

SPATIAL TRANSFORMATIONS
OF
THE WATERFRONT – AS AN URBAN FRONTIER
CASE STUDY: DURRËS A PORT CITY

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Approval of the Graduate School of Natural and Applied Science

Prof. Dr. Canan Özgün
Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of
Master of Science

Prof. Dr. Ali Türel
Head of Department

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully
adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science

Assoc.Prof.Dr. Baykan Günay

Co-Supervisor

Assoc.Prof.Dr. Güven A. Sargın

Supervisor

Examining Committee Members

Assoc.Prof.Dr. Baykan Günay

(METU,CP)

Assoc.Prof.Dr. Güven A. Sargın

(METU,ARCH)

Assist.Prof.Dr. Adnan Barlas

(METU,CP)

Assist.Prof.Dr. Burcu Erciyas

(METU,CP)

Inst.Dr. Namık Erkal

(METU,ARCH)

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Name, Last name:

Signature :

ABSTRACT

SPATIAL TRANSFORMATIONS OF THE WATERFRONT – AS AN URBAN FRONTIER CASE STUDY: DURRËS A PORT CITY

Koçi, Valbona

M.S., Urban Design, Department of City Planning

Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Güven A. Sargin

Co-Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Baykan Günay

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This thesis explores the spatial transformations of the waterfront –an urban frontier - of Durrës port city in Albania, within a predefined timeframe: before, during and after socialism. Within this framework, a special concern of the thesis is the examination of the impact of political, social and economic actors, as well as the morphological and geographic conditions, which occur when transforming the urban space and environment. Thus, the work is constructed on the basis of cause (urban process) – effect (physical change) relation, within a particular period of time.

The aim of the study is to understand how space was (re)produced, used and transformed in three different and consecutive systems: pre-socialist, socialist and post-socialist one; and the relations set among actors involved in these process, by making a descriptive and comparative spatial analysis utilizing the constituting physical - programmatic elements of the waterfront as the essential tools of the examination. Along with the information on space production process inherent of three political systems, concentrating the attention on the waterfront as an important

element of the urban structure; this work will bring some understanding on subjects related to the actual spatial transformations occurring in the city and its social space.

Finally, by affirming the waterfront as an edge condition, the notion of 'edge' and its meaning in the socialist and post-socialist city will be elaborated.

Keywords: Waterfront, Edge, Urban Frontier, Port-city, Socialist and Post-socialist City, Spatial Transformation

ÖZ

KIYI BÖLGESİNİN MEKANSAL DÖNÜŞÜMÜ- BİR KENTSEL UÇ-BÖLGE ÖRNEK ALAN ÇALIŞMASI: DURRËS LİMAN KENTİ

Koçi, Valbona

Yüksek Lisans, Şehir Planlama Bölümü, Kentsel Tasarım

Tez Yöneticisi: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Güven A. Sargın

Ortak Tez Yöneticisi: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Baykan Günay

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Bu tezde, Arnavutluk'taki Durrës liman kentinin kıyı bölgesinin –kent ön-bölgesi- mekansal dönüşümü önceden tanımlanmış zaman dilimi içerisinde araştırılmaktadır: sosyalizm öncesi, dönemi ve sonrası. Bu çerçevede, tezin temel ilgi alanı, kentsel mekan ve çevrenin dönüşümünde morfolojik ve coğrafik koşullar kadar yer alan politik, sosyal ve ekonomik aktörlerin incelenmesidir. Böylece çalışma, belirli bir dönem içerisinde neden (kentsel süreç)- sonuç (fiziksel değişim) ilişkisi üzerine kurgulanmaktadır.

Çalışmanın amacı, mekanın farklı ve ardıl üç sistem –sosyalizm öncesi, sosyalizm içerisinde ve sosyalizm sonrası) süresince nasıl (yeniden) üretildiğinin, sürece dahil olan aktörler arası kurulan ilişkilerin; betimsel ve karşılaştırmalı bir mekansal çözümleme ile, kıyının fiziksel-programatik unsurlarının gereken sorgulama araçları olarak kullanılması ile anlaşılmasıdır. Üç politik sistemin mekan üretim süreci üzerine olan bilgi ve ilgiyi kentsel yapının önemli bir ögesi olan kıyı alanına yoğunlaştırılması ile bu çalışma, kentte ve sosyal mekanda olan gerçek mekansal dönüşümler üzerine bir kavrayış ortaya koymaktadır.

Sonunda, kentsel su kenarı alanlarının bir kıyı durumu olarak sunulması ile 'kıyı' fikri ve onun sosyalist / sosyalizm sonrası kentteki anlamının üzerinde durulmaktadır.

Anahtar sözcükler: Kıyı bölgesi, Kent uç-bölgesi, liman kenti, Sosyalist ve Post-Sosyalist Kent, Mekansal Dönüşüm

To them who love the sea
and
believe in its supreme power to change...

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Cities are continuously subject of transformations due to a series of external forces, which could be changes in political and economic systems, or social and geographical conditions. All these causes force the city to exceed the boundaries and effect the definition of new edges or city frontiers. The waterfront as an urban frontier, which since the emergence of the city appears as an element of the urban form, undergoes physical changes as well as social transformations. The thesis aims to raise a discussion on the spatial transformation of the waterfront – as an urban frontier of the port city of Durrës, in Albania, within a predefined timeframe: before, during and after socialism. In this framework, a special concern of the thesis will be the examination of the impact of political, social and economic actors, as well as the morphological and geographic conditions, on the transformation of the urban space and environment. Thus, the work will be constructed on the basis of a cause (urban process) and effect (physical change) relation, within a particular time period.

This study focuses on and analyses the spatial transformations on the waterfront of the port city of Durrës, before, during and after Socialism. This time range is particularly interesting because it comprises three very distinct and consecutive systems, which have shaped the city of today. The thesis revises how the physical and social structure of a particular urban area, which in this case is the waterfront, is transformed as a consequence of radical changes in political systems and eventually institutional and legislative organisms. This descriptive and comparative analysis of the spatial transformation on the waterfront will be developed, based essentially on visual material such as maps and images. The basic map of the pre-socialist period is the first Master-plan of the city of Durrës (1942); two more maps, both Regulatory-plans of the early and late socialist era, belonging to the years 1957 and 1987 respectively, will be the reading maps of the impact of socialist system on urban space and environment. Finally, a recent map showing the urban form and actual condition of the city will be the bases to discuss on the post-socialist state transformations, accompanied by a series of observations through pictures, images and reports.

1.1 Scope of the Study

The waterfront – as a new urban frontier has been a subject of interest and concern for various disciplines that deal with the space (architecture, urban planning, landscape urbanism, sociology, etc). It is a dynamic area of the city and a catalyst of development and renewal. Within this physical context, the change of the port-city interface will also be a topic of interest.

Durrës is a Mediterranean coastal city, which perpetuates its existence as an important trade-commercial settlement since the very ancient times, and being at the present the prime port-city, as well as one of the main cultural and economic centers in Albania.

As mentioned above, the spatial transformations on the waterfront of the port city of Durrës, will be analyzed within three crucial stages of drastic political changes, and ultimately economical and social conditions.

The strategic geographical location has made the emergence of the city of Durrës possible since the very ancient times. It is one of the most distinct cities in the Adriatic and Ionian Region, whose coast has continuously been the set of different encounters and interactions among people of the Mediterranean area. Durrës has undergone the domination of different civilizations throughout its history. But, the political changes and economic systems of the 20th century, as well as the very radical differences between them, are definitely among the most essential factors that have structured the city of today. Also, by analyzing the actual condition of the post-socialist city, it is possible to raise questions and provide answers to different contemporary phenomena, and discuss ways of dealing with the urban space. The first period (the pre-socialist one) is identified with the Monarchy Regime (1928-1939, the time duration of this regime), during which the law for the Agrarian Reform was approved, and the time duration of World War II, during which the influence on Italian architecture and urban planning was immense on that of the city of Durrës. The second period is the Socialist System Era (1945-1990), coming to stage with the end of World War II, a period characterized by the state ownership and central planning versus the post-socialist one (from the 1990s on), which is exemplified by a system of capitalist mode of production, private ownership and market economy. Within this framework, the aim of the study is to analyze and discuss the impact of regulations and principles of architecture and urban planning on the spatial transformations of the waterfront and the urban form and space.

1.2 Method of the Study

Since the main concern of this thesis are the spatial transformations of the waterfront in a port city, this process is analyzed and interpreted by a method combining both the physical morphological analyses and the political, social and administrative structure that have shaped this morphology or urban form. The essential method used in this study is the spatial analysis of the city, paying particular attention to the study area - the waterfront - as an important element of the urban form. The tools of the spatial analyses generate from the studied area itself, as physical components of the waterfront, the space of confrontation between water and land. Thus, the method of spatial analysis consists in observing and discussing the three main linear elements of the waterfront, the seaside promenade, the port and the costal area respectively, supported also by an analysis of the perpendicular elements of the waterfront, the street, the junction and the pier(s), based both on their physical and programmatic features. Examined in a spatial- temporal framework, the results will support the descriptive and comparative analysis of the waterfront, in order to understand the spatial transformations on the urban space and the generating factors, social, political, economical and the actors involved in these processes.

The study will start with a survey on the water - land duality, and the emergence of cities on the water's edge due to the confrontation of these two opposing and complementing and interdependent entities. Furthermore, the work will continue with a research on and definition of the terms waterfront, frontier, edge, which define a strong element of the city urban form. The study will progress with an analysis of the port-cities, which constitute a distinct type of city whose character is reflected on its waterfront, based on their very physical and morphological settings. In doing this, port cities of different world geographies will be presented, examining only their physiognomy and landscape features, as a trial to unveil the peculiarities of the ports in the Mediterranean basin. Thus, the field of inquiry will narrow down into the analyses of the Mediterranean port-city and its waterfront. All the consulted references will contribute into clarifying and defining the concepts of waterfront, urban or city frontier, spatial transformation, port city, and in the later chapter, the terms of socialist, post-socialist city, and property relations; in order to complete an adequate and comprehensive study on the spatial transformations of the waterfront - as an urban frontier. This will be carried out within the context of the specific case study of the port city of Durrës.

The next chapter will introduce the case study and focus on the description of the port city of Durrës in the Mediterranean entity, also by providing with some facts and data (physical and geographical; historical, social and economic). At the end of this chapter, the spatial analysis of the urban morphology of the city focusing on the urban area to be studied will be completed. This analysis aims to define the waterfront as an important physical and dynamic element of the urban form and space. It will also try to emphasize the specificity of waterfront of port-city of Durrës. Through the spatial analyses of the city and the studied urban area, there will be a task to define first the three linear components of the waterfront based on their physical layout or urban morphology as well as their function, and second the ‘perpendicular’ structures of urban elements on the waterfront, that inevitably influence its spatial transformation.

Chapter 4 is constructed on and analyses the spatial transformations on the waterfront of the port city of Durrës, during three successive political systems and within a defined time period: before, during and after Socialism. This timeframe will cover the analyses of transformations starting from the 1930’s till nowadays - the beginning of the 21st century. The morphological analyses will be based and supported by maps and images belonging and expressing the characteristics of the city and its waterfront during these distinct periods, under three so different political, social and economic systems. Thus, the aim of this chapter will be to develop a discussion on the spatial transformation of the waterfront – the urban frontier of the port city of Durrës, with special concern on the examination of the impact of political, social and economic agents, in the pre-socialist, socialist and post-socialist era. Within this study, particular attention will be paid to architecture and planning principles, as the legal and institutional structures, very distinctive for each period. At the same time, complementary to the discussion on planning and architecture, an argument on the property rights will be raised, since during the time period of the study three different property relations appear: feudal, socialist and capitalist property relations. Günay states: “property should be considered as a tool of urban design, that is, production of space”.¹ In this section of the thesis, by being introduced with the approach of state and the policies towards architecture and planning issues within the three periods, we derive the importance of the role of state in the production of urban space.

The conclusion section will provide a discussion on the strong and mutual relation between the urban processes and the urban space. The results attained at the end of the spatial-temporal analysis on the spatial transformation of the waterfront, will be presented in a

¹ Günay, B., 1999, *Property Relations and Urban Space*, MFY, ISBN: METU, Ankara, p.9

comparative way, giving features of the pre-socialist, socialist and post-socialist systems consequently.

When superimposed onto space, these three timeframes are perfectly legible on the regional map, inasmuch as each of them corresponds to an emblematic site of the coastal geography and are on an increasingly greater scale.²

In addition, the actual condition and urban morphology of the waterfront - the studied urban area - as a consequence of a series of external factors being political, economical and social changes, will be discussed. Then, I will take position and formulate scenarios on the future possible development of the Durrës port-city waterfront, as an urban frontier, paying particular attention to the port and its relation to the city. Finally, by affirming the waterfront as an edge condition, the notion of 'edge' will be discussed on the basis of its implication in the socialist and post-socialist city.

² Borruey, R., 2001, "Binding City and Port: Landmarks in Marseille", in *MAKING THE CITY BY THE SEA, Forum and Workshop Marseille 2001*, Berlage Institute, Fundacio Mies Van Der Rohe / ETSAB, Institut Francais D'Architecture, p.41

CHAPTER 2

WATER - CITY CONFRONTATION AND THE WATERFRONT AS AN ELEMENT OF THE URBAN FORM



Figure 1: Circle Satellite Image of Durrës, Port and Old City Part

Water-Land, as an archaic universal symbol, represented in most ancient cultures. In this symbol, the border between two worlds (black and white, dry and wet, hard and soft) is a symbolic dorsal spine, which unites as it divides. This tangible, “threshold” transferred to real life, represents a real process of respiration through which, like on own skin, the sea (sea: movement flux, infinite scope, free of references, abstract...) acts between the “exterior” of the dynamic, universal environment and the “interior” of the land (land: rootedness, solidity, memory, a landscape, codified, figurative...), a static and “localized” environment. We are used to cities being the “respiratory pores” of this epidermis, but so too are the bays and natural phenomena (valleys, river deltas, cliffs...). Both symbolise the seed of the opposite, the complementary principle. The different aspects of the other are silently present in each of the dominant principles, material reality or movement. These points, elements or sparks, in the constant, osmotic, dorsal flux between two ambits, make the change from one energy field to the other possible.³

³ Sasa Ostan, A., 1996, “Dual Landscape”, in *Water-Land / Tierra-Agua, Quaderns D’Arquitectura I Urbanisme*, Nr. 212, p. 45, (extracted from “Telling of the Ancient Commitment to the Earth’s Consciousness”, in AB, issue 126-127)

3.1 Water-land. The impact of water in shaping the city

The water was one of the most important natural assets that influenced the very first settlements of the ancient cultures. Throughout history, man living on land profited from the various features of the “water unit” being a river, lake, sea or an ocean. Water was the vital element, generator of life, a tool used for defense, a resource to agricultural production, a milieu –“smooth space”⁴- that permitted easy transportation and thus commercial uses and industrial developments. As also stated by Detwylen and Marcus, ‘Historically, man has sought city locations that provide: access to good water transportation, security from the enemies, water supply, building materials, fuel, and other usable resources; and a stable base for construction’.⁵ Furthermore, in the past and even more so today, water tends to be an important recreational element.

The unity of advantageous characteristics of water and the strong dependence of human activities on it made the water-edges the most favorite terrains to live in. Regarding the establishment of the cities and the selection of the site Nijenhuis declares: ‘At the strategic knots, in the endless flow of traffic, at mountain pass, at the opening up of valleys, along side-rivers or estuaries, the important cities are found’.⁶ Therefore, some of the ancient established cities, being dependant on water, chose to locate on the water-edges in order to provide their continuation, growth and development. Once settled, the city continues to grow and develop, demonstrating its own structure and form. It is very interesting to note the fact that beforehand the city’s boundaries were defined during ritual ceremonies in the ancient times. The territory within which the city would develop was delineated. With the passing of time the city grew within predefined borders. The (macro) form of the city was controlled by its own limits. Indeed, the relation between the ‘plane’ (the city) and the ‘line’ (the border) is quite intriguing, each inter-dependant and influencing the other, ‘the form,..., is the effect of the limit: or the limit in-forms a substance in a metastable state, which subsequently assumes a stable form’⁷, as differently put forward by Nijenhuis. Further on, he elaborates on the idea that “The city does not radiate from the city, but is formed from the boundary. The limit is not the end of the city, but its beginning, in space as well as in time”.⁸ The same applies to

⁴ Please read Deleuze, G., and Guattari, F., 1987, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. According to Deleuze and Guattari, smooth space is characteristic of sea, steppe, ice and desert, it is not homogeneous, but rather amorphous or non-formal. Furthermore, their statement "The primary determination of nomads is to occupy and hold a smooth space" (p.410), strongly relates to the emergence of the settlements.

⁵ Detwylen, R., and Marcus, M.G., 1972, *Urbanisation and Environment: the Physical Geography of the City*, Duxbury Press, California

⁶ Nijenhuis, W., 1994, “City Frontiers and their Disappearance”, *AD*, vol. 64, no. 3/4, p.15

⁷ Ibid, p.13-14

⁸ Nijenhuis, W., 1994, “City Frontiers and their Disappearance”, *AD*, vol. 64, no. 3/4, p.15

the cities founded on the water-edges, on natural but defined boundaries, and their relation with the water.

Obviously, the city form is an unstable effect, a temporal end-product. The city, its urban form, its ground plans take shape and meaning from the distinctive opposition between water and land, land and city, city and countryside, centre and periphery. The confrontations and inter-dependence between these dualities are persistent and the influencing factors are heterogeneous. As long as there are exterior pressures, social actors and movements the city changes, transforms. In this framework Nijenhuis claims, “The city exists through traffic in all its forms”.⁹

Topography is also a determinant of urban form, similar to the presence of water as a significant natural factor in the selection of site, foundation of settlements and the shaping of urban macro-form. Lynch defines topography as “an important element in reinforcing the strength of urban elements: sharp hills can define regions, rivers and strands make strong edges...”¹⁰ Moreover, Kostof also elaborates on the strong relation between topography - landform or landscape - (mountains, hills, valleys, etc) and the urban form. He states that “The particularity of the site and the way the settlement meets the water, give characteristic to the city form”.¹¹ He sketches the “Natural harbor”, “Riverine settlements”, “Hilltop town” or, “Sloped terrain” (see figure: 1, 2, 3 and 4).

River towns might acknowledge the flow of the course with responsive streets along one or two banks. The sea too provides some choice design opportunities. Natural harbors with sweeping backdrops will suggest suitable street sweeps.¹²

It was already emphasized that the water affects the city form and its urban pattern, thus the environment that the people live in. The particular aspect of the water-city relationship, the integration of one into the other, the co-existence of the city or any urban context with the water, this bond in-between these two entities, though problematic and influential to the urbanity and life of cities, represents the most essential characteristic feature of their existence and development. This particular space of confrontation is defined as the waterfront.

⁹ Ibid, p.14

¹⁰ Lynch, K., 2000, *The Image of the City*, MIT Press, USA, p.110

¹¹ Kostof, S., 1992, *The City Assembled: the elements of the urban form through history*, Boston: Little, Brown , p.39

¹² Kostof, S., 1991, *The City shaped: Urban Patterns and Meanings through History*, Bulfinch Press, Canada, p.54

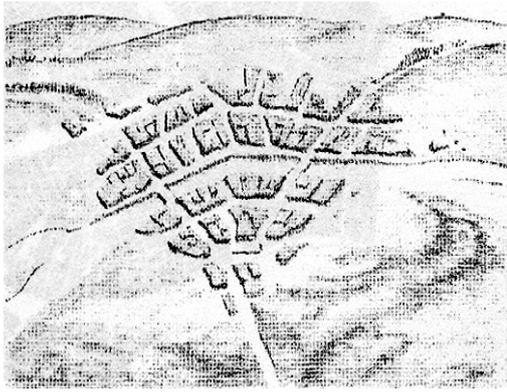


Figure 2: “Riverine Settlement”

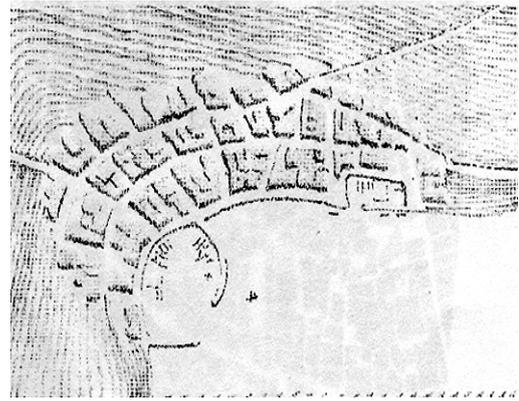


Figure 3: “Natural Harbor”

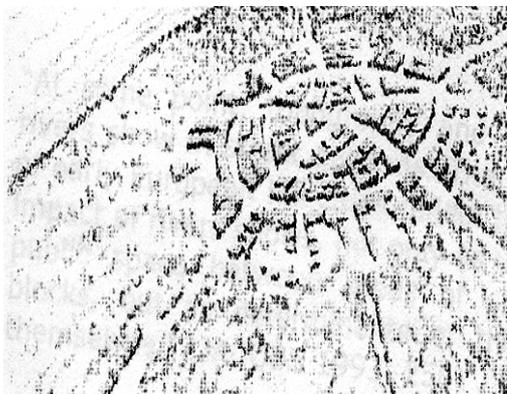


Figure 4: “Hilltop Town”



Figure 5: “Sloped terrain”

“Topography as a determinant of Urban Form” (Kostof, S., 1991, *The City shaped: Urban Patterns and Meanings through History*, Bulfinch Press, Canada, p.54)

2.2 Waterfront as the Urban Frontier

In the previous section of the study, it was argued and concluded that Water and City are two different milieus that continuously exchange their assets, and in this confrontation water becomes the dominant element that affects the physical form of the city. On the other hand, the “non-water entity”, the city with its physical structure and the social actors, continuously effect the shaping of the “water unit”. Breen and Rigby define the urban waterfront as “the dynamic area of the cities and towns where land and water meet”¹³, whereas from the physical point of view Bruttomesso describes the urban waterfronts as “areas sandwiched between the water and the urban fabric”.¹⁴ Nevertheless, the notion of “waterfront” is

¹³ Breen, A and Rigby, D, 1994, *Urban Waterfronts: Cities Reclaim Their Edge*, New York: McGraw Hill, p. 2

¹⁴ Bruttomesso, R., 1997, *The Oriental Dimension of the Waterfront*, Editorial, Aquapolis, vol.1

<http://brezza.iuav.it/citiesonwater/inglese/aquapolising.html>

perceived and defined in many various ways according to different views, fields of interest and disciplines. In this context, in “Generic and Specific” – SMLXL, Koolhaas states:

Each Generic City has a Waterfront, not necessarily with water-it can be with desert for instance- but at least an edge where it meets another condition, as if a position of near escape is the best guarantee for its enjoyment.¹⁵

From this statement we derive the idea that the “waterfront” is an “edge”, an element of the urban form that Lynch would define as “the boundary between two phases, linear breaks in continuity: shores, railroad cuts, walls”¹⁶. Not only in the notion of boundary or edge wide enough to define specific physical elements in the urban context, but it evolves and undergoes transformation in time also. Thus, Virilio argues, “since the originary enclosures, the concept of boundary has undergone numerous changes as regards both the façade and the neighbourhood it fronts”.¹⁷ He further comments on and reveals the thought that:

...the boundary surface has recorded innumerable perceptible and imperceptible transformations of which the latest is probably that of interface.
Each surface is an interface between two environments that is ruled by a constant activity in the form of an exchange between two substances placed in contact with one another.¹⁸

Within the space of confrontation between two media that act differently, emerges a continuous exchange allowed by their possible boundary, which is the urban frontier.¹⁹ In the urban context, the frontier is not simply the city edge, its ritual foundations, natural limit (hills and mountains) or boundary between land and water (rivers, lakes or seas); its defensive wall or custom’s border; its periphery or suburbs. As an interface between two different media, the urban frontier emerges, gets shaped and transforms in time, through incessant confrontations and pressures, flows of goods and information, or “fusion of reality and non-reality”²⁰, as stated by Nijenhuis. The relationship settled among the two opposing entities (water and land/city) and the interface in-between them, as well as the impact they have on each other is quite intriguing. Besides, the relation between the city and its urban frontier is also fascinating, taking under consideration the influence one has on the appearance, transformation and continuance of the other. In this framework, Nijenhuis argues that “In addition to the difference produces by speed and the *repressed state of siege*

¹⁵ Koolhaas, R., 1995, *Small, Medium, Large, Extra-Large: Office for Metropolitan Architecture*, New York: Monticelli, p.199

¹⁶ Lynch, K., 2000, *The Image of the City*, MIT Press, USA, p. 47

¹⁷ Virilio, P., 1991 “Overexposed City” in *Lost Dimension*, New York: Semiotext(e), p.12

¹⁸ Ibid, p.17

¹⁹ Erkal, N., 2001, *Haliç Extra-mural Zone: a Spatio-temporal Framework for Understanding the Architecture of the Istanbul City Frontier*, the Doctoral Thesis, METU, Ankara, p.4

²⁰ Nijenhuis, W., 1994, “City Frontiers and their Disappearance”, *AD*, vol. 64, no. 3/4, p.12-14

the location of the city is important to the formation of the city frontier” and that “[...]the city frontier is a machine, the city itself is also a machinic arrangement that emanates from the city frontier”.²¹ The Urban (City) Frontier is the result of continuous social, economic and political processes, the entity of which Lefebvre entitles as “spatial practice”. He argues that “(social) space is a (social) product”, as well as a milieu of production.²² It is the external forces, the systems, the actors involved in transformation processes, and as claimed by Nijenhuis “the regime of signs” those that give the border the quality of a social, cultural and linguistic frontier, to thus make the city edge a boundary of signification, sense and identity.²³ The waterfront as an urban frontier having an identity of its own emerges as a space that displays the culture and identity of a society. This is a result of the twentieth century last quarter and recent worldwide interventions on the waterfront that have transformed it into “from a peripheral, marginal urban area, often run-down and inaccessible, to one of the city’s most prestigious zones, in great demand, and a focus for both public and private operators”.²⁴ Furthermore, on the issue of the “identity of place”, Bruttomesso argues that since years now, the waterfront:

...has undergone a profound ‘genetic modification’, meaning that not only does it represent a specific and identifiable city ‘structure’ (to the same extent as the square, roads, business district, industrial zone) but it even implies a particular category of city in which the presence and role of the waterfront have become so saturated that a single part of it is used to refer to the entire urban body (they could be called ‘waterfront-cities, just as there are ‘university cities’, ‘entertainment cities’, etc.).²⁵

For the wide range of astonishing facts and phenomena, for the important impact on the urban form, for the significant role in the socio-economic aspects of a society, and many other reasons, it is challenging to investigate the spatial-temporal transformations of the waterfronts, as “the most complex areas to develop in the urban fabric”.²⁶ Aside with the pressure of attraction the waterfronts cases apply, they emerge also as problematic sites that deserve particular interest and consideration concerning the role of actors, their usage, as well as the improvement of tools to appropriately deal with the issue and complexity of waterfronts. Regarding this issue we quote Eisner and Gallion as follows:

The most critical areas of our world are the margins, the edges where related conditions require careful planning and decisions to determine the use of land on

²¹ Nijenhuis, W., 1994, “City Frontiers and their Disappearance”, AD, vol. 64, no. 3/4, p.15

²² Lefebvre, H., 1991, *Production of Space*, Translated by D.N.Smith, Oxford, OX, UK; Cambridge, Mass., USA: Blackwell, p. 120

²³ Nijenhuis, W., 1994, “City Frontiers and their Disappearance”, AD, vol. 64, no. 3/4, p.15

²⁴ Bruttomesso, R., 1999, *The Waterfront Once More*, Editorial, Aquapolis, vol.3
<http://brezza.iuav.it/citiesonwater/inglese/aquapolising.html>

²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ Erkal, N., 2001, *Haliç Extra-mural Zone: a Spatio-temporal Framework for Understanding the Architecture of the Istanbul City Frontier*, the Doctoral Thesis, METU, Ankara, p.4

both sides of a border. Perhaps one of the most interesting and challenging margins is where water meets land.²⁷

The aim is based also on the idea to once more emphasize the importance and significance of this element in the urban context, and in structuring the city. Apart from the certain fact that the most attractive attribute of the waterfront is its very nature, the reality that it is a strip of city in contact with the water, which has a particular superior importance with respect to other parts of the urban structure, the waterfront, in most of the cases, displays great qualities, values and specificity also for the presence of the port.

2.3 Port-Cities and their Waterfronts

The Port-City constitutes a separate group of cities that inherits distinct features from inland city. Eventually, the main distinguishing feature is the presence of water in the port city, for the simple reason that, as declared by Soffer and Stern, “All ports, by definition, stand where land and water meet. Every one stands at the end of the road or inland waterway...”²⁸, and benefits from the advantages or suffers the disadvantages the water embodies. Moreover, they claim that:

A port city is characterized by physical elements that differ from those of an inland city. Port cities depend on such things as protection from the storms and enemy attacks by sea and the great importance of the hinterland; therefore, a fundamental factor in the success of the city and the port is accessibility to the coast and the interior.²⁹

The port itself, as an indicator of the open central position and the activity it generates, causes a continuous state of extraordinary mobility within the city. One characteristic of waterfront cities, as Braudel has pointed out, is that “when we arrive by boat, we enter them not on their periphery but in their centre”³⁰, which in fact increases the sense of place and the urbanity in a city that generates from the diversity, marginality and complexity. Regarding this issue, Mc Ewen argues:

[...]ports, generally speaking, are populated by shifty character of everyday description. Being places where people continually come and go, they are not known

²⁷ Eisner, S., and Gallion, A., 1993, *The Urban Pattern*, Van Nostrand Company, New York, p.76

²⁸ Soffer, A., Stern, Sh., 1986, “The Port City, a sub-group of the Middle Eastern city model”, *Ekistics* 316 January/February 1986, 317 March/April 1986, p. 102

²⁹ Ibid, p. 103

³⁰ Braudel, F., 1972, *Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, (First published in 1946), London, p. 317

for having a “harmonious” or coherent urban fabric. The habitués of ports do not form closely-knit communities.³¹

It is an undoubted fact that the proximity of cities to the coast causes an obvious exposure to economic and industrial development, as well as foreign influences and social pressures of heterogeneous communities. As a consequence the character of the port-city is reflected on its waterfront, and vice versa. The waterfront, as an Urban Frontier, experiences the same transformations, technological developments and various urban dynamics, which the city does. The waterfront is the fringe of the city from where the life, the activity, the motion takes start. It is the entity that defines the urban identity, the nature of the maritime port city.

The argument raised is especially true for port facilities linked to a busy pattern of long-distance trade, which often means seaports. With maritime ports, the entire waterfront is armed with docks, berths, warehouses, shipyards, and all their coincident clutter. Aesthetically unified designs for seaports clearly run foul of the myriad activities that were dependent on access or proximity to water. At best, one could dramatize or accent with architectural effects certain features of the waterfront, or else create landmarks on the skyline immediately behind the edge of the water to impress incoming vessels with an initial, striking picture.³²

The waterfront of a maritime city, its architecture that engenders surprises with the changes in buildings’ scale, the silhouette of the city with all its modest or showing off elements, the significance and silent communication between spaces near or far away from one another, constitute the perfect asset of the city, which welcomes the comers from the sea. As they approach, they “would land right in front of residential buildings, intermixed with business, structures and warehouses. Some others port life is distinct from the well-to-do residential districts further up”.³³ The character of the waterfront, consequently the city, differs regarding the elements that comprise it and the transformation they undergo and eventually the features they display in time.

2.3.2 Historical Evolution of Waterfronts in Port-Cities

When mentioning of a waterfront city, one eventually considers also a port, since most of the cities on water are actually port cities. The last ones have encountered urban activities interwoven with those on the wharves for many centuries now. Relationship established between the main part of the city and the functional or working part, thus the port, was

³¹ McEwen, I.K., 1993, *Socrates Ancestors: an essay on architectural beginnings*, Cambridge, Mass/London: MIT Press, p.84

³² Kostof, S., 1992, *The City Assembled: the elements of the urban form through history*, Boston: Little, Brown p.41-42

³³ Ibid, p.39

frequent, essential and enduring. Technological evolution in maritime transport, as one of the most influential factors among a series, has however, broken this bind and the port has been isolated from the city with functions and areas separated. Regarding this issue, Hall argues, “Technology made and then broke the traditional urban waterfront”.³⁴ During the attempts to handle and manage the emerging problem on the waterfront and specifically relation between the city and the port, strategies of development and integration were imposed, but they often appeared to contradict each other.

Within the port-city relation framework and based on the historical evolutions and development of the port and the city, there have been considered four main stages of the process of port development / waterfront transformation. Those are the “trade centres” - mercantile waterfronts, “working” - industrial waterfronts, “abandoned” - retreat from waterfronts, and finally “rediscovered” - redeveloped waterfronts.³⁵

The intention of referring to such a classification of the port-city waterfront development lies behind the idea of having an overall perspective of these historical transformations, in order to set a background and understand better the developments that have occurred on the port-city interface, in the analyzed case study: the port city of Durrës. Furthermore, the geography that the referred waterfront development categorization covered is also of great interest and assistance, because it offers the possibility of comparison to similar and different geographies, considering the fact that the city of Durrës is settled within the Mediterranean basin. This evidence generates the necessity of a further investigation of the Port-City model in the Mediterranean entity and its waterfronts.

2.3.2 The Mediterranean Port-City and its Waterfront

The Mediterranean maritime cities constitute a separate assembly of cities whose history and evolution, social and spatial transformations differ from those of other settlements exterior to the Mediterranean unit. They emerged as important cities since the very ancient times, and the prosperity and development has flourished since then. Referring to Braudel, who draws attention to the importance and significance, and indicates that “in the Mediterranean, the

³⁴ Hall, P., 1993, “Waterfronts: A new Urban Frontier”, p.12 in Bas Bütüner, F., 2003, *Waterfront Revitalization: A new challenge for Urban Development*, Master Thesis, METU, Ankara.

³⁵ For detailed information on the historical evolution of port cities, please see: Bas Bütüner, F., 2003, *Waterfront Revitalization: A new challenge for Urban Development*, Master Thesis, METU, Ankara. The author constructs the analyses on the Hoyle’s historical model of port-city structured on the development of Marseille port, as a representative of the European port-cities; and Wrenn’s pattern of North American port development.

great cities were all near the sea, the greatest route to all; inland they were less frequent, being served only by the overland roads, which carried less traffic...”³⁶, it is derived that in the Mediterranean basin, the relation between water and the cities used to be close and complex. The entity of the port was also well integrated into the city, constituting its core, the social life and activities. On this argument, Bourlier and Orillard claim, “Mediterranean cities and ports are materially and historically connected, the former never changing without altering the later”.³⁷

Within the framework of the spatial transformation of the waterfront in the port cities, and specifically that of functionality, complexity, life and urbanity, the Mediterranean ones represent a specific group, whose own transformation do not necessarily go parallel with those of other maritime cities. The statement of Boeri further supports this idea:

Mediterranean ports...should remain what they are: complex and composite places where work runs into leisure, where cars coexist with containers and where big ships salute fine old buildings. They should remain places where architecture is still capable of generating real surprises, changes of scale, with resonance between different spaces distant from one another.³⁸

Considering the geographical, physical and morphological features, it would be of interest to depict and describe the typical representative relation between port and city in four different geographies of the world, namely: North America, Asia, Northern Europe, and Southern Europe - the Mediterranean maritime cities, paying particular attention to the port type of Durrës, which as portrayed by Eduard Bru, possess “an undulating geography – as the majority of cities in the Mediterranean basin” do.³⁹ Therefore, this exercise will be the first attempt to locate the port city of Durrës in the categorization of Mediterranean cities, whose “common model had been the panoramic city extending around the curve of the natural bay, which integrated to the enlarged port area”⁴⁰, as described by Wilson. Moreover, regarding the geography of the Mediterranean port city, Bourlier and Orillard state the existence of various landscapes which, eventually, lead to the particularity of each one of the ports, but still they remain closely related to the city, mainly to the most vivid part of the city, the heart – the old part of the city.

³⁶ Braudel, F., 1972, *Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, (First published in 1946), London, p.316

³⁷ Bourlier, P., and Orillard, C., 2001, “Converging Viewpoints”, in *Making the City by the Sea, Forum and Workshop Marseille 2001*, Berlage Institute, Fundacio Mies Van Der Rohe / ETSAB, Institut Francais D’Architecture, p.13

³⁸ Boeri, S., 2001, “Mediterranean Ports: Functional Metissage”, *L’Architecture D’Aujourd’hui*, vol 332, Janv.-Fev. 2001, p.71

³⁹ Bru, E., 2001, *Coming from the South*, ACTAR, Barcelona, p.15

⁴⁰ Wilson. A., 2001, “Port cities: when Urban Design casts off”, *L’Architecture D’Aujourd’hui*, vol 332, p.33

Their geographical locations permit the coexistence of highly different landscapes and environments. The coexistence is not exclusive to the large spaces devoted to the temporary storage of goods, passenger access-ways, or to the leisure –time facilities that go along with housing development. This is to be explained by the geography of the Mediterranean coast, which squeezes the historical city into the port.⁴¹

The physical description of the port types will start with the North American port and specifically New York. The American ports usually use a repetitive system of perpendicular piers, as a continuation of the streets and extension on water of the gridiron pattern of the urban tissue.

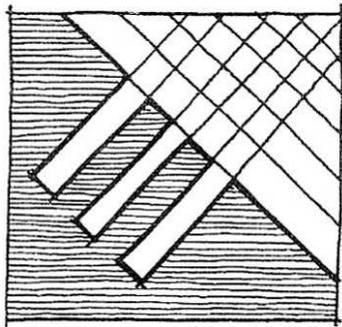


Figure 6: Port Type, typical of North America (Wilson. A., 2001, “Port cities: when Urban Design casts off”, *L’Architecture D’Aujourd’hui*, vol 332, p.33)

Figure 7: Aerial View of New York

(http://www.bbpd.org/The_Site/Aerial_Views/Manhattan_Context/BBPAerialPix1.jpg)

⁴¹ Bourlier, P., and Orillard, C., 2001, “Converging Viewpoints”, in *Making the City by the Sea, Forum and Workshop Marseille 2001*, p.12

The Northern European ports were built behind seawall, whereas the city extended in fragments around the harbor. This phenomenon, together with the physical and geographical features of the site, generated an uneven urban development on both banks (of rivers or water canals).

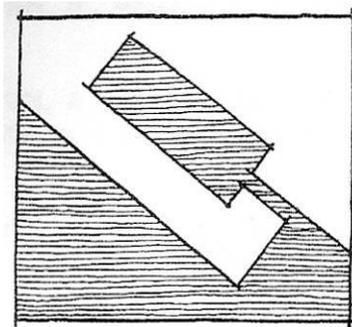


Figure 8: North European Port Type (Wilson. A., 2001, "Port cities: when Urban Design casts off", *L'Architecture D'Aujourd'hui*, vol 332, p.33)

Figure 9: Aerial View of Port of Rotterdam, Netherlands

(http://www.hannorotterdam.nl/hanno/internet/images/Hannoluchtfoto_compressed.jpg)

The Asian port type represented by ports in Japan: Kobe, Osaka, constitutes a quite unique example, characterized by artificial islands, and a strong water and port relation.

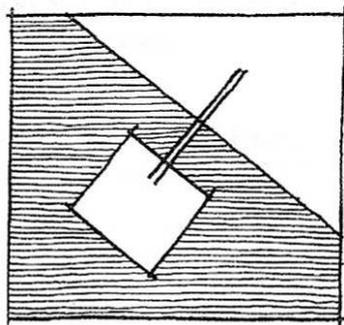


Figure 10: Port type of far-Asia (Wilson. A., 2001, "Port cities: when Urban Design casts off", *L'Architecture D'Aujourd'hui*, vol 332, p.33)

Figure 11: Aerial Image of Kobe Port, Japan, Asia (<http://ikonos.sfc.keio.ac.jp/preview/kobe.jpg>)

One of the most typical port models of Mediterranean Basin could be found in Genoa, where the old city panoramic city expanding around the natural bay and the port are in a very close symbiosis.

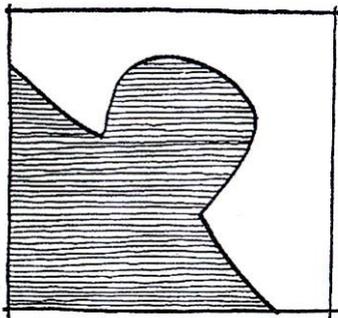


Figure 12: The Mediterranean Port Type (Wilson. A., 2001, “Port cities: when Urban Design casts off”, *L’Architecture D’Aujourd’hui*, vol 332, p.33)

Figure 13: Aerial View of Port of Genoa, Italy (<http://www.ess.co.at/SUTRA/CITIES/port.jpg>)

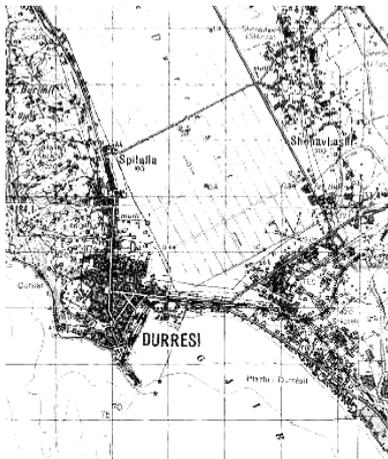


Figure 14: Topographical map of Durrës, displaying also the location of port on a natural bay, typical of the ports in the Mediterranean Basin (Arkiva e ISPU_ Archive of the Institute of Urban Studies and Plans, Tirana)

Figure 15: Aerial View of Port – City of Durrës, Albania (Picture taken by Alket Islami, Aeronautika Shqiptare, Digital Archive of Office of Urban Planning, Municipality of Durrës)

CHAPTER 3

THE PORT CITY OF DURRËS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN ENTITY



Figure 16: Map of Europe, and the Mediterranean Region
(<http://www.sspix.org/images/Miscellaneous/Europe-Map-2.jpg>)

3.1 Some Facts about the City

The history of the port city of Durrës goes back as long as 3000 years. The foundation of the city dates back to the year 627 B.C.⁴², when a Greek (Helene) colony settled at the lower-southern shores of Adriatic Sea. Being continuously a “node” and intersection of both water and land ways, the city has been a bridge between Albania and regions of Balkans, Europe and the Mediterranean. Because of its importance and size, the port city of Durrës is categorized among the greatest cities of the Mediterranean Entity during Antiquity and the middle Ages.



Figure 17: Map of Balkan Peninsula (<http://www.ethnomusic.ucla.edu/Images/mapbalkans.jpg>)

In the Antiquity, the city had two names: Epidamn and Dyrrahachion (Dyrrah) the second version of the name evolved during the middle ages and today it is called with the name: Durrës. Dyrrah was the starting point of Via Egnatia⁴³, which was the most important route to connect the southern regions of Italy with the East, as a continuation of Via Apia in Italy⁴⁴ Based on other sources; it has been found out that Via Egnatia provided a link between the

⁴² The foundation of Durrës in year 627 B.C. is given as a fact by many historians, in the educational texts, also.

⁴³ Micara, L., 2000, “L’eredita del passato” in *Un Piano per Durazzo –Durrës Master Plan*, p.11

⁴⁴ Hoti, A., 2003, *DURRËSI: Epidmani-Dyrrahu*, GUIDE, Tirana, p. 27

West and East Roman Empire. Erkal states that it was ‘originally formed in the consulate of Egnatius between 146-143 B.C., as a military highway, starting from the Adriatic shores at Dyrrachium and reaching Byzantium’. During the reign of Emperor Augustus, it was turned into a public transportation route, and used for the administrative and economic communication of the Empire, at that time.⁴⁵

Despite all ups and down, blooming and destructions because of either natural disasters or wars, since the time of its foundation till now, Durrës perpetuates its existence as a port city. It is for sure its geographical location and presence in the Mediterranean coast that has favored the trade activity in a wide hinterland, thus supporting the economy and the development of the city.

According to recent plans and developments on an international scale, the city of Durrës is thought to take up a strategic position and role within the net of the ‘VIII Corridor’, which is a strong infrastructural ‘arterial’ that will make a more efficient connection between the eastern and western countries.



Current Issue: BORDERS

The 'Corridor 8' project:

Once upon a time, the Appian Way connected Rome to Brindisi before heading east to the other side of the Adriatic. From the port of Durrës in Albania, it eventually reached Greece. This route carried military and commercial rule from the Roman Empire to the East. After 20 centuries, the EU is putting its trust in the same direct routes to make its transport and telecommunications system run more smoothly, by launching the so-called Trans-European Transport Network, known in EU as a ‘multimodal’ transport infrastructure.⁴⁶

Figure 18: Map showing a possible route of Corridor 8: Brindisi – Varna / Bari – Varna

(<http://www.cafebabel.com/en/article.asp?T=T&Id=3309>)

The notion of “Corridor” represents a system of road and railway transports, telecommunication and energy networks. In this framework, a modern transcontinental East-West Transport Corridor linking Adriatic with Black Sea has long been recognized by all the governments in the area as an important undertaking for integrating the economies of the

⁴⁵ Erkal, N., 2001, Haliç extra mural zone: a spatio-temporal framework for understanding the architecture of the Istanbul City Frontier, the Doctoral Thesis, p.65

⁴⁶ Merlo Tomasso, 2005, “Corridor 8: The Albanian Dream”, <http://www.cafebabel.com/en/article.asp?T=T&Id=3309>

South Balkan region with Europe, the Middle East, the Caucasus and Central Asia. In 1994, Italy, Albania, Macedonia, Bulgaria and Turkey executed a Memorandum of Understanding on the subject. Following this the Pan-European Second Transport conference held in Crete designated the East-West Corridor No. 8 as one of the priority transportation networks of Europe.⁴⁷

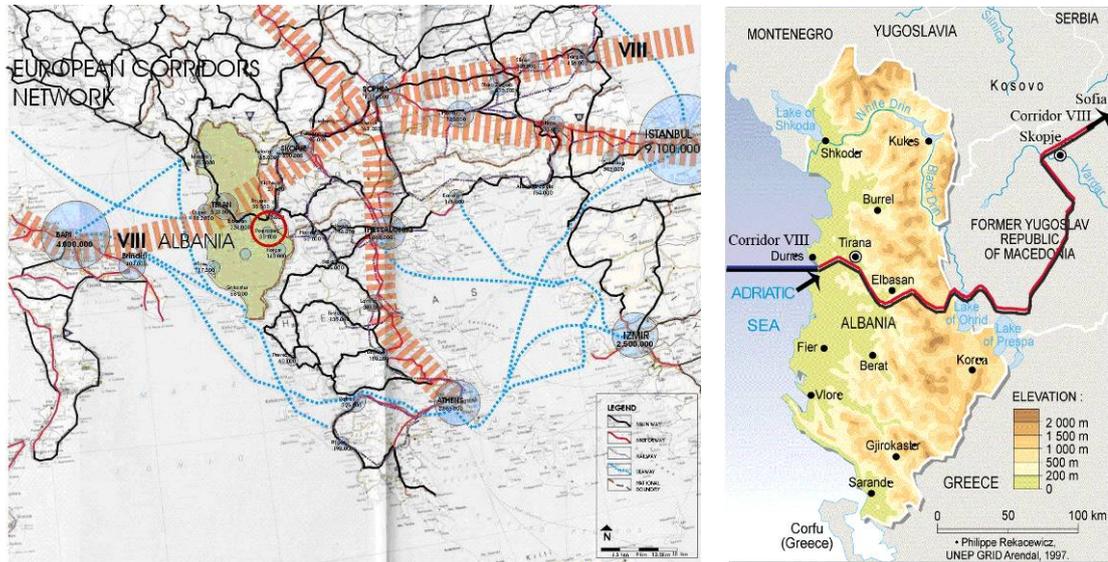


Figure 19: Map showing Corridor VIII and its impact on Albania, Balkans and the Region (Prepared within the framework of Urban Design Studio 2002-2003: “Master Plan for the City of Pogradec-Albania”, in the Master Program of Urban Design, Department of City Planning, Faculty of Architecture, METU, Ankara)

Figure 20: Map of Albania showing the route of Corridor VIII (original map source is [www: http://www.reisenett.no/ekstern.html?url=http://www.grida.no/db/maps/prod/level3/id_1259.htm](http://www.reisenett.no/ekstern.html?url=http://www.grida.no/db/maps/prod/level3/id_1259.htm))

Worked on based on a map prepared within the framework of Urban Design Studio 2002-2003: “Master Plan for the City of Pogradec-Albania”, in the Master Program of Urban Design, Department of City Planning, Faculty of Architecture, METU, Ankara)

To further support and help the understanding of the above positioned images we can state Günay, who on the issue claims that Corridor Number 8 originates from the Italian peninsula, crosses the Adriatic through Bari and Brindisi arriving at Durrës the main port city of Albania. The Durrës – Tirana conurbation is already a part of the 8th Corridor supported by an international airport (see figure 20). At the present the 8th Corridor moves east to Elbasan, passes through Skopje and comes to Sofia serving as a junction point.⁴⁸ The impact of the corridor - this strategic trans-national infrastructure project - on the sustainable development of the area of Albania, Adriatic, Balkans and more generally EU is immense. Based on the report “The “corridors” (road and railway transports, telecommunication,

⁴⁷ Themeli, Gj., 1999, “Contribution to the Adriatic Conference”, Trieste, 1-2 July, 1999, (www.)

⁴⁸ Günay, B., 2004, in Sargin, G.A. (ed.), *Hybrid spaces*, Middle East Technical University, Faculty of Architecture, Ankara, pp. 31-32

energy networks) as essential elements to achieve sustainable development of Albania and its integration in Europe”, presented by engineer Gergji Themeli at the Adriatic Conference held in Trieste on the 1st and 2nd of July 1999, the 8th Corridor would: first of all give access to a significant alternative source of raw material (gas, oil, ores); second, it would build a foundation for healthier economies throughout the Balkans (countries with weaker economy, but big development potentialities) and facilitate rapid integration with Western Europe; third, seen in the Adriatic context, the corridor introduces facilities and possibilities for the transit traffic accommodation with Albania as terminal; and finally, in the inter-regional cooperation framework and thanks to the favorable geographical position, N-S and E-W corridors represent a big interest for the parallel development of all Balkans neighbor countries (infrastructure, services, tourism, etc.).⁴⁹ In other words, expressed more precisely, the impact of Corridor No.8 on EU areas generally, Balkans and the Adriatic, Albania and city of Durrës specifically is quite important, since Port of Durrës will serve as the Adriatic Sea shipping gateway to the corridor, efficiently handling all types of commodities, including containerized traffic. At the present, the port of Durrës is the biggest and most important one in Albania. Almost 85% of the import - export goods in the whole country, as well as a great number of passengers making the waterway to neighbor countries such as Italy and Greece, use this port as a terminal.

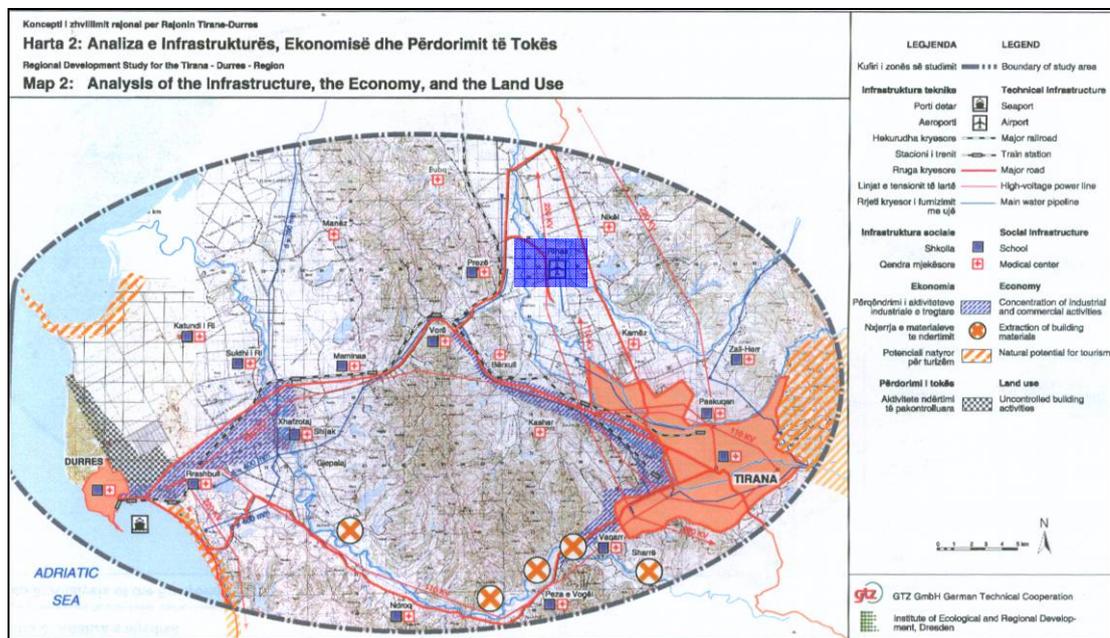


Figure 21: Analysis of the Infrastructure, Economy and the Land Use of Tirana- Durrës Region (DREJT NJE ZHVILLIMI TE QENDRUESHEM TE RAJONIT TIRANE-DURRËS, Studimi i zhvillimit Rajonal për Zonën Tirane-Durrës, Koncept Zhvillimi, Draft final, Tirane, Shkurt 2002, p. 42)

⁴⁹ Themeli, Gj., 1999, “Contribution to the Adriatic Conference”, Trieste, 1-2 July, 1999, (www.)

Furthermore, looking at the city of Durrës in a regional (sub-national) context, the phenomenon that attracts attention is the conurbation in between Tirana and Durrës. In this framework, there have been various studies. One to be mentioned is the Project “Towards a Sustainable Development of Tirana-Durrës Region” (see figure 21), whose vision is: the controllable expansion, manageable and sustainable development, supports and Tirana-Durrës region in becoming a Central Urban Region in Albania, as a part and partner of Europe.⁵⁰

3.1.1 Geographical Location and Physical Characteristics

Durrës is settled in the western part of Albania, which is a Balkans` Country neighbor of Monte-Negro (north), Kosovo and Macedonia (east), Greece (south-east and south), the Adriatic Sea (west) and Italy beyond it. The district of Durrës covers an area of 432 km². In the north- eastern part, it shares the boundary with the district of Tirana, and in the south with the district of Kavaja. As already mentioned, the western boundary of the city is defined by the Adriatic Sea Shoreline, which has a length of 30 km.

The physical morphology of the region is characterized by plains and hills, which have an average height of 89 m above the sea level, whereas in the city, the average height is only 2 m above the sea level. The whole city is settled on the natural bay of Durrës. The oldest part of the city, there where the traces of the ancient civilization are, is situated on the hill (Mali i Durrësit, whose height is 178m) overlooking the Adriatic Sea in the west, the bay of Durrës in the south and the plain in the east and north-east. The city is extending, and increasing in density as well, basically in all directions, the plain in the north and east and also towards the south, along the sandy seashore. The port is positioned right in the centre of the Bay of Durrës, which is probably the most favorable location to be protected from the winds and storms.

The Adriatic Sea is one of the most important natural resources, which has greatly influenced the economic development of the city of Durrës. The region of Durrës is also rich in rivers and water canals, among which Erzen (108 km) and Ishmi (74 km) are mentioned as the main ones (known respectively as Ardanaxus and Isamnus in the antiquity). They are both effectively used in the watering system of the agricultural land.

⁵⁰ Drejt nje Zhvillimi te Qendrueshem te Rajonit Tirane-Durrës, Studimi i zhvillimit Rajonal per Zonen Tirane-Durrës, Koncept Zhvillimi, Draft final, Tirane, Shkurt 2002,p. 10

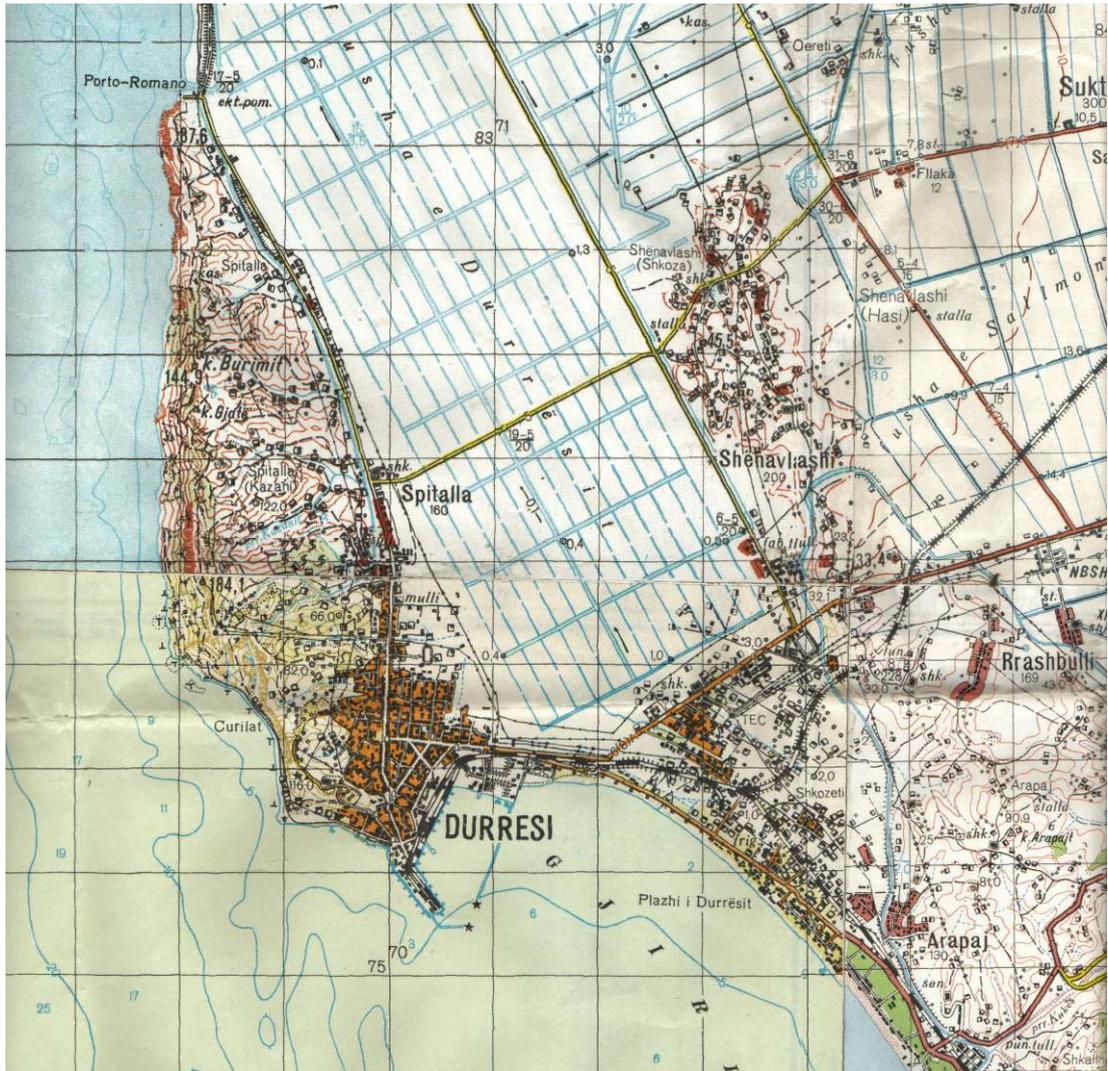


Figure 22: Topographical Map of Durrës (showing the range of hills on north south direction, the inclined planes, one towards the sea and the other towards the flat plane on the east, the city urban form, the location of the port on the natural bay, and the extension on the coastal area)

(Archive of Institute of Urban Projects and Plans, Tirana)

The climate is Mediterranean, part of the sub-tropical climatic belt, characterized by a warm winter and a hot summer, having an average temperature of 7° C and 24° C. respectively. The average annual temperature is 15.5 ° C.⁵¹

3.1.2 A historical narration

The economic advances and culture, the urban form and architecture has made of Durrës one of the most distinct cities in the Adriatic and Ionian Region, whose coast has continuously been the set of different meetings and interactions among people of the Mediterranean area.

⁵¹ Hoti, A., 2003, *DURRËSI: Epidmani-Dyrrahu*, GUIDE, Tirana p. 15

Durrës has undergone the domination of different civilizations throughout its history. Today's city partially stands on the ancient settlement inhabited first by the Illyrian tribe of Taulant (VII cent.B.C.). The Greek historian Apiani Alexandrini in the II century B.C. writes: `...the king of this place Epidamn, constructed a city by the sea and named it Epidamn`, and later after `...the king's grandson, constructed a port close to the city and called it by his name: Dyrrhachion`.⁵² According to historians, Dyrrhachion is a Hellenic (Greek) colony, also because of its urban form and spatial organization, which is very similar to the Greek polis. In the archaic period, starting from the year 627 B.C. till 480 B.C., Epidamn became the most developed and prosperous centre in the western plate of the Southern Illyria. Aristotle writes that during the classical period (480- 355 B.C.), the city of Epidamn was governed by political and juridical institutions very much alike those of Athens.⁵³

Since the V century B.C., the city of Durrës had an atelier and construction site for manufacturing boats and ships; and towards the end of IV century B.C. the first silver coin was delivered to the market. These advances generated crucial transformations in the trade exchange and commercial activity, as well as great progress in its economy.

In the Hellenic period (335-30 B.C.), promenades, commercial streets, temples and other structures and edifices of social and private character such as baths and private villas were already constructed in the city. In 228 B.C., the city of Dyrrah became a roman protectorate and por de facto, had the right to the status of `free city`. Having this status: `et libera civitatis est et ...proxima Italia`⁵⁴ and being a port-city at the same time, it became the center of great commercial exchanges with Brindizi and other settlements in the Apennines, and also wider in the Mediterranean Region. The currency (silver coin) was valid in many the area of Apennines and wider till the Black Sea.

Another asset that facilitated and strengthened the relations of the city of Durrës with other settlements in the region, as already mentioned above, is Via Egnatia. The construction of Via Egnatia (146-120 BC) was under the supervision of the Proconsul of Macedonia, G. Egnatius, from whom it also received its name. It was constructed on the traces of the ancient Illyrian way Candvia. The itinerary of the way was Dyrrah, Apollonia (another ancient settlement within the territory of Albania), then the route passed along the valley of

⁵² Bella civilia II, in Hoti, A., 2003, *DURRËSI: Epidmani-Dyrrahu*, GUIDE, Tirana, p. 39

⁵³ Hoti, A., 2003, *DURRËSI: Epidmani-Dyrrahu*, GUIDE, Tirana, p.21

⁵⁴ *Cic.Fam; 14,1, 7* in Hoti, A., 2003, *DURRËSI: Epidmani-Dyrrahu*, GUIDE, Tirana, p.24

Shkumbin River to reach the shore of Ohrid Lake, directing towards and crossing Thessalonica and ending up in Constantinople-Byzantium.⁵⁵

The city of Dyrrah lost its independence after the war between Cesar's army and supporters' of Pompei, and thus also its status of "free city". As a consequence, throughout the years 30 B.C. till 286 A.D., the city was a roman colony. The city had strong commercial relations with the most economically developed centers of the Adriatic and Mediterranean region of that era. During this period, a series of important public constructions took place such as: the amphitheatre (I century A.D. - II century, A.D.), whose capacity is estimated to be around 15 000 spectators; the library, whose opening was done during the era of Emperor Trajan (91-117 A.D.), the public baths, the water supply system (constructed in the era of Emperor Hadrian: 117- 138 A.D.), and many luxurious villas for the time.

Within this context, the surrounding wall of the city together with towers on the wall and the castle itself, have a distinct place and deserve a special attention. They constitute an important part of the Urban Form of the city. So, perfectly combined with the natural limit (hill) and the boundary between land and water (the sea), the function of the surrounding wall through its history has been: defense from sieges, custom's border; enclosure and definition of territory boundaries, etc. thus acting as a real urban frontier. When Cicero defined a series of disadvantages and only one advantage of the maritime city he wrote: "...maritime cities are exposed to dangers which are both manifold and impossible to foresee".⁵⁶ Wars and sieges, as well as natural disasters (earthquakes) have partially destroyed it and necessitated the restoration of the remaining sections of the wall. Its layers and also components belong to different periods of the history. Nowadays, only 1/3 of the walls of the fortification, three towers (one of which is the Venetian Tower, belonging to XIII cent.) and three gates are still remaining.

During the Byzantine Era (395- 1341), strategically located, Dyrrah continued being one of the most significant cities on the western coast of the Balkans. At that time, it was the epicenter of Epirus Nova (new Epir). The period of late antiquity was the time of great intensifications of trade and commercial activities among the ports of Epirus Nova, including Dyrrah and many other Mediterranean cities. Some of the well-known water way routes / itineraries were: Cercyra-Patras-Corinth-Dyrrachion, Dyrrachion- Brindisi- Otranto, etc.

⁵⁵ Hoti, A., 2003, *DURRËSI: Epidmani-Dyrrahu*, GUIDE, Tirana, p.27

⁵⁶ Vishnia in Malkin, I., and Hohlfelder, R. L., 1988, (eds.), *Mediterranean Cities Historical Perspectives*, Frank Cass, Great Britain, p. 187

Since the very beginnings of the Ottoman Empire Era, and after the invasion of the Albanian territory, an immediate and drastic decline in the economy and prosperity of the city was observed. According to the references, the situation started improving only in the XVII century, when the city became the centre of transit commercial activities and the most important quay in Albania for the time.⁵⁷



Figure 23: View of Durrës City in 1876, Gravure (Hoti, A., 2003, *DURRËSI: Epidmani-Dyrrahu*, GUIDE, Tirana, pp. 68, and Heuzey, D., D., 1876, *Mission Archeologique de Macedonie*, Paris, in Micara, L., 2000, “L’eredita del passato” in *Un Piano per Durazzo –Durrës Master Plan*, pp. 14-15)

While looking at the evolution of city’s urban development during the classical and Ottoman period⁵⁸ through the facts offered by historians who make their conclusions on the analysis and comparison of the remains and data regarding the location and extension of the ancient settlement, the hypothesis that the hill, on which today’s city extends, formed an island was constructed. This hypothesis is further supported by facts about the existence of a gate at the northern extreme edge of the hills’ ridge and promontory, and the fact that till 1960s there were traces of the marsh and the fact that the city was connected to the “continent” via a bridge, constructed on a very narrow strip of land. In addition, there are historians who argue that on the former marsh, there used to be a “navigable” canal that penetrated the land, right at the feet of the promontory, and again connected to the sea at the south.⁵⁹ The images below (specifically figures 24, 25 and 26) display the evolution of urban development from the Classical to the Ottoman Era, thus: the Greek-Roman, the Byzantine and the Ottoman city, respectively. A figure displaying the development of the city of today - the city of 2000 – has also been provided, in order to enrich the perception of the city’s expansion through history, starting from its early establishment to the present (see figures 27 and 28).

⁵⁷ Hoti, A., 2003, *DURRËSI: Epidmani-Dyrrahu*, GUIDE, Tirana, pp. 38-39

⁵⁸ Micara, L., 2000, “L’eredita del passato” in *Un Piano per Durazzo –Durrës Master Plan*, p.13

⁵⁹ Miho, K., 1984, “Amfiteatri i Durrësit dhe Raportet Urbnaistike me Qytetin Bashkëkohës”, Shtëpia Botuese 8 NËNTORI, Tiranë, p.17

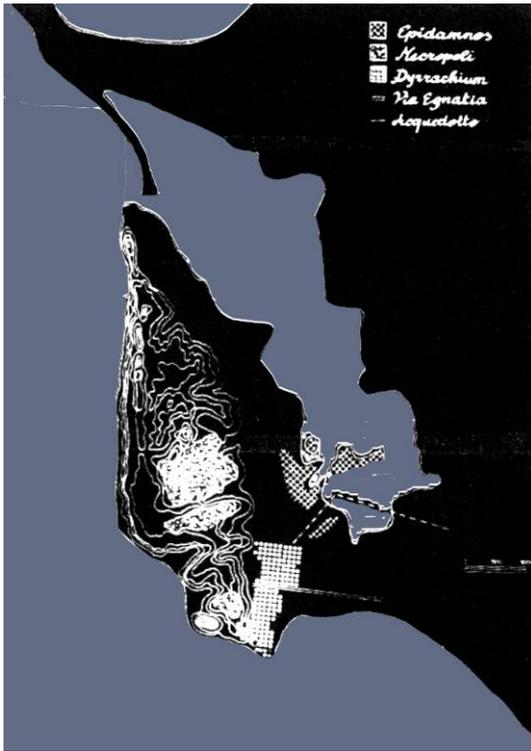


Figure 24: Greek-Roman City



Figure 25: Byzantine City

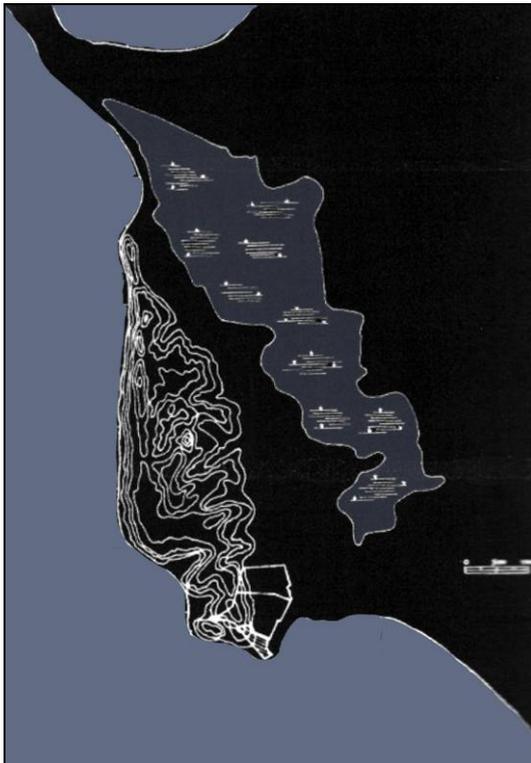


Figure 26: Ottoman City

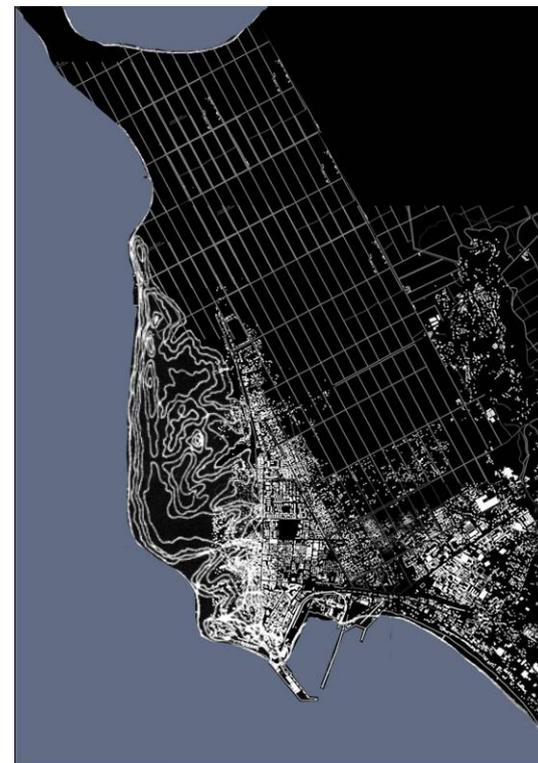


Figure 27: Second Millennium City

The figures 23, 24 and 25 represent the evolution of city in three stages, the Greek-Roman, the Byzantine and the Ottoman City, respectively. (Micara, L., 2000, "L'eredità del passato" in *Un Piano per Durazzo - Durrës Master Plan*, pp.12-13). The macro-form of the city in the early 2000 has been illustrated in figure 26.



Figure 28: Satellite image of Durrës, 1995 (Front Cover of *Un Piano per Durazzo –Durrës Master Plan*, a result of Spot-Pan satellite data elaboration, directed by M. Pesaresi)

Along with the evolution of the city in time, it is interesting to see how the physiognomy and morphology of the site transforms under both natural and artificial conditions, specifically referring to the former water channel connected to the sea that transforms into a marsh, and in 1950s into an agricultural land patterned by the grid-iron watering canals.

In the era of the Albanian Monarchy (1924 – 1939), the city of Durrës attracted again the attention of the authorities and found itself back in the centre of fluxes. This was made possible by the construction and development of road infrastructure (which was extremely poor at the time), of factories, administrative edifices and what is the most essential for the city economy and prosperity: the construction of the new port.

The World War II caused as much damages and casualties, and had as much negative impact on the city of Durrës, as it did in the whole territory of Albania and all countries involved in this war. The post-war period defines a new history for Albania. It was the beginning of the Communist and then Socialist Era, which would continue for 45 years (1945-1990). During the Socialist System, Durrës was transformed into an industrial city and important cultural and educational centre in the national basis. Thus, investments were done in the transportation system, industry (of mechanics, chemicals, electronics, furniture, plastic, rubber, and food) and the port, which was still a crucial source for the economy of the city and the country itself. Besides, during this period, other phenomena such as the agrarian reform, the agricultural collectivization, mass-education and construction of a series of socio-cultural edifices or complexes took place. And, last but not least in this sequence of actions taken all through the socialist system, state investments on the housing sector were done, as a necessity of the post-war state as well.⁶⁰

In the early 90s, the very first bases of the democratic system were settled. Detailed information on the transformations and developments occurring in city of Durrës before, during and after the Socialist System is provided in the coming chapters.

3.1.3 Economic Structure

While discussing the economic structure of the city of Durrës, the port always attracts a very specific attention, since throughout the history of the city; it has been the main tool of economical recourses.

It was the place where the trade exchanges and commercial activities took place. At the beginning of the 20th century, the city represented a small center inheriting the characteristics of the Islamic cities, influences of the Ottoman Empire “presence” in this territory. The blacksmithing and other arts and crafts dominated the sector of economy. It also had the small port, through which the commercial activities were perpetuated.

⁶⁰ Hoti, A., 2003, *DURRËSI: Epidmani-Dyrrahu*, p.40

After World War II, with the settling of a socialist system's modes of production, Durrës was transformed into an industrial city, and an important cultural and educational center. The main fields of production in Durrës during this era were the industries of mechanics, chemicals, electronics, furniture, plastic, rubber, and food. Durrës produces wine, cigarettes, fish, high tonnage ships, train cars, electric motors, radio and television sets, plastic and rubber articles, etc. The port developed, enlarged and continued being a primary source for the economy of the industrial city and the country itself.

The new system and the economical reforms applied in Albania and in Durrës after 1990 caused fundamental changes in the economic structure of the city. It is essential to mention that nowadays there are 3511 companies (among which 44 are international and 64 are cooperation based companies) performing their activity in the city of Durrës and there are 8 banks operating in the city.⁶¹ The port of Durrës is thought to be the gate of the VIII-the transportation corridor, which will start from Albania, passing through Macedonia and Bulgaria and ending in the Black Sea. As already mentioned in the previous section of the work, the aim of the project is to settle a secure transportation route among the eastern countries and eventually the European ones as well, according to European and international standards (please refer to the section "Some Data about the City", where this topic has been discussed more extensively). The coastal Tourism is also an important element in the economy of the city, supported by the natural asset of the city itself, which is the linear sandy coastal belt. The socio-economic conditions of the city are extremely vague, both from the point of view of employment (10 000 unemployed), a public service sector that is overstaffed, and is being drastically restructured and a crash in industrial activity), the service and quality of living conditions (including an inadequate technological network as well as health, school and transport services and degraded and overcrowded buildings). The social austerity is made even more acute by the presence of 12 000-15 000 immigrants coming from the inland areas of the country (the actual population rate is 110 000). However, despite seriousness of the situation, there are slight visible signs of a recovery in terms of the development of relatively minor entrepreneurial activity concerning small business, the resumption of harbor traffic; some new entrepreneurial initiatives in joint venture projects and the onset of a planning phase for big infrastructural work (e.g. port, motorway, new industrial are). The recovery signs are slight tied in with foreign help and income from immigrants, yet nevertheless significant and reassuring for a country, which has been subject to radical and sudden political and cultural change.⁶²

⁶¹ Hoti, A., 2003, *DURRËSI: Epidmani-Dyrrahu*, GUIDE, Tirana, p.43

⁶² Pavia, R., 2000, *Foundation Studies* in "Un Piano per Durazzo –Durrës Master Plan", p.199

3.2 Spatial Analyses of the City and its Urban Form

In this section of the thesis, by utilizing visual and quantitative material such as maps and aerial images, and qualitative ones such as pictures, images; the spatial analysis of the city will be done, paying specific attention to the study area - the waterfront. The ambition requires “an approach to the city that is halfway between its reality and a conjecture of it as an alternative reality”: from the original foundation as a Greek and then Roman settlement, but fundamentally from the new port construction and re-structuring of a city conceptualized by Carmignoni during the Italian occupation; “the Communist isolation and its emblematic monuments”; to the “current sprawl explosion”⁶³ and uncontrolled development. This process is necessary in order to further concentrate on the waterfront - the city’s urban frontier, in order to read, understand, visualize, refine, extract, analyze, discuss and comment on the items of its hidden / embryonic aptitudes set on the feet of the promontory and the ridge of hills, on the magnificent bay, to finally meet the water - the generous sea.

Port cities, especially cities with mountains and sea, have an internal logic dominated by their dialectical relation to nature; their spatial comprehension is inevitably related to topography and colored by the weather. Most probably, their confrontation with the sea, the way in which it delineates the dramatic demarcation between the “civilized” and the “wild” (in its most primordial condition – the mystery of the sea) is one of their most didactic statements and a fundamental “city” clue.⁶⁴

The city expresses the tendency of an aperture towards the sea and the port, it offers panoramic views and visual openness, it has objectives of urban composition which can be derived from the way it spreads, also from its alignment and continuity with relation to the site topography, the boundaries, the edges. As it has been further emphasized by the architects and urban designers / authors of the Durrës City Master Plan 1957, the emergence of the city in different stages of its history, which impose its definition as the Greek-roman, Byzantine, Venetian, Ottoman city. The traces of its expansion lead to the conclusion that the city develops on a structure of orienting sense. This spinal structure is composed of two main axes, typical of roman cities: “cordo” (the north-south axis) and “decumanus” (east-west). In the 1930s, the new port was located at the southern extreme edge of “cordo”. In addition to this, we claim that the town structure reflects both the economic base and cultural heritage of the society. In this respect, “the city wall”, for instance “was more than a means of

⁶³ Aureli P.V., and Zenghelis E., 2004, “Tirana Metropolis: The City as Archipelago”, in *Tirana Metropolis*, Berlage Institute Research Report, Rotterdam, p. 21

⁶⁴ Zenghelis, E., 2001, “Making the City: The Marseille Waterfont”, in *Making the City by the Sea, Forum and Workshop Marseille 2001*, p.77

protection; it was a symbol of the civitas, a domain reigned by law, order and security”.⁶⁵ On similar traces of analyses, we will look for and analyze both physical and programmatic or functional features of the promenade, the port, the street, the piers, etc, as constituting elements of the waterfront – the urban frontier.

At the actual state, the city communicates an attitude of demand for open public spaces, with regard to their functionality (the main square, the main boulevard, the promenade along the sea, the port, etc). On the other hand, it is possible to observe a pressure of constructions, which “speak out” a different city layout. At the end of this morphological and spatial analysis we might conclude, “The city represents juxtaposition of the extreme conditions of a metropolis that finishes by the sea, the face-to-face between the extreme conditions of nature with the extreme condition of a city”.⁶⁶ This exercise will be an endeavor to perceive the city and read its urban form via the visual materials, with the aim of deriving the importance of the waterfront as an urban frontier, and its interesting condition of direct confrontation with the water; and on the other side, understanding the positioning of different elements of the waterfront and the relation among them, and between them (as components of the waterfront) and the city - this complex unity. To better describe this condition, a sentence from Benjamin Walter’s essay devoted to the city and people of Marseille, is quoted: “the city not only revolved around its port, but became identified with the constellation of activities and characters that populated that unique space”.⁶⁷

Considering the physical and programmatic complexity, the city could not be perceived in one view, nor could the boundary between water and land, the waterfront as an element of the urban frontier, and even less, the complexity of urban frontier could be captured in a single camera shot, but rather as a true space of confrontation and challenge, as a piece of the growing metropolis, it needs many fragments, instants and images to be all pasted together, in order to give a picture of the city and its waterfront. Nevertheless, the following images will help in constructing a rough idea on the physiognomy, morphology, topography, landscape and nature of the city; its actual condition, the urban extension and its confrontation with the landscape; as well as the physical relation between the land and the water / the sea.

⁶⁵ Norberg-Schulz, C., 1980, *Meaning in Western Architecture*, Studio Vista, London, p. 94, in Günay, B., 1999, *Property Relations and Urban Space*, MFY, ISBN: METU, Ankara, p. 117

⁶⁶ Zenghelis, E., 2001, “The Marseille Experiment”, Elia Zenghelis interviewed by Vedran Mimica, in *MAKING THE CITY BY THE SEA, Forum and Workshop Marseille 2001*, p.136

⁶⁷ Costa, X., 2001, “From Hashish in Marseille to Eoromed”, in *Making the City by the Sea, Forum and Workshop Marseille 2001*, p.21



Figure 29: Aerial View of Durrës City (2004), looking towards the south (Picture taken by Alket Islami, Aeronautika Shqiptare, Digital Archive of Urban Planning Office, Municipality of Durrës)



Figure 30: Aerial View of Durrës City (2004), looking towards the north, at the hill range (Picture taken by Alket Islami, AERONAUTIKA Shqiptare, Digital Archive of Urban Planning Office, Municipality of Durrës)

The inclined plane of the hill range has “prevented” the city from expanding on this area, but the latest developments show a tension to conquer this steep site, as well.

In the case of Durrës, the settlement morphology displays an extreme exploitation of the city's existing natural and urban assets through a clear-minded (spontaneous) transformation based on (unwritten) policy, settled on a powerful structure: the waterfront with the linear incorporated components – the seaside promenade, the port, the coast; and the transversal (perpendicular) elements on the waterfront: the streets, the junction, the piers (please see figures: 32 and 33).

3.2.1 The “Linear” Components of the Waterfront

In this part of the thesis, the three main linear elements of the waterfront will be discussed based both on their physical and programmatic features. Those are: 1. the promenade: structure and connection; 2. the port: centrality and termination; and 3. the seafront “square”: linearity and interface. The above mentioned constituents comprise the tool to make a descriptive and comparative analysis in order to understand the spatial transformations on the urban space and specifically on the waterfront and their generating factors, during three distinct periods.

3.2.1.1 The Promenade: Structure and Connection

The promenade in itself is a complex element, which emerges both in building scale and the city scale. In the first one: the “architectural promenade, particularly in its Corbusian format, the design is intended to stimulate the user's gradually unfolding conscious understanding of the complex spatial sequence of the building”.⁶⁸ In the city scale, the promenade function with the same aim, but in contrast to the building scale, it intends to reveal understanding of the complexity of space and its urbanity. As argued by Rapoport, also, “the pedestrian based streets need to have a lot of complexity at several different scales at once”.⁶⁹ The seaside promenade is the part of the city where the very interesting condition of “City Confrontation Sea”⁷⁰ emerges. It is the plane between the water and the coastal hill range. The promenade constitutes the border between these two natural- physical elements: the sea and the hill. It is a real edge, a notorious structure / element of the urban form, as well as interface between two entities, the water and the sea, trying to “connect” them. In this specific case, the

⁶⁸ Baird, G, 1995, *The Space of Appearance*, the MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, p. 282

⁶⁹ Rapoport 1987, in Gronlund, B., “Life and Complexity in Urban space”, p.19, available online: http://hjem.get2net.dk/gronlund/Life_and_complexity.html

⁷⁰ Jumsai, 1993, p.210 in Bas Bütüner, F., 2003, *Waterfront Revitalization: A new challenge for Urban Development*, Master Thesis, METU, Ankara. Accordingly, the relation between water and city emerges as “Water Confrontation City”, “City on Water”, “Water City”.

promenade, as an urban public space, a pedestrian based street that connects the “upper city” and the “lower city” in order to anchor the coastal space in the historical city.

The territory of the seaside promenade, extends towards the southern part of the city, and shares its borders with the sea on the south and west, with the entrance of the port on the east and the Grand City Park on the hill at the north. The “direct connection” of the seaside promenade with the city - where the greatest intensity of flux or flow occurs - is created through the square in front of the entrance gate to the port. On the other section, the seaside promenade is physically disconnected / separated from the city by its surrounding Byzantine walls and the massif of hills. Morphological characteristic of the relief is the conjuncture of the flat planes at the proximity of the sea with the inclined hillside that slopes up gradually from the east towards west, creating two consecutive peaks at the level +90 m and +120 m.⁷¹ The Residence of the King Zog and the Lighthouse, stand on these two hill culminations, respectively. The surrounding city walls emerge and define the ridge of the hill, and historical and archaeological monuments such as the towers, the amphitheatre, etc, are attached to this urban structure.

3.2.1.2 The Port: Centrality and Terminal

The port is an enormous surface. Borruéy claims that “in its totality, the port forms an entity with a strong personality all of its own; a different space, so unlike the urban space; a space whose noblesse is attested to by its spatial history”.⁷² Furthermore, he argues that the port “provides the territory with singular objects: buildings, spaces, landscapes – Monuments”⁷³ and draws particular attention with its physical and functional presence. Most importantly of all, the relation the port settles with the city is an issue of great significance, since the character, identity, and urbanity of a city, strongly depends on this “connection”.

In the specific case that is being studied, the port within the waterfront territory, and also with relation to the city itself, defines a very clear centrality. According to Stefano Boeri, the portside territories represent an authentic “compilation of incredibly modern attributes of centrality”, which accounts for the specificity of Mediterranean- ports. Still, based on his analyses, these attributes can be broken down into three types:

⁷¹ Preface of Proposal for the Architectural and Urban Design Project of the Seaside Promenade- Durrës, 1983, Archive of Institute of Urban Planning Studies, Tirana

⁷² Borruéy, R., (2001), “Binding City and Port: Landmarks in Marseille”, in *MAKING THE CITY BY THE SEA, Forum and Workshop Marseille 2001*, p.50

⁷³ Ibid, p.48

This centrality is first and foremost geographical: port-side territories are median – though not urban- zones between houses and ships, to the extent that they do not depend upon physical concentration in one area of services and facilities, but rather upon their availability over a huge strip of territory.

Secondly, it is a centrality based upon a system of relations between vacant spaces. It is not the buildings that characterize ports as “sites of centrality”, but the network of passageway, warehouses and waiting rooms, networks for the loading and off-loading of goods. It is the empty spaces that determine the ports’ density.

Thirdly, it is a plural, composite, heterogeneous centrality. Mediterranean ports are a compilation of spaces of reception; they are projective, commercial and residential space; temporary public places with mobile and continuously changing functions; diverse populations that move at various rhythms in keeping with different cycles.⁷⁴

Besides being such a “central” entity in reference to the city urban form, the network and the waterfront, the port, regarding its functionality, is primarily a terminal, as well as a space of movements and flows. At the same time, the port represents an industrial area of great importance for the economy of the city and even wider: the country and the region. The issue of this waterfront area as an industrial site, and the attempt and concern of the city to develop / continue to develop tourism and recreation, all as water-related activities, is crucial. Along with the analysis, strategies, and decisions that need to be taken, it is an action of great importance, rather a necessity, and the preparation of a comprehensive analysis regarding all mentioned activities. This leads to a re-examination of the relationship between city and port.

3.2.1.3 The Seafront “Square”: Linearity and Interface

The seafront “square”⁷⁵ is actually the urban beach. For the very distinct physical characteristic of the site and the very functionality, “Void, then, as absence, and yet also as promise, as encounter, as the space of possible, expectation”⁷⁶, this element also presents a fascinating condition of urban frontier. Bruttomesso considers “the beach as an actual urban structure”.⁷⁷ He further states that this unusual resource is a characteristic of few cities, a fact that further highlights the “surprising nature of situations where residents - and visitors - in

⁷⁴ Boeri in Bourlier, P., and Orillard, C., 2001, “Converging Viewpoints”, in *Making the City by the Sea, Forum and Workshop Marseille 2001*, p.11

⁷⁵ Bruttomesso. R., 1998, *The Urban Beach: a Seafront "Square*, Editorial, Aquapolis 2, 1998 <http://brezza.iuav.it/citiesonwater/inglese/aquapolising.html> His argument on the issue is: “Numerous methods have been employed in the attempt to maintain or recreate nature within the realms of the 'artificial' city: parks and gardens have been created, watercourses enhanced and urban waterfronts rediscovered and upgraded. However one of the most impressive and pleasant is that of having a beach adjacent to, or better still, within the city itself”.

⁷⁶ De Sola-Morales, I., 1996, “Terrain Vague”, *Water-Land / Tierra-Agua, Quaderns D'Arquitectura I Urbanisme*, Nr. 212, p. 37

⁷⁷ Bruttomesso. R., 1998, *The Urban Beach: a Seafront "Square*, Editorial, Aquapolis 2, 1998 <http://brezza.iuav.it/citiesonwater/inglese/aquapolising.html>

one simple move can leave behind the streets and squares of their city for a completely different atmosphere, dominated by the sea". Considering the impact this leisure spaces have on the life and urbanity of the city, Lefebvre argues that:

...the most beautiful cities were those where festivals were not planned in advance, but there was a space where they could unfold, for example Florence, Venice...For a festival you need a rich and free society. Our era has found a space for festivals and pleasure - that's the beach.⁷⁸

Theoretically speaking, the combination or bond between the two worlds - one constituted of urban density and the other of a flat sandy surface, which in fact is the adjoining and continuous nature of the beach itself, is quite fascinating. The attraction and challenge stands also on the apparent difficulty of settlement of these two entities within a single physical context due to the opposing characteristics in terms of morphology and use. Regarding the issue of duality, Bruttomesso declares:

While the city is synonymous with a series of different activities, the beach is the place where people go to relax and spend their free time. While the city can have surprises around every corner, the whole of the beach is visible from the start, embracing a vast open horizon. It is this very closeness of the two so different worlds that creates an unrepeatable combination of such special interest. The urban beach thus becomes a special category in the city's public space, a sort of great 'square', which extends the chance of meeting and socialization typical of collective places, right down to the seafront.⁷⁹

In spite of all natural resources and values, the issue of the urban beach, as an urban square and element of the city structure, requires special attention in order to protect and avoid the uncontrollable development out of any criteria that fit to the context, the "invasion" of this territory with high raised and dense constructions, and finally to stop the degradation process. This call aims at raising the awareness of the authority (local or governmental) related to the necessity to react and take position towards the phenomena occurring on the urban beach, in order to make it a living place well-integrated to the city, and essentially, to increase the quality of life and environment.

3.2.2 `Perpendicularities` to the Waterfront

These are the urban elements or structures, which generate or take reference from the city and interrupt, intersect or combine and melt with the waterfront and another component of

⁷⁸ Lefebvre, H., An interview with Henri Lefebvre' from 1983, printed in Environment and Planning D 1987, p .36 in Gronlund, B., *Lefebvre's Concept in the City and the Urban in the 1980's*, available online: http://hjem.get2net.dk/gronlund/Lefebvres_urban_1980s.html#anchor255438#anchor255438

⁷⁹ Bruttomesso. R., 1998, *The Urban Beach: a Seafront "Square"*, Editorial, Aquapolis 2, 1998
<http://brezza.iuav.it/citiesonwater/inglese/aquapolising.html>

waterfront. In this collision, the elements with their programmatic functionality, combine with the waterfront as an urban frontier and strengthen its structure and relation to the city. The “perpendicularities” are: 1. the street: flow on land; 2. the junction: anchoring; and 3. the pier: landing on water.

3.2.2.1 The Street – Flow on Land

The street is definitely the most dominant and important element in the urban form and space in the public domain. Andre Breton defines the street as “...the only valid field of experience”.⁸⁰ Many scholars of the critical urban theories, urban designers, architects, sociologists, and representatives of various disciplines that deal with space, agree on the importance of the mere functionality and the impact the street has on the public life of a city, as real generators of urbanity.

Urban streets are probably a key element of a humane city with encounters among strangers in public space and with differences, as well as the possibility of foreseen events taking place.⁸¹

Further supporting and strengthening the idea, this time regarding the physicality of the street, and its relation to the urban structure, we could refer to Sennett, who explicitly mentions the street, as the most important general aspect of the city. He defines clearly that he is in favor of “discontinuities and non-linearities in social space as well as in physical space...”,⁸² which from the physical point of view, are indeed generated by the complex network of streets that also settle the stage, the frame or structure of the urban form.

3.2.2.2 The Junction – Anchoring

The junction is a point where water and the inland entity physically “meet” through the intersection of the vehicular roads, railway line and waterway; it is a peri-urban zone in which the city begins gradually to dissolve along and the sea and beyond, towards the land. The location of the junction and its emergence on a complex and dual landscape - at the edge of land and water, city and suburban area - implies the existence of inter-modal stations and terminals that serve as junctions for the land and water transport networks. In defining this

⁸⁰ Breton in Costa, X., 2001, “From Hashish in Marseillè to Eoromed”, in *MAKING THE CITY BY THE SEA, Forum and Workshop Marseille 2001*, p.21

⁸¹ Gronlund, B., “Life and Complexity in Urban space”, p, 1 available online: http://hjem.get2net.dk/gronlund/Life_and_complexity.html

⁸² Sennett, R., 1990, *The Conscience of the Eye - The Design and Social Life of Cities*, in Gronlund, B., “Life and Complexity in Urban space”, p.13, available online: http://hjem.get2net.dk/gronlund/Life_and_complexity.html

important stationary element of circulation, we could refer to Bonillo who describes that as “the site of a functional and symbolic osmosis between the city and the port”.⁸³ Moreover, while considering the relation between two entities: port as a gate of approach and the city, the junction emerges as:

...the principal site and symbolic articulation between city and port. A space of intersecting movements of port functions and professions, for a longtime its specificity was to associate and to some extent integrate the world of work and trade from the port with the complex world of the city.⁸⁴

Nevertheless, the most important function of the junction, which in fact is a structure in serve of the fluent traffic circulation, is to offer accessibility and connect different parts of the city as parts of an entire entity, considered in the local, national and regional context, as well. Furthermore, “these *nodes* influence urban reorganization processes, whether in a positive or negative sense, and can redirect a territory’s use and control mechanisms”⁸⁵, a fact that attracts the attention of large real estate and other influential urban investment groups.

3.2.2.3 The Pier(s) – Landing on Water

The piers, as urban elements - are generated or take reference from the city urban form and mainly are extensions of the streets themselves. They represent an interesting condition, which is the condition where the interface or urban frontier tends to be more flexible and to actually strengthen the relation between water and land. Since they extend towards the water, in this case the water surface becomes the *tabula rasa*.

While examining the piers, the relation they settle with the city urban form, as they generate from the city itself, we encounter with their multi-functionality, which renders them even more interesting and fascinating elements of the urban structure. Thus, they function as quays in the port area, places of anchorage for the boats and ships, as breakwaters, as lighthouse keepers, etc. In some other points they emerge as structures facilitating the fishing activity. In addition to all these, they appear as “public spaces” that house leisure activities. In this context, where the structure emerges on the water trying to dominate it, the pier is “a walkway guaranteed to be full of emotion”.

⁸³ Bonillo, J.L., 2001, “An Urban Meeting Place between City and Port”, *MAKING THE CITY BY THE SEA, Forum and Workshop Marseille 200*, p.38

⁸⁴ Ibid, p.33

⁸⁵ Bruttomesso. R., 1997, *Intermodal Stations in Cities on Water*, Editorial, Aquapolis 4, 1997

<http://brezza.iuav.it/citiesonwater/inglese/aquapolising.html>

In conclusion, along with the analyses of the pier as only one element of the waterfront that acts as a physical connector of two entities: water and land, the following sections of the work will evolve with the analysis of all integral components of the waterfront, the linear and the perpendicular ones. Their extraordinary spatial transformation will be examined in the three-period timeframe aiming the understanding of forces and their impact on the production of space.



Figure 31: Aerial image of Durrës (Photo by Marc Morell: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Durrës>)

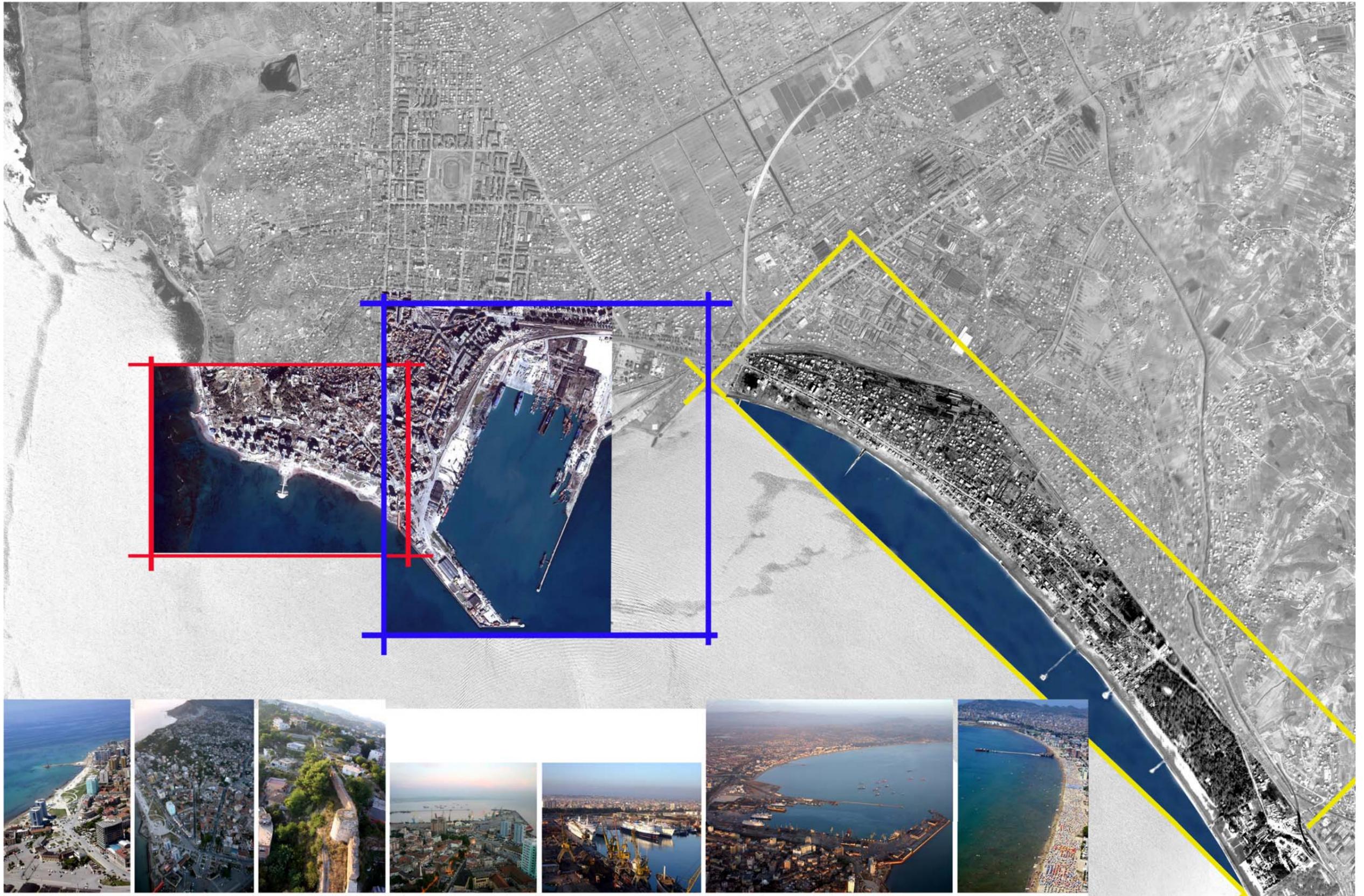


Figure 32: The Linear Elements of the Waterfront: Promenade, Port, Seafront "Square"

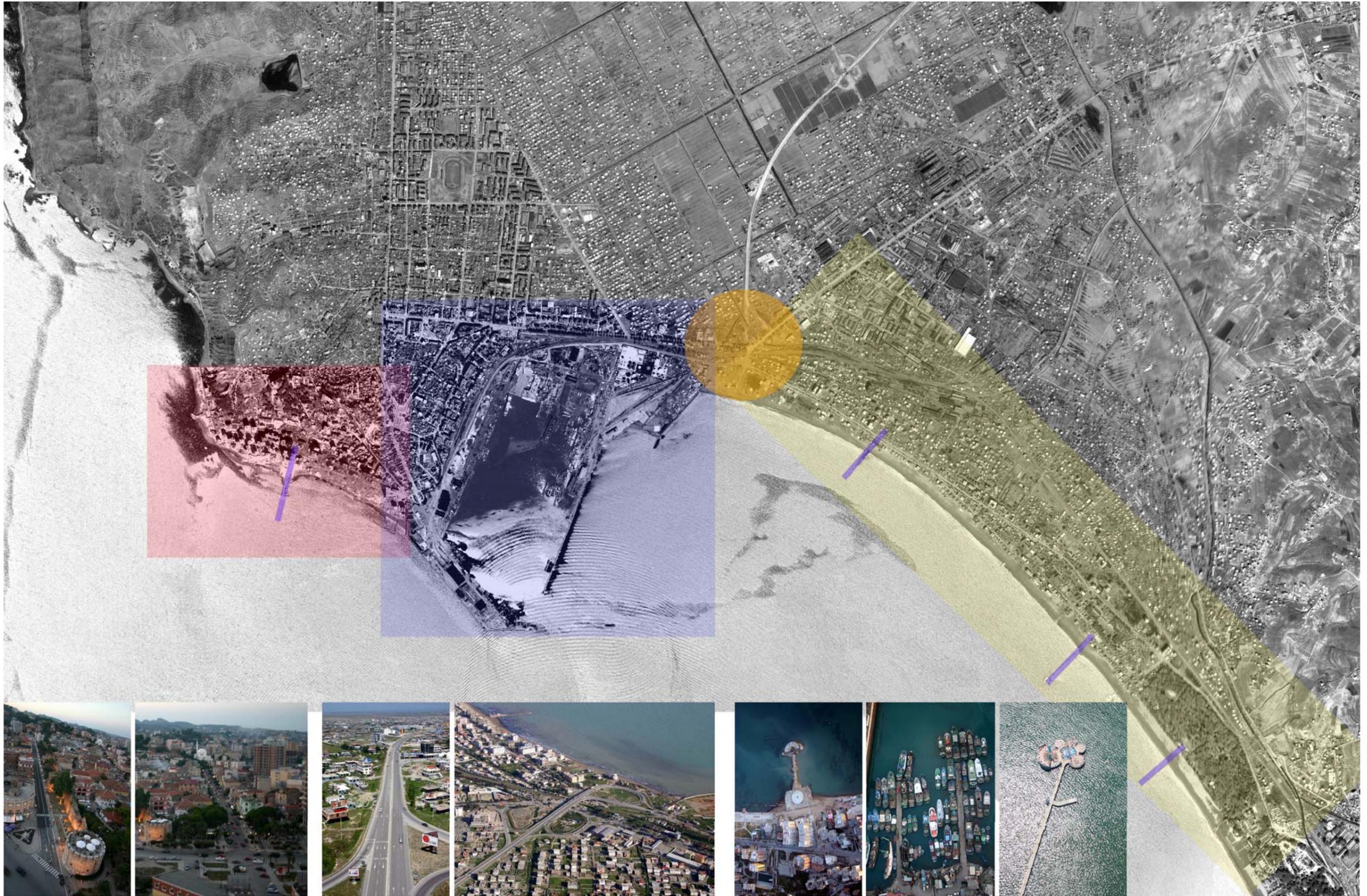


Figure 33: The Perpendicular Elements of the Waterfront: Street, Junction' Pier (s)

CHAPTER 4

TRANSFORMATIONS ON THE WATERFRONT OF THE PORT- CITY OF DURRËS BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER SOCIALISM

4.1 The city in the Pre-Socialist Era

As already mentioned in the previous sections of this chapter, Albania, similar to other Balkan and Eastern European countries, had been for five centuries subject of Ottoman rule. The reaction, though sporadic in the case of Albania, “to alien government was to discover through the intelligentsia a pride in the culture, folklore and language and a sense of nationhood”.⁸⁶ Nevertheless, the consequences of the long Ottoman domination were reflected not only on the culture, religion and society, but the space as well, on the settlements arrangements and developments, and their urban tissue and texture.

In the beginning of the 20th century, all Balkan countries were predominantly agrarian. It is possible to use the statement of Andrusz in order to define the condition of the country: “the pre-war social structures had persistent feudal features such as a politically powerful landed aristocracy, a large and impoverished peasantry, and a weak indigenous capitalist class”.⁸⁷ Urbanization and industrial development were of extremely slow rates and almost inactive in the 1920s and 1930s. Furthermore, it is known that the first half of the 20th century was the time when two World Wars took place, therefore the low level of development in the first half of the century, is not surprising. The very same characteristics of the region and the country correspond also to the city of Durrës.

Generating from the very strategic location, Durrës was one of the most important cities in Albania, also in the beginning of the 20-th century, and specifically within the period 1920 – 1938. Besides, the fact of being so close and interdependent on Tirana, which was the capital city of Albania proclaimed as such in 1920, in other words on the political and

⁸⁶ Andrusz, G., 1996, “Structural Change and Boundary Instability” in Andrusz, G., Harloe, M., Szeleyi, I., (eds), *Cities after Socialism, Urban and Regional Change and conflict in Post-Socialist Societies*, p.15

⁸⁷ Ibid, p.36

administrative centre influenced its emergence as the main port city, and a strategic economic and communication point. At that time, Durrës was the node where many of the connections and roads to other important centres in northern, eastern, and southern centres in Albania diverge. It is essential to state that the waterway from the western world and the western water gate to Albania was exactly (the port of) Durrës. It was one of the cities (besides the capital: Tirana) to undergo the transformations because of urban and architectural interventions of Italian influence during 1930-1945. As already mentioned, the reasons were far beyond the fact of the city proximity to the other important centres and the entire country development. They were naturally strongly related to the city's geographic position and environmental features.

The situation of the country in the 1920s was very critical and contradictory, considering the fact that it shared almost 40% of the borders with the sea but on the other hand did not have good port structures. In addition, there was a complete lack of railway system, the vehicular roads were limited, and the existing ones were in very bad condition. Being in such a decisive situation, the country was in need of foreign financial support and investments, and the sea seemed to be the only possible "open way" to connections with other countries, this leading to the contemporary development of Albania.⁸⁸ Among other Albanian coastal cities located on the Adriatic and Ionian Sea, hence the Mediterranean, each having its specificity and relative importance based on their regional position, Durrës had more advantages, especially after the definition of political borders of Albania in 1913.⁸⁹ Within the Albanian territory, Durrës had a central geographic location, was only 40 km distant from the capital city and these made it the most important port and the main marine gate of Albania. It is important to mention that during this period Durrës as the other Albanian cities confronting the water, had simply the advent of a natural bay different from the inland cities, where the anchorage place, constructed with poor and weak material was malfunctioning, forcing the ships to anchor further away in the deep sea waters. The goods embarkation-debarkation activity was carried out by boats to the shoreline, thus this activity required much greater arm working force.

Regarding the transportation network, the vehicular road system was not good either. The ground on which the city settled was still in the geographic and environmental condition of an island, being surrounded by the sea and the marsh (that centuries ago used to be a disconnected "part of the sea). The city was accessed through a very narrow strip of land,

⁸⁸ Miho, K., 2003, *Shqipëria: Vështrim Urbanistik (1912-1944)*, EXTRA, Tirana p.178

⁸⁹ Ibid

and beforehand it was approached through a 30 m long wooden bridge, known with the name “Ura e Dajlanit”, which according to the notes of Miho was used to cross the narrow canal that connected the marsh with the sea. The city had one single road (appendicitis) that connected it to other centres, when the others were tangent to the city almost 1 km distant. At the same time, the roads in the city were all of local character and in very poor conditions.



Figure 34: Port of Durrës in the 1940s (Hoti, A., 2003, *DURRËSI: Epidmani-Dyrrahu*, GUIDE, Tirana, p. 61)

During the era of Ottoman Empire, the city “shrunk” within the surrounding walls of the city till the beginning of the 19-th century. This was the time when, parallel to the development in the country, there was also prosperity in the city as a consequence of being the main port of transit trade activities of central Albania and some Balkan regions close by.⁹⁰ These progresses caused changes in the structure of the residence/the house, the demographic increase, the territorial extension of the city and its expansion outside the city walls, providing thus the city microform with some functions and urban characteristics that were missing until that time.

Exactly two years after the proclamation of independence in 1914, there was an historical event, that of the declaration of Durrës City as the Capital of Albanian State of Prince Vidi.⁹¹ This occasion effected the further development and prosperity of the city, even though for a very short time (according to Miho, Durrës City cherished the new function of Capital city for less then one year because of the start of the World War I). For many reasons, among which there are some political ones as well, it is believed that the declaration of Durrës as the

⁹⁰ Miho, K., 2003, *Shqipëria: Vështrim Urbanistik (1912-1944)*, EXTRA, Tirana, p.183

⁹¹ Ibid, p.183

capital was not a mere coincidence. For sure, the city condition and urban fabric must have been influential, as well as the offered possibilities and ease of communication with other settlements within and outside the borders of Albania. Despite all factors: geographic, political, economic and social, in the beginning of the 20th century till the 1920s the City of Durrës, was a modest settlement of only 4700 inhabitants.⁹²



Figure 35: Map of Durrës showing the urban tissue and some important buildings existing in 1940s and the port (Archive of Urban Planning Office, Municipality of Durrës)

4.1.1 Architecture and Urban Planning in the Pre-Socialist Era

Having a long history and a settled background from the ancient times until the beginning of the 20th century, the city of Durrës was inheriting a layered urban structure and form, and a few ancient constructions such as the city walls, towers, etc, which were in light, and others that had not been excavated or discovered at the time. However, the era of the Monarchy (1928-1939) and then the time of war till 1944 were very important regarding the urban structure, the planning and architecture domain because of the great influence and interventions done by foreign city planners and architects. Certainly, it was the administration and the governmental decisions of that time that has supported and generated these actions. The actual presence of several still standing buildings and quite a few remnants and projects that belong to the period 1920 – 1930, demonstrate that the designation and implementation of these specific projects were preceded by urban studies of

⁹² Miho, K., 2003, *Shqipëria: Vështrim Urbanistik (1912-1944)*, EXTRA, Tirana, p.184

a greater scale. In fact, there is an extensive lack of graphic documentations, being them urban studies or architectural projects of the period between 1920 and 1930. Based on a research on the administrative documentations of Durrës Municipality during this era, Miho⁹³ claims that the correspondence of the local administrative body, displays a continuous endeavour to have a plan for the City of Durrës, which is thought to have been realized by specialists from Austria. The known fact that till 1930's the representative of Technical Office in the Municipality of Durrës was Austrian⁹⁴ further supports the above declared idea. On the other hand, in the Report of Durrës City Master Plan in 1942, Doc. Arch. Carmignoni mentions about a plan that constituted the bases of the preliminary studies about the master plan, on which buildings, main axis and roads were shown. Related to this issue, there are several sketches of architectural and urban studies belonging to this period, which are done by Albanian architects among whom Sotiri and Kalaci could be mentioned. Moreover, there are also some works of Italian architects such as Guilio Berte, Brazini, etc⁹⁵, which, according to Miho, are documented and archived in the Central Technical Archive of Construction, in the Ministry of Construction, in Tirana.

Any map of Durrës, specifically one displaying the old section of the city (the consolidated city) belonging to 30s or 40s, would reveal the presence of the city walls partly demolished, and houses of more eastern character plan layouts located within them (in the territory defined by city walls). Furthermore, an important urban element of the city in the late 20s was the piazza of the bazaar, which was destroyed to construct the “Square of Liberty” instead, the new representative and institutional centre of the city.⁹⁶ Even today, this square continues to function as an administrative and representative centre of the city. Miho states that the construction of the square started in 1929 and finished in 1930, and that this was a process, which necessitated the demolition of several shops and residences/houses.⁹⁷ Apart from these, the creation of the square caused also the demolition of the Grand Gate of the City, which, according to Shufflay quoted in Miho, was “an authentic cultural monument” and “a real museum”.⁹⁸ Almost on its footprints, just some meters further on the south, the local administration building of the Durrës Municipality was constructed. Other buildings defining and framing the “Square of Liberty” were the Mosque, which was located on the west side of the square and was completed in 1939, the Post Office on the north, the cinema

⁹³ Miho, K., 2003, *Shqipëria: Vështrim Urbanistik (1912-1944)*, EXTRA, Tirana, p.184

⁹⁴ Ibid, p.188

⁹⁵ Ibid

⁹⁶ Micara, L., 2000, in “L’Eredita del passato” in *Un Piano per Durazzo –Durrës Master Plan*, p. 14

⁹⁷ Miho, K., 2003, *Shqipëria: Vështrim Urbanistik (1912-1944)*, EXTRA, Tirana, p.195

⁹⁸ Shufflay M., 1926, “Serbs and Albanians” in Miho, K., 2003, *Shqipëria: Vështrim Urbanistik (1912-1944)*, EXTRA, Tirana, p.195

on the northwest, a khan on the south, etc.⁹⁹ The surface area of the site was almost 1 ha and it was also furnished with a fountain and greenery in the centre.

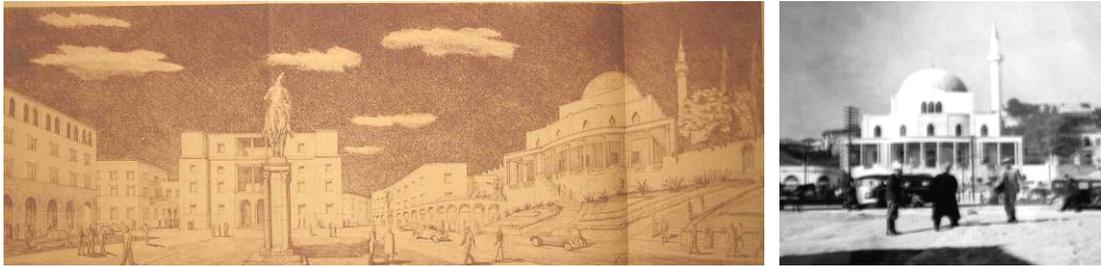


Figure 36: Three-dimensional representation of the centre of Durrës, proposal by Architect Carmignoni. Document included in the Regulatory Plan of Durrës, 1942 (Central Technical Archive of Construction - AQTN, Tirana)

Figure 37: Picture showing the construction of the Mosque in the Centre of Durrës, in 1939 (Central Technical Archive of Construction - AQTN, Tirana)

One of the most important buildings of the pre-socialist era was the Residence / Reception Villa of King Zog. The Albanian architect, Kristo Sotiri, made the first project for this building and it was implemented and completed in 1926. Apparently, for mere political reasons this building was demolished and another one, this time designed by the Italian architect Brazini, was designed and implemented in 1937, under the supervision of architect de Fausto.¹⁰⁰ From the urban point of view, the location of this building was intentionally and very carefully selected. The villa was standing on the highest spot, the most remarkable, strategic, and dominant site over the city and the sea. It fitted so perfectly with the silhouette of the hill range and ridge above which it was standing, and was visible when approaching the city from different directions. This building constituted a particular landmark for the city of Durrës; the residence villa continues to play this urban role, still.



Figure 38: The Residence of King Zog in the Urban Context (Picture of the present days (2004) taken by Alket Islami, Aeronautika Shqiptare)

Figure 39: The Residence of King Zog in the Urban Context (Picture of the present days (2004) taken by Armando Baguca, City postcard)

⁹⁹ Micara, L., 2000, in “L’Eredita del passato” in *Un Piano per Durazzo –Durrës Master Plan*, p. 14 and Miho, K., 2003, *Shqipëria: Vështrim Urbanistik (1912-1944)*, EXTRA, Tirana, p.195

¹⁰⁰ Miho, K., 2003, *Shqipëria: Vështrim Urbanistik (1912-1944)*, EXTRA, Tirana, p.196

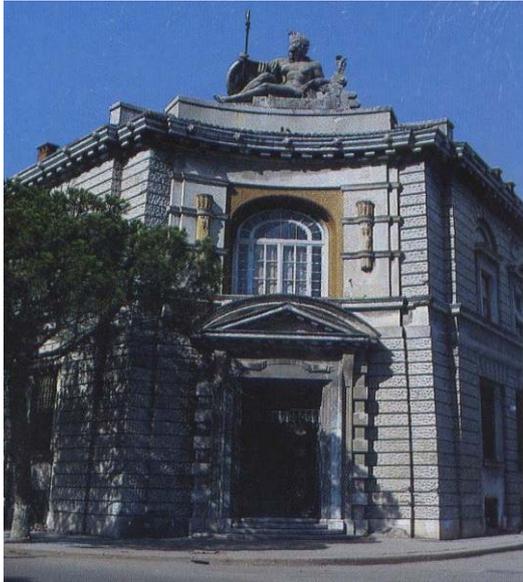


Figure 40: Local Bank Building (City Postcard)



Figure 291: A villa type residence (City Postcard)



Figure 4230: The Hotel Vollga (Iliria) Building located at the strategic junction of the road, which walks parallel to the City Wall and leads to the top hill to the King's Residence, and the other road, on the left that goes along the seaside promenade. (Photo taken by Alket Islami, Aeronautika Shqiptare)

Talking about the architecture of Italian influence in Durrës, another important building to mention would be the Local Bank Building, which was constructed in 1928. This is the Masterpiece of the Italian architect Morpurgo and the sculptor Remuzzi, implemented under the supervision of engineer Volkov¹⁰¹ (figure 40). While underlining the important edifices that were constructed during the pre-socialist era under the authority and influence of Italian architects and administration, it is of interest to reveal some other buildings. Those are the Italian Union Building, the Electric Power Station, the Customhouse, a number of villa type

¹⁰¹ Miho, K., 2003, *Shqipëria: Vështrim Urbanistik (1912-1944)*, EXTRA, Tirana, p.198

residences along the costal promenade at the littoral of the hills, some factories such as that of tobaccos, bricks, flour and oil factories, etc. To conclude the long list of significant buildings of the Italian era, towards the end of 1930s the construction of Hotel Vollga, close to the Venetian Tower, started and finished in the end of 40s (see figure 42).

The plan, which has definitely had the greatest impact on the city macro-form and urban structure of the city of Durrës, still present and readable today, is the Master Plan (Regulatory Plan) of 1942, prepared by the Italian Architect Doc. Leone Carmignoni and consultant Doc. Arch. Engineer Ferdinando Poggi.¹⁰² The preparation of Master Plan in 1942 was a motivating “action” that redesigned the metropolitan area of Durrës according to a scheme that is valid today in most of its parts, and whose structure, as already emphasized, is still quite perceivable.

The structure that defined the city macro-form as an entity was comprised of: first, the historical centre, which was the consolidated city having its extension on the hill; second, the new port that would develop on two directions, generating thus the city expansion. The industrial area along the road to Tirana in the northeast direction, and the residential area towards southeast direction, facing the sea and having the range of Arapaj hills at the back, represented these two lines of development. Based on various factors, the new residential area in the Master Plan was proposed to have three different densities. In this aspect, special attention was paid to the intervention and conservation of the characteristics of the urban tissue, in the area of the consolidated city (former ottoman city), that part of the city that was still inheriting and presenting features such as dead-end streets, low rise pitched roof houses with gardens, or walled back yards, etc. One of the essential criteria of the Master Plan worth being mentioned is the planned intervention on the core axis of the city. The idea behind this operation was the edification of new urban edges or urban facades, which would define and regulate the main streets in the city centre.¹⁰³ The impacts of this intervention and urban policy are noticeable at the present, also. The very remarkable point that appears while looking at the physiognomy of these neighborhoods is the fact that even though they are framed by boundaries defined of front-regular buildings, which create a hardly penetrable frontier, the quarters’ interior hidden behind this “mural” structure, still exhibits features of the ottoman city such as the “cul de sacs” or labyrinthine streets, etc. Along with the coexistence of superimposed and exposed layers of different civilizations, the specificity and richness of the old part of the city consists also in the presence of numerous historical and

¹⁰² Micara, L., 2000, in “L’Eredita del passato” in *Un Piano per Durazzo –Durrës Master Plan*, p. 14 and Miho, K., 2003, *Shqipëria: Vështrim Urbanistik (1912-1944)*, p.262

¹⁰³ Micara, L., 2000, in “L’Eredita del passato” in *Un Piano per Durazzo –Durrës Master Plan*, p. 16

ancient monuments. These are: the grand amphitheatre, the church, the city walls, the castle and towers, remains of public baths, remnants of bazaars, or other testimonials of the ancient civilization.

Based on the Report of Durrës City Master Plan 1942¹⁰⁴, written by Architect Carmignoni, it can be derived that the preparations for the Regulatory Plan started in early 1940. At that time, the city surface area covered by buildings was 50 hectares, and almost 8 000 inhabitants lived in there. The building typology had more eastern influences in the old city region, and western indications in the new parts of the city. According to Carmignoni, Durrës is without any doubt the very first Albanian city to have experienced the western influence, above all facts, because of it being an important port city. Referring to the Master Plan Report, the estimated number of population for the city of Durrës is 60 000 – 70 000 inhabitants. Various ideas and concepts have constructed the basis for the study of Durrës city Master Plan, whose some of the main leading objectives, which relate to the spatial transformation of the waterfront in time, were:¹⁰⁵

- The old city renewal project; the city should provide with all activities and necessary services that a modern city that has the potential to have a prosperous future does;
- Evaluation of the new sites and centres, as well as the creation of wide peripheral areas of development of residential, industrial and rural character;
- Extension and definition of the territory under jurisdiction of the Municipality: the “true” areas within the city boundary and those dependant or related to the city development, such as the port, the railway, the industrial area, the coastal/baths’ area, paying careful attention to an accurate functional zoning;
- The port development, which inevitably helps defining the character of the new city as both commercial and industrial;
- Definition of areas of influence and main routes or directions of the local traffic and external circulation network;
- The true estimation of the costal (baths) area, in order to achieve its utmost usage considering it as a separate administrative unit as a commune;
- The necessity for a precise regulation on constructions and urban planning, and the essential need of a new administrative laws for the realization of the Regulatory Plan, considering it not only as a plain technical problem, but economic and financial one, as well.

¹⁰⁴ The Report of Durrës City Master Plan that has been utilized to derive information, is the draft copy translated from Italian into Albanian by Eva Minarrolli. This document, together with the Original Report, is found in the Central Technical Archive of Construction (Arkiva Qëndrore Teknike e Ndërtimit), in Tirana

¹⁰⁵ Report of Durrës City Master Plan, written by Arch. A. Carmignoni

In conjunction with all provisions, the study for the Master Plan of 1942, presented a functional zoning scheme; an administrative map defining the boundaries and territory jurisdiction by the Municipality of Durrës at that time, as well as a proposed one. In addition, the study provided with demographic data, which give clues on the probability of city extension and development.

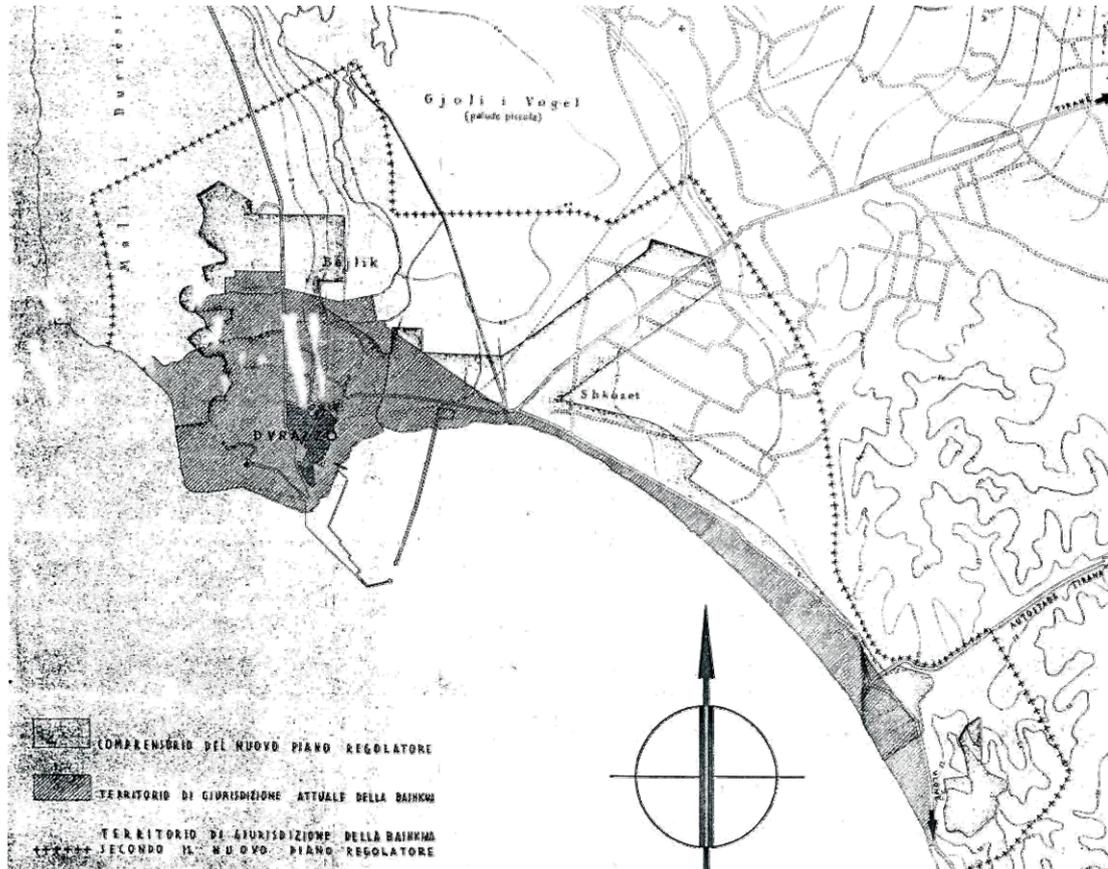


Figure 45: Map of the Regulatory Plan 1942, defining the extension and boundary of the existing city and the territory included in the Master Plan, as well as the proposal of the administrative boundary of the city (Central Technical Archive of Construction- AQTN, Tirana)

The jurisdiction of Durrës Municipality in 1942 was over a territory covering 50 hectares. The Master Plan had coverage of 785 ha whereas the prediction for the future territory under the authority of the Municipality was 1800 ha. The functional zoning in the Master Plan was the presentation of areas that had a defined destination or functional usage¹⁰⁶ (land use). They were:

- Residential area (310 ha over 397 ha in total), which had different intensities and densities: high dense (200 inhabitants per 1 ha), semi-dense (150 inhabitants per 1 ha), and low dense (100 inhabitants per 1 ha). Based on the data of the Master Plan

¹⁰⁶ Report of Durrës City Master Plan 1942, written by Arch. A. Carmignioni

Report, the estimated total number of population living in these residential areas, would be 46 650 inhabitants. The remaining sites (87 ha) within the primary residential zone were planned to be covered by military areas, cemeteries, hospitals, sports area, etc.

- Industrial area, which consisted of craftsmanship/artisanship and small industrial centres; warehouses and semi-industrial areas; and finally the biggest industrial area that had a connection to the port. Apart from these, in the industrial area there were included also the port (77 hectares), and the railway and station site (44 hectares).
- Peripheral area.

During the pre-socialist era, providing the city with a master plan or other urban studies was a right and a competence of the local government. In the domain of city planning and architecture, the Technical Office of Urban Planning represented the local government in the Municipality. The tasks of the local government consisted in the precise definition of boundary of city extension / development over space and time. This organ was also in charge of finding qualified professionals to deal with the issue of architecture and planning, to make a proposal for the city development, to discuss and agree on “space” and “time” factors, the deadlines, and process progress conditions. The Master Plan of Durrës City, as already mentioned, was prepared by architect Carmignoni and consultant architect Poggi, representing the Central Office of Architecture and Urban Planning in Albania (Ufficio Centrale per L’Edilizia e L’Urbanistica dell’Albania).¹⁰⁷ From 1920-1944, including the Era of Monarchy, the whole country was under the influence of Italy. It is essential to emphasize the fact that during this period, the political and economic conditions were influenced and affected by scenarios that were written by a specific “clan”, bearing stimulating political and economy based orientations. Apart from being closely related to the situation, these directives were particularly and notably present both in the form and in content of the fundamental documentation – the Master Plan - that in fact generated consequences, had crucial impacts and directed the development of a city.

4.1.1.1 Property Relations in a Feudal System

In the beginning of the 20th century, Albania was predominantly agrarian. Regarding the property relations of that specific era, Berman claims that “pre-socialist rights in land had many elements of feudal relationships in them” and that the very notion of “landownership -

¹⁰⁷ This is an information extracted from the stamp on maps and other documentations of the Master Plan 1942

that is the right to possess, use and sell land” did not really exist.¹⁰⁸ During the reign of King Zog - the monarchy, which was the longest life government, private property was guaranteed by the monarchy but at the same time the government had control over land.¹⁰⁹ After 1930 the law for the Agrarian Reform was approved. According to that law, land was going to be expropriated from the great landowners. Nevertheless, because of administrative reasons, the reform was realized only in a small portion.

4.1.2 The Waterfront

The foundation of the spatial configuration of the city during the pre-socialist period definitely generated from the inherited urban tissue, in addition to the system itself: the political, social, economical features innate in that. Nevertheless, it is quite remarkable to notice that the very essential spatial transformation occurred specifically on the city’s waterfront, on its particular integral elements. In fact, these changes constituted the basis for further developments, as well as the emergence and definition of the structure of the future city. It is of great importance to mention that the components of the waterfront structure at that time did not have such distinguishing features to appear as separate elements; rather they were somehow related among them, as extensions of the city itself. Thus, the relations between the sea and the settlement (rather than “the city”), was relatively natural. In addition, because of the lack of port facilities that at the time would be enormous and inappropriate to the scale of the city, this visual connection was strong. In the first quarter of the 20-th century, the city and the harbor (in fact, a structure developed enough to constitute “a port” was missing) functioned as osmosis, the boats (the ships could only anchor in a considerable distance away from the shore) were able to moor in the very centre of the city, and the narrow quays were but extensions of the streets themselves.¹¹⁰

In this section of the thesis, the intention is to provide with information that illustrate the existing condition of the city and its waterfront in the pre-socialist era, and examine the important developments and actors involved in them, in order to understand the causes that settled the foundations of significant transformation on the city’s urban structure and space.

¹⁰⁸ Berman stated in Marcuse, P., 1996, “Privatization and its Discontents”, in Andrusz, G., Harloe, M., Szeleyi, I., (eds.), *Cities after Socialism, Urban and Regional Change and conflict in Post-Socialist Societies*, p.123

¹⁰⁹ Dojçe, E., 2002, *Property Relations and Urban Space in Albania Before, During and After Socialism: A Case Study on the City of Pogradec*, Master Thesis, METU, Ankara

¹¹⁰ Borruey, R., 2001, “Binding City and Port: Landmarks in Marseille”, in *MAKING THE CITY BY THE SEA, Forum and Workshop Marseille 2001*, p.43

4.1.2.1 Shoreline – Seaside Promenade – Hill Range

The southern face of the hills' range on the promontory of Durrës, an area that is bordered by the ancient city walls that separates it from the centre, represents one of the most attractive sites of the city. The hillside looks towards, opens up, and joins the sea. Apart from its morphological values and landscape features, several landmarks clearly define and enrich this site. Some of the most interesting to mention are: the summer Residence (Villa) of King Zog at the top of the hill, the Castle at a lower level, and the Venetian Tower at the lowest point close to the entrance to the port. All these are sort of “attached” to the City Wall. The street named “Prince Umberto” at that time, extended along the city wall, having it on the right-hand side while climbing the hill, and the sea on the left-hand side. The road was “respecting” the topography lines and always “in harmony” with the slope. The favorable conditions of this site made of it a very attractive area to live in and preferable by the rich people since the 30s. In this respect, this site is defined as the “Area of Mistfers” in the Master Plan of 1942. Offering such appropriate conditions, the plan proposes villas and apartments within the dense greenery, having the great view of the sea. Besides, this site was very close to the centre, which the city walls were physically separating it from. Nevertheless, the vehicular road to connect this two entities, would be almost 1 km long, comprised of the section of boulevard (the main axis to the port entrance from the centre), and the “Prince Umberto” Street.¹¹¹



Figure 46: View of Durrës City in 1916 (Hoti, A., 2003, *DURRËSI: Epidmani-Dyrrahu*, GUIDE, Tirana, p. 41)

¹¹¹ Report of Durrës City Master Plan 1942, written by Arch. A. Carmignioni and Arch. F.Poggi

In the Regulatory Plan of 1942, the site bordered by the city wall and “Adriatica” Street (the one going parallel to the seashore line and closest to it), was proposed to be principally “green space”. The greenery would become denser towards the southwest and end up with a Public Green Park, right at the feet of the hill on top of which the King’s Residence stands. Obviously, considering the historical importance and cultural values they had, in the Plan of 1942 special attention was paid to the evaluation and designation of the site where the Villa of the King Zog and the Castle are established. In order to preserve the historical heritage, to emphasize and make use of its presence, the master plan proposed a dense green area that would cover the whole site where these monuments are located. They would be “floating structures” on the greenery and looking at the sea.



Figure 47: Part of the Regulatory Plan 1942 (Central Technical Archive of Construction, AQTN-Tirana)

This plan (figure 47) shows the urban design approach towards the Seaside Promenade, its physical relation to the city centre and the port entrance, the position of King’s Residence at the hill top, as well as the emphasis of the archeological elements (city walls, towers).

To conclude, the design approach towards this part of the city and the waterfront was to keep it at the most natural state possible and proposing low-rise villa type houses for a separate category of people. The idea was to make this place a park, and emphasize its character as such by also integrating the so far exposed ancient archaeological monuments.

4.1.2.2 The Mercantile Port

The city of Durrës has always been economically depending on its port. When making an attempt to analyze the water – land relation of pre-socialist period, the idea that “water borders the cities”, and “it (the water) is far more affected by its (city’s) functional role than by its urbanity is extracted. Water is above all a transport and communication infrastructure, a medium for commercial transactions, a source of economic prosperity; at the same time, it is the direct cause of multiple dangers”.¹¹²

In the beginning of the century, the “port” of Durrës was located further in the north of the actual present position, in a distance of some tens meters away. In fact, at that time there was simply an extremely primitive structure that constituted the port. It was composed of two wooden piers placed in parallel, some 15 meters distant from each other and having a length of almost 50 meters.¹¹³ This badly and poorly developed microstructure was served by wooden boats, which carried people and goods from the ships that had anchored far away from the shore, because of the shallow waters and lack of port structures, quays, etc.

This condition persisted until the end of the first quarter of the 20th century, period that coincides with many crucial political developments that consequently and providentially motivated the realization of the greatest work and asset of Durrës City, which was the port. For the construction of the port, 14% of all foreign investment or governmental funds during the period 1928-1933 were used. The port project was done in 1926 (please see figure 48); the implementation started in 1928 and with very small deficiencies, the project was completed in 1934.¹¹⁴ Similar to many strategic constructions realized throughout Albania within the period 1928-1939 and later till the end of World War II, both the project of the port and its implementation were done under the supervision of Mayor Engineers of the Italian Army. The construction of the new port solved the problem that accompanied the city for one entire century, the issue related to the strategic role of the city as a port city.¹¹⁵

However, there exists the idea that from the urban planning point of view and this water-city possible scenario of development, the location of the new port was inadequately chosen. This thought, is further supported by the fact that the construction of the port in 1930s and the railway line some years later prevented the city, in its greatest part, from having a direct

¹¹² Simeoforidis, Y., 1996, “Freshening the Gaze”, *Water-Land / Tierra-Agua, Quaderns D’Arquitectura I Urbanisme*, p.48

¹¹³ Micara, L., 2000, in “L’Eredita del passato” in *Un Piano per Durazzo –Durrës Master Plan*, p. 14

¹¹⁴ Miho, K., 2003, *Shqipëria: Vështrim Urbanistik (1912-1944)*, p.184-186

¹¹⁵ Micara, L., 2000, in “L’Eredita del passato” in *Un Piano per Durazzo –Durrës Master Plan*, p. 11

contact with the sea, thus forcing it to expand towards the plain and the former marsh. At the present, this area is the site where, in grand part, illegal settlements took place after the 1990s.

Regarding this issue, Miho argues that the selection of this specific place for the construction of the port could be considered quite normal if analyzed independently from the entire urban elements and assembly of the city structure. The port, as “an object” in itself, did function and is functioning rather well. From the technical point of view, it constitutes a perfect work; and from the economical one, it did for sure offer “life” and complexity to the city and the country, provided with considerable working places and generated substantial profits. Nevertheless, together with its whole infrastructure extending on an area almost as wide as the city itself, it occupied the entire southern coast and the most rentable land suitable for building constructions. Eventually, it prevented the city from approaching and having a closer relation to the sea. The port is a mayor cause of pollution, traffic and circulation problem. It constrained the city to extend, grow and develop at the “back-land”, as if it was a “hydrophobic” structure. Miho believes that there could have been more pleasing alternatives and better solutions to this problem, and that this result was the direct effect of economical policies and political views subject to backwardness complexity at the time when the decisions regarding the port and city development were taken.¹¹⁶

The new port structure consisted of two concrete and stone piers of a considerable length of 2.5 km both. The piers, like two strong arms, embraced a total water area of 85 hectares, and the depth within this water basin varied from 3.5 to 7 meters, in order to allow the ships of different sizes to make manoeuvres and easily accost to the quays.¹¹⁷ Along with these constructions, other structures were built within the territory of port in order to supply with services. Among them, it is interesting to mention the construction of warehouses, cisterns, containers, infrastructure of sewage system and water supply, a net of electricity supply, lighting fixtures and signals, new service roads and squares, etc.¹¹⁸ Regarding the interface between the port and the city, it is significant to mention the trial to demarcate this border with buildings whose usage would be appropriate for the port functions. Therefore, it is interesting to underline proposed elements such as the square at the port entrance right at the end of the main boulevard that leads to the centre (please see figure 49); the Marine Administration Offices, the Port Administration Offices, the Customhouse, and in front of

¹¹⁶ Miho, K., 2003, *Shqipëria: Vështrim Urbanistik (1912-1944)*, EXTRA, Tirana, p. 203

¹¹⁷ Ibid, p. 186

¹¹⁸ Ibid, p. 187

the Bank of Albania building, the Marine Station, Travel Agency and Passengers Hall building.

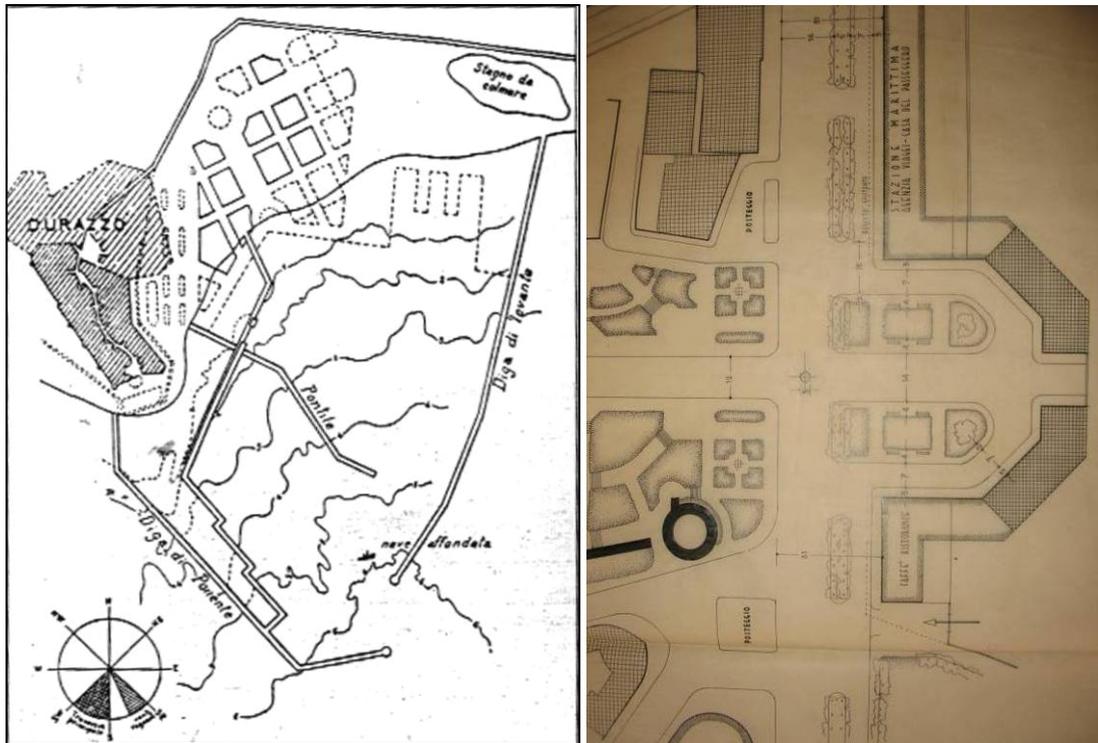


Figure 48: Master Plan for the Construction of the Port, 1928 (Pavia, R., 2000, “La Portualita” in *Un Piano per Durazzo –Durrës Master Plan*, p.60)

Figure 49: The Project for the Square at the Entrance of the Port, 1942 (Central Technical Archive of Construction- AQTN, Tirana)

It could be of interest that based on the report of the Durrës City Master Plan 1942, to provide with some data regarding the capacity of the port and its functionality, in two different years of the pre-socialist era. Thus, in 1937 there were registered approximately 667 ships and 646 boats that had either arrived or departed from the port of Durrës, transporting 15600 passengers, 73600 tons of goods and 1600 livestock. Whereas the data of year 1941 are as follows: total number of arriving and departing ships was 4104, number of arriving and departing passengers was 594920 and the amount of imported-exported goods was 849690 ton.

The impact of port construction was immense on the city, and the most important of all, was the construction of a new road network, that starting from the port was diverging in many directions and destinations in the entire Albanian territory. In other words, the construction of the new port was directly affecting the urban structure, tissue and morphology of the city of Durrës.

4.1.2.3 The Baths

It is very impressive to find out that during the pre-socialist era, special attention was paid also to planning and designing the coastal area. There are maps of that time, which represent urban studies on this site. The coast of Durrës was the first one in Albania to be urbanely organized and architecturally designed, and even used. This specific section of the waterfront, having a sandy land stripe of 70-80 metres, was envisaged to appear as a territory of private villas situated on well-defined parcels varying from 500 to 2000 sq meters.¹¹⁹ They would profit from the proximity to the sea and make use of the sandy coast, for the very basic function that the seaside offers: “bathing”.

In the analysis that architect Carmignoni developed in the area of the coast, the south and south-eastern part of the city, within the framework of the proposal for the Master Plan in 1942, he concluded that the coast or the “shoreline of Durrës is magnificent and even quite competitive with the other coastal cities on the shores of Adriatic sea”.¹²⁰ In a trial to mark the expansion of the territory, it could be said that the southeast costal area, has a long, half-moon shape that covers an area starting from the junction or the bridge (Ura e Dajlanit) in the entrance to the city till the point where the street to Tirana and that to Kavaja intersect (Plepa). The site has a length of almost 4.5 km bordered by the Durrës - Kavaja Street. In the central section where it encountered the range of Arapaj hills, this site has a maximum width of 300 m. For the favorable location, its proximity and exposure to the sea, beautiful landscape and its profitable values, the coast of Durrës seemed to have grasped the attention of not only urban planners and architects, but authorities and landowners, as well.

There exists a Master Plan for the Coastal area (the Baths) of Durrës, since 1933, almost 10 year before the preparation of the first Durrës City Master Plan (please see figure 50). The main aspect of this study was the division of the entire site into parcels of different but predefined sizes, based on a gridiron plan. Villa type low-rise residences of one to two floors were proposed to be located on these plots. They were private property of the high-class society of Tirana and Durrës at that time¹²¹ (mainly politicians and people working for the government). According to architect Carmignoni, along with the disadvantages and deficiencies of the plan, such as the lack of kindergartens, or more spaces designed and created for the public, there were advantages and good points, as well. One of these was the proposed road network, which meant that no ordinary villas or other constructions would

¹¹⁹ Miho, K., 2003, *Shqipëria: Vështrim Urbanistik (1912-1944)*, p. 202

¹²⁰ Report of Durrës City Master Plan 1942, written by Arch. A. Carmignoni, and Arch. F. Poggi

¹²¹ Miho, K., 2003, *Shqipëria: Vështrim Urbanistik (1912-1944)*, EXTRA, Tirana, p. 202

take place above any planned road. The designed road system enabled also the allotment and separation of the entire site into quarters. Carmignoni's belief was that the issues of costal area –the beach- was not a mere technical urban planning problem, but rather and above all, an economic one.¹²² In 1942, based on the Master Plan of Baths prepared in 1933, the territory subdivided into plots had been given / sold to mainly private individuals, and they had already started the construction of houses. Obviously, because of the lack of a clearly defined and written Urban Regulation for the Baths' Area in the Master Plan, the constructions varied in size, typology, some having surrounding blind walls, some did have gardens, and some others not-designed open space in front of their houses. Many decades later, Miho argues that this admirable part of the Albanian coast was studied rather geometrically, that there were not available public spaces, the proposed roads were all of the same character and monotonous, and in general, the diversity, complexity, hierarchy and architectural values were missing.¹²³ In 1942, in the opinion of Durrës City Master Plan authors also, this meant a real problem, in addition to the fact that in that state, the costal area would not have had the chance to invite and host other people. They believed that the costal city needed to have a clean, comfortable, inviting and friendly environment.¹²⁴

The Master Plan 1942 proposal for the coastal area (see figure: 51), which in this plan is defined as “peripheral area”, respects almost entirely the existing situation, which is the division into plots inherited by the Master Plan of 1933. In addition, the plan of 1942 elaborates further the idea of dividing the site that expands along the sea for almost 4 km into subsections or quarters defined by sub-centers where public activities are concentrated.

Furthermore, residences, villas, small apartment buildings are proposed in the Master Plan for the Baths 1942. Together with the residential buildings, constructions of commercial activity functions, such as hotels, restaurants, shops, etc, are proposed. A public park is proposed at the southeastern extreme of the “peripheral” coast city. At that time, this site was a tree nursery in very bad conditions. Moreover, a holiday campus for the youngsters, which during the socialist era was named as “Campus of Pioneers”, was proposed on the site bordered by the designed public park, the national road, the canal and the sea. This long strip of sandy land has great advantages and values. They consists in having an open view towards the sea on the south; the ridge of hills at the back; the panoramic view of the city with the beautiful silhouette of the promontory and the King's summer residence at the top of the hill in the north-west direction; and the sight of the Riviera in the south.

¹²² Report of Durrës City Master Plan 1942, written by Arch. A. Carmignioni, and Arch. F.Poggi

¹²³ Miho, K., 2003, *Shqipëria: Vështrim Urbanistik (1912-1944)*, p. 202

¹²⁴ Report of Durrës City Master Plan 1942, written by Arch. A. Carmignioni, and Arch. F.Poggi



Figure 50: The Master Plan for the Baths, 1933 (Central Technical Archive of Construction- AQTN, Tirana)

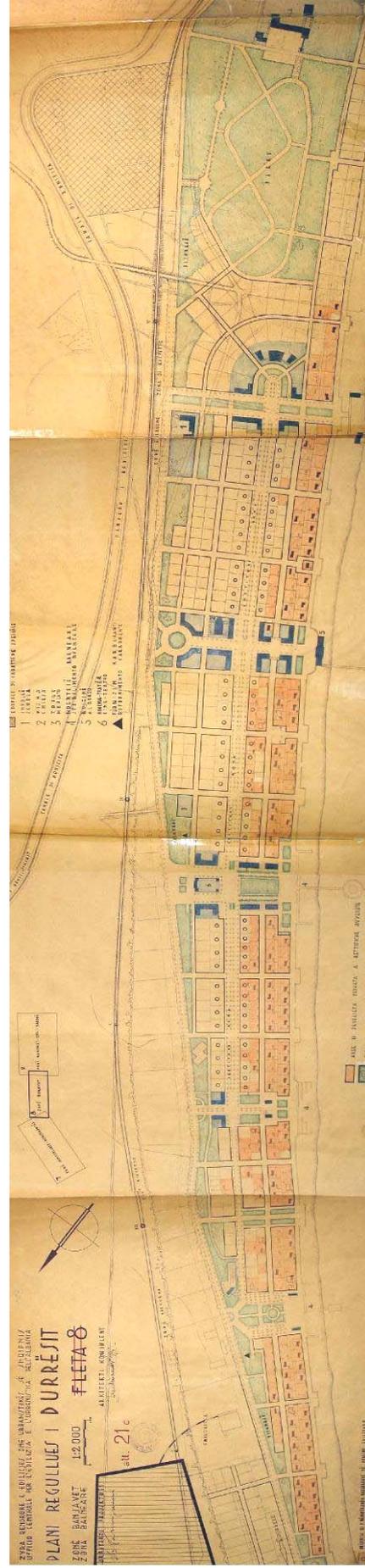


Figure 51: The Regulatory Plan for the Baths (Central Technical Archive of Construction- AQTN, Tirana)

The Regulatory Plan (Master Plan) proposed also the construction of a seasonal holiday campus, which would include facilities such as entertainment centres, restaurants, hotels, theatres, playgrounds, as well as a series of villas and small apartment buildings that would be constructed respecting and following the topography lines. The intention and objectives behind this plan were the ambition and idea of creating a vacation area utilizing the natural assets: the sea, the sandy site, and the range of the hills at the back, to create an attraction point or better say: site, even more attractive than the new and greater city of Durrës itself.

4.1.2.4 The Street, the Junction, the Pier

One of the essential criteria of the Master Plan 1942 worth being mentioned is the planned intervention on one of the most impressive streets, the core axis of the city, the one which determines ‘cordo’: the north-south axial spine. The most noticeable intervention was on the segment connecting the city administrative centre, the ‘Square of Liberty’ and the entrance square of the port. Both sides of the boulevard were delineated with 2 to 4 floor high buildings, expressing the features of Italian architecture of the time. In a view from the port’s entrance square, the perspective closing point would be defined by the silhouette of the mosque (see figure 52).

Second, the road network was definitely crucial within the framework of the Master Plan 1942, not only because it introduced the future urban tissue of the city, but it explicitly defined the development directions of the city, as well. In this respect, the ‘junction’ was important, for it defined the node where the flux and three main roads joined; respectively the ‘decumanus’ – east west axis of the city, the road coming from the south and bordering the residential area on the coast, and finally the road to Tirana in the northeast direction along both sides of which the future industrial area would take place (see figure 53).

Finally, it was fascinating to see that along with the main lines of development that define the basic structure of the city, the Master Plan included various detailed studies. One of them was the proposal for a structure on water that definitely represented ‘landing on water’. That was the continuation and culmination of one of the perpendicular ‘lines’ to the ‘linearity’ of the coast parallel to the water. From the structural point of view, it assured diversity, hierarchy, definition and creation of public space and the vertical flow versus the horizontal one. Architecturally, it presented an avant-garde example of the time (see figures 54 and 55).



Figure 52: Three dimensional representation of the street, the Main Axis that connects the Centre and the Port (Central Technical Archive of Construction- AQTN, Tirana)

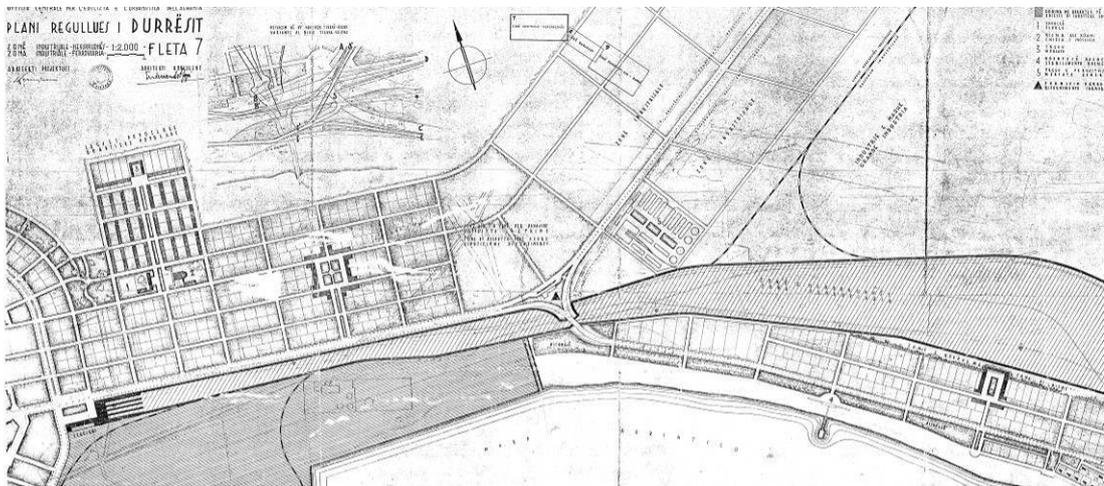


Figure 53: The Proposal of the Road and Circulation System and Junction, Regulatory Plan 1942. (Central Technical Archive of Construction- AQTN, Tirana)

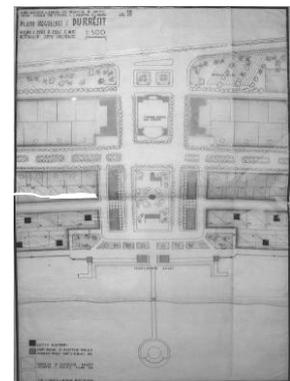
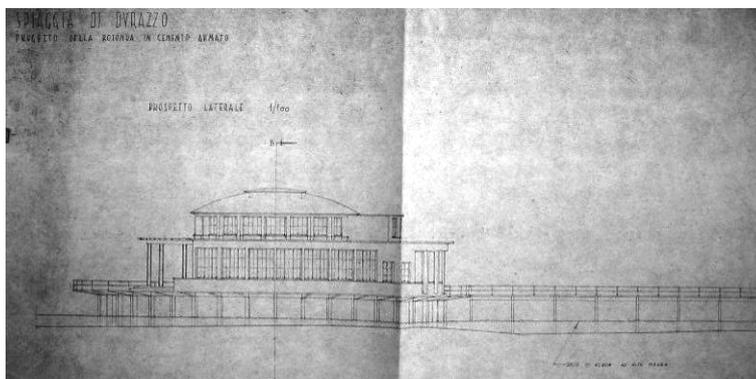


Figure 54: Project for a Structure on Water in the Bath Section (Elevation) Complementary material of the Regulatory Plan 1942 (Central Technical Archive of Construction- AQTN, Tirana)

Figure 55: Detailed plan representing one of the structures on water and the public square defined by public use buildings in the costal area – the baths (Central Technical Archive of Construction- AQTN, Tirana)

4.2 The city during Socialism

This part of the thesis deserves special attention and work, because it represents an extensively discussed model of the city, which is the socialist one. The Socialist City's model major concern, as Milyutin states, is to create a rational and economical city which acts as an interface between the rural and the urban that works as a cost-efficient unified whole, in other words: a "functional-assembly-line system".¹²⁵

The foundation of the state socialism in Albania, as in many other countries that followed the same route, coincided with the termination of World War II. As Andrusz states, the consequences of this war were "severe destructions, population loss and political upheaval".¹²⁶

One outcome of the defeat of fascism was the impetus, which it gave to working-class demands for greater democracy and for society to be rebuilt on a more egalitarian basis. People's lives should no longer be left to the "anarchy" of the market. The state would in future intervene to control the "commanding heights" of industry and to decide on investment policies.¹²⁷

These demands were among the factors that set the stage for the emergence of state socialism. The administrative-command economy that overruled in Albania from 1945 till early 1990s, operated according to a coherent logic in itself, which was based on a central planning system in which financial institutions played a minor role. To further support this idea, we could refer to Harloe who claims, "State socialism, with its emphasis on industrialization under the control of a centralized one-party state, created cities and ruled over them".¹²⁸ Within this framework, some of the distinctive basis characteristic to the Soviet Union model¹²⁹ as defined by Andrusz, which were either adapted or imposed in Albania's state socialist system, and that were strongly related to space production, considering the particular case of Durrës port city and its waterfront, are:

- Industrialization and urbanization were to be based on state ownership of the means of production and the centrally planned determination of resources use - allocation;

¹²⁵ Milyutin in Gentile, M., "Urbanism and Disurbanism in the Soviet Union", p.3

<http://www.student.uu.se/studorg/europe/inblick/?p=/2articles/04/gentile.html>

¹²⁶ Andrusz, G., 1996, "Structural Change and Boundary Instability" in Andrusz, G., Harloe, M., Szeleyi, I., (eds), *Cities after Socialism, Urban and Regional Change and conflict in Post-Socialist Societies*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford UK, p.36

¹²⁷ Ibid

¹²⁸ Harloe, M., 1996, "Cities in the Transition", in Andrusz, G., Harloe, M., Szeleyi, I., (eds), *Cities after Socialism, Urban and Regional Change and conflict in Post-Socialist Societies*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford UK, p.2

¹²⁹ Andrusz, G., 1996, "Structural Change and Boundary Instability" in Ibid, p.37-38

- Priority was given to investment and heavy industry; (port)
- Economic planning took precedence over physical (spatial) planning; (residential block in the seaside promenade)
- Investment-production plans and locational choices were to be based not on market or profit criteria but on planners' preferences, which took into consideration local, regional and national needs;
- The state provided cheap, highly subsidized public welfare goods and services, including food; (the coastal vacation zone)

In addition, Harloe states that there were three principle characteristics of state socialism, which after the Second World War (1945) and based on the Russian model, were compulsorily imposed on the East European countries including Albania. These aspects, shortly defined, were: first, state monopoly ownership of the means of production and collective consumption, centralized planning for market-led distribution of investment, incomes and consumption of goods and services; second, the political domination of one ruling party (Communist and the Labor Party in the case of Albania), which acted through a centralized state apparatus, trying to control and order every aspect of the social, economic and political life; finally, the development of a distinctive class structure or socialist rank order.¹³⁰

4.2.1 Impacts of Socialist Central Planning on Urbanization. Architecture and Urbanism

Physical planning was introduced or reconstituted in Albania, and in other Central East Countries, as a tool for urban development in the late 1950s and early 1960s, which in fact coincides with first years of the communist/socialist system. During this period “the first comprehensive regional and urban strategies were developed and applied, based on the principle of industrial decentralization”,¹³¹ as claimed by Enyedi. Regarding this issue, the first Socialist Master Plan, or to make use of the term applied to it: General Regulatory Plan of Durrës, was prepared in 1957. It kept the main lines of development as the preceding plan, which defined the city macroform, and its main feature was the functional zoning where the industrial area had a considerable place and emphasis. The development / master plan aimed at controlling and regulating everything, including both the structure of the city and its parts.

¹³⁰ Harloe, M., 1996, “Cities in the Transition”, in Andrusz, G., Harloe, M., Szeleyi, I., (eds.), *Cities after Socialism, Urban and Regional Change and conflict in Post-Socialist Societies*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford UK, p.4

¹³¹ Enyedi, G., 1996, “Urbanization under Socialism”, in *Ibid*, p.112

Günay maintains that “at a time when the state had substantial authority holding extensive land, this type of planning displayed legitimacy”.¹³²

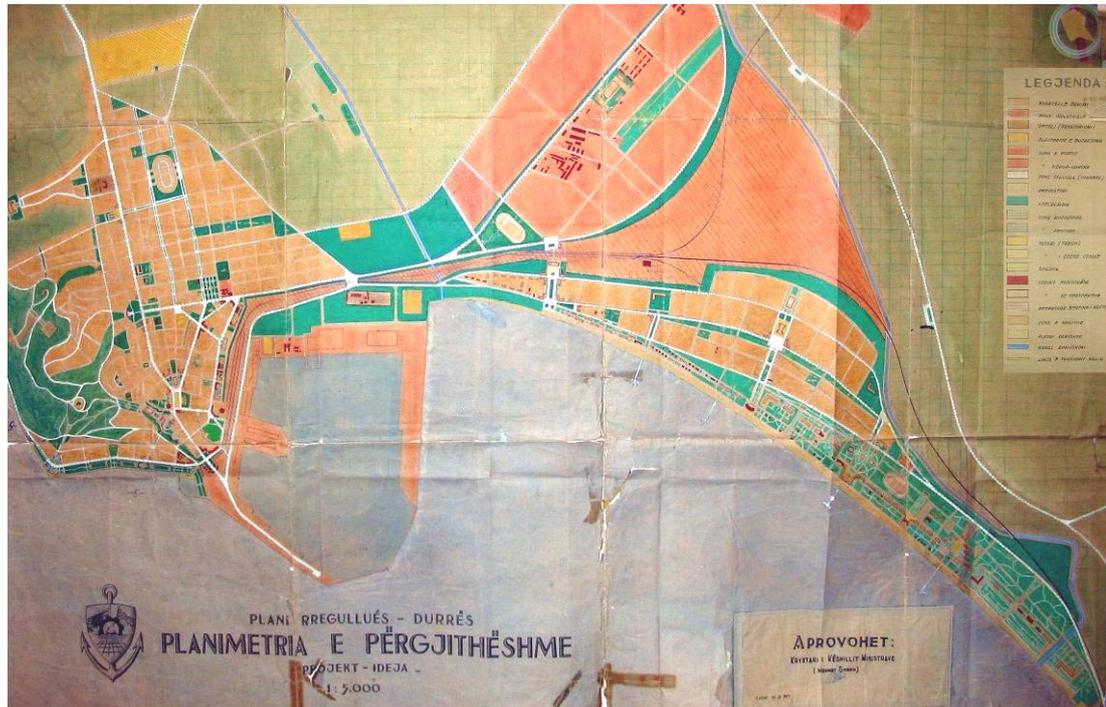


Figure 56: Durrës Regulatory Plan, 1957 (Central Technical Archive of Construction- AQTN, Tirana)

Whereas in the 1970s, the approach towards and ideas regarding the city, its role and function in the regional and national level, underwent crucial changes. The cities were not anymore considered only based on their existence as industrial production centres. More inclusive, or to use other terms “comprehensive” plans came forward. The same could be said for the case of Albania and Durrës city specifically considering the facts of it “owning” the largest port in the country, which supported the industrial sector.

The physical plans from that time laid down the macro-spatial structure of urban areas, their general land use patterns and especially focused on the allocation of land for housing, industrial construction and transport network arrangements.¹³³

Furthermore, the central planning system was concerned with and paid particular attention to the territorial organization and accessibility to public services. Contemporarily, “the alternative development strategies were discussed by experts and decision-makers, focusing on political, economic and strictly professional issues”.¹³⁴ Since the personalities/figures

¹³² Günay, B., 1999, *Property Relations and Urban Space*, MFY, ISBN: METU, Ankara, p.181

¹³³ Dimitrovska A., K., 2002, *Mastering the Post-Socialist City: Impacts on Planning and the Built Environment*, p.3 (<http://www.planum.net/topics/documents/dimitrowska.PDF>)

¹³⁴ Enyedi, G., 1996, “Urbanization under Socialism”, in Andrusz, G., Harloe, M., Szeleyi, I., (eds.), *Cities after Socialism, Urban and Regional Change and conflict in Post-Socialist Societies*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford UK, p.113

involved in setting urban policies were principally politicians and planners, the majority of the population did not have any significant say and contribution in the process”.¹³⁵

In this line of development, from the 1970s on, instead of a socialist city conceived as an overlapping and rationally derived product of its activities, we find a segregation of the commercial centre, the residential nuclei, the industrial zone, and so on. The proposed master plans were characterized by the functional zoning scheme. Based on various references (Gentile¹³⁶, Smith¹³⁷) regarding the definition of the socialist city, its physical layout and functional organization it is possible to list and categorize these “zones” or “sectors” of the socialist city. After scrutinizing the documentation of the Regulatory Plans of Durrës City¹³⁸ prepared during the socialist system, and specifically that of 1957-1963 and the consequent one planned in 1983-1987, it could be arrived to the conclusion that the same scheme applies to the city of Durrës. Thus, the socialist city consisted of: 1) a purely segregated zone for railroad line and port area; 2) a zone of production and communal enterprises with related scientific, technical and educational institutions; 3) a green belt or buffer zone with major highway; 4) a residential zone including social institutions, residential buildings and children's facilities; 5) a park zone (forest, hill including tourist complexes); and 6) an agricultural zone.

Many analysts, theoreticians and critical thinkers in urban studies, but in this specific case I refer to Enyedi, argue that the crucial features of the socialist urbanization derive from “the collective (mainly state) ownership of urban land and infrastructure, from the centrally planned allocation of development funds, and from the existence of comprehensive strategies for the development of the national settlement network”.¹³⁹ These and other reasons justify or explain the “internal segmentation of the city, this loss of complexity in the urban phenomenon, which meant that the traditional virtues of the city and its urbanity were in crisis”.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁵ Harloe, M., 1996, “Cities in the Transition”, in in Andrusz, G., Harloe, M., Szeleyi, I., (eds.), *Cities after Socialism, Urban and Regional Change and conflict in Post-Socialist Societies*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford UK, p.15

¹³⁶ Gentile, M., “Urbanism and Disurbanism in the Soviet Union”, p.3
(<http://www.student.uu.se/studorg/europe/inblick/?p=/2articles/04/gentile.html>)

¹³⁷ Smith, D. M., 1996, “The Socialist City”, in Andrusz, G., Harloe, M., Szeleyi, I., (eds.), *Cities after Socialism, Urban and Regional Change and conflict in Post-Socialist Societies*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford UK, p.73

¹³⁸ Regulatory Plans of Durrës City, accessed in the Archive of Urban Planning Studies Institute (Arkiva e I.S.P.U.), Tirana

¹³⁹ Enyedi, G., 1996, “Urbanization under Socialism”, in Andrusz, G., Harloe, M., Szeleyi, I., (eds.), *Cities after Socialism, Urban and Regional Change and conflict in Post-Socialist Societies*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford UK, p.101

¹⁴⁰ Rubert de Ventós, X., 1998, “Urbanization against urbanity?”, *Ciutat real, ciutat ideal. Significat i funció a l'espai urbà modern*, (<http://urban.cccb.org>)

identity”.¹⁴² The state, as a central planning entity, had a powerful influence on the production of (urban and public) space. The authority and pressure applied by the state through city planning, which was viewed as an important means of achieving political purposes, did materialize in the physical layout of the socialist city. Some of its spatial features were expressed through strong axial streets and axes, residential areas developed in typical (mostly prefabricated) blocks or collective housing, and the most distinctive characteristic being the central squares and monumental enclosures.

...the centre is the heart of the city; it is the political centre for its citizens. The most important political, administrative and cultural establishments are in the city centre. On the central squares, political demonstrations, parades and festivals on public holidays take place. The city centre with squares, main avenues and voluptuous buildings determine the architectural silhouette of the city. Squares are the structural basis for urban development.¹⁴³



Figure 58: Project Proposal for Durrës City Center, in 1960-1970s (Central Technical Archive of Construction- AQTN, Tirana)

Figure 59: The Mosque transformed into a Cultural Centre during the Socialist System (City postcard)

Differently put, by referring to Dear, “planning practice certainly has a political legitimization”.¹⁴⁴ In addition Günay argues that one dimension of the (planning) practice has been deeply embedded in the apparatus of the state, and in essence planning serves to legitimize the actions of the state. The second dimension of practice is part of land and property development interests. In this case, planning serves to legitimize the actions of capital. In its roles as a tool to legitimize the state and capital, planning resembles architecture.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² Andrusz stated in Smith, D. M., 1996, “The Socialist City”, in Andrusz, G., Harloe, M., Szeleyi, I., (eds.), *Cities after Socialism, Urban and Regional Change and conflict in Post-Socialist Societies*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford UK, pp. 71-72

¹⁴³ Häussermann, H., 1996, “From the Socialist to the Capitalist city”, in Ibid, p.217

¹⁴⁴ Dear, M. J., 1986, “Postmodernism and Planning”, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, Volume 4, p. 379 in Günay, B., 1999, *Property Relations and Urban Space*, MFY, ISBN: METU, Ankara p. 13

¹⁴⁵ Günay, B., 1999, *Property Relations and Urban Space*, MFY, ISBN: METU, Ankara, p. 13

4.2.1.1 Property Relations under State Socialism

The socialist state emerged with a claim to establish the basis of a communist society, eliminating all private property. Thus the two major notions that characterize the property relations in a socialist system, as argued and defined by Gúnay, are the “abolishment of private property” and “domination over space through public property”.¹⁴⁶ Differently expressed, during socialism the state dominated and intruded personally to the production of space by either eliminating or ‘refining’ private property. In addition, the state was the institution structuring the market and land use patterns as collective public matters, thus “land use questions inevitably become political”.¹⁴⁷

According to Gúnay, the abolition of private property emerged with the “legitimization” of “anti-property society” that declared to “hand over all property into the domination of working classes”.¹⁴⁸ In fact, it was the leading left-wing/ communist party that proclaimed the need to take control over urban spread by expropriating land (in the case of Albania this phenomena appeared as taking it from the legitimate owners, who constituted the category of “rich people”) and making it public¹⁴⁹ (to the use of peasants and working classes). Actually, there was a contradiction and conflict between the public and private property, for the reason that public or communal property was state-owned property. Nevertheless, it is crucial to underline that despite the prevalence of the concept of “state monopoly ownership, much land and housing remained in private hands” in the socialist societies, “although the right to profit from them was generally abolished and other matters, notably rents, were strictly controlled”.¹⁵⁰ It is also possible to affirm as a fact that the socialist planning did not entirely replace the pre-existing urban fabric.

In analyzing the cities in socialist societies, Andrusz states that they “develop on the basis of the public ownership of the means of production within a planned economy, which makes it possible to find rational solutions to the economic, social, demographic, ecological, spatial and other problems of urban development”.¹⁵¹ Further supporting and elaborating this idea, Enyedi claims that in a socialist planned economy “the locational value of urban land is

¹⁴⁶ Gúnay, B., 1999, *Property Relations and Urban Space*, MFY, ISBN: METU, Ankara, pp. 147-155

¹⁴⁷ Smith, M. P., 1988, *City, State and Market*, in *Ibid*, p. 10

¹⁴⁸ Gúnay, B., 1999, *Property Relations and Urban Space*, MFY, ISBN: METU, Ankara, p. 148

¹⁴⁹ Corbus, A., 1994, *The Sprawling City* Published in the exhibition catalogue ‘Cities: from balloon to satellite’
http://urban.cccb.org/urbanLibrary/htmlDocs/urbanLibrary_1024.asp?gIdioma=C&gDoc=A003-C.html&gPDF=A003-C.pdf

¹⁵⁰ Harloe, M., 1996, “Cities in the Transition”, in Andrusz, G., Harloe, M., Szeleyi, I., (eds.), *Cities after Socialism, Urban and Regional Change and conflict in Post-Socialist Societies*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford UK, p.15

¹⁵¹ Andrusz, G., 1996, “Structural Change and Boundary Instability” in *Ibid*, p.63

expressed in detailed construction regulations, norms, comprehensive physical plans, and resource allocations”.¹⁵² These arguments once more lead to the premise of the importance of “central planning”, which in conjunction with “the state ownership of land” indicate that “urban development could be subject to great control”¹⁵³, in other words domination over space through public property.

Within this framework, in the socialist system the state did not only own the asset (the land), but also the tools (central planning) in order to dominate over space. The “socialist city” or “industrial city” model were theories applied in practice on available urban land at the domination of the state. The lack of a land market gave planners and architects the possibility to use space in ways that would normally be impossible in capitalist cities, being more concerned with the aesthetic rather than economical issues, but at the same time under the directives of the central government, providing the state with its “space of appearance”.¹⁵⁴ On the relation between architecture and politics, Leon Krier states: “Architecture is not political; it is only an instrument of politics.”¹⁵⁵

Despite all provisions, the involvement of architects and urban planners in this process, which goes along with “Le Corbusier’s belief in architecture’s capacity for large-scale social and political transformation”¹⁵⁶, puts them to the status of “powerful professionals participating in the production of a new space”.¹⁵⁷

4.2.2 Transformation of the Waterfront during the Socialist System

Taking under consideration what was presented so far in the discussion, we could review the structure, which the socialist city developed on. The main terms and components of the structure are as follows: first, the concept of “private property” did not exist in the sense that the owners did not have the rights to get profits on their property (by selling, renting, etc), and in other cases it was state / collective property; second, the state had total control on the economic source and investments; finally, decision making processes were settled in such a hierarchical way that central government could monitor and control them. Furthermore, the issues of city expansion, its primary function, functional zoning, investment allocation and

¹⁵² Enyedi, G., 1996, “Urbanization under Socialism”, in Andrusz, G., Harloe, M., Szeleyi, I., (eds), *Cities after Socialism, Urban and Regional Change and conflict in Post-Socialist Societies*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford UK, p.104

¹⁵³ Smith, D. M., 1996, “The Socialist City”, in Ibid, p.72

¹⁵⁴ This term is used by George Baird in *The Space of Appearance*, the MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts

¹⁵⁵ Crier, L., 1976, in Baird, G., 1995, *The Space of Appearance* the MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, p. 241

¹⁵⁶ Baird, G., 1995, “*The Space of Appearance*”, the MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, p. 241

¹⁵⁷ Günay, B., 1999, *Property Relations and Urban Space*, MFY, ISBN: METU, Ankara, p. 148

distribution among sectors (economical, industrial, social, housing, etc) were all state concerns, facts that basically constituted the fundamentals of socialist urban planning. Consequently, the city was designed according to a theory and was developed based on this theory / plan. Within this process, the role and task of the state was to manage all resources essential to accomplish this project and get the final product – the socialist city.

Within this framework, it is important to mention that the guiding principles of architects, and city planners regarding urban development had a great influence on the production of space and city itself. While territorially narrowing down the field of interest and study, to further concentrate on the city's waterfront, it is remarkable to see that specifically the elements that constitute the waterfront have been subject to great spatial transformations. The promenade, the port and the costal area, fundamental components of the waterfront have been analyzed considering both their physical and functional features, which appear to be strongly related to planning strategies and property relations under state socialism.

4.2.2.1 The Promenade: Monuments - Ceremonies

The seaside promenade has continuously been an area that had a strong sense of place and good recreational potential. Before going into detail, explaining the content and arguing on the approach of the architectural and urban design project (waterfront development) for the seaside promenade, it is of great interest to mention the legal and executive aspects, which relate to the central planning features of the socialist system.

In this respect, from the file of reports and all attached documentations to the architectural and urban design project for the Seaside Promenade in Durrës¹⁵⁸, it can be derived that: the terms of reference / design task / project requirements were compiled by the Executive Committee of the Party in the district of Durrës. The design process involved a complete team of experts, who were representatives of: the Institute of Urban Planning Studies and the Office of Urban Planning in the city of Durrës. The Institute of Urban Planning Studies (Instituti i Studimeve dhe Projektmeve Urbanistike -I.S.P.U.) was/is a national institution, dependant on the Ministry of Construction, specialized in the sphere of territorial planning and urban planning studies of national, regional and local level. At the present, this institute acts also as a consultant to the Territorial Adjustment Council of the Republic of Albania.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁸ Ministria e Ndërtimit, Instituti i Studimeve e Projektmeve Nr. 1 , Sektori i Urbansitikës, 1983,“Studimi Urbanistik dhe Arkitekturik i Shëtitorës Bregdetare, Durrës- Parashtesë e Projekt Idesë”

¹⁵⁹ Draft of the Law on Urban Planning in Albania, 2002

Even though of a smaller scale than the Master Plan / Regulatory Plan, this was a comprehensive project that involved and necessitated the collaboration of professionals of different disciplines such as: urban planners and designers, architects, civil engineers, projects manager, specialists of traffic and circulation system, geological / hydrological / seismological engineers, landscape architects, cost estimators and economists. The fact that the planning process involved a considerable number of institutions, the central and local government, a heterogeneous group of professionals, and that the Technical and Scientific Council in the Ministry of Construction controlled it, to later be approved by the Council of Ministers, is the true evidence of a centralized planning strategy under state socialism. According to the authors, the aim of this study/project was the development the waterfront, which at the time constituted the only interface and space of confrontation between the city and the sea and its transformation into an area of residential and social character rich in urban and architectural language and expressions that would fit to the context. The site was intended to have a settled environment and functional territory that would provide with the landscape designed promenade along the sea, parks and gardens, as well as recreational activities, all for the public.¹⁶⁰ Even though the city had the tendencies to develop in the inland rather than closer to the water, the people traditionally have considered the seaside promenade as the main public space of the city. As a result, taking into account its physical characteristics such as location, relation and role in the urban structure and the proximity to the water, as well as its functionality the seaside waterfront appears to be the most living urban place/ public space in the city.

Public space, then, implies public domain, collective social use and multi-functionality. It is physically characterized by its accessibility, which makes it a factor of centrality.¹⁶¹

The project site extended from the entrance to the port at its intersection with the boulevard leading to the centre, till the turn of road following the feet of the hill and going to the northern part of the bay, to the place called “Currila”. It covered a surface area of 312 hectares with a costal line length of 1100 ml. It is interesting to mention of an urban intervention to the seaside promenade that had taken place in 1960’s, which comprised of the widening (by 60 m) and extension (in length, by 900 m) of the promenade towards the sea.¹⁶²

¹⁶⁰ Preface of Proposal for the Architectural and Urban Design Project at the Seaside Promenade- Durrës, 1983, Archive of Institute of Urban Planning Studies, Tirana, p. 1

¹⁶¹ Bordja, J., 1998, “Citizenship and Public Space”, <http://urban.cceb.org/urbanLibrary/htmlDocs/urbanLibrary.asp?gIdioma=C&gDoc=A011-C.html&gPDF=A011-C.pdf>

¹⁶² Ministria e Ndërtimit, Instituti i Studimeve e Projektmeve Nr. 1, Sektori I Urbansitikës, 1983, “Studimi Urbanistik dhe Arkitektonik i Shëtitorës Bregdetare, Durrës- Parashtesë e Projekt Idesë”, p.2

Evidently, this operation re-structured the promenade, changed its physical morphology and inevitably set the ground for the creation of a new relation between the sea and the land.

The seaside promenade is a site exterior to the Byzantine city walls, overlooking the sea. There were some buildings of social function and architectural qualities that had emerged since the 1930s till the early 1980s, and some others of good construction conditions of 2 to 4 floors, all integrated in the design of project. Among the buildings of the Italian Era (30-40s) valuable to mention are: Hotel Iliria at the intersection of the road going along the city walls, leading to the top hill, at the Residence of King Zog and the road taking to “Currila” bay at the north, the tobacco factory, and a number of villa type houses. In addition, there were a few constructions of social character, which had taken place during the socialist period. They were: the open-air swimming pool, the new archaeological museum (which was under construction at that time), the “House of Officers” – facility of the Ministry of Defence, the orphanage (under construction at the time), a high school, primary schools and a series of private houses of 1-2 floors, located on the inclined plane of the hill. The upper part of the hill was characterized by dense vegetation, constituting thus a green park for the city.¹⁶³

One of the most important and dominant features of the “seaside promenade” in the early 80s, was the “archaeological park” bordered by the retaining wall in-between the sea and sidewalk, and the road leading to the northern bay. In reality, this park was an open space where some archaeological findings were exposed. It is important to mention that in the report it is underlined the fact that at the actual condition (talking about early 1980s), the archaeological park failed to play the role it was designed for.¹⁶⁴ This was one part of the seaside promenade that under design or planning directives as well as spontaneously, in an illegal or uncontrolled way, did undergo essential transformations in the years that followed, but always perpetuating its function as a public space characterized by different levels of urbanity, influenced by economical, social and political factors.

The predominant “functionalism” in modern urban planning soon disqualified public space in assigning it for specific uses. In some cases it was mixed up with highway administration, or submitted to the requirements of “public order”. In the more auspicious cases, priority was given to its “monumental or urban embellishment” value. Or it was connected with commercial and sometimes cultural activities. In less fortunate cases, it was used as a mechanism of social segregation, either to exclude or to concentrate by way of price accessibility, social image, etc.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶³ Ministria e Ndërtimit, Instituti i Studimeve e Projektmeve Nr. 1 , Sektori I Urbansitikës, 1983, “Studimi Urbanistik dhe Arkitektonik i Shëtitorës Bregdetare, Durrës- Parashtesë e Projekt Idesë”, p. 5

¹⁶⁴ Ibid

¹⁶⁵ Bordja, J., 1998 “Citizenship and Public Space” (<http://urban.cccb.org/urbanLibrary/htmlDocs/urbanLibrary.asp?gIdioma=C&gDoc=A011C.html&gPDF=A011-C.pdf>)



Figure 60: The Plan of the Seaside Promenade, 1983 (Archive of the Institute of Urban Studies and Projects, Tirana)



Figure 61: The Public Space – Promenade where the Opening Ceremony of “Festa e Detit”, took place (Hoti, A., 2003, *DURRËSI: Epidmani-Dyrrahu*, GUIDE, Tirana, p. 57)

Figure 62: The Archeological Park on the Seaside Promenade, early 80s (City Postcard)

The architectural and urban design project for the Seaside Promenade – Durrës 1983-1984, expressed it in different terms would be a waterfront development project, whose considerable part was implemented in the coming years. Several factors and considerations influenced the fundamental design criteria of the seaside promenade. They consisted in the significance of the location and the relation settled between the seaside promenade and the city. Then, it is the magnificent features and values of the landscape where the sea, the promenade, the archaeological park, the buildings and structures, the cultural monuments, the green park and the hills of the city merge. In addition, it is the great importance the

seaside promenade has as a recreational area within the city. Finally, the contribution and role it plays in structuring the interface in-between two entities: the sea and the city. Whereas the design principles¹⁶⁶ consisted in the:

- Survey and classification of the existing buildings, and the integration in the project of those having historical and architectural values, those housing important functions and being in good conditions. (in this respect, taking into account the architectural and construction values of the Tobacco Factory, as well as its size and location, the renewal of this industrial building was proposed and its transformation into a structure that would house social activities);
- Proposal of new residential buildings as housing blocks, which would be located on the territory “bordered” by the Archaeological Museum in the east, the sea (the seaside walk) on the south and west, and the park on the north;
- Construction of more buildings of social character aiming the harmonization between the old-existing and new ones, and also paying particular attention to the natural conditions of the site (sea, topography, landscape, geological features and seismic constraints);
- Further development and the transformation of the archaeological park into a Grand Open-air Museum of great educative values exhibiting pieces of history and informing about it (this park would also function as an important recreational public space; as a significant element for the connection of cultural monuments-the city walls with their fortresses and the amphitheatre-with the new archaeological museum);
- “Enrichment” of the seaside with structures hosting recreational and commercial activities (such as cafes and restaurants, a pier in the sea for anchoring the boats, extensions of the seaside-walkway retaining wall towards the water, stair platforms);
- Economizing with space that would lead to an acceptable ratio of territory usage by proposing residential buildings higher than 5 floors (the heights of buildings varied from 4 to 10 floors);
- Creation and designation of public open spaces, which would accommodate social activities, green spaces, playgrounds, etc;

A very essential and significant documentation attached to the file of Architectural and Urban Design Project for the Seaside Promenade in Durrës, is the detailed cost estimation and economical analyses report. Among the notes in the report, it would be of interest to

¹⁶⁶ Relacion i Studimit të Shëtitores Bregdetare Durrës (Report on the Urban Design Project for the Seaside Promenade)

mention two, which inevitably have affected the spatial transformation and actual appearance of the waterfront. Those regard the tendency and supported idea to construct housing blocks of lowest cost possible by proposing and promoting prefabricated concrete panels. Furthermore, the documentations witness the exclusion of the proposed intervention (one of the options) to widen up the seaside promenade – walkway by 100 to 150m from the shore, with the earth fill attained from the excavation to deepen the water basis within the port territory.¹⁶⁷ These proposals were not defined as impossible interventions, but rather as long-term goals, which lead to the conclusion that “planning in the socialist country was comprehensive and it also controlled the financial-economic basis of urbanization”.¹⁶⁸



Figure 63: The Monument of Resistance at the present time, 2004-2005 (Photography taken by Valentin Stanaj)

Finally yet importantly, regarding its significance in the design project for the Seaside Promenade, attained and controlled by the central government in a socialist system, it could be argued that the construction of the “Monument of Resistance” was of great importance. For the coastal city of Durrës, the promenade traditionally constituted the most essential, even central public space. The memorial of Mujo Ulqinaku, the first warrior to die on 7 April, 1939 – the day of Italian occupation, symbolized / embodied the resistance of Albanian people against the enemy. It stood monumental on the axis of the promenade-this space of confrontation between land and water, right on the “entrance” to the promenade, where it met the port.

¹⁶⁷ Reçencë mbi Studimin Urbanistik dhe Arkitekturik të Shëtitorës Bregdetare, Durrës, 1983 (Remarks on the Urban Design Project for the Seaside Promenade, 1983)

¹⁶⁸ Enyedi, G., 1996, “Urbanization under Socialism”, in Andrusz, G., Harloe, M., Szeleyi, I., (eds.), *Cities after Socialism, Urban and Regional Change and conflict in Post-Socialist Societies*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford UK, p.111

4.2.2.2 The `Industrial` Port

The harbor was the principal motivation for the gigantic and costly undertakings during the socialist era in the city of Durrës. It was in the process of gaining a permanent place in the global network of goods trafficking and becoming the greatest port in the country. The arguments raised in the previous sections of the thesis, lead to the conclusion that in state socialism, the financial-economic basis of urbanization was controlled due to comprehensive planning and, as Enyedi states, the urban development strategies indicated the nationalization of industrial, financial and commercial enterprises.¹⁶⁹ Furthermore, during the socialist era, "...the port area found itself at the cutting edge of the most direct experimentation with modern space".¹⁷⁰ In many cases, the port is not just an urban entity like any other and tends to be separated from the city. Nevertheless,

...the relationship between the city and the port continued to be a very close relationship, but on a different basis. The focus was no longer on osmosis but rather on two entities which lived actually side by side: on the one hand, the port, which became a "facility" in keeping with the modern principles of specialization and the rationalization of spaces; on the other hand, the city, as much of a muddle as ever, which continued to grow as one industrial neighborhood after another burgeoned.¹⁷¹



Figure 64: Photograph of the Port from one of the Towers on the City Wall (Central Technical Archive of Construction, Tirana)

Figure 65: Aerial View of Durrës in 1960s, showing the port city confrontation (Back Cover of Sula, A., 2002, *Reminiscenze Durazzine* , Casa Editrice ACUSTICA, Lecce, Italy)

¹⁶⁹ Enyedi, G., 1996, "Urbanization under Socialism", in Andrusz, G., Harloe, M., Szeleyi, I., (eds.), *Cities after Socialism, Urban and Regional Change and conflict in Post-Socialist Societies*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford UK, p.109

¹⁷⁰ Borruey, R., 2001, "Binding City and Port: Landmarks in Marseille", in *MAKING THE CITY BY THE SEA, Forum and Workshop Marseille 2001*, p.50

¹⁷¹ Ibid, p.45

In this respect, the port continued to further extend as a crucial basis supporting the industrial development during the socialist era. Based on the report of Urban Study for the reevaluation of Durrës Regulatory Plan, prepared by the Institute of Urban Studies and Projects in 1985, the total surface of the port, including its enterprise facilities covered an area of 88.5 hectares, or 28% of all industrial area in the city of Durrës.¹⁷² The port provided with the service of transportation of goods both in national and international level, which at the same time meant occupation of vast area by warehouses, which represent the architecture of the port. In addition, the fishing industry was concentrated and had its facilities in the port area. Besides, within the territory of the port, the boat and ship construction and repair ateliers were located.

Table 1: Technical Characteristics and Commercial Traffic of the Port of Durrës (Pavia, R., 2000, “La Portualita” in *Un Piano per Durazzo –Durrës Master Plan*, p.61)

Technical Characteristics and Commercial Traffic of the Port of Durrës (*)				
Year	Importation	Exportation	Internal-national	Total
1981	1 232 973	688 036	39 988	1 906 997
1982	1 479 984	868 272	42 691	2 390 947
1983	1 893 525	865 038	45 202	2 803 700
1984	1 821 348	637 069	52 738	2 511 155
1985	1 459 389	601 274	84 637	2 181 297
1986	1 874 400	603 060	114 600	2 510 400
1987	1 813 700	657 700	108 086	2 579 800
1988	1 901 813	613 819	108 300	2 823 718
1989	1 714 834	968 184	90 504	2 773 525
1990	1 452 000	835 000	80 000	2 340 000
1991	436 000	644 000	55 000	1 135 000
1992				891 000
Principal Goods of Exportation				
Ferro Nickel			450 000	
Chromium			600 000	
Bitumen			130 000	
Cement (sacks)			100 000	
Concentrated chromium			5 000	
Ferro-chromium			5 000	
Principal Goods of Importation				
Flour, until 1985			100 000	
Rise			15 000	
Sugar			25 000	
Steel			800 000	
(*) Values are expressed in tons				

¹⁷² Studimi Urbanistik per Ripunimin e Planit Rregullues te Qytetit Durrës, Parashetse e Projekt Idese, Ministria e Nderimit, Instituti i Studimeve e Projekteve N.1, Sektori Urbanistikes, Tirane, 1985, p.35

4.2.2.3 The Urban Beach - Coastline and Vacation Zone

The coastline has a special attention while planning during the socialist era, because it was considered as an asset and natural common property belonging to the public, but owned by the state. In the Master Plan of 1957¹⁷³, the territory of the southern coast is included within the “yellow line”- the administrative territory of the city of Durrës. One of the crucial indicators of the master plan in defining the development of the city is its character as a retreat / vacation zone offering recreational activities. In the Regulatory Plan 1957, the proposal on the coast area followed the basic design principles regarding the structure and physical layout, and the line of development based on the proposal of the Master Plan 1942, realized by the Italian architect Carmignoni. On the other hand, the most crucial difference consisted in the attitude towards the property, which generates from the abolition of property in the socialist system. As already underlined in the previous sections, the property is the apparatus that influences the production of space and determines the spatial and physical appearance, thus the urban form.

In 1961-1963, a detailed urban study was developed for the costal retreat area in Durrës, which was elaborated following the lines and directives of the Regulatory Plan 1957.¹⁷⁴ One of the reasons for the preparation and attaining of this plan is the great importance of Durrës costal area as a region offering magnificent assets for the development of costal tourism and acting as an important economical recourse both in the local and regional, as well as in the national level.

Characteristic of this Master Plan is the functional zoning of the site or the function allocation on the costal belt, a feature typical of the socialist planning. Within the framework of utilizing the asset in both local and national levels, it would be of interest to reveal the function of the subdivided sections of the costal belt and the “property relations” settled between them, as physical entities, and the institutions or organs managing and utilizing them. Thus, by analyzing the urban design proposal and plan of the retreat /vacation area in Durrës, it is possible to obtain information on the functional zoning and facilities that take place on the costal belt.

¹⁷³ Arkiva Qendrore Teknike e Ndertimit, Tirana

¹⁷⁴ Ibid

Referring to the Master Plan of the costal area¹⁷⁵, the subdivision or “sections” of the costal belt regarding their function, territorial allocation and “ownerships” were as follows:

- The daily retreat area; which offered facilities and structures such as dressing rooms, showers, shops, bars and restaurants, etc;
- The 15-days retreat/vacation area; which was designed to specifically host families or group of people, offering facilities such as apartments (including bathroom and kitchen and their amenities) or 1-storey light material structures offering the same function, located in the proximity to the belt of sand and the sea;
- Tourist area; equipped with facilities such as hotels, bars, restaurants, dressing rooms and showers, refreshment cubicles, as well as structures of social, recreation and leisure activities;
- The “special” zone; was the site designed to host the seaside retreat villas ‘owned’ by the “elite”, politicians or important governmental figures of the time. This was an “impermeable territory”, restricted to the use of public, and militarily protected by the state;
- The Complex under the administration of the Ministry of Defence (defined with the term “convalescence”); within whose territory facilities such as apartments, bars and restaurants, kindergartens, open-air theatre, football and tennis courts would take place;
- The Complex under the administration of the Ministry of Internal Affairs; which offered the same facilities and services as the above-mentioned campus did;
- House of Youth (Campus of Pioneers); which provided with the facilities such as apartments, sleeping, dressing, bathing rooms/structures, cafeteria, football court, volleyball and other sports’ fields, etc;
- Sports, Recreation and Park area;

This urban design approach shows that central planning, inheriting the features of comprehensive planning, could apply its principles in both national and local level, aiming to provide with service different (age–profession) groups of society.

¹⁷⁵ Plan Rregulles i Zones se Plazhit, 1961-1963

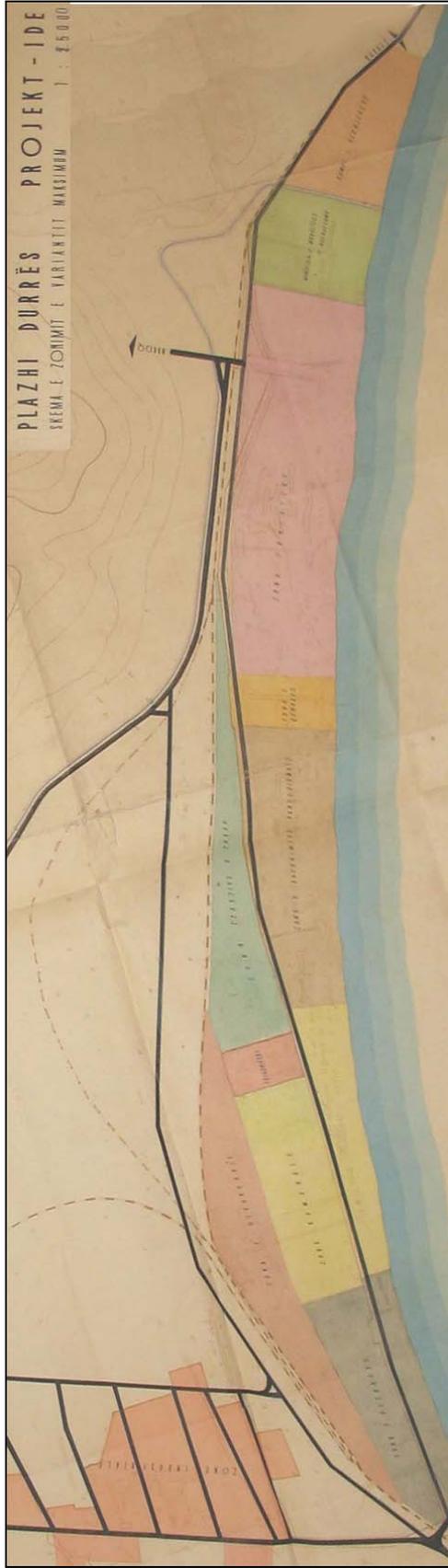


Figure 66: Functional Allocation on Coastal Area (Central Technical Archive of Construction- AOTN, Tirana)

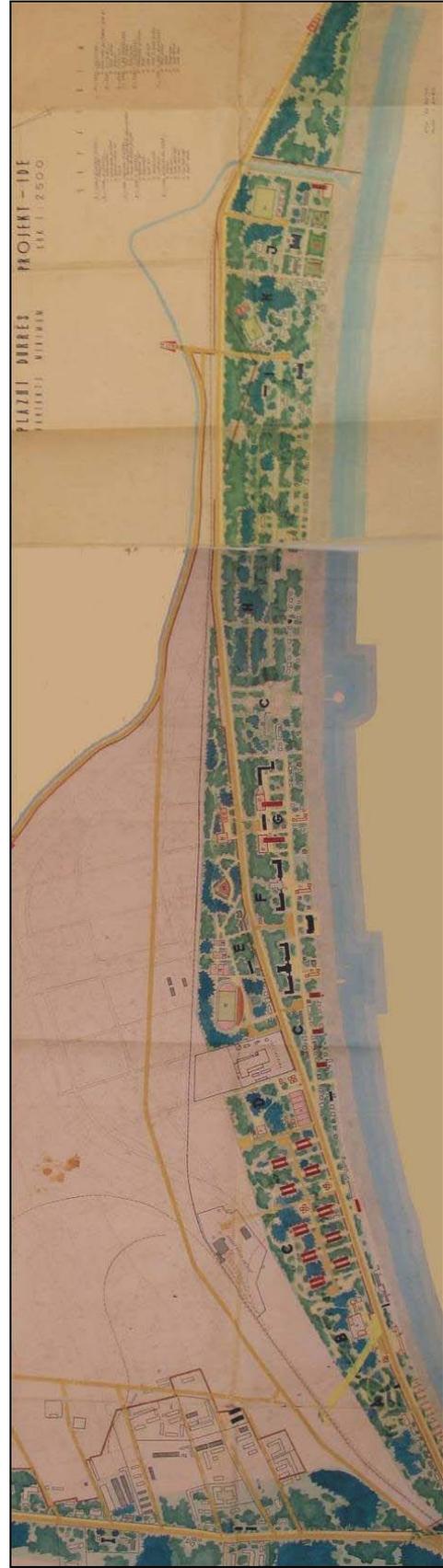


Figure 67: Urban Project for the Coastal Area – the Urban Beach. 1963 (Central Technical Archive of Construction- AOTN, Tirana)

4.3 The city in the Post-Socialist Era

This part of the chapter on the transformation on the waterfront during three consecutive political systems and specifically before, during and after socialism, intends to give a general picture of the condition the city was after the demise of communism and the emergence of a new system post-socialist, pro-capitalist one.

The last 50 years of our history have been characterized by political, cultural, and social change of extraordinary intensity, from which Albania willfully isolated itself and to which it suddenly found being brutally propelled and powerfully attached: during this period the idea that change corresponds to a dialectic development in society and culture has been substituted by the notion that the present is a period dominated by pluralism, a condition in which diverging trends-and the idea of change itself- instead of evolving according to a unidirectional movement, tend towards a kind of “conceptual stability” in which the representation of things is no longer normative or hortative, but descriptive and neutral: a condition in which the world is no longer perceived through the transparency of ideal models (such as the idea of a dialectic future vis-à-vis the past), but through the opaque sum total of its own fragments, unbound by any one consequential structure.¹⁷⁶

The post-socialist cities, including those in Albania, underwent very crucial transitions after the 90s. The most fundamental changes, which inevitably influenced the production of space, were the shift from the central to free-market economy, as well as the appearance of private property notion against the state ownership pattern. In a more emphasized way than other contemporary cities, the post-socialist ones seem to “display a chaotic behavior, which is part of a process of reformulation of orders rather than a sign of their disappearances”.¹⁷⁷

In order to understand the process of transformation and to create a better “image” of the post-socialist city, it could be of interest and help to mention once more the three distinctive features of the socialist city, as stated by Harloe referring to Szelenyi. Accordingly, the socialist city: first, achieved industrialization with relatively low rates of population growth and low spatial concentration; second, the urbanism level was not high, which in fact meant low diversity and economizing with space that lead to low inner-city densities, and less urban marginality; finally, the socialist city had a unique/characteristic ecological structure.¹⁷⁸ What is so obvious in the urban and spatial transformation of the post-socialist city at the present is that the above-defined aspects of socialist urbanization are under a

¹⁷⁶ Aureli P.V., and Zenghelis E., 2004, “Tirana Metropolis: The City as Archipelago”, in *Tirana Metropolis* Berlage Institute Research Report, Rotterdam, p. 19

¹⁷⁷ Zaera P., A., 2001, “ORDER OUT OF CHAOS, THE Material Organization of Advanced Capitalism”, in Mapelli, E.G., (ed), “*Urban Environments*”, Willey Academy, p.179

¹⁷⁸ Harloe, M., 1996, “Cities in the Transition”, in Andrusz, G., Harloe, M., Szeleyi, I., (eds), *Cities after Socialism, Urban and Regional Change and conflict in Post-Socialist Societies*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford UK, p.26

process of dissolution since 15 years now. The transition of the Albanian society from a socialist system to a still undefined, but definitely pro-capitalist one is very critical. It deserves further detailed studies. This condition can be defined with the term Kenneth Frampton uses: “Interregnum”. This state is characterized by:

..a universal misdistribution of wealth and education, which invokes a number of casually interconnected factors, from the demise of socialism to the rise of fundamentalist religion, from the ruthless exploitation of non-renewable resources to the pollution of the biosphere, from the globalization of the economy, to the decline of the nation-state, from the commodification of the spectacular to the dissolution of the rooted culture.¹⁷⁹

Within this framework, the notions used by Sargin, of recent phenomena and developments “exploitation, land-allocation, commodification, private ownership”, which critically engage with issues of contemporary needs “emancipation, appropriation, use- value, public ownership”¹⁸⁰, give a more complete picture of the process of production of space and the challenge of urban development in Albania, at the time speaking.

Durrës was one of the Albanian cities to experience in the most extensive way the difficulties and crisis of transition that had already invaded most of the East European Countries. Its post-socialism condition, so similar to many other countries and cities that had the same fate, could be clearly described through this paragraph, which actually depicts the state of Pogradec city in Albania, so explicitly “spoken” by Sargin:

[the city] ...since its first days of political “re-becoming has been offering inbetween conditions where such polarities as planned vs unplanned, historical vs ahistorical, collective vs individual, liberated vs commodified, stand together and create their liminal spaces, either in the form of post-industrial or local simulacra.¹⁸¹

The reasons of experiencing such difficulties during the transition period, for the city of Durrës are various. First, there are economical ones: the fact that the entire industrial sector was undergoing critical difficulties, even failures and destructions. This directly affected the port activity, thus the city sustainability and economy itself. Second, the fact of the city being an important administrative centre, and the proximity to Tirana – the capital city of Albania- made it experience more intensely the political transformations and its consequences compared to other cities. The third reason is related to the fact that by being a port city, thus a gate to the water-land, which before and immediately after the fall of the

¹⁷⁹ Frampton, K., 2002, “In this Interregnum”, in Henket, H. J. and Heynen, H., (eds) *BACK FROM UTOPIA, The challenge of the Modern Movement*, p. 80

¹⁸⁰ Sargin, G.A., 2004, “Hybrid Spaces: hybrida, hibrida” in Sargin, G.A. (ed), *Hybrid space*, METU Press, Faculty of Architecture, Ankara, p.5

¹⁸¹ Ibid

communist regime was considered to the highest degree as the desirable “wonderland”, it underwent through the deep social crisis generated by the occurrence of “exodus”. The phenomenon of “exodus” (1991) or the “escapade” of thousands of people to a “wonderland” they had dreamt of for 45 years but never really seen was their most courageous expression and position against the political system in Albania, and the total crisis floating over the country at that time. The post-socialist situation of the city of Durrës is reflected on a contrasting image of it that appears as such: on the one hand there is a historical past with great cultural importance, strongly connected to a geographical site which is well defined by geophysical trends, and on the other hand a contemporary urban condition which is extremely degraded.¹⁸²

4.3.1 Architecture and Planning: Legal and Institutional Situation

In Central East European countries, including Albania, the rapid political and economic changes since 1990 have raised demands for corresponding changes in the established planning systems and especially in the development control and urban management processes. The liberalized thinking of the early years of the transition has been characterized by the low political priority given by central government to physical planning, regional and housing policy. The absence of comprehensive national spatial development strategies and coherent regional policies, together with the reforms in the local and regional government systems and disputes regarding the basis of new planning legislation, have been significantly evident in Albania.

The willingness and attempts to re-define their image, re-model the urban structure, and re-interpret the city's assets, public/private spaces, and cultural values characterize the post-socialist cities, among which there is also the port city of Durrës. The city starts to be re-built between lines of dislocation and connection, and the “new urban form spreads over the territory as a dis/continuous essence”.¹⁸³ In a city that is under constant pressure and transformation, it is possible to figure a dis/continuity of newly appearing urban fabrics and models. These features and phenomena constitute the process of order reformulation, whose success depends on the optimal combination of the inevitable global models with the particularities and peculiarity of the city itself. During this process of transformation, the city emerges with a new glocal (the tension between global and local) character.

¹⁸² Pavia, R., 2000, “Foundation Studies” in *Un Piano per Durazzo –Durrës Master Plan*, p.199

¹⁸³ Zaera Polo, A., 2001, “ORDER OUT OF CHAOS, THE Material Organization of Advanced Capitalism”, in Mapelli, E.G., (ed), “*Urban Environments*”, Willey Academy, p.180

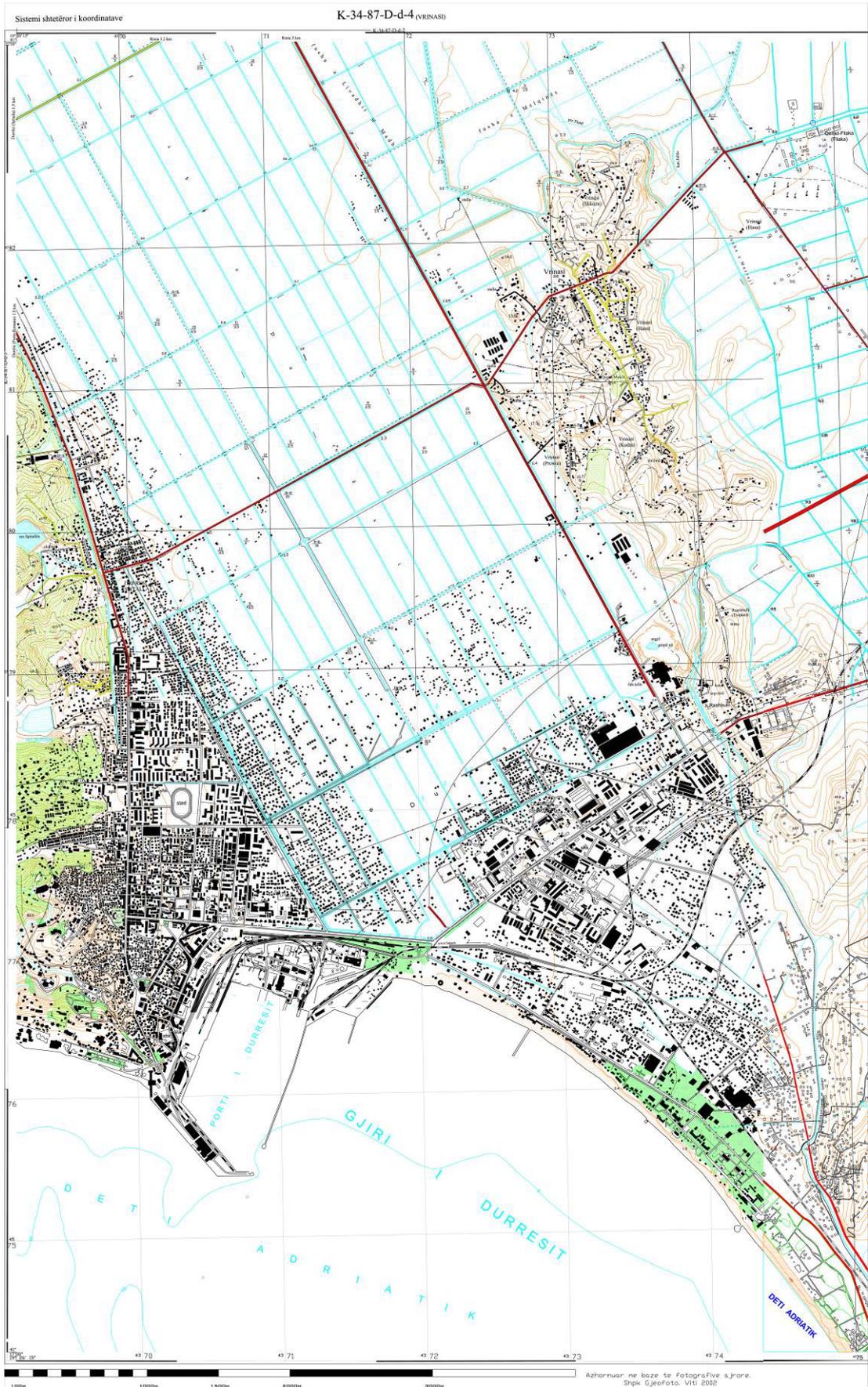


Figure 68: Plan of Durrës City, 2002 (Urban Planning Office, Municipality of Durrës)

What characterized the urban development of the city after the 1990 was the phenomenon of illegal constructions. The very essential cause of the uncontrolled / uncontrollable urban expansion and emergence of informal settlements was the occurrence of immigration-the free movement of people within the country, from the rural areas to the more urban ones, aiming for the centres of greater “opportunities”. Consequently, in no other sector were the negative aspects of the dualism legal-illegal as evident as in the territory management and in the field of construction.¹⁸⁴ In addition, the fact we face up with nowadays is that “the city is becoming less a result of design and more the expression of economic and social factors. The size of contemporary urban agglomeration means that no one single authority controls the form of the city”.¹⁸⁵ Urban development is a process, which is influenced by various social, economical and political factors, and that involves different actors in it. Thus, under state socialism, the planners and administrators were dominant forces in urban development, whereas now, in a post-socialist or capitalist system, “urban planning has become a form of urban management of private-sector-led development”¹⁸⁶, and the actors that have the most to say in the entire process are the landowners, developers, and inevitably politicians.

In order to understand better the legal and institutional situation in post-socialist Albania, it is necessary to state sections and comment on some articles of Urban Planning Law in Albania. This exercise will also help in understanding the hierarchy of decision-taking and executive organs from the governmental to the local level. Accordingly, chapter III of the Urban Planning Law regards the issue of Competences of State Organs in the Field of Urban Planning.¹⁸⁷ Within this framework, Article 7 of the Law defines “the highest state organ responsible for approving urban studies”, which is, “the Territory Adjustment Council of the Republic of Albania (TACRA)”. Further in Article 8 it is clarified that “TACRA is a decision-making organ and operates at the Council of Ministers. The head of TACRA is the Prime Minister”. Moreover, at the governmental level, in article 12 it is stated that “the relevant ministry¹⁸⁸ handling territory planning activities through the Territory Planning Directorate coordinates activities among TACRA, state organs and local government organs in the field of territory planning”. In addition, another state organ functioning at national

¹⁸⁴ De Vito, s., Manahasa, A., 2000, “Le Condizioni Locali della pianificazione”, in *Un Piano per Durazzo – Durrës Master Plan*, p. 46

¹⁸⁵ Marshall, R., 2001, “Contemporary urban space-making at the water’s edge” in Marshall, R., 2001, (ed.) *Waterfronts in Post-Industrial Cities*, SPON Press, Thames & Francis Group, London and New York, p.3

¹⁸⁶ Harloe, M., 1996, “Cities in the Transition”, in Andrusz, G., Harloe, M., Szeleyi, I., (eds), *Cities after Socialism, Urban and Regional Change and conflict in Post-Socialist Societies*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford UK, p.21

¹⁸⁷ LAW No. 8405, dated 17.09.1998 FOR URBAN PLANNING

¹⁸⁸ It has been stated as “relevant ministry” because in different Governmental Legislations it appears with different denotations such as the Ministry of Construction, Ministry of Territory Adjustment and Tourism, or Ministry of Public Works, Transport-Telecommunication, etc.

level, dependant on the relevant ministry and playing the role of consultant to TACRA is The Institute of Urban Studies and Projects. Whereas on the local level, according to Article 14 of the Urban Planning Law, the organs specialized in Urban Planning are: the Territory Adjustment Council in the district councils and in municipalities (TAC), which different from the following ones, is a decision-taking organ; urban planning section\ directories in district councils and in municipalities; urban planning office in the municipality; and finally, the urban planning office in the commune.

In the socialist central planning systems, the cities' development was oriented and controlled by the state through the Regulatory Plans that were produced by the Institute of Urban Studies and Projects, which was a governmental organ, in collaboration with the urban planning offices in the cities. These Regulatory Plans had a validity of almost 20 years, providing with a vision about the development of the city within this time span. Thus, as already mentioned in the part of the thesis where the impacts of socialist architecture and urbanism were discussed, the last Regulatory Plan of the city of Durrës was approved in 1987. Based on the law, this plan should be legally available until another Master Plan substitutes it. In spite of all drastic transformations that have occurred in Albania since 1990, and their most unpredictable or rather reflections on the space, despite the fact of termination of "validity" of the regulatory plan and the obvious for a new Master Plan, none of the cities-municipalities as the administrative entities, has managed to attain a comprehensive Master Plan. Having such a plan approved, would mean "possessing" the legal tool to control, lead and manage the urban development of the city and its periphery, thus the urbanization (architecture and urbanism). The actual condition of many cities in Albania, and in order to remain within the scope of the thesis, giving the specific example of the city of Durrës, force the raise of several critical urban questions related to the succession of invasion of space and uncontrolled development. Why the authorities, local and central government, do not show reactions towards these phenomena using the legal tool that they actually possess? Is this situation a consequence of capitalism or rather a lack of law and order, or unlawfulness?

Founding themselves in between the lack of a contemporary Master Plan for the city and the necessity of plans and projects to keep up with the pace, and most importantly, precede the urban developments, the municipalities-local governmental organs (through their urban planning offices), started preparing Partial Urban Studies. In fact the "master plan", which was the basis controlling document of the era of comprehensive planning during socialism, as a result of change and growth, it is found too static to solve the intrinsic behaviors of both

real property disputes and property relations in general.¹⁸⁹ According to the Law of Urban Planning¹⁹⁰, by definition, a partial urban study would be a detailed study\project based on the provisions of the General Regulatory Plan. It covers the territory in which improvement interventions are probable to take place. These projects are presented for approval to TAC (Territory Adjustment Council) in the municipality. Those of an area bigger than 15 hectares are competence of TACRA, thus a central government issue. Another right of TACRA as a governmental organ is the approval of “yellow line”, which is the boundary of the territory under the administration of the Municipality. In the case of Durrës particularly, this boundary has a great significance and has been an issues of discussion in the meetings of TACRA several time during the post-socialist era. Thus, based on the information provided from the Directorate of Urban Planning in the Ministry of Territorial Adjustment, (in October 2005), there have been taken various decisions regarding the clear definition of administrative boundary of Durrës city in 1993, 1996 and 1999. The greatest impact of them, which relates to the spatial transformation process on the waterfront, is the inclusion of the coastal area within the city “yellow line”.

Another important initiative of both local and central government in the trial to control the urban development by first encouraging urban studies and providing plans was that of defining the boundary of cities central area(s). However, this action was taken only 13 years after the process of transformation and the uncontrolled construction had initiated and already invaded parts of the city, transforming their spatial appearance, structure and identity. This phenomenon occurred particularly in the city centres where the pressure of all actors involved in the procedure, and most importantly of all that of property (land and capital) owners, and eventually the rent and profitability were higher. Its aim was to “freeze” the development in central areas presenting values and having potential within the city, until urban studies and master plans were prepared for them. Regarding this, in July 2004 TACRA decides the approval of the Project Requirements of Durrës City Centre Master Plan and the Boundary of City Centre.¹⁹¹ It is important to mention that the site of Seaside Promenade has been only partially included within the defined boundary (see figure 69). The City Centre, being one of the most rentable sites, was experiencing greater changes and transformations. The pressure of property owners and developers, in other words, the pressure of high-rised construction, more than everywhere else, was noticeable in the central areas(see figure 70).

¹⁸⁹Günay, B., 1999, *Property Relations and Urban Space*, MFY, ISBN: METU, Ankara, p.181

¹⁹⁰ LAW No. 8405, dated 17.09.1998 FOR URBAN PLANNING, Chapter I Definitions, Article 1

¹⁹¹ Directorate of Urban Planning in the Ministry of Territorial Adjustment, Tirana, Albania

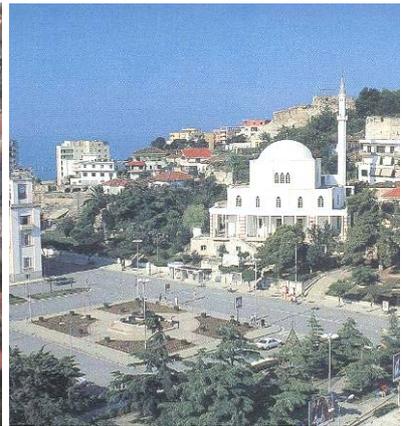
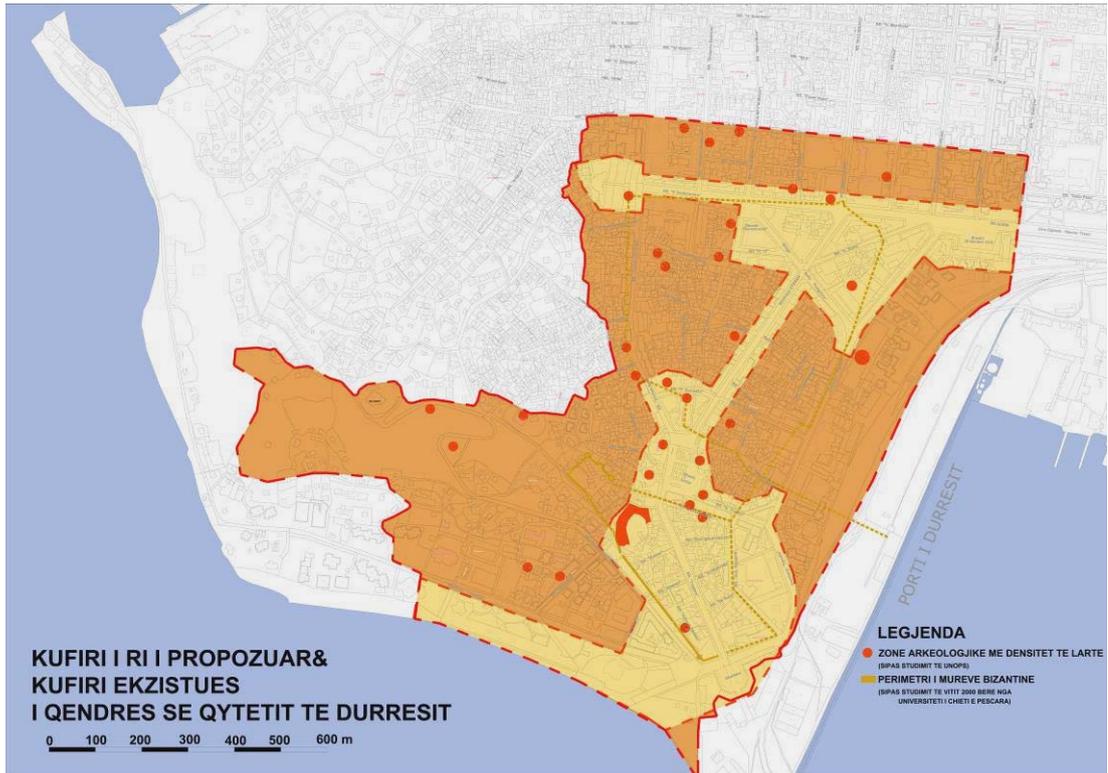


Figure 69: Plan showing the Existing City Centre Boundary and the Proposed one, 2004 (Urban Planning Office, Municipality of Durrës)

Figure 70: Aerial View of Durrës City Centre, 2004 (Photo by Alket Islami, Aeronautika Shqiptare)

Figure 71: The Mosque in Durrës City Center (City Postcard)

The fact is that the city of Durrës does not have a recent Regulatory Plan, but there has been a trial to accumulate and set the basis for the preparation of the Master Plan. There was a work initiated in 1995 and perpetuated for several years by the University of Chieti, Department of Urban Planning and Architecture, in Italy and the Municipality of Durrës, which in itself included proposals within the framework of City Master Plan. Accordingly, certain factors that influence the decision making process during the preparation of a Master Plan are: the environment, the seismic and hydro-geological risks, the landscape, the

historical and archaeological heritage, the system of local planning.¹⁹² Essentially, the plan becomes the main document that establishes the possibility of “agreement for development” on specific initiatives, which have a strategic importance for urban transformation while guaranteeing as much as possible coherence between the physical and functional organization in the city.¹⁹³ In addition, two main items, which strongly relate to decision and choices made for the Master Plan of Durrës, are specifically as follows:¹⁹⁴

- The problem of the port area and its dual function, namely that of being an area of great national interest and the role it has as part of the urban structure of Durrës
- The issue of tourism which could represent the key to a development strategy and, which is based on the upgrading of the local resources

These subjects were intentionally mentioned and underlined, because they represent two points, which strongly relate to the issue of waterfront development, as one of the main matters discussed in the thesis.

4.3.1.1 Property relations in the Post-Socialist System

The property relation is one more factor shaping new forms of conflict that are emerging in post-socialist cities. Consequently, if a defining feature of the socialist city was the state expropriation and nationalization of land, the defining feature of the post-socialist society is the returning of land to private ownership within the context of a broader de-nationalization (de-statisation) policy.

The attempt to introduce an element of legality into this transformation of property ownership in the post-socialist city is discussed (and practiced) under the heading of ‘restitution’. This is the process whereby all forms of property, including agricultural land and urban real estate, are to be returned to the former owners. Restitution, both as a concept and an issue, constitutes one of the thorniest of problems and not just because borders have changed and populations have migrated.¹⁹⁵

In counties / cities experiencing the post-socialist condition, there was a lack of legal, regulatory and planning framework regarding the property relations and rights, a deficiency, which caused the greatest problems of uncontrolled urbanisation and production of space. The most powerful reason to this great problem the post-socialist cities encountered, was the significant feature of “property and its objects: land, capital and labour that constitute the

¹⁹² Clementi, A., 2000, *A Planning Experience for Durazzo* in “Un Piano per Durazzo–Durrës Master Plan”, p.198

¹⁹³ Ibid, p. 198

¹⁹⁴ Ibid, p. 198

¹⁹⁵ Andrusz, G., 2001, “Further Thoughts on the Post- Socialist City”, (available online on Ebscohost 2002)

basis of urban field”¹⁹⁶, and specifically the property relations set under state socialism (which consist in relations among property, state, law, planning theory, urban design approaches and space itself).¹⁹⁷ As argued by Harloe, the features of this relation were expressed through “the limited role played by the law in protecting rights” on property, and that “these functions were performed by the state, through its centralized planning and administrative system”.¹⁹⁸

Along with the transition from central planning state socialism to liberalized market economy capitalism, new relations emerged among property and the above-mentioned entities. In this respect, regarding the property relations “decentralization of ownership” was the process that appeared and fitted well to the “atmosphere of democratization”. As Marcuse states, “decentralization is in substance a transfer of property rights and obligations from central government, to local governments”, which in fact was “power of control and disposition” given to local governments (thus municipality) by the central legislation.¹⁹⁹

Therefore, after the fall of the communist regime, the processes that was mostly supported and accelerated was the privatization of land and buildings (housing, factories, etc), all real estate, and the transferring of rights (ownership) to different kinds of property (assets) to the local governments. These would later on constitute the assets of local governments (municipalities, communes, etc) to be managed by them. These procedures characterize the decentralization process that is still going on in Albania.

Furthermore, Harloe while referring to Marcuse on the property relations during socialism and its reflections in the forthcoming system defines the following general conclusions about the obstacles and conflicts arisen regarding the issue of property. First, “private property rights continued to exist under state socialism”, and were not “simply something (re)introduced” in the post-socialist system. In addition, he states that the approach towards property in the post-socialist city was “the destatification, which consisted of measures to sell state property, to decentralize decision making, and to provide for the management of property for the time being remaining under state control”.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁶ Günay, B., 1999, *Property Relations and Urban Space*, MFY, ISBN: METU, Ankara, p.3

¹⁹⁷ Please read Baykan Günay, 1999, *Property Relations and Urban Space*, MFY, ISBN: METU, Ankara,

¹⁹⁸ Harloe, M., 1996, “Cities in the Transition”, in Andrusz, G., Harloe, M., Szeleyi, I., (eds), *Cities after Socialism, Urban and Regional Change and conflict in Post-Socialist Societies*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford UK, p.15

¹⁹⁹ Marcuse, P., 1996, “Privatization and its Discontents”, in *Ibid*, p.173

²⁰⁰ Harloe, M., 1996, “Cities in the Transition”, in *Ibid*, p.16

All constitutional, legislative and administrative actions, which have been taken or that are still under process during the transition state from socialism to capitalism, regarding the property relations, are discussed and accepted or modified as mechanisms of both political and economic change. Consequently, in the capitalist system, the demands, inspirations and decisions of private property (land) owners and investors or developers (capital owners), who “make deals” between them, do definitely play an important role in transforming the space and re-shaping the city.

According to Enyedi, “in a free market economy the locational value of urban land is expressed in monetary terms”²⁰¹, in contrast to the socialist planned economy, in which the value of urban land was conveyed by planning, norms and regulations, which meant that land had constituted the material bases for the (now lost) state authority. Regarding this issue, Günay argues that “The substantive role of the state is its capacity of dominating space. How state achieves this power is through its control and regulation over property relations”.²⁰² The most evident changes and transformation regarding land public (state) / private ownership are reflected on the real estate (free) market, where inevitably land prices and projects gain a speculative character.

4.3.2 Transformations on the Waterfront after the 1990s

The waterfront is an urban element and space that in the post-socialist urban condition and under the market forces is undergoing drastic transformation and development processes. As a result of new relationships settled between the property (land and capital) and the owners (landlords and developers) monitored by the state and law, involving also urban designers and architects, the space, and specifically in our case study the waterfront itself, is experiencing the “demonstration of the current cult of the iconographic landmark building”²⁰³, which is in search of a spectacular image capable of attracting tourism and business. In a market economy, which is characteristic of post-socialist system in Albania, “the use of the parcel is auctioned off to the highest bidder, and the value of the land capitalizes this maximum income”. In addition, “considering capital and land in the economic context, certainly explained many facades of the urban question”²⁰⁴, which

²⁰¹ Enyedi, G., 1996, “Urbanization under Socialism”, in Andrusz, G., Harloe, M., Szeleyi, I., (eds), *Cities after Socialism, Urban and Regional Change and conflict in Post-Socialist Societies*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford UK, p.104

²⁰² Günay, B., 1999, *Property Relations and Urban Space*, MFY, ISBN: METU, Ankara, p.9

²⁰³ Frampton, K., 2004, “Megaform as Urban Landscape and other Strategems”, Interview by Declerck, J., Ryan, M., Tattara, M., in *Tirana Metropolis* Berlage Institute Research Report, Rotterdam, p. 25

²⁰⁴ Günay, B., 1999, *Property Relations and Urban Space*, MFY, ISBN: METU, Ankara, p.4

constitutes an argument presented by Günay, when inquiring the issue of urban development and architecture in capitalist countries, which perfectly fits to the actual urban condition of Durrës city and its waterfront.

4.3.2.1 The Seaside Promenade: Urban Public versus Private Space

The development of the city in a resettled continuation within a time span of more than 3000 years now, has produced a rich and articulated urban system whose components: monuments, urban tissue and fabric are the evidences of various civilizations and cultures overlaid on a particularly favorable site.

The southern face of Durrës promontory overlooking the port and the sea has such geographic and morphologic conditions that make it a part of the city under continuous pressure of development and constructions having specific features and functions that would fit to the environment – the natural park. Besides, this specific section of the consolidated city is rich in archaeological resources and historical values. This heritage and the preserved / good managed assets could increase the quality and significance of the place, and transform it into a valuable support of tourism development. Even though there is a trial to raise the awareness on the importance of the archaeological site and to settle an approach towards it, the actual conditions offer facts that go completely against these initiatives. In most of the cases, the new constructions not only do not try to create a dialog between them and the urban features and elements, but sometimes, they emerge on probable archaeological sites, destroying thus the cultural treasure. On the contrary, it is important that the exposed monuments become an integral part of a new urban system, which would accompany whoever visitor or resident in the drift through the promontory park and along the seaside promenade.

Throughout this thesis, the transition from a centralized state socialism to a liberalized economy of capitalism has been continuously refereed to and underlined as the crucial factor that generated transformation of the space and change in the physical layout of city and identity of its components, elements of the urban form.

The change in content and function applies equally to those squares and boulevards, which catered for the “mass spectacle”. The monumentalism of the space and the rituals conducted in them were designed to create feelings of security, permanence and pride among the people and their rulers.²⁰⁵

²⁰⁵ Andrusz, G., 1996, “Structural Change and Boundary Instability” in Andrusz, G., Harloe, M., Szeleyi, I., (eds), *Cities after Socialism, Urban and Regional Change and conflict in Post-Socialist Societies*, p.65

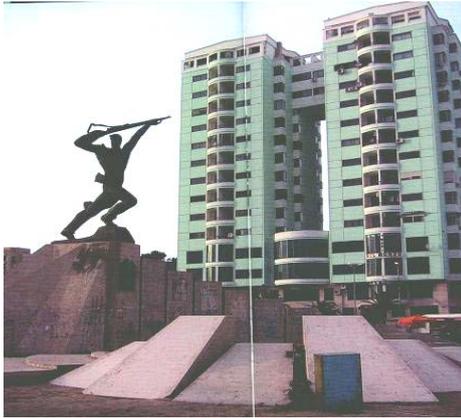


Figure 72: The Monument of Resistance and a newly constructed high-raised building (Photo by Blerti Kroj, in “Tirana Metropolis”, Berlage Institute Research Studio *Tirana: A Modern European Capital Report*)

Figure 73: A carrousel on the Seaside Promenade Site (Photo by Valentin Stanaj)

Whereas nowadays, these spaces, and in this case the site within the scope of this study, thus the seaside promenade in particular, becomes furnished and ornamented with the actually ephemeral “structures”, such as the inflatable Disneyland castle, or roller - carrouels. Andruezs claims that “the great men who guided the destiny of their states, from the top of plinths and mausolea overlooking the squares”, if not replaced, they are challenged by small men feeding the population from the ambulatory stands.²⁰⁶

Within the scope of the study and analysis of the spatial transformation on the waterfront before, during and finally after socialism, we encounter the natural tendency of designing and utilizing the seaside promenade mainly as a public space, or in order to define better: as a place open to use of public. Referring to the pre-socialist era, the site including the promenade was perceived as a park, where the greenery and the natural relation between water and land dominated and were strengthened. While analysing the characteristics of place during socialism, we were presented to an attitude of designing the space for the public by controlling the process through central planning, and the tendency to enrich the public space by providing facilities that would house social, educational, cultural and political activities, which in fact fit to the ideology of the system. Thus, on the site of the promenade we observe the emergence of museums, schools, swimming pools and residential blocks, which go along with the appearance of monuments and spaces of parades. On the contrary, the new system defined either as post-socialist or capitalist one, provided different scenarios

²⁰⁶ Andrusz, G., 1996, “Structural Change and Boundary Instability” in Andrusz, G., Harloe, M., Szeleyi, I., (eds), *Cities after Socialism, Urban and Regional Change and conflict in Post-Socialist Societies*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford UK, p.65

to be put in play on the stage of public domain. A recognizable change in the city in the post-socialist state was “the conversion of the urban landscape of socialism, its squares and monumental places, to commercialism”.²⁰⁷ In addition, according to Harloe,

...with the explosion of consumerism and the provision of leisure, recreation and cultural consumption by the market, new values are placed on activities previously subsidized by the state²⁰⁸.

Based on the Marxist analysis and approach towards space, Günay claims that “it is produced within particular relations, which give to space a form, a function, a social signification”²⁰⁹, since “Space is a material product, in relation with other material elements”.²¹⁰ Moreover, he argues that property plays a decisive role in the production of urban space by acting as “an institution governing social relations, evolution of power conflicts and generation of symbolic values”.²¹¹ As a consequence, in the transition condition, when the state has not yet positioned itself as a “dominator of the public space” by controlling the real property or as a “regulator of the capitalist society” by adjusting the property relations, a conflict between public and private emerges. This phenomena best materializes on the public space, and specifically on the waterfront promenade, where the pressures of development and resistance as well have been extensive, leading to a contradiction between public and private property and space.

4.3.2.1.1 Appropriation of Space

In the previous sections of the thesis, it has already been argued that in the early 90s and during the state of difficult transition, a negative reaction towards the precedent system, which had endured and dominated for 45 consecutive years, was observed and painfully experienced. This had its more severe reflection on the space. In the framework of property relations, the feature that had characterized the socialist system and represented it to people was “state property” and “the common socialist property”. As a consequence, with the demise of the system, people revolted and reacted in different ways towards what so far had been known and considered as public space, which in fact was state property. In a condition where the property ownership was entirely vague, the reaction towards the “idolized” and

²⁰⁷ Harloe, M., 1996, “Cities in the Transition”, in Andrusz, G., Harloe, M., Szeleyi, I., (eds), *Cities after Socialism, Urban and Regional Change and conflict in Post-Socialist Societies*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford UK, p.13

²⁰⁸ Ibid, p.9

²⁰⁹ Günay, B., 1999, *Property Relations and Urban Space*, MFY, ISBN: METU, Ankara, p.8

²¹⁰ Castells, M., 1977, *The Urban Question: A Marxist Approach*, in Günay, B., 1999, *Property Relations and Urban Space*, MFY, ISBN: METU, Ankara, p.8

²¹¹ Günay, B., 1999, *Property Relations and Urban Space*, MFY, ISBN: METU, Ankara, p.9

“divine” state property emerged in the form of its destruction, re-possession, appropriation, and invasion.

Within this context, in the early 1990s to intensify even more during the period 1995-1998, the phenomenon that occurred on the seaside promenade, was the appropriation of public space. There could be different ways of space appropriation, but this specific case had the greatest impact on the economy of the city and the space, for the fact that it appeared as an “invasion” of the so far recognized, the most typical and best representative public open space of the seaside in the port city of Durrës. Thus, in the state of unclear definitions of property relations, many legal-illegal structures emerged on the waterfront promenade. Though not surely planned, these constructions followed a spontaneous but logical layout and sense of development, regarding both their positioning on the site and program. These constructions were basically 1 or 2 (with rare exceptions of 3-4) storey buildings functioning as bars, cafés, restaurants, and hotels. Apart from physically occupying the place with the construction itself, the functions they offered temporarily appropriated the open space as well, the walkways, the terraces on the sea, etc, by putting chairs and leading to a new form of space appropriation. From the economical point of view, these activities were among the first expressions and practices of free market economy, working as small businesses, though most of the time being illegal. Another way of description of the new phenomena emerging in the urban space is “the appropriation of public places by market forces”.²¹²

If we were to define the concept of “appropriation”, various definitions of (urban) sociologists would contribute to a great extent. In this respect, referring to Graumann, “appropriation is the act or process of taking something as one’s own or making one’s own”, which in our case study appears as “the improper or even illegal taking possession of things, mainly of ownerless goods or unclaimed property”.²¹³ Furthermore, appropriation is related to the concept of “territoriality”. Proshansky argues that the persons establish “authority, mastery, or control of a given space by behaviour and activities designed to meet the challenges and complexities of the space”.²¹⁴ Remaining within the framework, the concept of “appropriation of space” is a much wider and intriguing one. It is both a social and political question.

²¹² Costa, X., 2001, “From Hashish in Marseillè to Eoromed”, in *Making the City by the Sea, Forum and Workshop Marseille 200*, p.21

²¹³ Graumann, C. F., 1976, “The Concept of appropriation and Modes of Appropriation of Space” in Korosec-Serfaty, P., (ed), *Appropriation of Space- Proceedings of the Strasbourg Conference*, p.113

²¹⁴ Proshansky, H. M., 1976, “The Appropriation and Misappropriation of Space”, in Korosec-Serfaty, P., (ed), *Appropriation of Space - Proceedings of the Strasbourg Conference*, p. 34

The appropriation of space phenomenon (by means of man-made structures) on the seaside promenade was a sort of “taking possession or jurisdiction of space and domains (land, sea, and air), buildings, objects either temporarily or for a long term, which occurred through the actions of: “occupation / marking off as possessed-dispossessed, as property-expropriated; fencing in; lawful, legal, illegal occupation; violating rules, norms; buying, selling, leasing, renting”.²¹⁵ This statement leads to the conclusion that appropriation of space is an ephemeral phenomenon, argument which is further supported by Proshansky, who declares that “appropriation of space is a process based on time duration and continuity”.²¹⁶

All complex human processes are ongoing events whose consistency emerges from a balance of changes over time in a context of modifying stable structures that establish form and substance for these processes. For this reason, it is far better to view the appropriation of space as a process in which appropriations require continuing “re-appropriation” in order for the efficacy and value of the appropriation or its designed consequences to be maintained.²¹⁷

This relates more to the collective appropriation of space by community, inhabitants, individuals of different ages and social status, tourists, etc. As already mentioned before, though not constructed based on a coherent plan made by architects or urban designers, the structures on the waterfront promenade achieved a conscious perception and social appropriation of them by people who took the traditional walk on the public space. The positioning of the structures and their relation among them and the water – the sea, created a different atmosphere on the seaside promenade. It appears that for any significant appropriation of space, design and construction alone are necessary but not sufficient conditions. Graumann argues that “people will appropriate places and streets, only to the extent that their individual capacities are ready”.²¹⁸ This statement strongly related to the political, economical and social situation of Durrës city during this period. In fact, there was an extremely contradictory condition, specifically that of 1997.²¹⁹ While, the facts demonstrated an entire national economical collapse, this space continued to be appropriated by structures, people and activity. While rates of unemployment were extremely high and income per capita were at the lowest levels compared to other East European Countries, it was so common to see people, mainly youngsters driving Mercedes and spending time and money in the cafes and bars, right on the place where their concentration was at the highest rates: the promenade, as the “public space”.

²¹⁵ Graumann, C. F., 1976, “ The Concept of appropriation and Modes of Appropriation of Space” in Korosec-Serfaty, P., (ed), *Appropriation of Space- Proceedings of the Strasbourg Conference*, p.124

²¹⁶ Proshansky, H. M., 1976, “The Appropriation and Misappropriation of Space”, in Ibid, p. 35

²¹⁷ *ibid*, p.35

²¹⁸ Graumann, C. F., 1976, “The Concept of appropriation and Modes of Appropriation of Space” in Korosec-Serfaty, P., (ed), *Appropriation of Space- Proceedings of the Strasbourg Conference*, p.121

²¹⁹ This period coincided with a national economical collapse as a consequence of “pyramid system” in investing money.



Figure 74: Appropriation of Space – the Seaside Promenade, Durrës (City Postcard)



Figure 75: The Seaside Promenade “cleaned out” of constructions (Photo by Valentin Stanaj)

Figure 76: Landscape Project for the Seaside Promenade (Urban Planning Office, Municipality of Durrës)

In the above lines, it was mentioned that the appropriation of space is both a social and political issue, and an ephemeral “event”. Therefore, the state continuously encounters the necessity to take position and react towards this phenomenon in the different ways of its appearance. The case of appropriation of the seaside promenade, as a public space, in Durrës was extended in several years in time. In year 2000, the municipal authorities and exclusively the political power, took the decision of pulling down the illegal constructions on the waterfront promenade. The slogan of this action was “Bringing back the Identity of Public Space”. During the process of order re-formulation and renewal of the promenade and after, “emptied” and open-space was available. But, Graumann raises the argument that “having space available, e.g. as private or state property without utilizing it (in the broadest

sense of theoretical, aesthetic, practical activities) is not appropriating it”.²²⁰ He further elaborates on the idea that generally, “whether and how space is appropriated by relevant activities depends only partly on its physical characteristics, however well they may have been designed. The kind of appropriation is largely due to the level of actualization which the individual potentialities have already attained”.²²¹

In the conclusion to the discussion about the “appropriation of space”, we could say that in the analyzed case, there are two types of space appropriation: one physical that in other term could be expressed as “invasion of public space” by illegal constructions, which nevertheless continued to generate “appropriation of space” by public-people. The second is crucial in defining the complexity of space and urbanity of the place.

4.3.2.1.2 Development & Re-structuring of waterfront

In the previous section, the phenomenon of “space appropriation” was examined and questioned. The initiative of claiming back the public character and identity of place went along with other urban development on the waterfront and trials and urban interventions aiming its re-design, re-structuring and order re-formulation. During this process,

...the hegemony of form was restored, but the desire, in a pluralist culture, to remain in the forefront of the market place, prevailed and the problem of architecture’s accountability in making the city was passed over. As a result, in a society that celebrates the demise of our post-democratic, global anti-culture, the primacy of form is now being misrepresented with self-referential and narcissistic “landmarks” that turn their back on the city.²²²

Influenced by this drastic transformation, the call goes to architects, designers and perhaps even more to those who administer or manage space, whose crucial interest and concern should be “the continuing attempts of individuals and groups to maintain and enhance their appropriations of space over time in the face of changes in physical settings, the emergence of new priorities and value demands, and changes in individuals or group itself”,²²³ in order to design and produce living and valuable places, which make the city. Both in architecture and urban planning, the activities of the professionals involve the “manipulation of space”, as defined by Stringer. Space constitutes, independently of any consideration of property, an

²²⁰ Graumann, C. F., 1976, “The Concept of appropriation and Modes of Appropriation of Space” in Korosec-Serfaty, P., (ed), *Appropriation of Space- Proceedings of the Strasbourg Conference*, p.120

²²¹ Ibid

²²² Aureli, P.V., and Zenghelis, E., 2004, “*Tirana Metropolis: The City as Archipelago*”, in *Tirana Metropolis* Berlage Institute Research Report, Rotterdam, p. 21

²²³ Proshansky, H. M., 1976, “The Appropriation and Misappropriation of Space”, in Korosec-Serfaty, P., (ed), *Appropriation of Space - Proceedings of the Strasbourg Conference*, p.35

important resource of every person, individual and thus, society. Stringer further argues that “the results of manipulation of space can readily be shown to have implications for people’s activities. In this sense, architects, planners and their clients, whether knowingly or not, often exercise power over others. This is a political matter”.²²⁴ This is an idea that further supports the argument of strong relationship among property (land and capital), law, state and politics, planning theory, urban design approaches and architecture, and finally society and urban space.

Contemporarily, the phenomenon of waterfront development is analyzed and discussed within the framework of the most recent spatial transformations occurring on the water's edge worldwide, and the emergence of the (post)modern waterfront. To elaborate on this issue, we might refer to Harvey who argues that the occurrence of waterfront revitalization or development is the spatial reflection of “the uneven development, both between sectors and geographical regions”²²⁵, a result of “a new regime of accumulation coupled with quite a different system of political and social regulation”²²⁶, which are characteristics of capitalism, as well as the demonstration of the globalization process that exemplify the features of postmodernism. Based on these facts and declarations, we argue that it is through the processes of *commodification* and spectacle-isation that the so-called: *postmodern waterfronts* have been created. Harvey claims that the “fleeting qualities of a postmodernist aesthetics ...celebrate difference, ephemerality, spectacle, fashion, and the *commodification* of cultural forms”.²²⁷ Beside, the demands of consumer society, the spontaneity of the postmodern life style, generated the necessity “to accelerate the turnover time in consumption”, which “has lead to a shift of emphasis from production of goods... to the production of events (such as spectacles)”.²²⁸ Because of the physical, social, cultural, commercial, spiritual and material features inherent in them, the waterfronts generate extensive flow of investments and spontaneous revenues. This process converts the place, in this case: the waterfront; into a commodity, which needs to be developed, used and ultimately exploited.

The waterfront redevelopment, being a phenomenon that began in early 1960s in the United States and contemporary in England, blossomed in 1970s, accelerated in 1980s and nowadays continues to spreads all over the world, as a planning issue has been reduced to a

²²⁴ Stringer, P., 1976, “A Participatory-relational Theory for Architectural Psychology”, in Korosec-Serfaty, P., (ed), *Appropriation of Space- Proceedings of the Strasbourg Conference*, p.121

²²⁵ Harvey, D., 1989, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, p. 147

²²⁶ Ibid, p. 145

²²⁷ Harvey, D., 1989, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, p. 156

²²⁸ Ibid, p. 157

“waterfront package project”, thus a commodity, which is produced to be copied and further consumed in different place and geographies of the world. The post-socialism urban developments in Albania have caused the “contamination” of Durrës waterfront development by the features common to various worldwide water cities. The ingredients of these “waterfront formulae” are well defined: “a festival marketplace, an aquarium, office buildings, condominium apartments... and perhaps a hotel”.²²⁹ These operations and projects, in many cases, including that of Durrës, intend the design of places that would compete in the global market of capitalism and would fulfill the demands of the consumer society. The models of these projects constitute of complexes, which provide with work and leisure, knowledge and entertainment, culture and sports equipments. Looking at the urban context, the model that started to be applied in Durrës waterfront constitutes of a mix of residence, work, leisure, sports and entertainment facilities.



Figure 77: Aerial View of the Seaside Promenade – Waterfront Development (Photo taken by Alket Islami, Aeronautika Shqiptare)

Looking at the world-wide examples, their results and impacts on the social space, we encounter the fact that the insertion of these project-types did not always generate positive and successful results in various countries and cultures, unless their waterfront planning approaches “paid close attention to the local sense of place and waterfront-related uses”.²³⁰

²²⁹ Gordon, D., 2002, *Waterfront Planning*, Queen’s University Kingston, Ontario Canada; in IESBS, (available online on EBSCOhost)

²³⁰ Breen, A and Rigby, D, 1994, *Urban Waterfronts: Cities Reclaim Their Edge*, New York: McGraw Hill, p.14

As a result, the waterfront emerges as historic, cultural, environmental, recreational, residential, working, or as eclectic, mixed-use water's edge. Consequently, their development includes a series of critical issues that are environmental problems, urban design approach subjects, historical and social concerns, property matters, etc, which sometimes find solution and reflection on the architectural style of the built environment.

The role of the authorities that financially support or manage these projects is very crucial and determinant for their success or failure. Local governments, chamber of commerce, and various institutions manage some redevelopment schemes publicly; whereas some others are managed privately (by companies, investors etc). Considering the importance of the place, in the case of Durrës, as an important public space as well as an urban element, the cooperation and partnership between the public and the private entities, seems to be the best and most appropriate collaboration model that can assure some success in the waterfront development process.

4.3.2.2 The Port

Despite all events occurring, the difficult transition and the economical, political and social crisis that Albania was undergoing after 1990, while it was stated as the country that was experiencing this drastic transformation and its consequences in the worst way possible among the ex-communist East European Countries, Durrës continued being the most important port city in Albania.

Mediterranean ports are spaces in mutation in the course of plural processes, which often, however, succeeds in attaining a sufficient level of self-regulation. They are large tracts of land, constantly in motion, often in the wake of decisional processes taking place hundreds of kilometres away; and yet those often able to follow a consensual orientation, to adapt to collective norms, to promote jointly-held rules. This “eclectic” centrality, combined with their self-regulated vitality, often constitutes a veritable urban “mystery” that those who, like myself, appreciate these double-bordered territories, cannot refrain from existing.²³¹

The Port of Durrës is a Joint Stock Company with 100% of the shares belonging to the state. Thus, the port is owned by the state and is controlled by the Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of Transport and Telecommunication through the Sea Transport Directorate and it is managed and operated by the Port of Durrës Authority (PDA). The PDA is a legal entity, responsible for all activities, i.e., cargo handling, maintenance of nautical and port

²³¹ Bourlier, P., and Orillard, C., 2001, “Converging Viewpoints”, in *Making the City by the Sea, Forum and Workshop Marseille 200*, p.13

infrastructure and superstructure, maintenance of equipments and buildings, loading, discharging and shipping operations together with the associated storage, and goods transportation to and from road and railway.²³² Being substantially dependant on the Ministry of Transport and Telecommunications and that of Economy, permits these governmental institutions to intervene on the planning decisions as well as the operative and commercial aspects (prices, taxes, rates, etc) of the port. Furthermore, the fact that the process of decentralization is not yet “present” in the port entity, which means that the port is still under the administration of ministries (central government) and not the Municipality (local government) which in fact, not only territorially it belongs to, has direct impacts on the spatial transformation and relation between the port and the city. The dynamics of the port itself stimulated by its own growth and of the decision makers, who stand out as a force for spatial and economic organization in the urban – harbor realm, are also subjects to be taken into account.

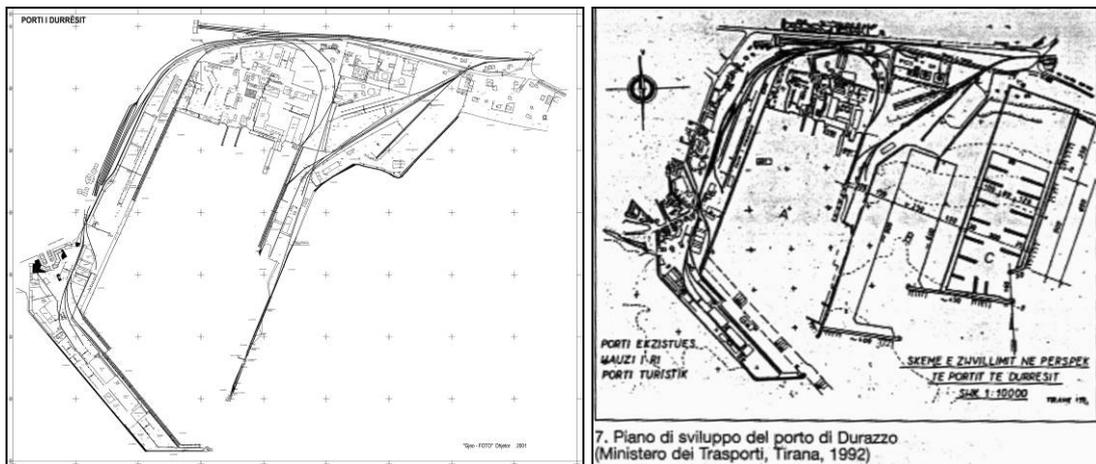


Figure 78: Plan of the Port, 2001 (Urban Planning Office, Municipality of Durrës)

Figure 79: Plan of Port Development, prepared in 1992 by the Ministry of Transport (Pavia, R., 2000, “La Portualita” in *Un Piano per Durazzo –Durrës Master Plan*, p.65)

Considering these issues, if a greater autonomy of the port authority is not achieved, in order to involve the local administration, then there is the risk that “the port area be completely separate from the city as well as from the process of planning and social practices”.²³³ As far as the city is concerned, the port of Durrës is totally divided from the adjacent urban network. Such a division not only abstracts the upgrading of the city but, as argued by Pavia, it also deprives the community of a true relationship with the seafront.²³⁴

²³² Ministry of Transport and Telecommunications 2003,

<http://www.mtt.gov.al/english/port%20of%20Durrës/port-indx.htm>

²³³ Pavia, R., 2000, “La Portualita”, in “Un Piano per Durazzo –Durrës Master Plan”, p. 60

²³⁴ Pavia, R., 2000, *Scheme Items* in “Un Piano per Durazzo –Durrës Master Plan”, p. 201



Figure 80: The Port – Ferryboats, Ships, Fishing Boats (Photo by Alket Islami, Aeronautika Shqiptare)

Figure 81: The Port – Containers, Cranes (personal archive)

Taking into account the data that reveal the “working capacity” of the port, it could be said that during the socialist period, the total volume of import-exportation of goods was 2.5 million tons; in the early 90s, specifically during the first year of transition to a new system, the traffic and the values drastically fell to 900 000 tons. Other deficiencies consisted also in the ration between import and export rates. While during the socialist era, the export volumes constituted 60-70% of the total goods’ transportation, after the 90s the reverse happened: importation comprised 60% of the total volume.²³⁵ On the other hand, the function that had considerable raise in efficacy and great promotion was the transportation of people via waterways. The number of ferryboats has increased from 2 to 22 per week, and even greater during specific periods of the year, going to destinations such as Italy, Greece, Croatia. Being a “city on water”, Durrës responded to this situation, though partially, by re-launching the role of water transport for both people and goods.

Regarding the spatial dimensions of the port, based on the research report for the Durrës Master Plan and the Report of the Ministry of Transport and Telecommunication, the values

²³⁵ Pavia, R., 2000, “La Portualita” in “Un Piano per Durazzo –Durrës Master Plan”, p. 62

are claimed as such: the total area of the port is 1.2 km² including railway and warehouses, which cover an area of 27000m² when the total storage area is 270000 m². The Port has an aquatorium (water surface) of 68000 m² and a depth varying from 7.4 to 11 m. There are 2,200 meters of operational quay, divided into 11 wharves.²³⁶

Currently, the port of Durrës is heading towards a serious state of degradation (there are insufficient docks, inadequate management of the area and a lack of intermodal connections), yet despite this, commercial trade and visitors to the area are continuously increasing. Taking this fact into account, the development of the port must be seen within the political framework of the European Union in order to strengthen its communication network.²³⁷ The port of Durrës represents an asset of national interest and as already mentioned, being as such, it is actually under the direct competence of Ministry of Transport and Telecommunication. On the other hand, it is a part of the city; the most dominant section on the most important element of the city's structure- the waterfront. The fact that the port operates under a "duality of governance", a central and a more local one represented by the port authority and the local administration (municipality), gives rise to a problem that requires solution for a more successful development and qualitative appearance of the city. Apart from many technical problems and rearrangements that would restructure and improve the spatial organization of the port itself, one of the main points that deserves particular attention, is the relation between the Master Plan of the Port and that of city. Based also on the declarations of the Port Director 1994, it could be derived that this operation would create a more organic relation between the two entities: the port and the city.²³⁸

The port is a complex structure, for the fact that it is a part of the city, thus needs to have a relation to it, a proper interface that could allow a more natural connection between the two entities: the city and the port. The urban texture and tissue of the city should somehow be reflected on that of the port, since it is the site through which the city "looks at" and "contacts" the sea. This integration could be achieved through functions, activities and facilities that should create a permeable structure, membrane or interface that allows for the flow of people and goods from the city to the port and vice-versa. Besides, the port is a gate, a real terminal, a complex frontier, a tense junction and exchange point where water and land (vehicular and railway) transportation routes merge at and diverge from. In this respect, the port of Durrës has an extremely strategic and crucial place in the transportation network of

²³⁶ Ministry of Transport and Telecommunications 2003 and Pavia 2000, in "Un Piano per Durazzo –Durrës Master Plan", p. 62

²³⁷ Pavia, R., 2000, *Scheme Items* in "Un Piano per Durazzo –Durrës Master Plan", p. 201

²³⁸ Zafer Ypi, Director of Port Authority, 1994 in "Un Piano per Durazzo –Durrës Master Plan", p. 64

Albania and wider. The importance is further increased considering the fact that the port constitutes an industrial area, as well.

To conclude the discussion, the port as an significant element on the waterfront, emerges in a duality of being both a national asset and most importantly of all, the gate to Albania on the VIII Corridor, and a central entity of the city of Durrës, forcing it to extend in the in-land weakening the relation between the city and the sea, the land and the water.

4.3.2.3 The Costal Area: Retreat - Residential Zone

At the present, year 2005, the city does not anymore develop according to the model of a socialist city (give reference about this model). A new scheme that seems to assure the perpetuation of the existence in the new economic, political and social system emerges. The model that would best lead the new developments is the multi-centered city. Within this framework, the proposal of Chietti University research team for Durrës Master Plan is also based on the division of the city into sub-cities or centers. The costal area on the south and southeast is potentially a good resource for tourism developments. In fact, as already mentioned in the previous sections of the thesis, since the re-settlement and extension of the city, and in the first master plan for the city (and specifically the Master Plan for the Baths 1933), this site has been considered as a prospective tourism based recreational - area. In addition, considering the whole city, its historical background and archeological heritage do perfectly support the development of tourism, as one of the main sectors of economic development and prosperity. Going further into a greater scale by analyzing the issue regionally and taking into account the entire country, which actually has a ideal geographic position, favorable Mediterranean climate, a yet uncontaminated environment that needs a lot of investments in infrastructure and facilities, a relatively long costal belt (approximately 400 km) of various characteristics (sandy: along the Adriatic shores and rocky: along the Ionian one), Durrës seems to present an important asset within the “stage” of coastal tourism in Albania.

As already mentioned in the previous sections of the study, the costal area- the “city of tourism” in Durrës, lies in the south and south-eastern part attached to the consolidated city. Unfortunately, nowadays, features other than those so commonly known till the 90s characterize this site - the long strip of plain sandy seashore bordered by the ridge of hills on the north and northeast. The former dense green belt of marine pines creating a buffer zone between the sandy seashore and the infrastructure (road) and low rise buildings at the feet of

the hills, today appears randomly among the accumulation of constructions of neither urban nor architectural criteria. The phenomenon of illegal constructions, though not entirely, has invaded the coastal area as well.

The Master Plan of Durrës City of 1987 excludes the coastal area from the administrative boundary-“yellow line” of the city. It was considered a tourism area of national interest. Being as such, both the development/planning strategies as well as decision-making processes were monitored by the government. As already mentioned, this coastal tourism area included several sub-sites that were facilities under the administration of various governmental organisms. The transformation processes of post-socialist era, among which the “demolition of state property” and property restitution to former owners, the management of governmental / public assets or decentralization process, had direct impacts on the spatial transformation of the coastal area. This is a process of transfer of ownership of assets, a process by which, according to Stark, “the political capital is converted into economic capital”.²³⁹ Within the framework of property relations and asset management, while looking at the actual layout and the linear coastal belt starting from the intersection of Durrës, Tirana and Kavaja Street at the south-eastern point to the junction “Ura e Dajlanit” at the north-western one, it is important to underline that: at the present a part of the Ministry of Defense territory and facilities, including the former “Campus of Pioneers” is a NATO headquarter; the territory of Ministry of Internal Affairs is still a governmental (ministry) asset; the facilities of the “special zone”²⁴⁰ are an asset of Governmental Services. Concerning the urban and spatial transformations, the very positive aspect of this asset management process and its reflection on the space, specifically on these territories, is the fact that they have been preserved putting great emphasis on the importance of greenery, and ratio between “the constructed” and “open” spaces taking into account the spatial quality of these recreational areas. In contrast to this, the worst possible transformation occurred on the coastal area starting from what is called “Iliria”, which shares the borders with the above mentioned site, to the proximity to the junction, at the entrance to the port and city. Obviously, the pressure of construction and all actors directly and strongly related to this process (investors – developers, property owners, politicians, planners and architects) seem to have been stronger than the resistance of this space.

²³⁹ Stark quoted in Harloe, M., 1996, “Cities in the Transition”, in Andrusz, G., Harloe, M., Szeleyi, I., (eds), *Cities after Socialism, Urban and Regional Change and conflict in Post-Socialist Societies*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford UK, p.8

²⁴⁰ “Special zone” was an area restricted to the use of public and protected, for it was the site where residences and holiday villas of politicians of the socialist era were located. It was also known as “Blloku” – the block

At the present, what characterizes this site is a great number of buildings, legal and illegal ones that somehow already did or will manage to get legalized, which seem to have not obeyed or followed any urban or architectural criteria of construction. There exists a chaos in the spatial organization in this area; in the agglomeration of numerous residential and hotel type buildings, which most of the time are out of scale and proportion both in footprint and height, and besides have no quality of construction not to mention the architectural one, there is a considerable lack of open public spaces, sports areas, and greenery, public squares, social infrastructure (schools, kindergartens, or other edifices that would host social activities). The constructions have expanded so widely, that they have occupied quite a lot of the sandy belt, squeezing and making its shrink, also not obeying to the criteria of keeping a distance from the waterline. There is also much to say about the infrastructure (malfunctioning road system, sewage or water supply systems, electricity, etc). Finally, these urban conditions, pollution and the considerable decrease on green areas, generate serious environmental problems.

There have been several planning initiative and legislative undertakings that have tried to precede and control these developments. Within the line of tourism development, in 1992 there was prepared a Master Program and Plan for the development of the Coastal Zone of the Republic of Albania²⁴¹, which was only partially implemented, and in a successive Report of the Ministry of Tourism and World Bank on the Resources of Development, the costal zone of Durrës is included in the areas of great potential for Tourism Development.²⁴² In addition, in 2005, a plan prepared by the Urban Planning Office in the Municipality of Durrës was presented and approved in the Territory Adjustment Council of the Republic of Albania (TACRA). This plan was proposing the reassessment of urban criteria of the Coastal Area Master Plan (see figure 82). Instead of offering solutions to the actual issue of infrastructure, accompanied by crucial problems of urban character such as unplanned, spontaneous, dense construction of low quality and values, it simply proposed a “zoning” that defined one only urban criteria - the height (of 6, 8 and 10 floors). As a result of all developments occurring in the last 15 years the costal area, the occupation of the geographical setting, namely the sloping plane between the costal hill range and the sea, what we named as the seafront “square”, not having a clear defined identity, remains in-between a residential and retreat area, but at the same time, not offering the necessary services or having the features of neither the residential nor retreat-vacation area. On the other hand, considering importantly the idea and vision of further promoting Durrës as a city

²⁴¹ Aymonino, A., and Cicchitti, M., “Il turismo e la costa” in “Un Piano per Durazzo –Durrës Master Plan”, p.87

²⁴² Ibid

of tourism, considering the historical and archeological heritage and its great importance as a gate of Albania and a port in the Adriatic basin, it is a fact that the consolidated – old part of the city and the port deserve supplementary attention and investments, both local and international ones.

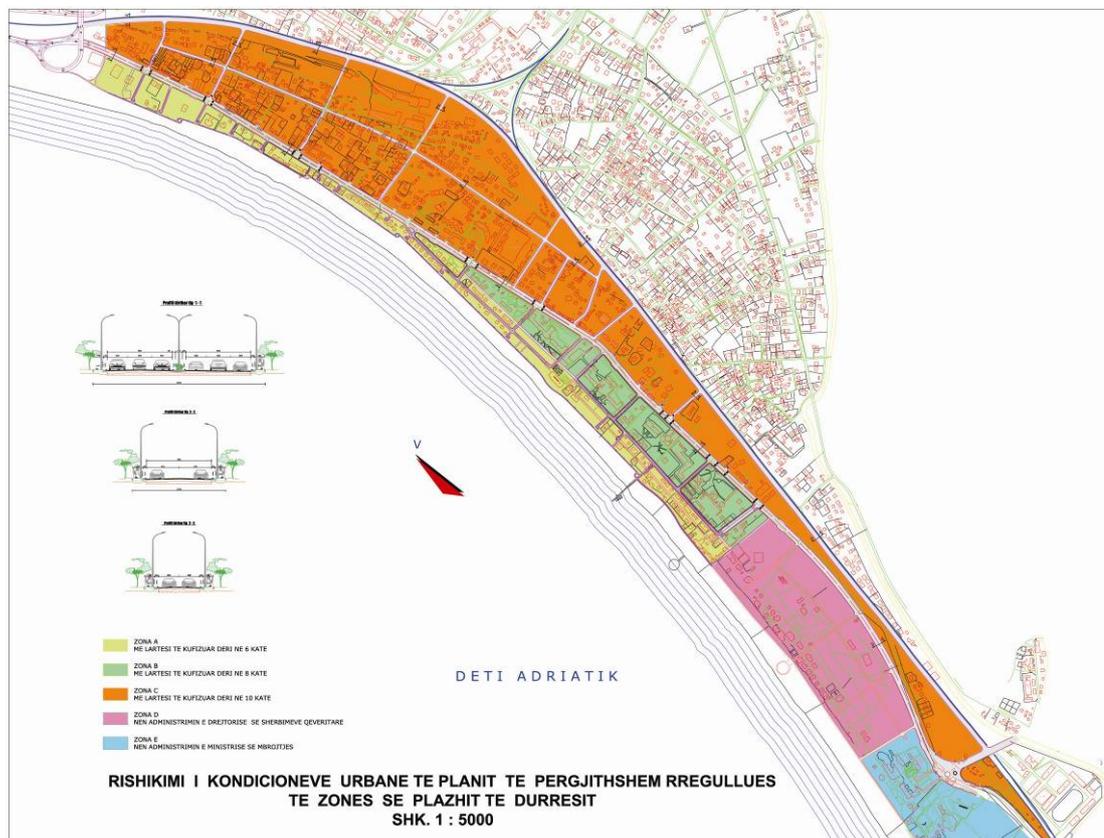


Figure 82: Plan of the Coastal Area 2005 (Urban Planning Office, Municipality of Durrës)

Figure 83: View of the Seafront “Square”- the Urban Beach (Photography by Alket Islami, Aeronautika Shqiptare)

4.3.2.4 The Street, the Junction, the Pier(s)

We have observed and underlined several times the fact that the street connecting the City Central Square and the Port defines an important section one of the most important elements of the city urban structure: the north-south axis or “cordo”. The fact that it terminates with the port is quite important. At the present, the street keeps the same urban and architectural features as attributed in 40s by Italian architects (see figure 84). It also represents one of the most lively interesting and urbane places in the city. Thought it is true that the street is different form the public square and that the public square is different from the park or the promenade, it is nevertheless just as true that all of them share a similar, public nature²⁴³. This street represents an urban drift, a mainly pedestrian (and vehicular) network which connected two squares of extreme importance: the city central square and the port entrance square, which in fact presents a barrier to the public flow over land. A question emerges: Will the barrier disappear to allow the flux over land flow over water, as well?

The junction represents an infrastructural project of great scale and importance. It is the realization of a direct accessibility from the highway to the port and industrial area, the coast and the city itself. As already mentioned, having its port and the industrial area, Durrës represents the only “reliable” and well-functional terminal in the Adriatic coast in Albania. The passengers train station, proposed in the Master Plan of 1942, was constructed in the 50s emerging in-between the port and the consolidated city. This generates a complex transportation network comprised of railways, vehicular and pedestrian ways and waterways. At the present, various rail joints for the transportation of goods are mostly out of use. They are further branched on the port area leading towards the piers. The track of the principle route lies longitudinally upstream to the littoral/seafront city constructing thus a barrier of various courses.²⁴⁴ Besides the complexity extracted from a variety of circulations way types, the location of the junction is also important. It emerges so close to the sea occupying a rentable vast area, and close to the city, which keeps on expanding; overcoming the boundaries and defining new edges (see figures 85 and 86).

While developing the spatial analysis of the waterfront, it was interesting to face the fact that the piers(s) are among the most remarkable elements of the waterfront. The variety of functions (breakwaters, lighthouses, docks or wharf, structures floating on water), features, ways they connects to the city its structure where they sometimes derive from, the forces that

²⁴³ Korosec-Serfaty, P., 1976, “Protection of Urban Sites and Appropriation of Public Squares”, in Korosec-Serfaty, P., (ed), *Appropriation of Space - Proceedings of the Strasbourg Conference*, p.46

²⁴⁴ Fiorentini and Cetrano 2000, *Le Infrastrutture* in “Un Piano per Durazzo –Durrës Master Plan”, p. 73

make them emerge, the impact they have on both structure and urbanity of the public space make them even more fascinating. Considering the actual urban structure of the city, which apart from being a port-city “invests” on and appears also with the character of the city of tourism, the designation of transversal courses perpendicular to the linear routes along the waterfront - the coast- seems to be crucial.

In addition, it is quite impressive to see that the piers emerge perpendicularly and integrally generating from the structural composition of all the “linear” elements of the waterfront, namely: the promenade, the port and the seafront “square” - costal area. Respectively, in the seaside promenade area, the pier emerges as a structure on the water housing leisure activities, within the framework of waterfront development, and mainly public character of the site. It attempts to express features of common waterfront development projects applied all over the world, having more global rather than local features, and quite few references of the structure of the site, or missing peculiarities of the place (see figure 87). Secondly, the pier is inherent in the port structure: the breakwater, the quays, etc. Its image is related to anchored ships, floating boat, cranes, containers cliff, warehouse, customhouses, lighthouse, sailormen, travelers, etc (see figure 88). Considering the condition in the case study, the pier represents “landing over water”, after the surpassing of the port’s gate, in front of which the “flow over land” appears. The presence of the gate reminds the presence of a different milieu once you surpass it. In addition, it defines a boundary, and gives the clear information rather than just a clue, of the existence of a different territory under the administration of an authority. Nevertheless, by not underestimating the thorny aspect of the issue, from the urban point of view, a question is inevitable to ask: Will the flow over the urban drift ever be uninterrupted? Finally, considering the seafront “square” and its actual condition, further introduction and strengthening of the existing piers perpendicular to the shoreline, seems to be essential. This should be done in order to overcome the “barrier effect” of existing infrastructural network, aiming a natural re-curing of the east-west connections between the coastline (the sandy site and urban seafront defined by residential/mix-use constructions and hotels) and the residential area at the back beyond the infrastructural line (vehicular road and railway).²⁴⁵ Then, the function of the pier will overpass its leisure oriented functionality natural in an urban beach, and will assist in strengthening the structure of the site and adding, creating and achieving quality of urban life in the city.

²⁴⁵ Aymonino, A., and Cichitti, M., 2000, *La Valorizzazione turistica della fascia costiera*, in “Un Piano per Durazzo –Durrës Master Plan”, p.173



Figure 84: Picture of the Main Boulevard that connects the City Centre Square and the Port (City Postcard)



Figure 85: Aerial Picture of the Junction, looking towards the sea, on the west direction (Photo taken by Alket Islami, Aeronautika Shqiptare)

Figure 86: Aerial Picture of the Junction, looking towards the city, on the east direction (Photo taken by Alket Islami, Aeronautika Shqiptare)



Figure 87: The Structure on the Water in the Seaside Promenade Area (Photo taken by Alket Islami, Aeronautika Shqiptare)

Figure 88: The Main Wharf and Breakwater in the Port (Photo taken by Alket Islami, Aeronautika Shqiptare)

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

5.1 Conclusive Notes

In this study, a discussion on the spatial transformation of the waterfront – as an urban frontier - of the port city of Durrës in Albania was developed. The spatial transformation on this specific site, as an important element of the urban form, was analyzed within a predefined period: before, during and after socialism. In this framework, a special concern of the thesis was the examination of the impact of political, economic and social factors, in other words: the role of state, planning theory and practice, law, property relations, as well as the influential or determinant morphological and geographic conditions in setting, producing and transforming the urban space.

Before starting to make the spatial analysis, we introduced the definitions of a series of terms and concept, which were involved in this thesis. Thus, it was of great importance to discuss on the “water-land” duality and confrontation, as a result of which the waterfront - urban frontier emerged. Following this, emphasis was put of the impact of water in shaping the city, and the eventual construction of ports in the water cities since their very ancient foundations and emergence, to continue with a brief historical evolution of the port. Further on, various port types representative of some world geographies, which had different relations to the city depending basically on landscape and nature of the site, were mentioned. Within this framework, the Mediterranean port-city model was underlined; also for the reason that this type represents the topographical condition, and the relation between port and panoramic city extending around the curve of the natural bay, where the port of Durrës is located.

A thorough description enriched with a variety of geographical, historical, economical, and political data about the city was essential is attempting to locate Durrës, underlying its role and position in the Mediterranean basin, in Balkan Peninsula, in national and European context regarding the transportation network as a strategic gate on the 8th Corridor

“constructed” on the footprint of Via Egnatia, and finally in the regional environment: the conurbation of Durana²⁴⁶ (Durrës + Tirana). Moreover, while setting the basic frame of a background that would facilitate discussions on spatial transformation of the city and its waterfront, as well as other crucial issues, it was mentioned that the strategic geographical location has made possible the emergence of the city of Durrës since the ancient times. It is one of the most distinct cities in the Adriatic and Ionian Region, whose coast was continuously the set of different encounters and communications among people of the Mediterranean region. In this respect, Durrës has undergone the domination of different civilizations throughout its history. At the present it is the prime port-city, as well as one of the main cultural and economic centers in Albania. Likewise, in the thesis, we argue that the political changes and economic systems of the 20-th century, as well as the very radical differences and peculiar features intrinsic of them, were definitely among the most essential factors that have structured and shaped the city of today.

In understanding the re-structuring or re-shaping process, thus analyzing the spatial transformation of the city, paying particular attention to the waterfront, as an important element of the urban form, we necessitated the development and utilization of “tools”. The tools of the spatial analyses were extracted from the studied area, as physical and functional components of the waterfront, the confrontation space between water and land. Differently put, the method of spatial analysis consisted in observing and discussing the three main linear elements of the waterfront, the seaside promenade, the port and the costal area respectively, supported also by an analysis of the perpendicular elements of the waterfront, the street, the junction and the pier(s), based both on their physical and functional / programmatic features. Examined in the spatio-temporal framework, the results supported the descriptive and comparative analysis of the waterfront, in achieving the aim of understanding the spatial transformations on the urban space and the generating factors, social, political, economical and the actors involved in these processes. This descriptive and comparative analysis was developed based essentially on visual material such as maps, images, and pictures; sometimes supported by written material. Accordingly, in creating an idea about the way the three consecutive political and economical systems: the pre-socialist, socialist, and post-socialist one respectively, produced their own space, and specifically their approach towards the urban field through planning (theory) and architecture, we utilized the maps and other graphical material, such as pictures. This process was important to further concentrate on the issue of the relations sets between state and property, law or legislative

²⁴⁶ This term has been presented and used by a team of architects of Berlage Institute, whose interest and then project was developed on Tirana- Durrës region, within the framework of *Tirana: A Modern European Capital*, Berlage Institute Studio Work

tools, and ultimately: space. Regarding the pre-socialist period, the crucial qualitative “tool” that helped perceiving all the relations set among the above mentioned actors and tools, was the first Regulatory-plan of the city of Durrës 1942. This was a plan prepared by Italian architects. On the topic of socialism, two more maps, both Regulatory-plans of the early and late era, belonging to the years 1957 and 1987 respectively, became the reading maps of the impact of socialist system and central planning on the production of urban space. Finally, concerning the discussion on the post-socialist state transformations and specifically the actual urban condition and questions, problematic issues and challenges, lacking any master or comprehensive plan, the recent maps showing the urban form and city expansion, accompanied by a series of observations through pictures, images and reports constituted this period’s data base. In addition, while arguing the role of (central) state-the legislative and executive organs, the judiciary powers – local administration; and the property relations in the production of space, we looked at the “city centre”. That is one of the spaces/parts in the city where the systems’ attitudes towards urban space, the domination over property and space, as well as some features and ideology expressed by utilizing planning and architecture as tools, are best presented.

Within this framework, we derived that the first period (the pre-socialist one) is identified with the Monarchy Regime (1928-1939) during which the law for the Agrarian Reform was approved, to continue with the “event” of World War II, before and during which the influence of Italian architecture style and urban planning features was immense on that of the city of Durrës. Regarding the Socialist System Era (1945-1990) that initiated with the end of World War II, abolition of private property, state ownership and central planning emerged’ to be followed by the opposing system of capitalist mode of production, private ownership and market economy, characteristics of post-socialist system. Further narrowing down the field of inquiry, the aim of the study was to analyze and discuss the impact of regulations and principles of architecture and urban planning, as well as the property relations and state impact on the spatial transformations of the waterfront as an edge, an element of urban form. Günay claims that property plays a determining role the production of urban space as an institution governing “social relations”, “evolution of power conflicts” and “generation of symbolic values”. Furthermore, he argues that “ownership patterns of real property and their transformation give the form of urban space”.²⁴⁷ In comparing basically the socialist and post-socialist systems based on their attitude towards property, which emerges as the basis of production relations, we conclude that the socialist society searched for a good life in the public ownership of property, different from today’s liberal capitalist society that aims the

²⁴⁷ Günay, B., 1999, *Property Relations and Urban Space*, MFY, METU, Ankara

creation of the good life through the legally protected enjoyment of property, whereby both have produced their own space. It is important to underline the fact that “(re)production of space refers to a production beyond the mere physical and material attributes of forms and patterns”, as defined by Keskinok.²⁴⁸ Within the same frame of discussion, we derived that the state totally dominated space production through its control of real property as well. On the other hand, in post-socialist system, the state emerges rather as a regulator of the production relations and space organization, by arranging or monitoring property relations.



Figure 89: Comparative Maps of Durrës of the Pre-Socialist, Socialist and Post-Socialist Era (Sources: fig. 1 Central Technical Archive of Construction AQTN, fig.2 and fig.3 Urban Planning Office, Municipality of Durrës)

During the study we looked at the space, at the design, production, use, and transformation of the elements of the waterfront before, during and after socialism, considering their structural, programmatic and functional features. The seaside promenade, as structure providing connection, is in itself a complex element that inherits the important notion of ‘promenade’, which appears with its ultimate strength in the city scale, intending to reveal understanding of the complexity of space and its urbanity. Physically, it emerges in the confrontation of the city and the sea, as a plane between the water and the coastal hill range. It is a real edge, an element of the urban structure, as well as interface between two entities, the water and the sea, trying to “connect” them.

Before socialism, the approach of the Italian architects towards the seaside promenade was basically landscape oriented, trying to preserve the natural character and condition of it,

²⁴⁸ Keskinok, Ç. H., 1997, *State and the (Re)production of Urban Space*, METU Faculty of Architecture Press, Ankara, p. 51

profiting also by the proximity and strong relation to the water, putting an emphasis on the archeological heritage and cultural values intrinsic in the site. The idea was to make this place a park. On the other hand, we observe the positioning of a series of important buildings of residential character (for a separate social group), a fact that indirectly displays the values of the places, as well as the intention to use, enjoy and profit from this property. During the socialist system, with the abolition of private property and emergence of state ownership, as a result of state dominating the property (land and capital) and consequently the space, the seaside promenade appears as a public space. Fitting to the ideology of the system, which put strong emphasis on society's education and emancipation, one of the most important and dominant features of the "seaside promenade" during this era was the "archaeological park". Actually, this park was an open space where some archaeological findings were exposed. At the same time, the space functioned also as a place of ceremonies and celebrations, which were usually of local character. Furthermore, since the promenade traditionally constituted the most essential, even central public space, it was furnished with a monument, which symbolized the resistance of Albanian people against the enemy, displaying thus another feature of the socialist state: its 'obsession' with domination of space monumentally. The sculpture stood enormous on the axis of the promenade-this space of confrontation between land and water, right on the "entrance" to the promenade, where it met the port. On the contrary, after socialism, as a reaction to the previous system and a sudden release from restriction, the seaside promenade becomes furnished and ornamented with the actually ephemeral "structures". In addition phenomena such as 'appropriation of space' by illegal buildings and constructions, followed by the initiative and intervention of the local government to bring back the identity of public space, down in a widespread invasion of space by high-rised buildings, as a results of property owners and developers relations set by the urban policies, waterfront developments and attempts to restructure and introduce it in a more world wide (global) context appear.

The same discussion and comparative analyses is developed for the other central element of the waterfront, namely the port, which indicates centrality and functions as terminal, before, during and after socialism. The port occupies an enormous surface in the city context, and with its presence it represents a strong celebrity of its own. It is a space so different from the urban space. In being so, the evolution of port-city relation displays an important and crucial issue, because the nature and identity of one entity (either port or city) depends on and affects the other.

The pre-socialist era defines a crucial phase in the port development process because it was the period when the port was constructed and its very basic relations to the city of the present and the future were settled. It is important to mention that the preparation of port project as a great asset of Durrës coastal city coincides with many crucial political developments, which eventually motivated its implementation. The most important of all was the reign of King Zog during the Era of Monarchy (1928-1939), which facilitated the presence of Italians and their influence in the political decisions making process that predicted a possible “occupation” of Albanian territory that in fact happened with the starting of World War II. On the other hand, the port master plan was developed almost 15 years before and independently from Durrës city regulatory plan. Looking only at the port entity, the selection of the site was quite normal, a natural setting on the topography and landscape. Whereas from the urban point of view, the central positioning of the port on the waterfront and in-between the city and the sea became the cause of a disconnection between these two entities, creating a disjointed relation that further strengthened in the future.

During socialism, the port represented a primary drive for the valuable actions of an enormous scale having great impact on the economy, both in regional as well as national context, becoming the main port in the country. Throughout the study, we reached the conclusion that fitting to the state socialism’s principle of financial-economic and industrial basis of urbanization controlled by comprehensive planning, the port developed both as a “facility” supporting industrial sector and as an industrial area in itself. Furthermore, during the socialist system, the functionality of the port as a “gate” on a transportation route located in a communist country of the Balkan region and Mediterranean basin, politically and socially isolated from other countries, was quite contradictory. On the one hand, it was functioning as a workstation for the transportation (import – export) of goods mainly minerals, as an industrial site for the ship construction and maintenance, as well as a fishing industry port, whereas on the other hand, the passengers’ transportation rates were extremely low. These industry-oriented developments additionally encouraged the enlargement of the port, and its “separation” from the urban context. At the present, in a post-socialism era, the issue of the port and its relation to the city emerges at the most problematic level that call for particular attention. First, this concern involves the services supplied by the port, the fact that some operations have been transformed due to technological advents or replacements as a result of mal-functionalities as well as other priorities set in the economical plans of industrial sector. On the contrary, the appearance of people’s transportation via waterways accompanied by a significant and continuous raise in efficacy has been a fact since 15 years

now. The other matter has to do with the port's operation and administration, which represents the issue of the port both at a local, national and regional (sub-global) level.

The third element on the waterfront, whose transformation was analyzed in the thesis, paying the same attention since it appeared of equal importance with the other components (the seaside promenade and the port), was the coastal area –specifically the seafront 'square' as linearity and interface. The seafront "square" is the costal area – the urban beach, which for the very distinct physical characteristic of the site and the very functionality presents an attractive condition of the waterfront – the urban frontier.

It was quite impressive to find out that during the pre-socialist era, special attention was paid to planning and designing the coastal area. Therefore, we came across two urban and architectural studies on the "baths" area belonging to years 1933 and 1942. Their basic feature was the arrangement and allocation of private villas situated on a territory of well-defined parcels. Hence the essential issue in designing the costal belt was "the private property" notion. Though, in the second plan, special attention was paid also to publicly used spaces and places well integrated with the residential area, whose spatial organization set the ground for the latter socialist planning oriented interventions on the costal area, considered as an asset and natural common property belonging to the public, but owned by the state. Within this framework, different from the pre-socialist system's characteristics, in the socialist era we encountered the abolition of private property, a fact that was highly reflected on the designation of the costal are. Another crucial characteristic of the plan for the coastal belt was the functional zoning of the site / the function allocation. On the contrary, the post-socialist system attributed to the costal area entirely different features from fore of the previous ones. The transformation in this case was characterized by the "demolition of state property" and property restitution to former owners, the management of governmental / public assets or decentralization process. These gave rise to the "invasion" of this territory with high raised and dense constructions, problems of infrastructure and even issues of urban and architectural degradation.

The analysis of the other structural elements on the waterfront, the perpendicular ones, from the programmatic point of view, explicitly the street - as flow over land; the junction – as anchoring; and the pier(s) – as landing on water, strongly supports the understanding of the spatial transformation of the waterfront, since they act as integral components of this edge as an important element of the urban form. They create links and appear as bonds between the

city urban tissue and the waterfront, and also emerge as crucial constituent in the future oriented goals related to waterfront development.

A further stage of the analysis of the defined components of the waterfront/the edge of the port city of Durrës would be the “perpendicular versus parallel” or “vertical versus horizontal” discussion. In this respect, considering the physical features and their relation to the water, we have argued and accepted that the seaside promenade, the port and the seafront urban beach represent the “linear” elements of the waterfront, which stand parallel to the water’s edge. On the other hand, by reading the city structure and its urban form, we derived that the street, the junction and the pier are vertical elements, perpendicular to the waterfront and the water’s edge. The research lead to the fact that since the antiquity Durrës displayed features of roman cities whose main distinctive characteristics of the macroform were the axis: “cordo” (the north-south axis) and “decumanus” (east-west) direction. The actual port is located at the southern extreme edge of “cordo”, the most important street analyzed in our case, whereas the northern point represents a significant industrial area and settlement. The other element: the junction is the node to which the flux of traffic is anchored and then lead towards the city. The flow comes from the east, where a former industrial and residential area is settled, through the route on the west-east axis “decumanus”; and from the north-east direction that connects the city of Durrës to the most important administrative center in Albania, the capital city Tirana. The last among the perpendicular elements to the waterfront and the sea were the piers. They appear with a variety of functions: as port wharves and breakwaters, street extension and leisure piers on both the promenade and the costal belt-the urban beach. Emerging vertical to the parallel and liner elements of the waterfront, to the water’s edge and beyond, they represent the most intriguing and “courageous” elements of the city’s structure and its edge, as those that challenge the water and allow / set in motion the landing on water. These are the elements that most explicitly among all other units of the waterfront define a stronger relation between the water and land, generating thus a new perception of the city’s or water’s edge.

These facts once more emphasize the importance of the perpendicular elements and their crucial impact on the spatial transformation of the waterfront, specifically in the case of Durrës. In addition, their emergence, mutation through time, strengthening or fading of functionality, as well as their role on the entire city structure set the ground for making the statement that the vertical / perpendicular urban structural elements are important because they represent the commercial and industrial city, whereas the horizontals/ parallels elements embody and transmit features of the panoramic and tourist city.

5.2 Derivations

Throughout the study, we were essentially trying to open a discussion and pose questions on the strong and mutual relation between the urban processes and the urban space. We were specifically concerned with the spatial transformations of the waterfront, the actual condition and urban morphology of the waterfront as a consequence of a series of external factors being them political, economical or social changes. Within this framework, the methodology of work was constructed on making a spatial analysis utilizing the physical tools, which were actually, structural and programmatic elements of the waterfront. By observing the transformation of Durrës port city waterfront within a predefined timeframe, thus before, during and after socialism, we believe to have derived important conclusions on the relationship among forces, actors, processes and their impact on the production of space, and set the ground for further urban oriented discussions, interventions, projects on the field. As a matter of fact, developing this study on the spatial transformation of the waterfront of Durrës port-city was essential for a number of reasons, which appear as follows: First, this process led to a fundamental comparison between the present (post- socialist) city of capitalism and socialism, considering the fact that they both shape and are shaped by their respective forms of economic organization, class formation and political structures. In this respect we conclude that the socio-spatial organization of city, its politics and administration, the property markets, the patterns of social interaction, etc, are directly linked to the major features of the socialist and capitalist orders. On the other hand, by observing the actual condition, production, appropriation, use and of space, always concentrating of the issue of waterfront: the promenade, the port, the costal area, we reach to the conclusion that the urban developments and approach towards urban field are a consequence of sudden release from restrictions, indicated by the preceding system.

Second, by presenting such a study we believe to have modestly contributed on the issue of understanding and knowing how to approach and deal with the actual challenge of urban development. In this respect, taking under consideration the characteristics of Durrës as an urban centre rich in history and inherent culture, with a promontory hovering over the city destined to become an urban park with a flat and sandy southern coastline, the prospect for upgrading tourism to the area must on the one hand favor the city itself (in this sense the re-qualification of the port area can become the opportunity to position on the seafront adequate structures intended for leisure time, recreation and commercial activity) and on the other favor residential development on the southern coast that lead to the sloped terrain at the back

of the costal area. So, this process leads to upgrading of the waterfront as an entire entity and strong element of the urban structure and the development of the costal belt.

In addition, the third motivation that constitutes the basis to one of the most crucial issues is the port, considering it both in the local context, as well as in the regional, national and international framework. From different point of views, mainly economical and political content wise, the port represent an important asset and generator of economy. Being a “gate” on the transcontinental East-West Transport Corridor linking Adriatic with Black Sea represents an important undertaking for integrating the economy of Albania and that the South Balkan region with Europe, Middle East and beyond. On the other hand, from the social and urban point of view, the presence of the port in the actual condition and appearance has entirely negative impacts of the city and its urbanity. Considering the port operation and its administration, we promote the idea of the creation of an administrative organ that would prevent the operation as two distinct realms – the harbor and the city, and which would advocate both the national interests related to port functionality, as well as the local ones that are strongly related to planning issues and urban design approaches towards the space. This means that the conflict between the Port Authority and the Municipality regarding the management of the overlapping zones or confronting areas between port and city have to be resolved.

Finally, derived from the above mentioned issues we suggest that special attention should be paid to planning directives and osmosis between the city and the port. The idea is to achieve the integration between the port and the city, by dismissing from its functionality the breakwater (pier) on the west, and re-qualifying it as a system that provides commercial activities, services and leisure time facilities. The renewal of the pier should be followed by its connection to the urban drift –the pedestrian network comprised of the main boulevard connected to the city centre, the seafront promenade and the pedestrian walkway along the coast towards the south-east direction. Furthermore, in achieving a successful urban intervention on the port-city frontier, the re-qualification of urban tissue and texture and the construction of a new road adjacent to the perimeter of the port, emerges as a necessity. This intervention would make possible the valuation of real-estate of the stock of old and degraded buildings on this belt, covering a considerable surface area. The most important of all, would be the construction of a waterfront promenade, thus merging the connection between the western waterfront promenades to the coastal on in the south-east (this argument strongly relates to the first discussed issue - that of the waterfront in a costal tourist city).

5.3 Beyond the “Edge”

The waterfront, as a dynamic urban frontier, represents an edge condition. This statement constitutes a significant account derived from this developed study. Additionally, the edge is the border between two worlds that symbolize the origin of a state that is both opposite and complementary: the water and land. Acting as an interface or an epidermis in-between these two bodies, it either appears as water’s edge or city’s edge. Within this framework, it is of great importance to emphasize that since the early stages of civilization and establishments of ancient settlements, the water was the “dominating” element, the entity that generated the emergence, influenced the positioning and effected the shaping of the city. Water was the entity that in all its possible appearances and confrontations with the land, created an edge. Considering and looking at the waterfront edge from a “marine” perspective, as well as from the urban point of view, it is essential to accept, highlight and strongly state “the sea-borne culture of the edge”.²⁴⁹ In addition, the ports as entities that essentially depend on water and provide with marine-based activities, emerged on the water’s edge. Port cities are favorable places for processing goods; hence they appear as important nodes of transportation and commercial centers. They have historically been “parts of the global world, which always created the conditions of the edge as an extension of marine life rather than of the hinterland”.²⁵⁰ It was through the “smooth space” and flow over water and port cities playing the role of stationary points that civilizations flourished as a consequence of conflict and integration of different cultures. The water is a space of captains, sailors, and fishermen; of boats, ships, sails, flags, lighthouses, fishing nets, oars; of farewells or welcomes. It is for this reason that the maritime activities in coastal cities have to be at the waterfront, at the water’s edge. Eventually, these apply to Durrës port-city in the Mediterranean Basin.

Furthermore, the edge is an important structural asset of the city and its macroform; an urban element in continuous mutation. The thesis of this study was: analyzing and understanding the way the political (and economical) systems, specifically the pre-socialist, socialist and post-socialist one, produced their own space. In this context, particular attention was paid to the waterfront, from which the tools of spatial analysis were extracted, and definitely the transformation of the waterfront as an urban frontier. Conceptually, within the temporal and political framework (before, during and after socialism), and specifically in the last two

²⁴⁹ Günay, B., 2003, Book Review: Marshall, R., 2001, (ed.) *Waterfronts in Post-Industrial Cities*, SPON Press, Thames & Francis Group, London and New York, in *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment* 18, p. 204

²⁵⁰ Ibid. Furthermore, in “Liman Kenti bir Kültürdür” paper, Günay states that “Port-city is a Culture”

consecutive, opposing and fundamentally differing systems: the socialist and post-socialist one, the notion of “edge” emerges in the most intriguing condition.

During the Socialist Era, in Albania, the idea of “edge” connoted the true meaning of border, barrier, frontier, state-line, territoriality, enclosure and isolation in all political, ideological, economical, social, cultural and physical aspects. The “edge” was materialized; the “no man’s land” was delineated with particular “substances”, starting from the signals conducting thorny wires that were controlled by incessantly patrolling military troupes, to the most fascinating objects and unique representatives of the architecture of city frontier characteristic of the socialist era, the bunkers. On the other hand, in the post-socialist era, some of the barriers or borders have been broken or surpassed and some other frontiers have been redefined. In the spatio-temporal framework the notion of “edge” itself has undergone a metamorphosis. At the present, from the urban, architectural, anthropological and cultural point of view, the concept of “edge” is defined as “a response to the dissolution of traditional limits and lines of demarcation due to rapid urbanization and globalization”.²⁵¹



Figure 90: Bunkers constructed during Socialist Era in Albania (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bunker>)

Figure 91: Coca-Cola Advertisement on a Bunker in Albanian Coast

(http://www.albaniafoto.com/shqiperia/albumi_search/pamje_0.html)

In this context, the issue of “edge” is further more complex, but unequivocal at the same time, when urbanization (socialist and post-socialist) is considered. The city condition in these two differing systems appears in entirely opposing states and can be described through a series of antonyms and extreme polarities. The argument develops on the basis of confrontation between the socialist and post-socialist city and their “edge” condition; differently stated: Socialist versus Post-Socialist city appear as edged versus edgeless city,

²⁵¹ Marshall, R., 2001, “Contemporary urban space-making at the water’s edge” in Marshall, R., 2001, (ed.) *Waterfronts in Post-Industrial Cities*, SPON Press, Thames & Francis Group, London and New York, p.4

structured versus amorphous, planned versus spontaneous, rational versus illogical, concrete versus abstract, ordered versus disordered, restricted versus open, definite versus elusive, centered versus polycentric, bounded versus illimitable, border controlled versus uncontrollable sprawling, linear versus distorted, horizontal and low-rise versus vertical and high-rise, homogenous versus eclectic, clearly stated versus imperceptible, revealed versus undiscovered, enlightened versus confused, emancipated versus exploited, use-valued versus commodified, land-allocated versus appropriated, collective versus individual, publicly owned versus privately possessed urban space.

The issue becomes even more significant when the waterfront in the port city (Durrës) is concerned, as it displays an extraordinary condition of “edge” rooted in the existence of the port especially during the socialist era. An inquisitive question that emerged and hopefully received the answer during the study is: “What was the meaning and function of the port in a city of an isolated communist country, in the Balkan peninsula within the Mediterranean entity?”

Furthermore, currently the waterfront presents an intricate critical urban issue, since by inheriting physical, historical, cultural and most importantly of all for the actual condition of liberalized market economy: rentable values, they provide opportunities in terms of contemporary urban space-making at the water’s edge. At the present undefined condition, the city’s edge – its waterfront - displays a plurality of functions, multiple activities; residential, service and leisure uses trying to compete in the global market, which also generate the conflict between the strategic objectives and ambitions to use historical heritage and culture (inherent in the port city) as a tool for development, and the real-estate development, supported by property owners and developers. This implies a co-presence of “public and private” but always in favor of the private ownership. In addition, the maritime or water-based activities are questioned, influenced by the community desires for greater waterfront accessibility, which also initiate disagreements among Port Authorities, Central Government and Local (Municipal) Administration. All these conflicts lead to inquiring questions, which are physical, programmatic and functional based issues and confrontations on the water’s edge such as: the conventional maritime industry versus the promotion of new economies; waterfront renewal versus long-standing identity; private investment favoring needs for housing versus accommodation and service supply to tourists, which on the other hand should be at high levels in order to be able to compete in the global market; commercial expansion versus multiple civic needs; densification of inner city urban areas versus encouraging suburban extension or controlling the urban sprawl, increasing public access

versus empowering private development at the water's edge, searching for the peculiar and encouraging the local versus promoting and relying on the global character of the waterfront's development. Regarding the waterfront-as an edge condition, there are many other urban questions, which direct or indirectly related to political, social, economic and geographic factors, make the post-socialist city an "edgeless" city. The most crucial question is: Will the city reclaim its water's edge?

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