping an urban future that is sustainable, inclusive and based on hope, especially in an era defined by overlapping crises?*”. We seek to answer this research question through a methodological analysis of how Polis University has addressed the topic of teaching and research in the field of urban design and planning.

The analysis focuses on the international, interdisciplinary and intersectoral strategies of Polis University, showing how its doctoral program, pedagogical methods and spatial planning form a productive synthesis of knowledge. The paper seeks to reconceptualize urban planning as an act of collective hope by combining theoretical reflection with institutional practice.

The projects and research analysed span a ten-year period at Polis University, covering the timeframe from 2015 to 2024. During this decade, Albania has faced a series of overlapping crises that have profoundly impacted the practice of urban planning and design. We begin with an analysis of planning pedagogy, starting from the case of the “*100+ Villages Academy*” and conclude with the most relevant research projects and scientific contributions carried out by the Polis University staff up to 2024.

In 2018, the staff of Polis was engaged in a program called “*Academia 100+ Villages*”¹⁷ and for this reason this opportunity was used to discuss some aspects of the teaching experience and of urban planning or settlement design in these villages. The specific conditions of the project had to be addressed from different perspectives and at different scales at the same time. The treatment of development projects for more than 40 villages covering a large number of rural areas involves a range of skills, from agricultural studies to economics, culture, and offers an excellent opportunity to test teaching methods in practice. For this reason, were created eight interdisciplinary research and design groups led by eight¹⁸ tenure researchers that collaborated with other experts and

¹⁷ Academia 100+ Villages, launched in 2018 by the National Territorial Planning Agency (AKPT) and Atelier Albania (AA), is an initiative for sustainable rural development in Albania. It aims to create development models for 100 villages through academic collaboration, participatory planning, and the promotion of cultural heritage. POLIS University is the designer of the projects for around 40 villages across the territory of Albania.

¹⁸ According to the rural development document prepared by AKPT (2018), the villages studied by Polis University are grouped by lots:

LOT 01 includes the villages Shishtavec, Shtiçqën, Cahan, Valbonë, / LOT 02 includes Lëpushë, Razëm, Vrith, Theth, Drisht, Zogaj, led; / LOT 03 includes Ishull, Lezhë, Fishtë, Kukël, Mjed, Qelëz, Kryezi, / LOT 04 includes Lurë, Orosh, Bushkash, Skuraj, Katund i Vjetër, / LOT 05 includes Rabdisht, Radomë, Zerqan, Guri i Bardhë, / LOT 15 includes Gorica, Krutje, Libofsh, Ardenic, Pojan, / LOT 16 includes Cakran, Siqec, Luar, Hekal, Kaliva, / LOT 20 includes Zvernec, Kaninë, Drashovicë, Tragjas, Pilo.

These lots were prepared within the course of Urban Planning Theory and Studio led by Besnik Aliaj, Sotir Dharmo and Llazar Kumaraku.

students from *Planning and Urban Management* Master and *Architecture and Urban Design* Master.

However, first we would like to mention some of the key concepts of this approach. “*Space*” is not understood here in the simple Newtonian sense that classifies this concept in absolute terms. The word “*space*” is here understood as a context where spatial forms are intertwined with the relevant activities, tradition, culture and identity of the areas where the intervention is being carried out. Secondly, we state that the goal of specialists who study or intervene in the space is the improvement of quality of life. The work would be meaningless in the absence of this goal. In 1935, one year before his death, Edoardo Persico, an architectural critic, stated at the end of a lecture entitled *Profezia dell'architettura*: “*And it doesn't matter if this prejudice is denied by those who should most defend it, or banished by those who most vaguely fear it: it will remain, all the same, the secret faith of the age. The substance of things hoped for.*”¹⁹ In these words we can find the effort toward modernity, toward the transformation of global crises into aesthetic and ethical values. With this belief in mind, Polis teach students that when they design, they will not only work with space, but will also need to incorporate the expectations of the inhabitants of that space.

At this point, it is important to understand the general context in which this intervention was adapted. After the fall of the communist system in the early 1990s, Albania underwent major economic and social changes that were reflected in a serious urban crisis. As Aliaj, Dharmo and Shutina emphasize in *Between Energy and Vacuum*,²⁰ during this period Albania struggled between a great amount of energy directed toward rebuilding the country and the lack of institutional and legal frameworks. This gap caused an informal and chaotic urbanization of the territory. Today, in the face of the consequences of this kind of reality, rural development models must act as a general framework that allows the energy of the inhabitants to be channelled in the best way toward a sustainable and systemic approach. Starting from this situation, we had to apply a methodology that takes into account a context of urban and rural crisis, where a series of overlapping crises have caused the fragmentation of the territory and the form of settlements. The methodology used is analysed below and considers the settlement through a holistic approach in which various aspects and areas of expertise are interwoven.

2. Teaching methodology in urban design and planning

The main objective of teaching practice at Polis is to facilitate the development of critical thinking to face the challenges of planning, landscape, or urban design. However, the linear analytical process is deliberately overturned at certain decisive moments, thus enabling creative steps and new discoveries. The analytical method used is structured according to the following steps:

¹⁹ Persico, E, 1935. *Profezia dell'architettura*. Skira. The original text in Italian: «*E non conta che questa sua pregiudiziale sia rinnegata da coloro che piu dovrebbero difenderla, o bandita da chi piu, vagamente, la tema: essa restera, lo stesso, la fede segreta dell'epoca. Sostanza di case sperate*»

²⁰ Aliaj, B., Dharmo, S., & Shutina, D. (2010). *Midis energjisë dhe vakumit*. Co, PLAN.

2.1. Analysis

When analyze the territory, Polis students consider three important aspects related to space. The first is the society that lives in that space and all the derived aspects related to it. The second is the environment built by society, such as infrastructure, population groups, services, etc. The third aspect is the environment in which the first two aspects develop. The first group of analyses, or more precisely, social research and social activities in space, is divided into several niches of analysis that seek to achieve a comprehensive view of the social potential and its activity in space. Among them, we can mention: Social Analyses (demography, education, unemployment, gender distribution in relation to education, etc.); Historical Analysis (City History, Historical Development of Population Clusters, Historical Layers of Population Clusters, etc.); Cultural Analyses (Channelling of cultural strengths, such as events, traditions, city specifics, etc.). The second group of analyses investigates the entire space built by society and is based on the various infrastructures built by human beings, population clusters, and services: Infrastructure Analysis (railways, roads and other transport infrastructures, and pipelines); City Morphology Analysis in relation to population clusters and settlements; Service Analysis (government services, administration, health, education, culture, commerce, economy, tourism, entertainment, etc.). The third group of analyses deals with the interaction between the environment and human beings, focusing on the following: Land Cover Analysis (channelling of flora as spontaneous or cultivated, parks, etc.); Hydrographic Analysis (rivers, streams, natural or artificial lakes, underground waters, etc.); Agricultural Analysis (agricultural crops, shrubs, cultivated forests, etc.) Undoubtedly, these analyses are not an absolute and complete representation of reality; however, combined with each other, they allow a comprehensive understanding of human activity in the territory and its interactions with the ecosystem.

2.2. Results from the analyses

The objective of these analyses is to understand the space and to draw specific conclusions for the context in which this space develops. It is very important to emphasize that the moment of analysis is not conceptually separated from the design phase. It is at this point that the first traces of the vision or future project begin to appear, emphasizing the fact that there is an interaction between analysis and the creation of a vision and a project. The first ideas of the vision materialized in relation to the analysis phase will certainly change and mature over time and, at the same time, the findings from the analysis will evolve and intensify as a result of the development of the project. Some elements of the analysis may play a more dominant role, while others may fade since the analytical structure itself is a simplification of the complex reality of ecosystems; the conclusions drawn from these analyses must always consider the intricate relationships between the analysed elements. Fragmented and discontinuous conclusions for each subgroup or for the larger set of analyses are meaningless if the urban planner does not formulate a critical judgment when giving importance to fragments of reality.

2.3. Proposals based on conclusions

During the development of the project, we often see that students' proposals are partially disconnected from the analysis phase and its conclusion. Our goal is always to have an overlapping continuity of phases and, in such cases, students are asked to step back and consider the analysis of the existing situation. Proposals for creating a development strategy are entirely based on the analyses and the conclusions drawn from them. In some cases, this may seem insignificant, but examples of this type are numerous in current planning and design practices. We can find architectural projects that do not take into account the context in which they are being built, or even urban plans and visions that are the same in very different parts of the planet.²¹

2.4. Creation of a Development Strategy

After the phase of analysis, conclusions, and proposals based on them, students undertake the creation of a development strategy based on a vision for the future. To achieve this vision, several strategic projects and actions are proposed. In a later phase, strategic projects may be implemented through a series of smaller physical projects that affect specific areas of the territory or city.

2.5. The Project as Implementation of the Strategy

The final phase of the process that we aim to achieve in teaching and building the vision at the scale of urban planning or design is the elaboration of the architectural project based on the strategic development model. These projects are designed by defining, within the territory itself, the spatial importance that each project will have in space. In this phase, the minimum requirement is the definition of this spatial belonging, which often can develop several dimensions of space in its physical sense. During these phases, what Franco Purini (2000), in his book *Comporre l'architettura*, describes as the overlapping of the analysis phase and the design phase occurs, in which the project is born during the analytical phase. Therefore, we can say that the final drawings of the project must clearly reflect the initial analysis; however, it often happens that, through these drawings, aspects of the analysis that were not previously considered gain a new understanding.

3. Research on urban planning in the polycrisis era

Nowadays we live on the cusp of interesting times. However, according to Žižek "*if you really hate someone, you curse them like this: 'May you live in interesting times!'*"²² It seems we are under a sort of curse and we must rise to the challenge.

²¹ Stefano Boeri proposes the "vertical forest" project both in Milan and in Tirana, and has even suggested the same idea for cities in the Arabian Peninsula. This stance is not exclusive to Boeri. Unfortunately, many contemporary architectural offices do not take into account the context in which they intervene, and the phase of analysis and the extraction of results are completely nonexistent.

²² Žižek, S. (2011). *Living in the end times*. Verso.

Over the past five years, it appears that the world has been spiralling into increasingly dire circumstances. This observation extends beyond the context of Albania and encompasses global events. Multiple crises have converged, leading us down an unprecedented path. Some of these significant events are: 1) Earthquake of November 26, 2019. This seismic event struck Albania, causing widespread destruction and loss of life. Two months earlier, on September 21, 2019, another earthquake had occurred; 2) The Pandemic situation where the entire world faced the COVID-19 pandemic, affecting every aspect of life. As we approached 2022, there was hope that the pandemic would disappear, but events took an unexpected turn; 3) The Russian invasion of Ukraine (February 24, 2022) escalated global tensions and disrupted stability in the world. The conflict had far-reaching consequences, affecting not only Ukraine, but also international relations.; 4) The Hamas-Israel conflict (October 7, 2023) witnessed heavy clashes between Hamas and Israel, resulting in destruction and loss of life. Israel's response led to significant casualties in Palestine, with an estimated 40,000 Palestinians killed. This war caused wider regional conflicts in this area, such as Hezbollah, the Houthi rebels in the Red Sea and Iran; 5) The decline of international rights as in the case of the seizure of the president of Venezuela and the division of the world not into the northern and southern hemispheres but into the eastern and western hemispheres. 5) Economic Adaptation to War Conditions where the European Council emphasized the need to adapt economies to the realities of war. In this panorama not only Europe but also transforms the economy into a war economy but also the Russia, USA and China. In this period the "driving" engine of the world is focused on war activity. The overlap of these crises is reshaping the world, challenging our resilience and adaptability to these disturbing realities. It seems as if the world is teetering on the brink of chaos, with the imminent threat of a global war involving nuclear weapons. However, as if the above points were not enough, our reality includes more than just pandemics and armed conflicts. Since 1971, we have also been faced with crises related to climate, environment and energy.

When these crises intersect and overlap, we are dealing with a *polycrisis*. The uniqueness of a *polycrisis* lies in its impact, which exceeds the simple sum of the effects of each individual crisis. In other words, the consequences are not simply the sum of all the consequences of the overlapping crises but go beyond the result. Morin and Kern (1999) define a polycrisis as *"a period of disagreements, confusion, and suffering caused by the overlay of various crises. The intertwining of these crises results in consequences greater than the sum of all the crises taken individually."*

The concept of a polycrisis highlights the interconnectedness of multiple challenges. It is essential to acknowledge that the situation may worsen further. Janzwood and Homer, Dixon (2022) argue that a global polycrisis can be even more severe than a simple local polycrisis. According to them, the difference between a polycrisis and a global polycrisis lies in the scale, magnitude and reversibility of the outcomes. We are currently facing a series of global challenges such as economic crisis, migration, environmental issues, climate change and armed conflict. According to Janzwood and Homer, Dixon (2022), when at least three of these crises overlap, we find ourselves facing a "global polycrisis".

In Polis, guided by the 2005 High-Level Expert Group report (HLEG. 2005) is practiced "frontier research". This approach emphasizes international and interdisciplinary collaboration, linking academia and industry in what is called the "third mission". Since its founding in 2006, Polis

University has positioned itself at the avantgarde of architecture and urban planning disciplines. In its facilities, not only the spatial dimensions of these disciplines are explored, but also their intersections with other fields such as engineering, economics, law, art, design and medicine. For example, biologists have investigated bacteria in relation to hospital materials, aiming to reduce contamination by using bacteriophobic materials. This innovation improves the technology of building materials in hospital buildings.

The research approach prioritizes the frontier of each discipline instead of its centre. This deliberate choice is consistent with our holistic approach to urban and territorial spatial challenges. To address urban problems, are brought together interdisciplinary teams who intersect with the urban dimension as architects, urban planners, environmental engineers, lawyers, economists, and other professionals. While modern architecture once considered architects and urban planners as saviours, Polis has come to understand that the issue is not only one of purpose, but also of methodology how you will achieve that purpose. Everyone in our field seeks to improve the quality of people's lives, but how do we achieve this practically is the real problem.

3.1. Urban sustainability and earthquake

After the tragic November 2019 earthquake in Albania, Polis University quickly organized an international symposium. Within ten days of the event, experts from all over the world gathered to discuss the consequences of the earthquake. The results of the symposium were documented in a technical bulletin published by the Department of Architecture and Engineering.

The earthquake brought great destruction but also served as a catalyst for positive change. Urban planners and engineers used the opportunity to reshape their studies and propose solutions. Their focus was on improving the structural quality of buildings and the overall urban space. The researchers applied to international journals with publications related to structural studies. In particular, Professor Merita Guri and her team, consisting of Aguljeln Marku, Blerim Nika, Ilda Rusi, Nikolla Vesho and others, contributed significantly to this topic. They published a series of research papers that address the topic of sustainability and resilience in the urban context.²³

The earthquake forced researchers to confront urban sustainability and resilience. Researchers such as Rudina Toto, Merita Toska or Skender Luarasi and Llazar Kumaraku approached these challenges from different perspectives. Toto emphasized environmental sustainability, while Luarasi and Kumaraku (2023) focused on the formal aspects of settlements. Different perspectives allow for integration, not in a dialectical way, but through dialogic communication, guided by Mikhail Bakhtin's dialogic principles.

²³ This research group has maintained a prolific activity, publishing the following material that serves as the foundation for the seismic sustainability: Guri, M., Vesho, N., & Marku, N. (2020); Koka, P., Vesho, N., & Shehu, F. (2021); Vesho, N., Rusi, I., & Sulaj, E. (2021); Guri, M., Brzev, S., & Lluka, D. (2022); Nika, B., Vesho, N., & Marku, A. (2022). Together, these publications establish a specialized framework for understanding the seismic vulnerability and rehabilitation potential of the regional building stock.

3.2. Sotir Dhamo's urban research

Sotir Dhamo has left an indelible mark on Albanian and international urban studies. His scholarly articles and monographs published nationally and internationally stand as important contributions. *Tirana: Qyteti i Munguar*²⁴ and *Saranda: Qyteti i Munguar*²⁵ follows a Foucaultian archaeological approach. Dhamo does not consider the city simply as a product of physical constructions. He also explores the imagined but unrealized potential of the city. Dhamo's research aligns with Michel Foucault's archaeological method. In these monographs, he delves into the history of ideas, uncovering the fundamental rules and structures that shape our cities. By applying this approach to urban development, Dhamo pioneers a new way of analyzing and conceptualizing the city. "What could the city have become?" This question goes beyond missed opportunities; it reveals untapped possibilities. Just as Le Corbusier's "Void of the Future" at the Cannaregio Hospital inspired Eisenman's provocative proposals, Dhamo's work challenges us to explore uncharted urban directions.

His third book, *Understanding Emergent Urbanism: The Case of Tirana, Albania*,²⁶ published by Springer, reveals the hidden rules that define urban form. He connects conventional planning with the complexities of everyday life, self-organization, quantum theory, and fractals as key aspects that lie at the core of contemporary design and planning where current crises overlap.

In this journey, like Piranesi and Eisenman, Dhamo navigates the interplay of lost elements, shaping a future where cities are shaped not only by the presence of existing ones, but also by the absence of a lost potential.

3.3. PhD programs in Albania: A complex landscape

Doctoral programs in Albania have been truncated over the past decade. They were closed by a Decision of the Council of Ministers (VKM) in 2015. Among the programs that remain open these years was a Polis collaboration with the University of Ferrara in Italy, which brings the PhD program in "Architecture and Urban Planning". As a result, there will be a large gap in academic titles for associate and full professors over the next ten years. This situation will be created in different fields. The only discipline that will be covered by researchers will be that of architecture and urban planning. Polis has played a crucial role in ensuring the continuity of research and academic titles in these two disciplines. Over the past decade, 45 doctors have successfully graduated from this program and approximately 20 candidates are currently pursuing their doctoral studies. The doctoral program at Polis is more than just academic, it is international, interdisciplinary and intersectoral Phd. Polis aims for frontier research, pushing boundaries and exploring uncharted territories.

In conclusion, the Polis doctoral program stands as a beacon of sustainability, filling gaps and nurturing the next generation of researchers. Some of the publications resulting from the doctoral studies are: Durana (2014), Albanian Riviera (2015), When a River Flows (2016), Projecting Shkodra

²⁴Dhamo, S., Thomai, G., & Aliaj, B. (2016). *Tirana: Qyteti i munguar*. Polis Press.

²⁵ Dhamo, S., Thomai, G., & Aliaj, B. (2022). *Saranda: Qyteti i munguar*. Polis Press.

²⁶ Dhamo, S. (2021). *Understanding emergent urbanism: The case of Tirana, Albania*. Springer

(2017), Prishtina: The New Image of the City (2018), RURBAN SEQUENCES: Inquiries on Dropull's States of Liminality (2019), and RETHINKING GJIROKASTRA: Can Architecture and City Planning Stimulate Hope and Growth for Shrinking Cities? (2020). Spatial Proposals for The Post, Pandemic City: The Case of Lezha (2022), Re-Inventing Phoeniciae (Finiq): New Intersections of Tradition, Innovation, Landscapes and Tourism. (2023) Intersecting Landscapes: Finding New Spatial Visions for the Cross, Border Region of Prespa Lakes and the case of Pustec Municipality, Albania. (2024)

All these publications have addressed the themes and challenges presented by the territorial and urban reality in the Albanian context. From this perspective, these challenges are as contextual as they are international. For this reason, their contribution transcends national borders.

As part of the research on sustainability and resilience is included the organization of the Tirana Planning Week, held on 22-26 April 2024, by the Faculty of Planning, Environment and Urban Management. At this conference, with 8 international guests as keynote speakers and over 50 presentations in research workshops, the challenges of resilient and sustainable planning were discussed. At this conference, sustainability and resilience were analysed from 5 main aspects: formal, environmental, economic, social and institutional. The results of the conference were published in the corresponding Book of Proceedings and Book of Abstracts, and the most selected papers were published in the 29th issue of Forum AP.

4. Conclusions

Unlike more consolidated urban realities in which the attention of the urban planner is focused on the analysis phase, the Albanian reality requires rapid interventions in which the design phase is combined with the analytical phase. Considering these conditions, the proposed methodology is results-oriented, and strives to consistently combine the analytical approach with strategic thinking and design solutions. It is important to emphasize that, in the Polis approach, analysis and design are two interactive actions and, given this, design begins with analysis, and, consequently, the analysis ends with the completion of the project. In this way, there is a simultaneity of analysis with the project and with the construction phase. In this way, the project is not a "*closed object*" but a process that is intertwined with the realization phase which supplies it with ideas and from which it is influenced with results.

The most important part of facing the overlapping crises is the international, interdisciplinary and intersectoral approach that Polis follows in the research developed within the institution. This approach synthesized in the 3I approach (international, interdisciplinary and intersectoral) guarantees a holistic coverage of the research methodology at Polis.

Such an approach that covers the international scale, the different disciplines and guarantees collaboration with the economic sector is able to face the overlapping crises that are increasingly present in the period in which we live. For this reason, in a world that tends to close borders and divide into territorialized sectors, a 3I approach to research appears as a solution to the problems created by overlapping crises.

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