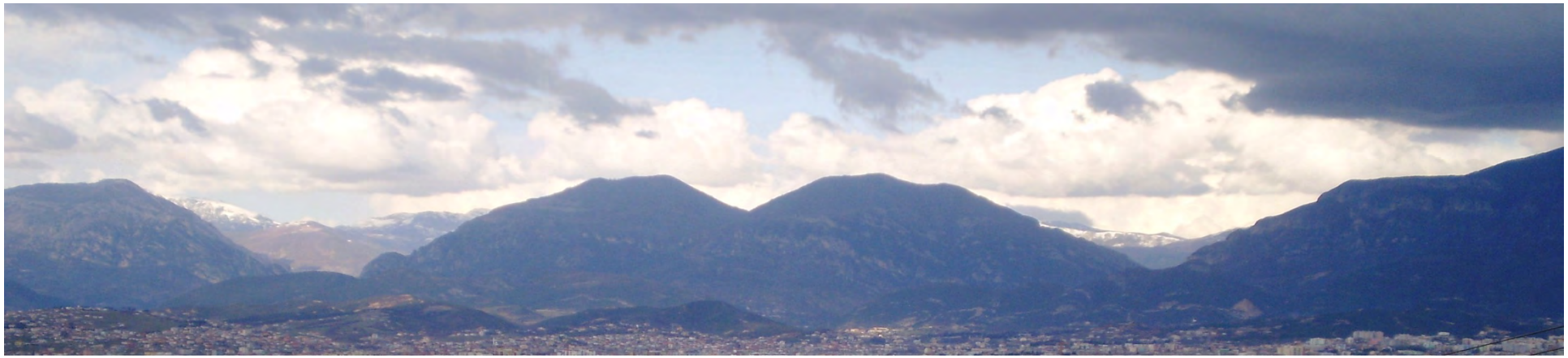
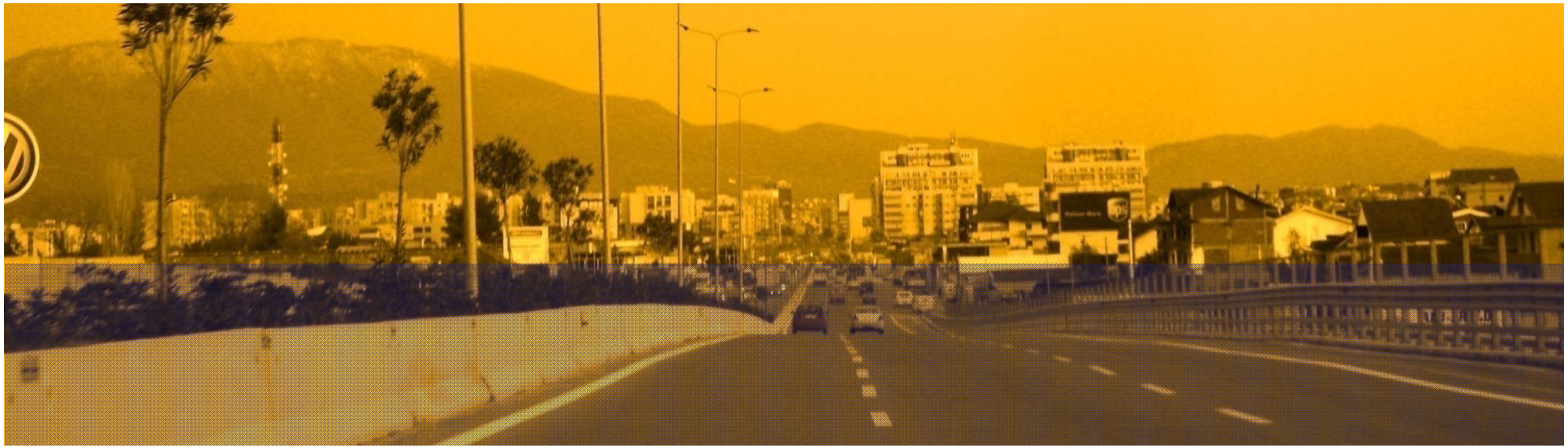
… Issues of urban design and planning in Tirana …



Approaching Tirana



1980 ... Dead ...

... city alive ...

... the center for the “New Tirana” started ...

Towards the city

... alive

1614 Nascita di Tirana

1912-1942 Dall'indipendenza alla monarchia. La visione italiana

1942-1990 La dittatura comunista e l'economia centralizzata

1992-2002 Postcomunismo: dall'uguaglianza al capitalismo

2002-2009 Recupero dello spazio pubblico

new aspects ...	unknown... ???

City and architecture "Founding" and "Re-founding"

1912-1942: The Monarchy and the Italian occupation Period ... The **First "Re-founding"**

1944-1991: The Centralized Economy ... The **Second "Re-founding"**

1992 – 2000: Post communism: from social equality to capitalism ... The **Third "Re-founding"**

2000-2009: can the city provide more opportunities?

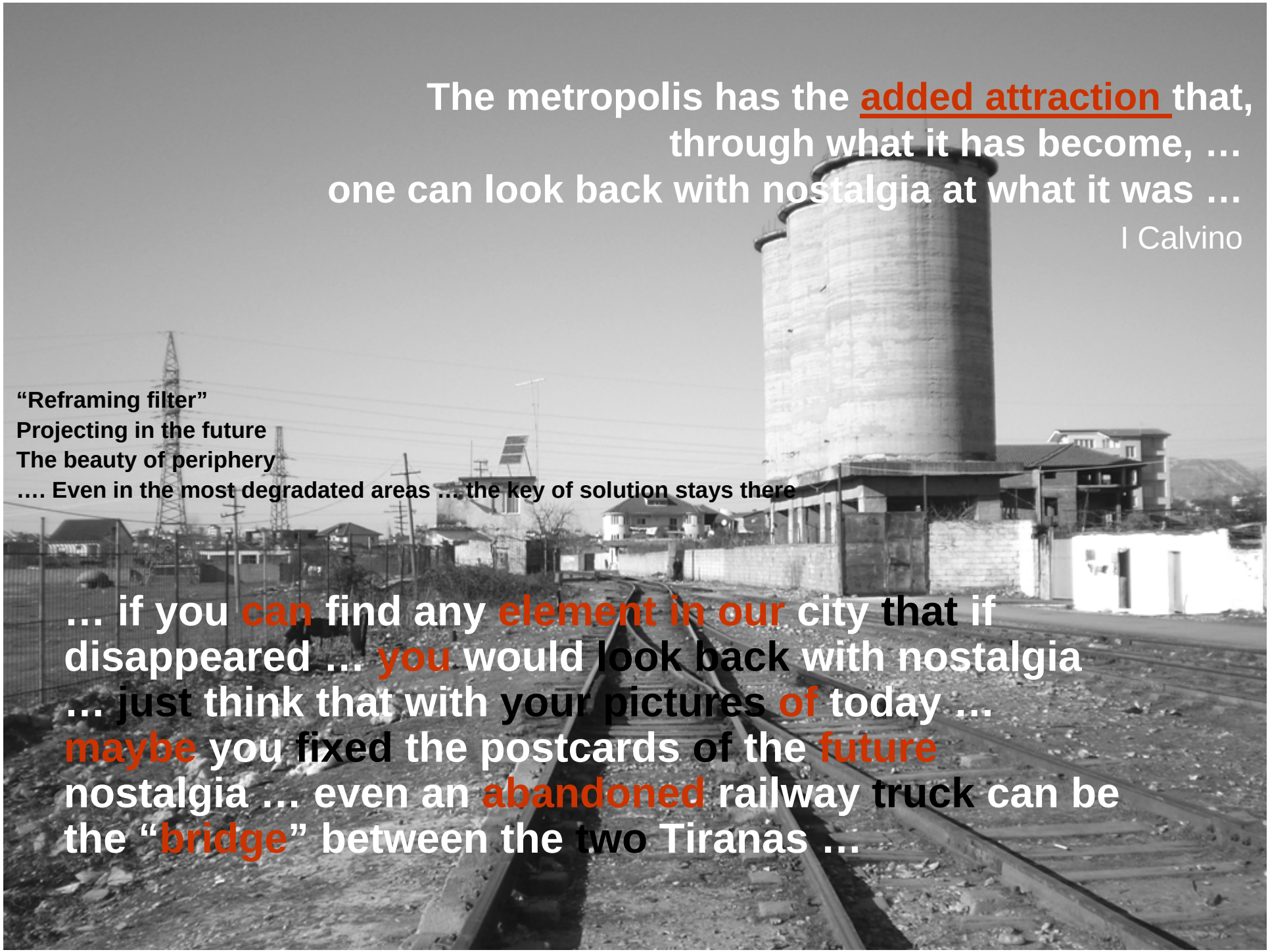
2009-20xx:the challenge continues ...

What are the main characteristics of **transformation of urban space and image** in Tirana in the socialist and post socialist period

… the future …

The challenge

Can we still “**recapture**” “reshape” the urban form?

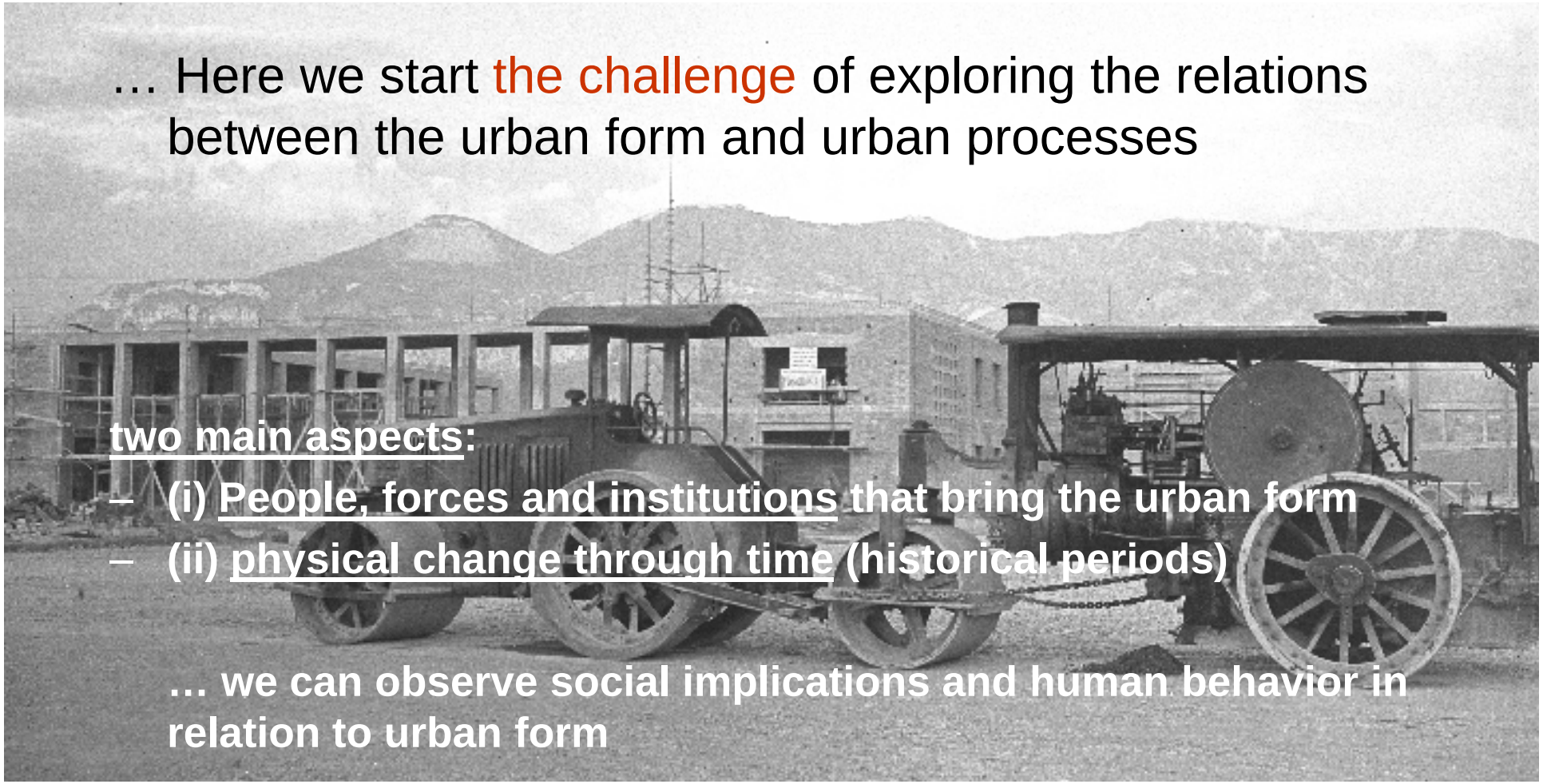


The metropolis has the added attraction that,
through what it has become, …
one can look back with nostalgia at what it was …
I Calvino

"Reframing filter"
Projecting in the future
The beauty of periphery
…. Even in the most degradated areas … the key of solution stays there

… if you can find any element in our city that if disappeared … you would look back with nostalgia … just think that with your pictures of today … maybe you fixed the postcards of the future nostalgia … even an abandoned railway truck can be the "bridge" between the two Tiranas …

How Tirana took this “shape”?



… Here we start the challenge of exploring the relations between the urban form and urban processes

two main aspects:

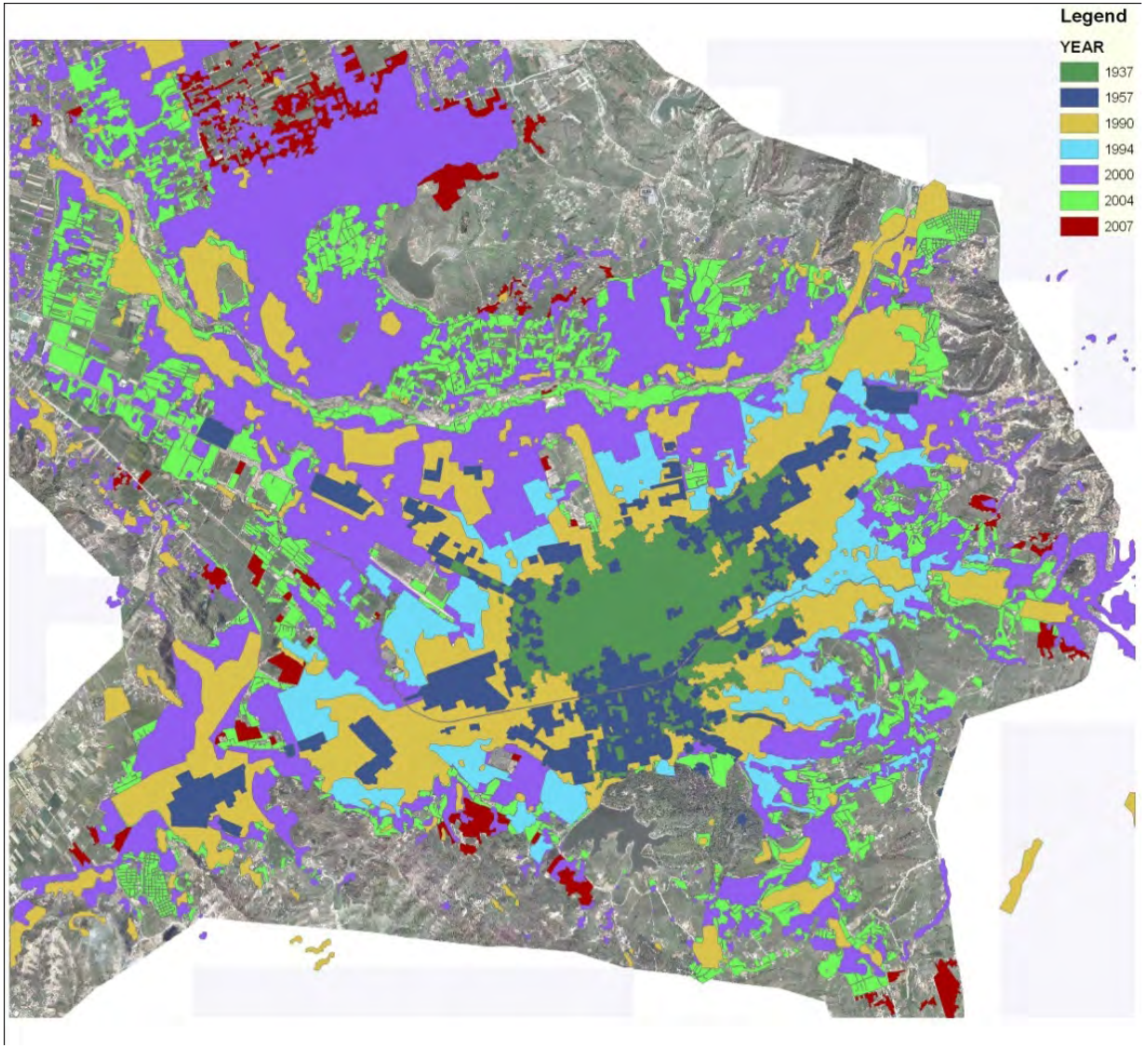
- **(i) People, forces and institutions that bring the urban form**
- **(ii) physical change through time (historical periods)**

… we can observe social implications and human behavior in relation to urban form

… Does Albanian type of public space / place engender social interaction or discourage it?

Repositioning of Tirana in the new metropolitan settings

- Five fold increased from 1991 to 2001 GT:
  - 12km2 --- 56 km2
- Massive population expansion in GT:
  - 7-5% increase during the same period

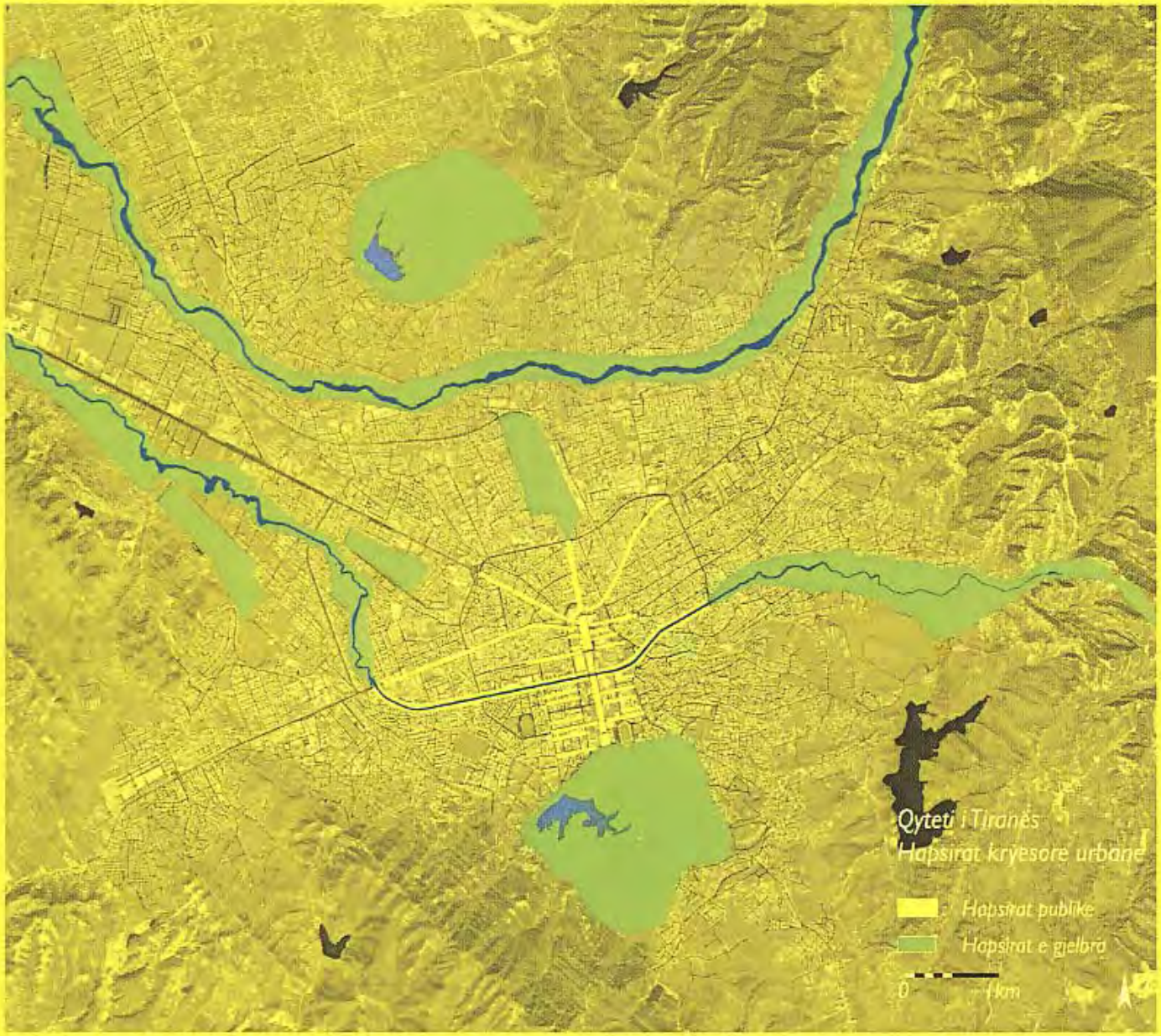


- **Necklace of (parks), river corridors**
- **The city three river system from east to west … <u>crossing the city</u> and the territory**
- **Vital role in <u>structuring the city</u> – regeneration and the future development**
-

Necklace of parks and three river corridors

Repositioning of Tirana in the new metropolitan settings

HAPSIRAT E GJELBRA DHE SHESHET PUBLIKE



… representative city “cells”

This unprecedented growth influenced the **urban morphology** (big and small scale)

- Traditional areas
- Housing blocs built during the communist regime
- Post ‘90
  - Inner city densification
  - New development in periphery
  - Informal areas
  - Other areas …. (commercial and production activities)

socialist period

standardized typology of transformation …

Industrialization program of the country …

…**regulatory plans**

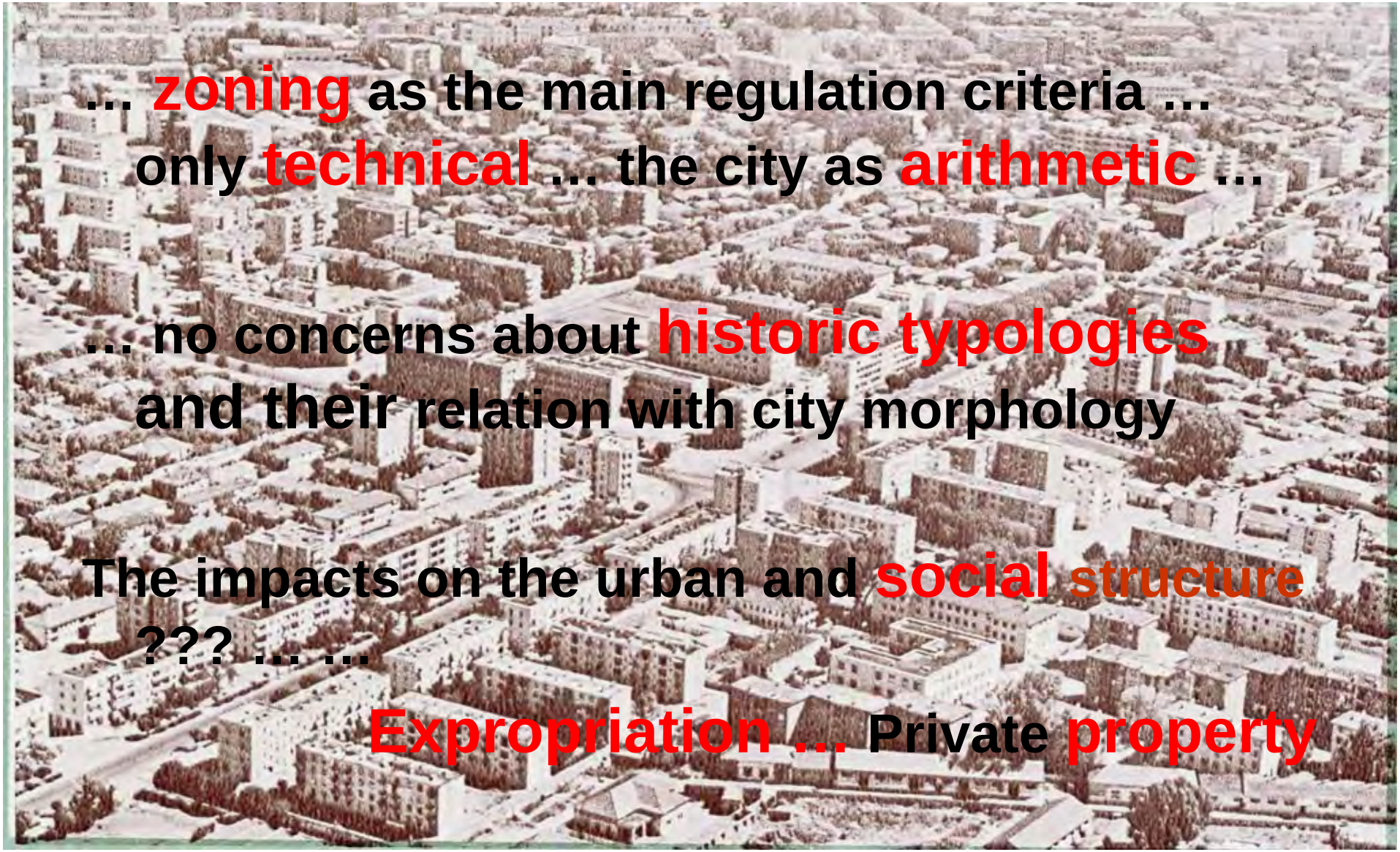
Transforming the city based on the

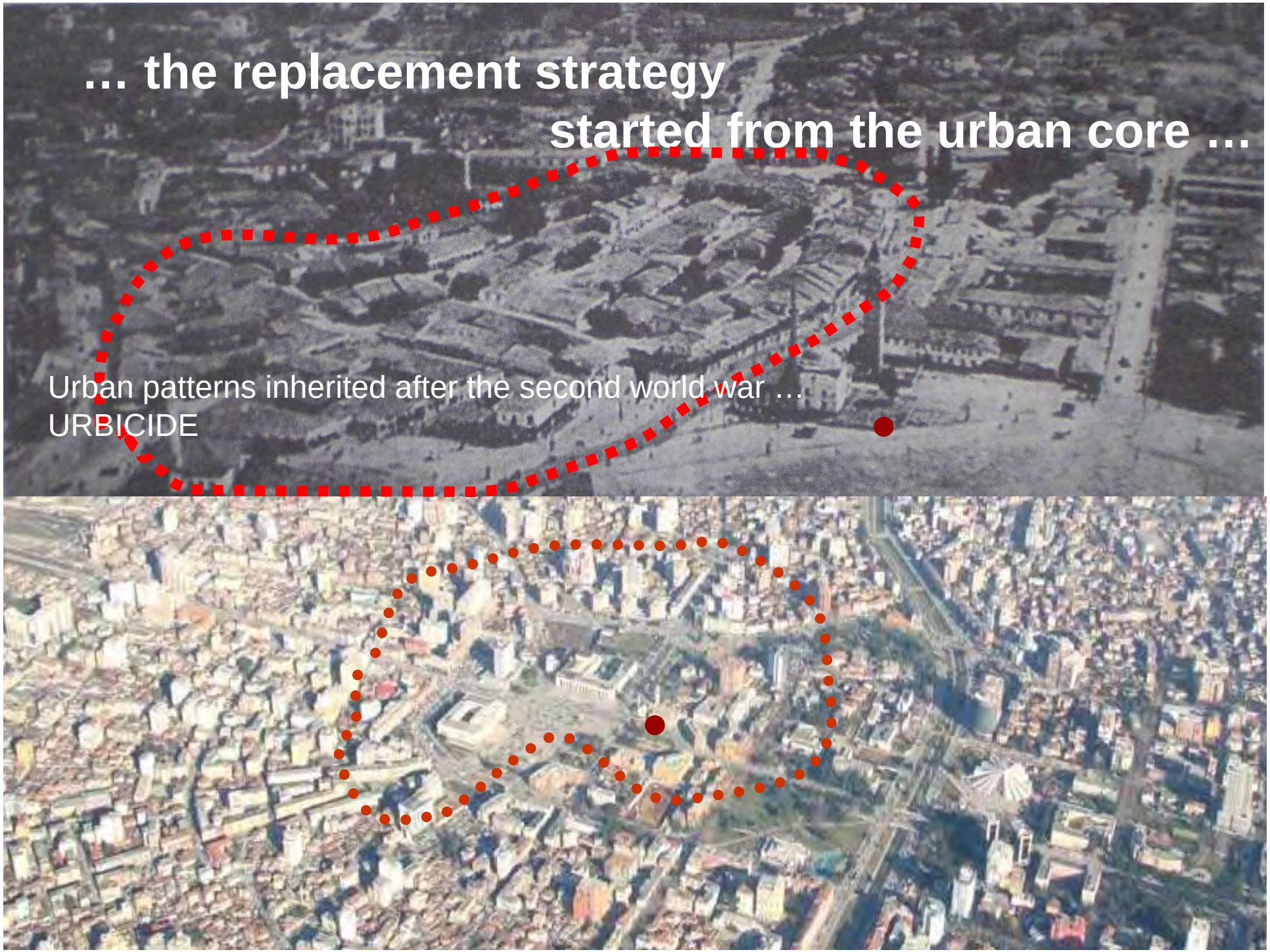
Replacement strategy of the old / traditional neighborhoods

Expansion of the city in new areas …

Instruments

"paradise" for urban planners




… the replacement strategy
started from the urban core …
Urban patterns inherited after the second world war …
URBICIDE

Violence against architecture

…Impacts on urban fabric

The destruction of buildings is a **strategic maneuver**

- Urbicide is a **struggle** into the sphere of organized space (Bill Millard)
- **Erosion** of neglected (Dajti hotel)
- A city can be destroyed also through acts of **construction**
    - Socialist
    - Post-socialist

APARTMENT BLOCS, TYPICAL DURING THE COMMUNIST PERIOD
Replaced traditional areas; or developed as new extensions of the city

... **inhuman** ...

... **the “essence” of basic needs”**

... **not the place to offer more opportunities** ...

No architectonic representation ...

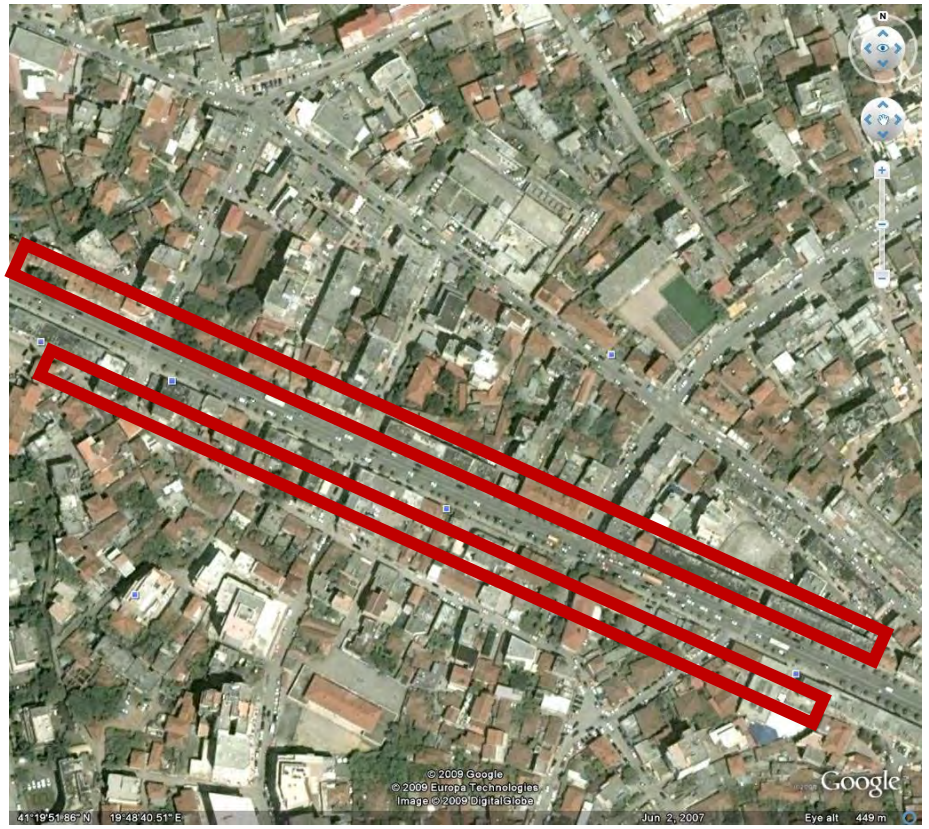
this was what we inherited at the beggining of ’90s

Lack of vital energy

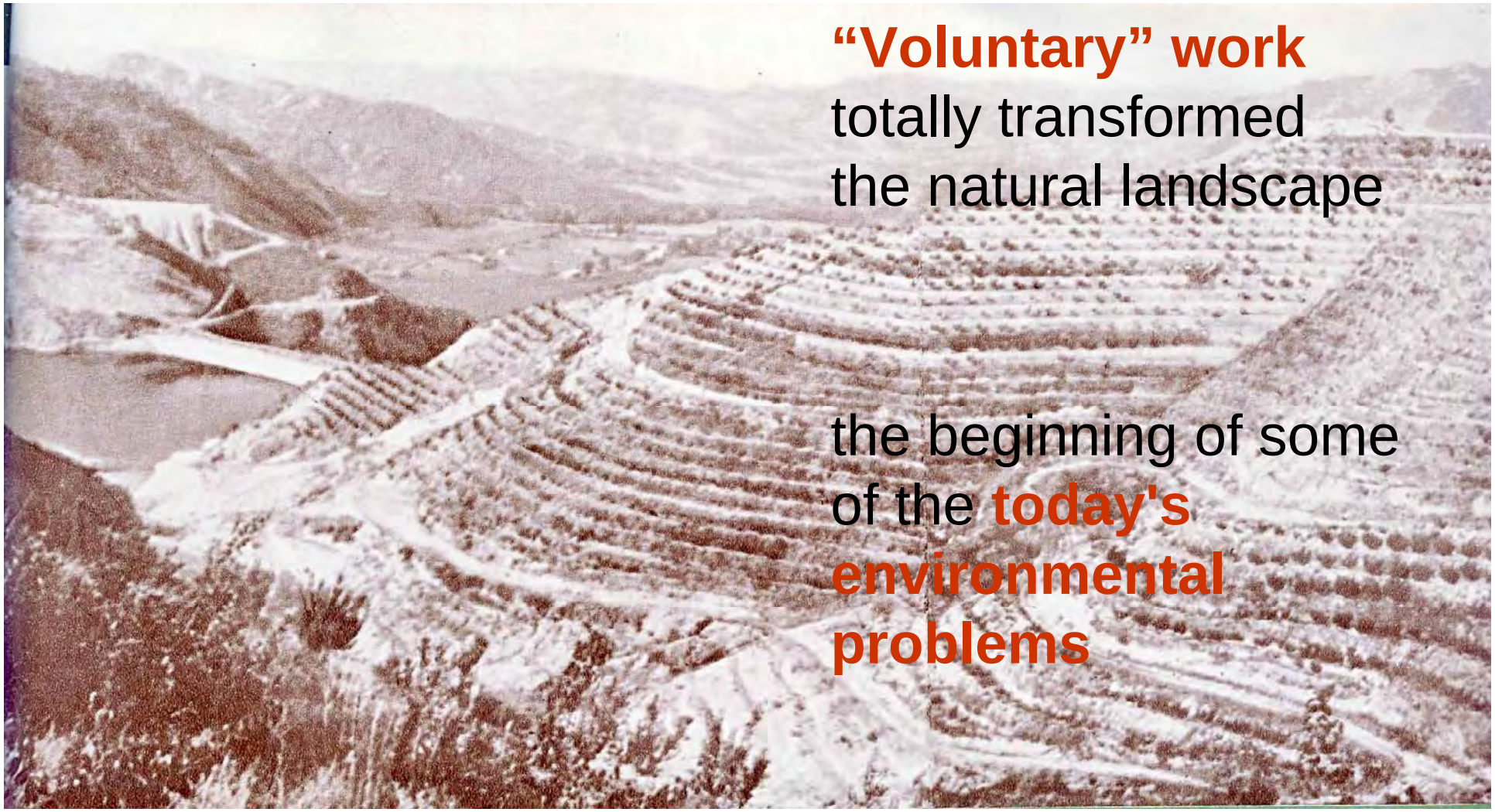
… clean cities = “sterility”

deprived from life energy …

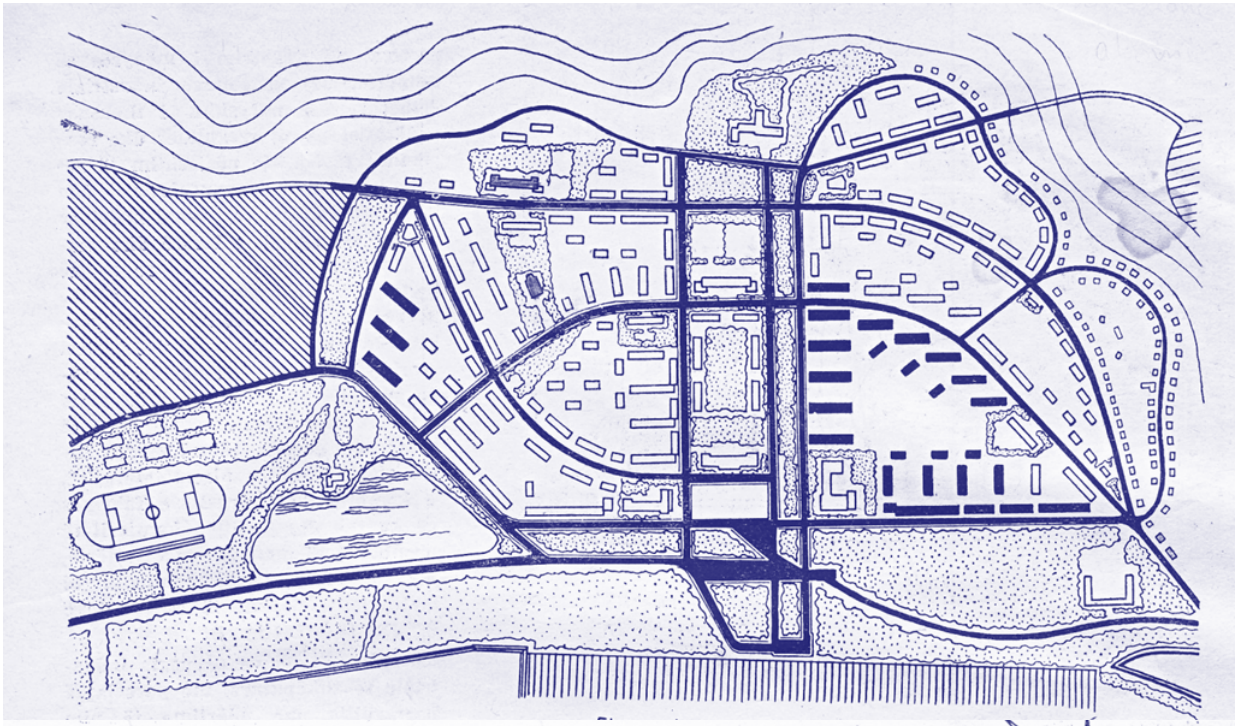
… no-ones space

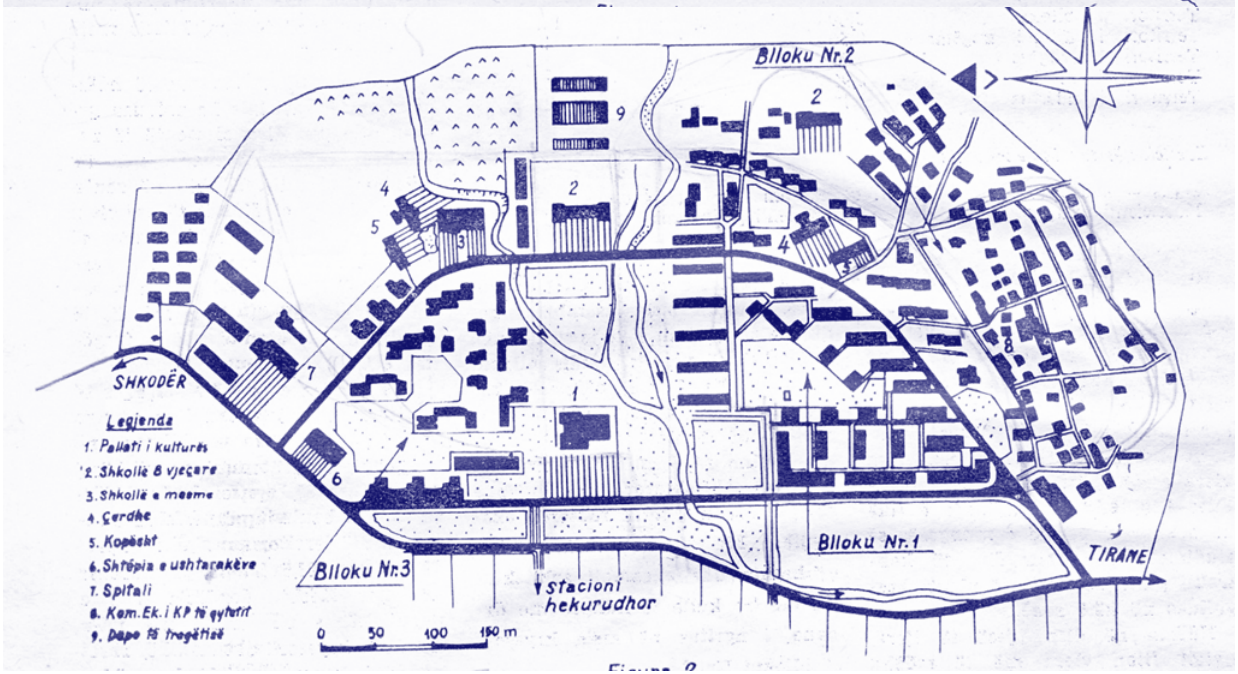


… the syndromes started … much time before ...
“Artificial” insertion … urban “curtains”

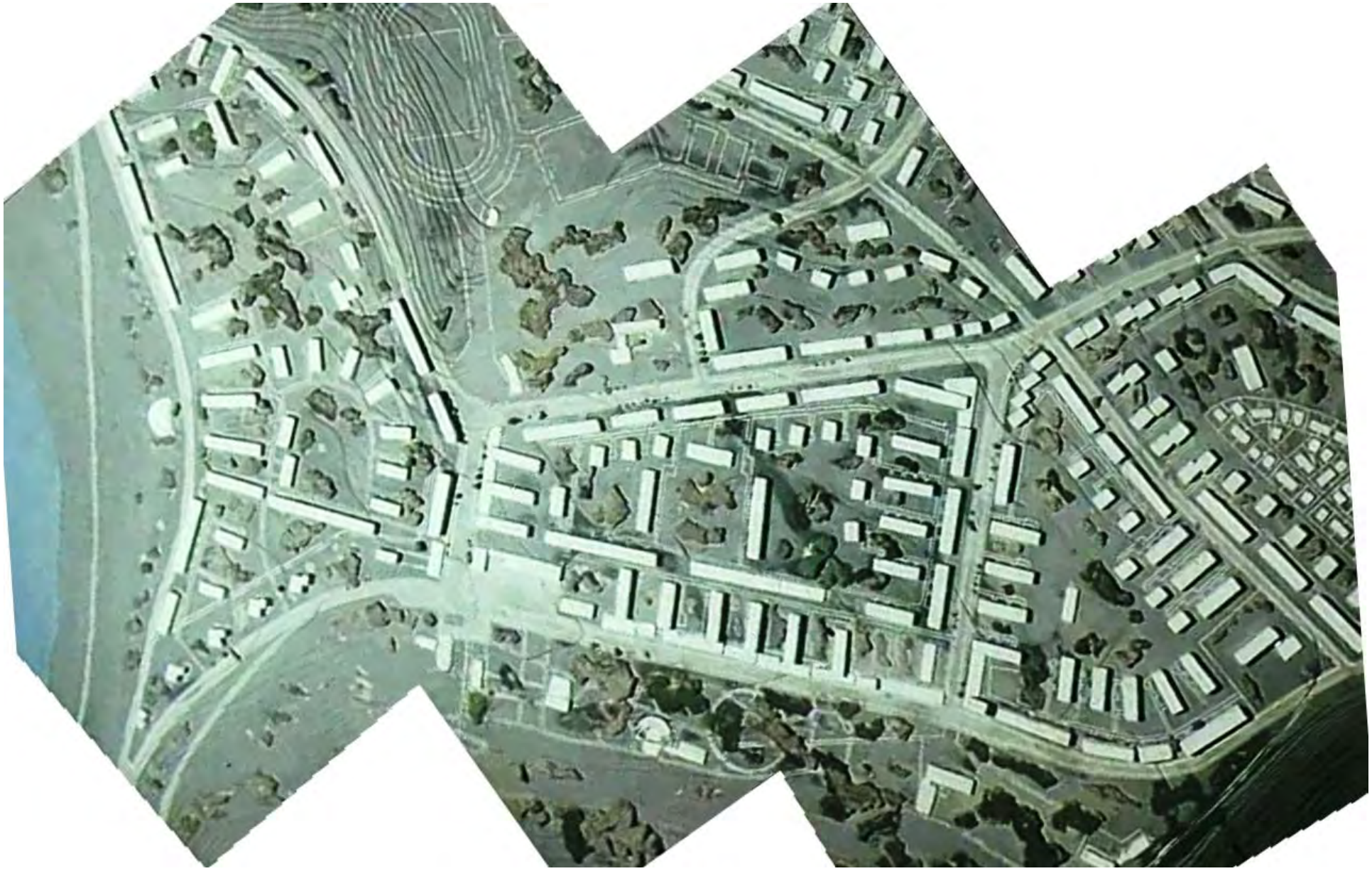

“Voluntary” work
totally transformed
the natural landscape
the beginning of some
of the **today's**
environmental
problems

SALI
SHEJAKU





Foundation of the new towns of Kukës i Ri, Laç, Cërrik, Ballsh, Çorovodë, etc ...



Project for the new town of Kukes

Kukes

Kukës
© 2009 Europa Technologies
© 2009 Tele Atlas
© 2009 Cnes/Spot Image
© 2009 Google
Google
42°04'38.46" N 20°25'27.11" E
Jul 20, 2003
Eye alt 4.84 km

The “new town” built during ‘70s
nowadays is surrounded by informal buildings

… after ’90s approaches …

Interventions … “instruments”

… from **replacement** interventions / expansion **big scale** (neighborhood)…

Erosion of space in traditional areas = replacement (small scale)
“**fill-in**” = gradual “space occupation” …
… **plot based** …
interventions

… **inability to create /maintain coherence** at big scale…

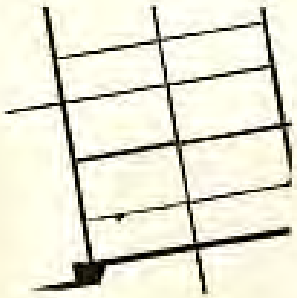
Inapropriate building typologies
“Tensions” in the use of space

TRADITOINAL AREA EROSION

Traditional areas

Eroded and neglected

Reticular Pattern



Radial Pattern

Straight Linear Pattern

Curved Linear Pattern

Cul-de Sac Pattern

“URBICIDE”
Eroded and neglected

Post ’90s

Infill development .. In the city center

Replacement of small houses … with high rise (in periphery)

N
© 2009 Google
© 2009 Europa Technologies
Image © 2009 DigitalGlobe
Google
41°19'28.92" N 19°48'53.74" E
Jun 2, 2007
Eye alt 451 m

© 2009 Google
© 2009 Europa Technologies
Image © 2009 DigitalGlobe
19°50.39" N
19°49'24.28" E

Auto Trans

Nga tekstura uniforme ne tekstura teresisht te perziera

New developed areas … high rise buildings in the periphery

N
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© 2009 Europa Technologies
Image © 2009 DigitalGlobe
Google
41°20'23.40" N 19°48'20.39" E
Jun 2, 2007
Eye alt 451 m

New developments in periphery …
High rise private developments … and social housing

High income residential area – new expansions

Informal peripheries … new expansions

The future informal “garden city” …

Rur-urban

Trendencies
For the
creation of
a linear city
With economic
activities

Everything in
the hands of
Private
Developers
And land
owners

“Highway city”

... Albanian commercial landscape

Reference to Venturi “Learning from Las Vegas”

Communication dominates space as an element in the architecture and in the landscape – for a new scale of landscape

Graphic signs in space has become the architecture of this landscape

The quality of being an oases in a hostile context ,,, the ability to "catch" the visitor in a new role : one may imagine oneself … in a different and various places …

… walking from one store to another is not possible because the interaction is only by car and highway --- even they are adjacent …

Sometimes the <u>building is the sign</u>

… kind of architectural shelter

“Architecture” in this landscape becomes symbolic in space rather than form in space

... driving ...

The sign at the front is a vulgar extravaganza, the building at the back a modest necessity

Special relationships are made by symbols
more than by forms

Symbold dominates space …. Architecture is not enough

The space is unified only by highway signs,
their particular position in space,
their graphic meanings that identify and unify
the megatexture

Big signs and little building is the rule …

Signs are more important than the architecture

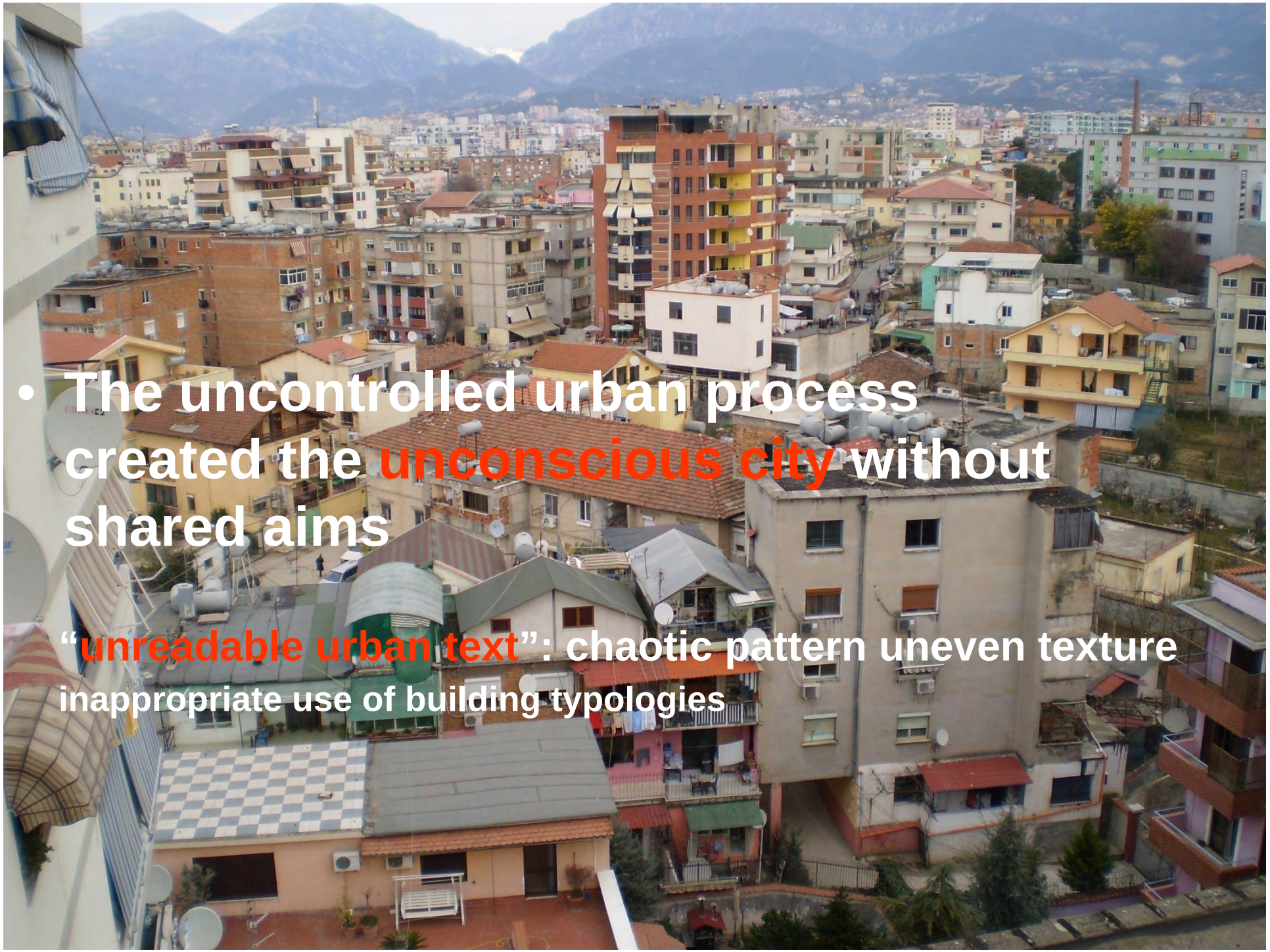
If you take the signs away, there is no place

The image of the commercial strip is chaos

… the “friendly gasoline stations” parade their universality …

Front footage on the strip has not yet reached the value … and parking is still the appropriate filler …

The parking lot is the parterre of the asphalt landscape



- **The uncontrolled urban process created the unconscious city without shared aims**

"unreadable urban text": chaotic pattern uneven texture

inappropriate use of building typologies

Why??

- Low **enforcement – no** enforcement
- Life style
- **Profit maximization** (builders, land owners …)
- Traditional **education of architects** and urban planners (lack of consideration of the contexts)
- **Planning approach:** blocking Vs enabling

Professional situation

Narrow scope of architecture … routed in the “traditional **education” from civil engineering** …

Focused **only on technical and engineering concepts** – pure rationalist model – mixed with socio-communist limitations

… educated **how to “divide” the space** but not how to **“create” the space** … this impacted the development during the communist regime … and this of today

Lack of critical judgment **and professional critique** about the damages in the past and this of today

One example …
“The geometry of distances” … the alibi

The rule that destroyed our cities

The space understood only in terms of 3d geometry
No character ... no care about the lived space

... “hapesira merr kuptim jo vetem nga boshlleku ne vetvete, por nga elementet konkret te vendit” – kjo ben diferencen ..... *Heidegger*

Lack of inspiring visions for future development

Positivist approach – reframing

- Urban fabric in Tirana is **heavily damaged** … paradoxically **here stays its specificity of today** … the challenge is to transform it in a more **conscious** urban condition …

- … after that … it is clear that a **change** is needed … starting from a thorough **understanding of the "urban text"** …
- TRANSLATE it IN AN urban design strategy

Reframing: the architect as “facilitator”

… all **behavior takes place in some context …** The meaning, **depends upon the “frame”** we perceive it

When we **change the frame we change the meaning** (Bandler and Grinder, 1982).

Framing = contextualization

reframing = **re-contextualization**

Positivist approach

Reframing the existing in a new identity …

Assuming: CONSCIOUS conditions AS a remedy TO the lost IDENTIY

Reframing should guarantee the passage from :

- Unconscious → Conscious (shared experience)
- “unreadable” → “urban text” … reading the hidden potentials

REFRAME results

Instead of **“killing” the richness** of the context we can **recreate** the “unreadable”

CAOTIC AND UNREADABLE as --- Complexity and multi-layered phenomena --- richness of the urban patterns / specificity

Anti-urbicide strategies

Examples of improvement through the design process

- … ability to **conjecture** “a form” with catalytic role … in favor of **public consciousness**

Berlage institute study

- **“catalytic” lines** of influx and / or nodes
- “sanitation” of chaos through **collage technique**

Better understanding of the “latent” structural features, centralities

Collage model

Rowe, Koetter

- A theory of **competing powers** to establish a more likely **comprehensive city**
- Re-establishing **bricolage alongside sciences** --- as concomitant propensities
- **Why this dialectical predicament be not accepted in theory as in the practice?**
- … allow for **joint existence** **of over planned** and **genuinely planned** … of the “accident” and, public and private … individual and state equilibrium
- Qualify the virtues of order with the values of chaos
- **Rome illustrate** bricollage: a dramatic settlement with **abrupt collisions, acute disjunctions** …

The proposition leads to the condition of
the 17 century Rome …
collision, inextricable fusion,

Tirana as a paradigmatic example

Berlage Institute (Tirana Metropolis)

- The city as an **archipelago**: … distinct parts - a **concentration of complementary** centralities outside the city center … reinforcing of what already exists

- **Strategic interventions**: Fine and tuning; Reinforcing patterns and structures; Structuring Tirana's formation; Concentration; Parallel Tirana; Durana

Character of pattern as a spatial device - platform for a more conscious urban condit

“Fine and tuning”: distilling patterns

– character extrapolated from each pattern and reinterpreted to turn latent potentials into quality of space

Essential character

- The labyrinth – from impermeable to permeable
- The fortress – from excluded to included
- The garden city – from latent to explicit

Scars and seams: urban level

not consciously perceived

Morphological interruptions – linear, public

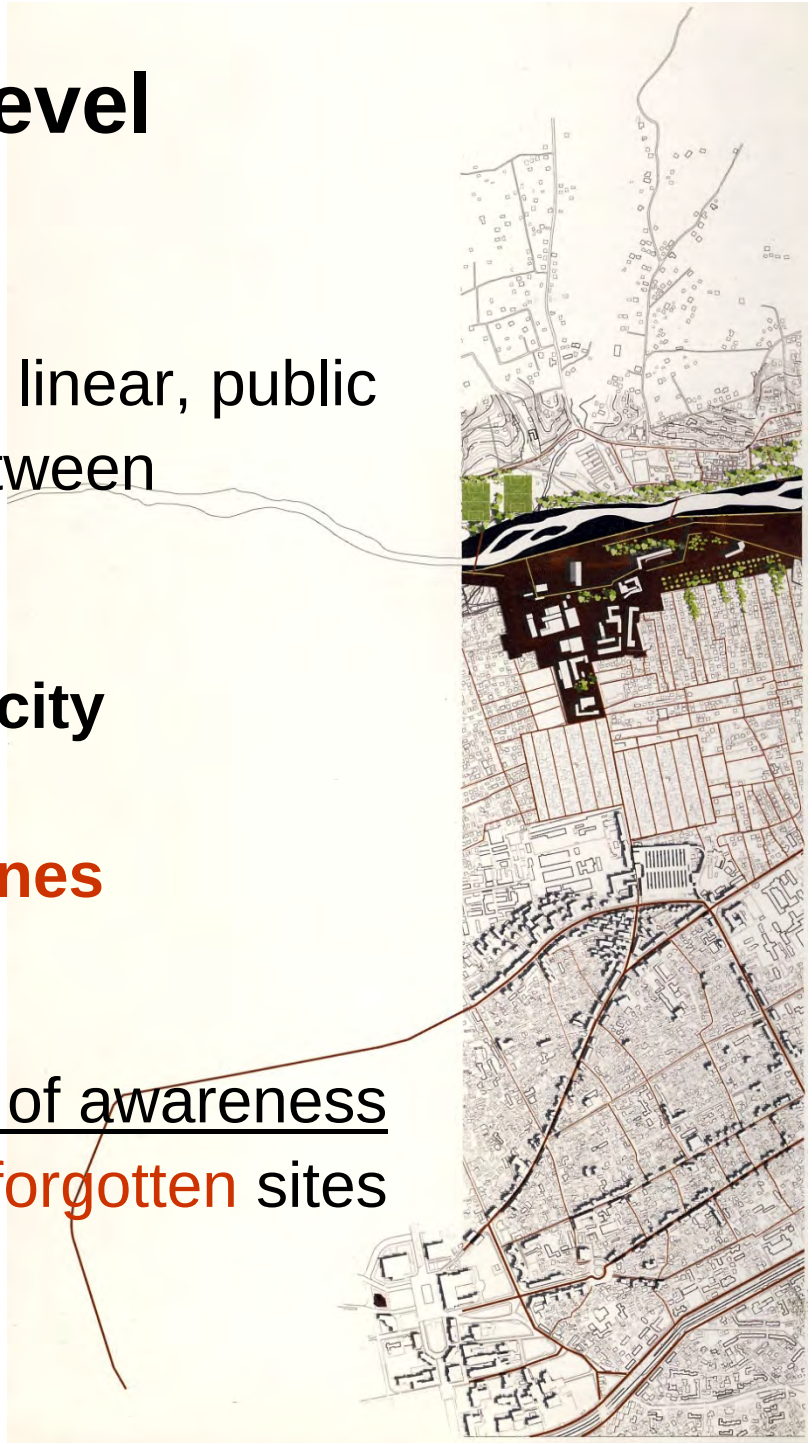
– represent **exceptions** (position between patterns)

– **enact a dialog across the whole city**

– urban **collectors** = **new gravity lines**

establish greater sense of awareness

urban **gathering** places - forgotten sites

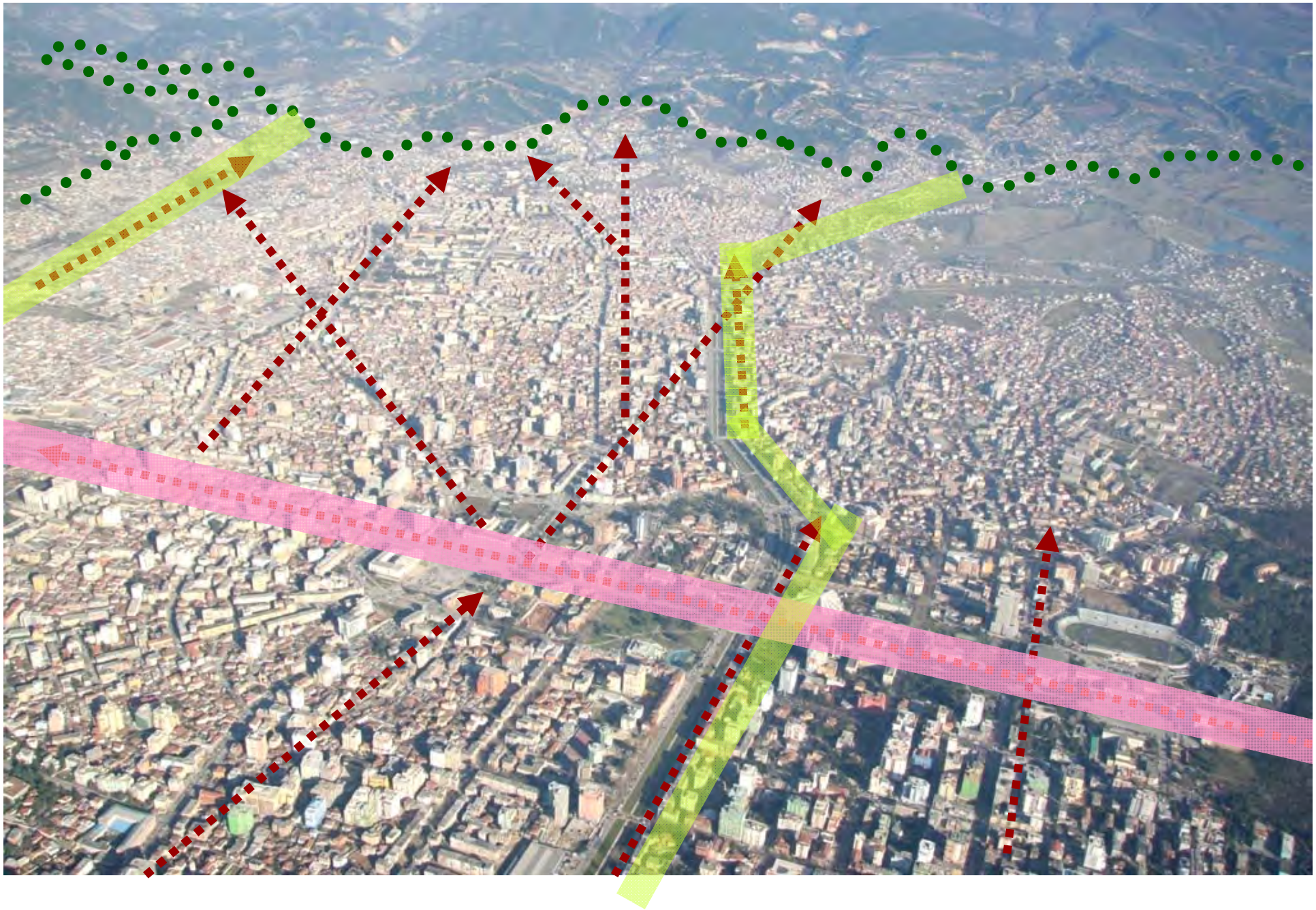


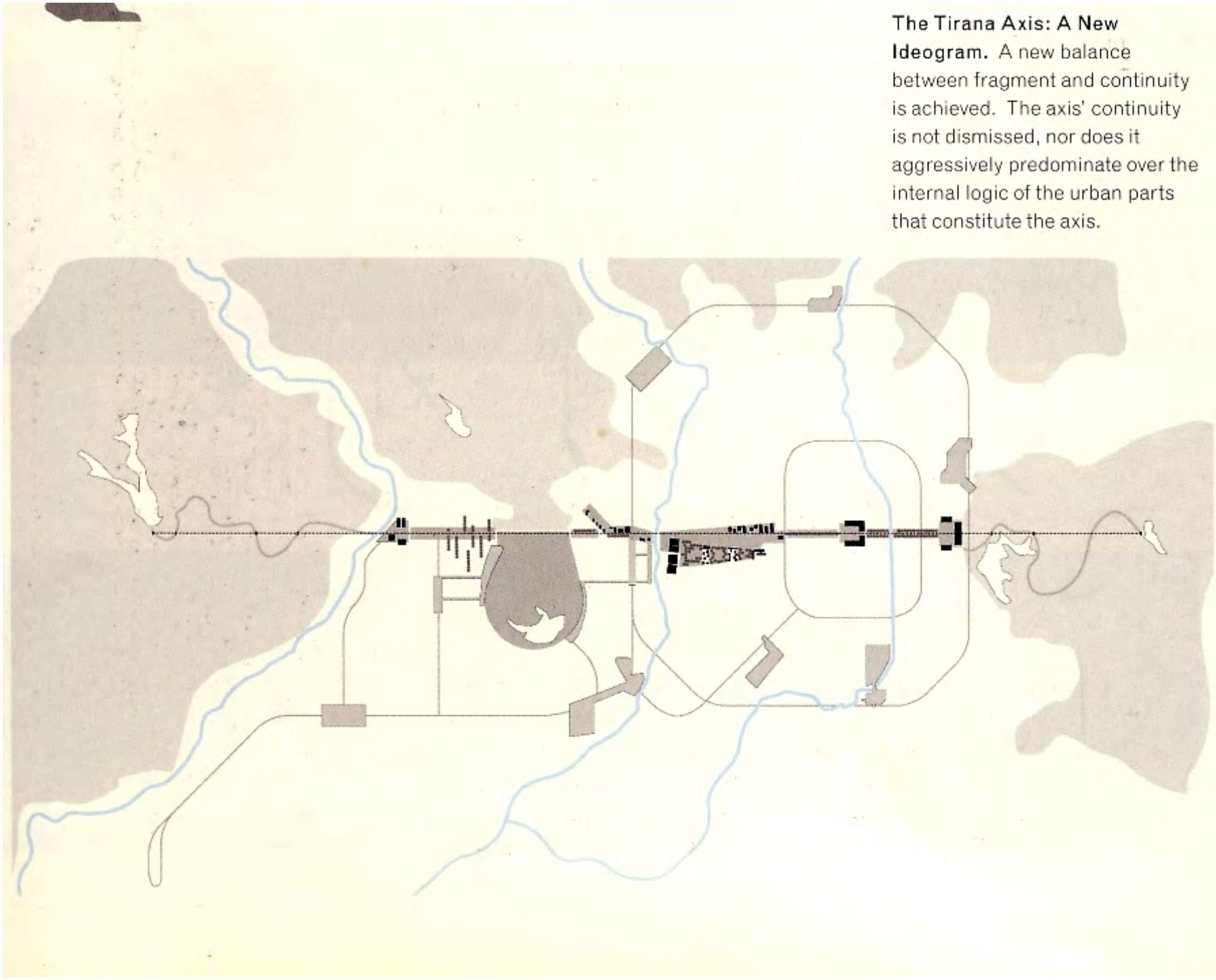
Axes as a new line of gravity

… the relation between the **continuity** and the **sequence** of fragments along it;

The axis counteract with the difused urbanisation offering a new **collective experience**, affecting the collective **consciousness**, collecting **independent urban and landscape fragments**,

… not an idealized axis type

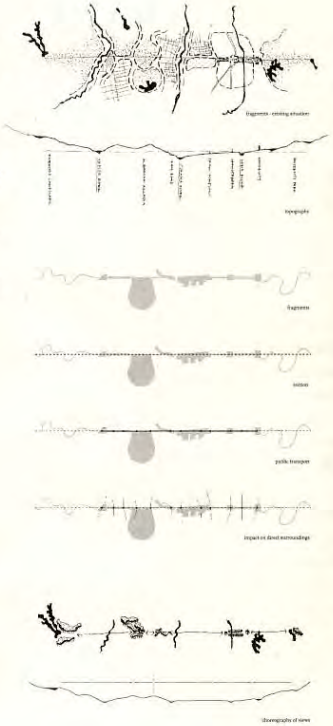




The Tirana Axis: A New Ideogram. A new balance between fragment and continuity is achieved. The axis' continuity is not dismissed, nor does it aggressively predominate over the internal logic of the urban parts that constitute the axis.

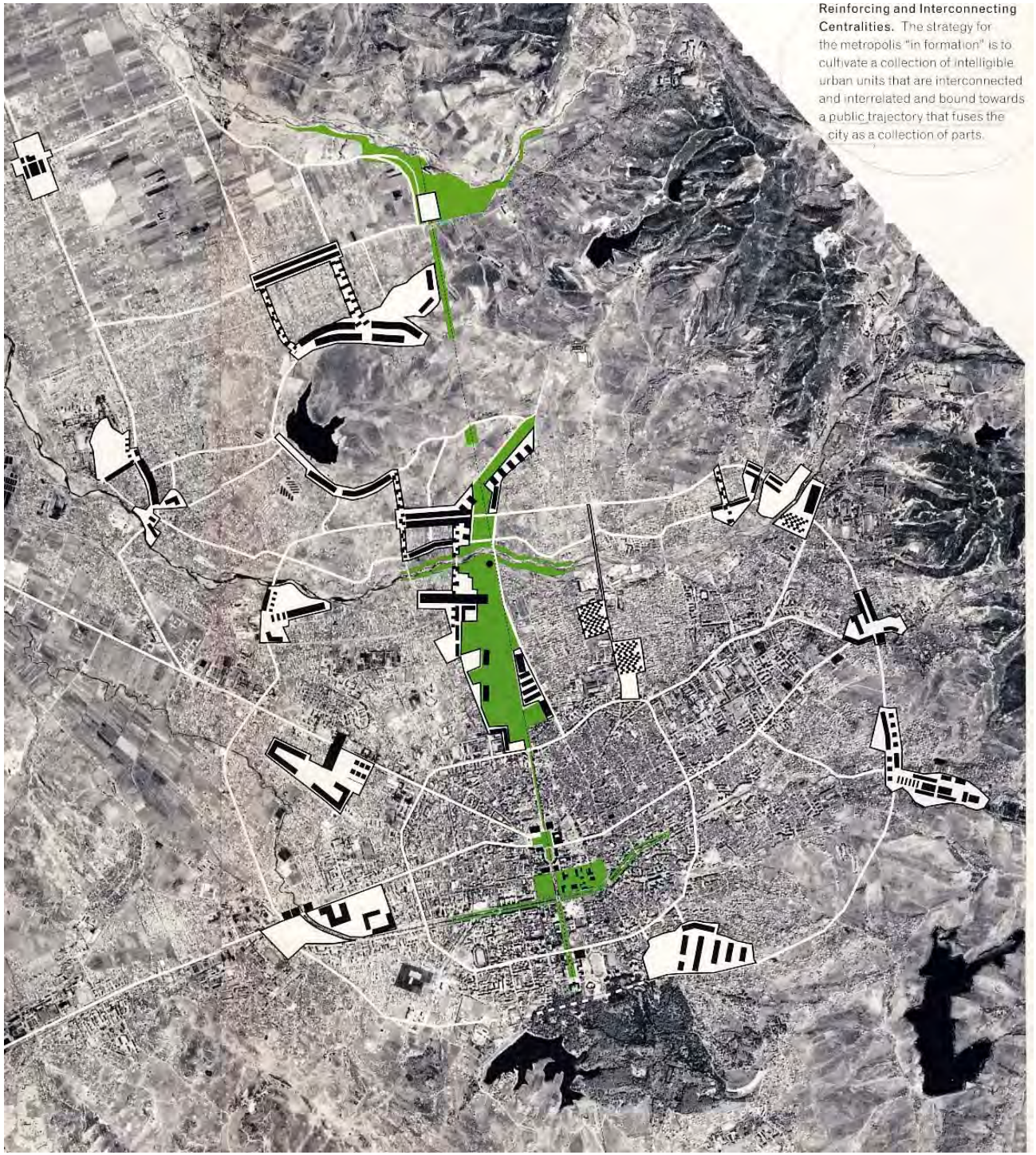
The Axis.
Symbolized by the first Albanian tram line running along its trajectory, coherence is introduced to the metropolis 'in formation' and the collective imagination of its citizens. The impact of the axis depends as much on its engagement with the different city- fragments in its path as it does with its desire for continuity.

From Axis to Section
The axis of the boulevard 'Martyrs of Nation' in the historic core continues as a northern trajectory into the periphery, collecting a series of urban and landscape fragments that are engaged to function as a catalogue, or literally a 'cross-section' of the current state of Tirana 'in formation'. Rather than imposing an idealized axis-type upon the existing, we propose to bring precisely this aspect of 'cross-section' into action for the realization of a new civic structure.



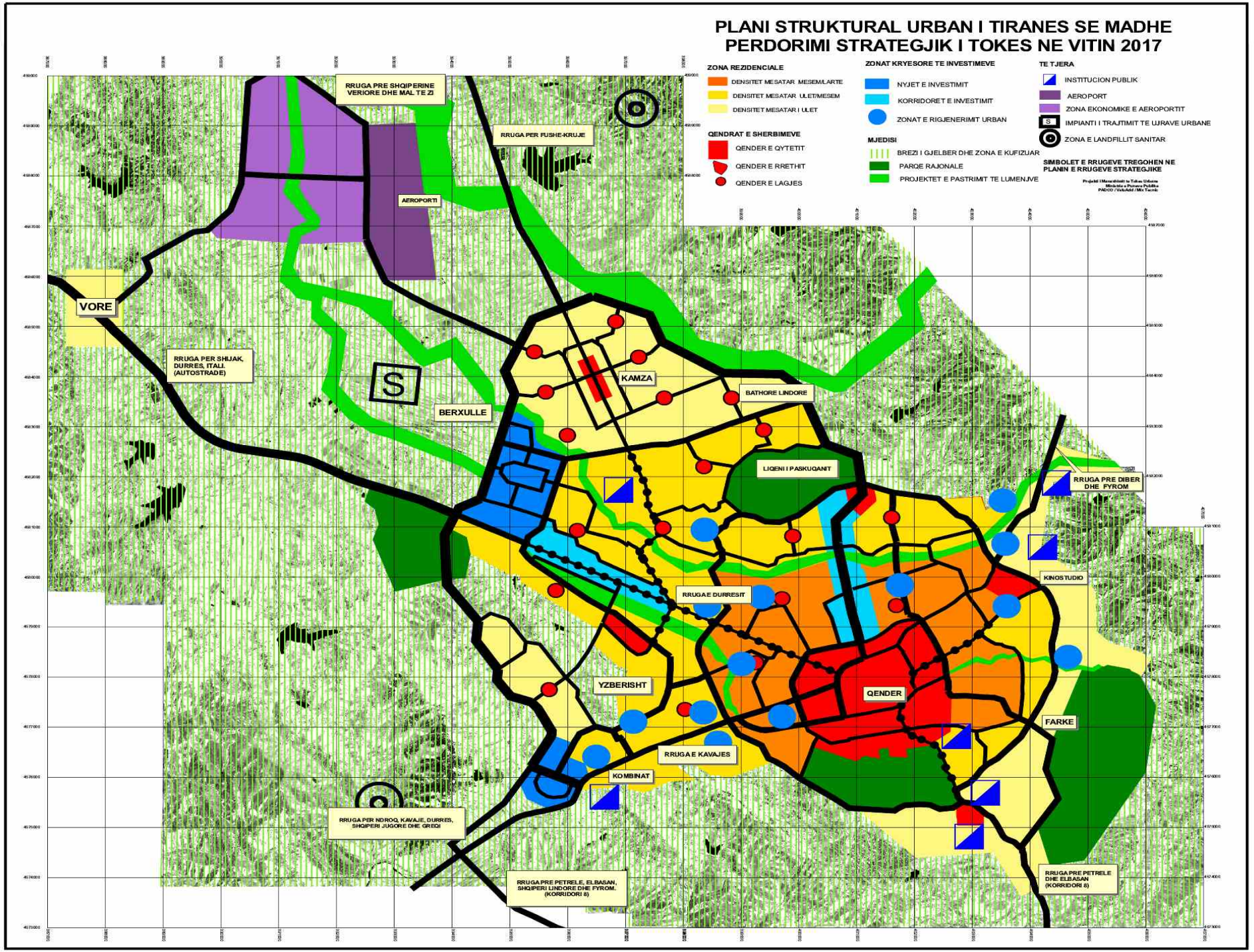
Civic axis

The civic axes act as a line of gravity (linear centrality) generating a consolidating force that provide coherence and intelligibility in the metropolitan area

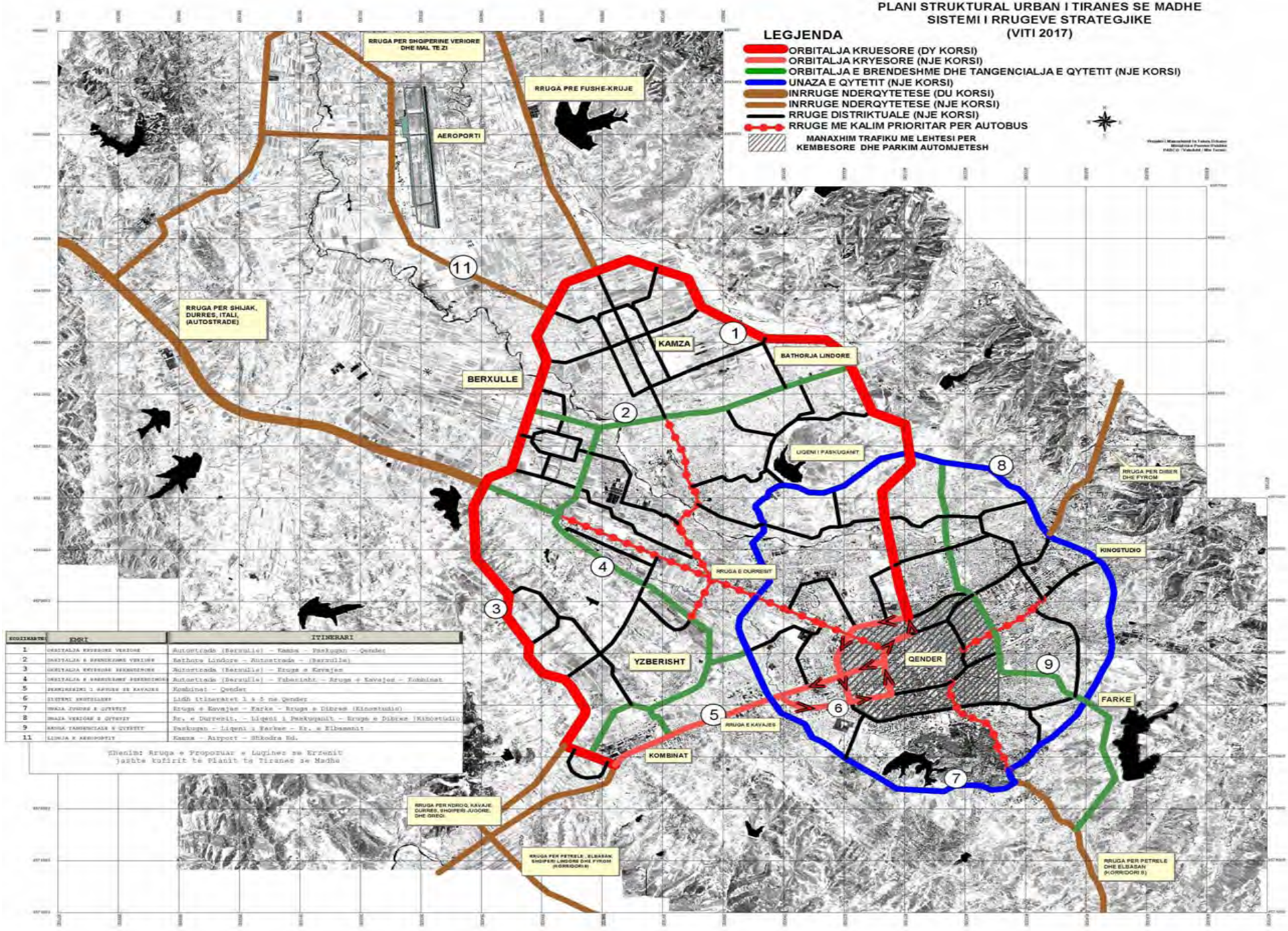


Reinforcing and Interconnecting Centralities. The strategy for the metropolis "in formation" is to cultivate a collection of intelligible urban units that are interconnected and interrelated and bound towards a public trajectory that fuses the city as a collection of parts.

PLANI STRUKTURAL URBAN I TIRANES SE MADHE
PERDORIMI STRATEGJIK I TOKES NE VITIN 2017



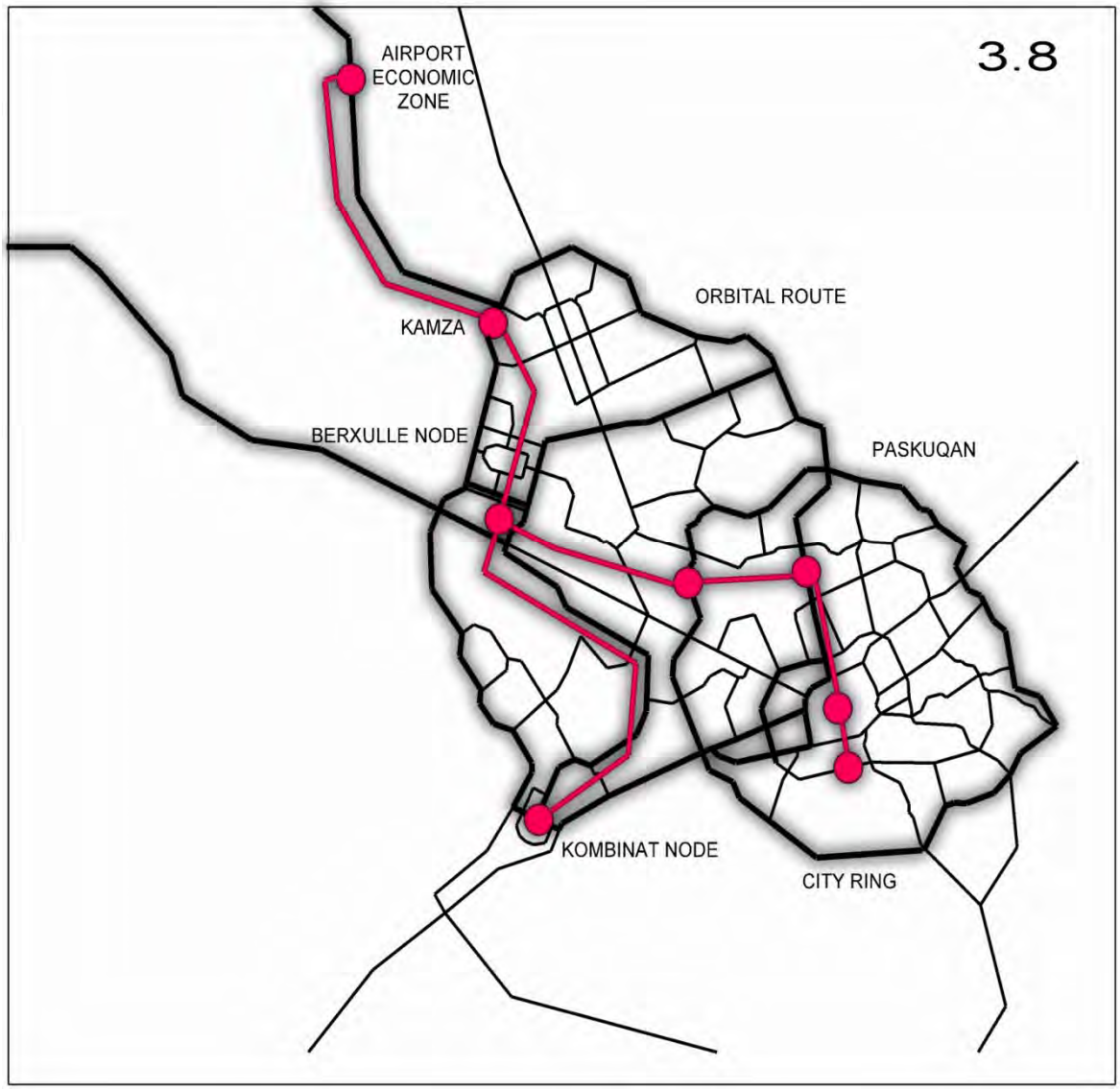
PLANI STRUKTURAL URBAN I TIRANES SE MADHE
SISTEMI I RRUGEVE STRATEGJIKE
(VITI 2017)



KODIFIKIMI	EMRI	ITINERARI
1	ORBITALJA KRYESORE VERIORE	Autostrada (Berxulle) – Kamza – Paskuqan – Qender
2	ORBITALJA E BRENDSHME VERIORE	Bathore Lindore – Autostrada – (Berxulle)
3	ORBITALJA KRYESORE PERENDIMORE	Autostrada (Berxulle) – Rruga e Kavajes
4	ORBITALJA E BRENDSHME PERENDIMORE	Autostrada (Berxulle) – Yzberisht – Rruga e Kavajes – Kombinat
5	PERMIRESIMI I RRUGES SE KAVAJES	Kombinat – Qender
6	SISTEMI RRUTULLERE	Lidh itineraret 1 & 5 ne Qender
7	UNAZA JUGORE E QYTETIT	Rruga e Kavajes – Farke – Rruga e Dibres (Kinostudio)
8	UNAZA VERIORE E QYTETIT	Rr. e Durresit. – Liqeni i Paskuqanit – Rruga e Dibres (Kinostudio)
9	RRUGA TANGENCIALE E QYTETIT	Paskuqan – Liqeni i Farkes – Rr. e Elbasanit
11	LIDHJA E AEROPORTIT	Kamza – Airport – Shkodra Rd.

Shenim: Rruga e Propozuar e Lugjnes se Erzenit jashte kufirit te Planit te Tiranes se Madhe

Transport Forecast



Tirana: a New European City

B: Intervention

Urban Uses

Urban Uses

Tirana: a New European City

Study Model

Tirana: a New European City

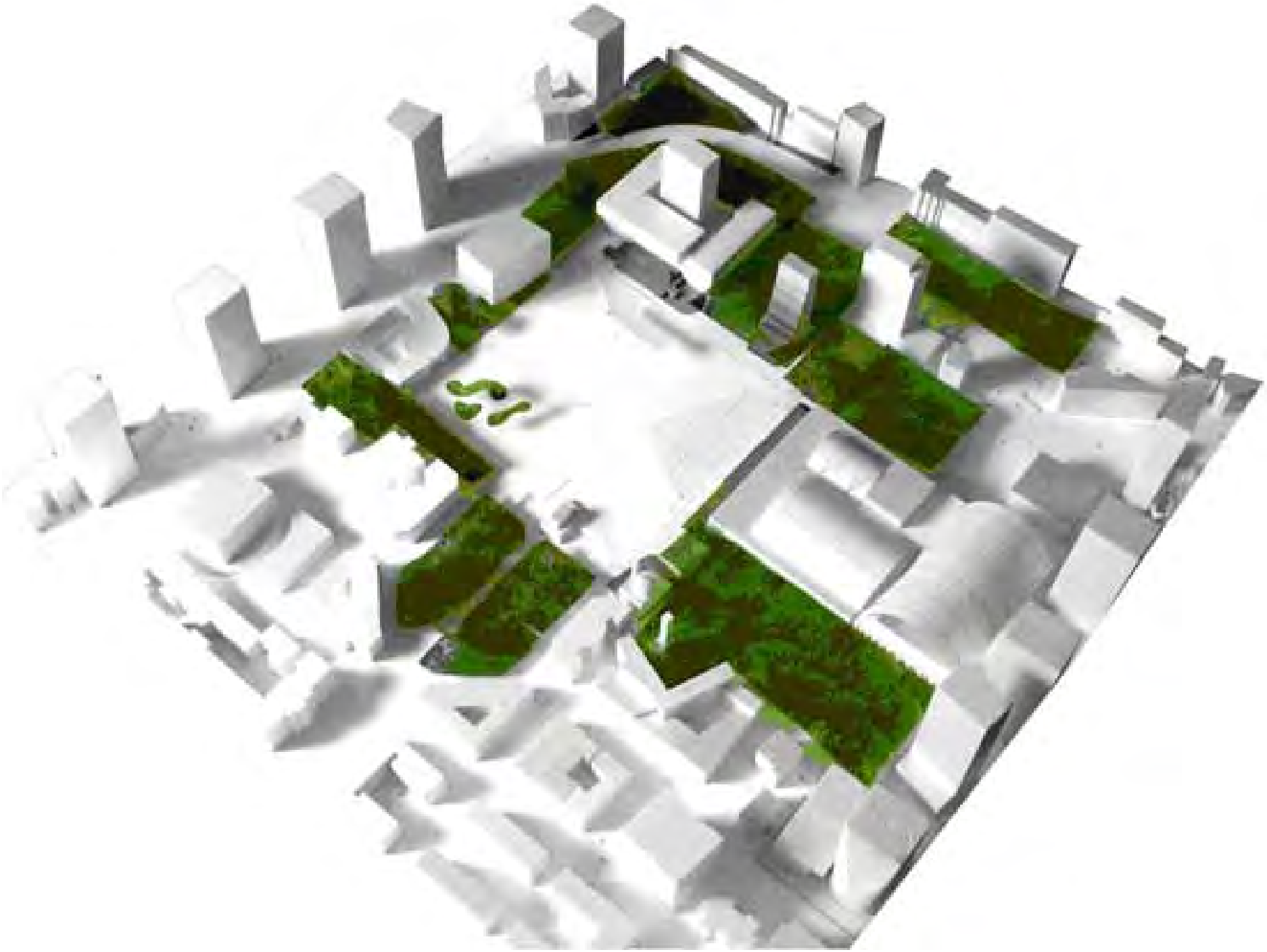
A. Analysis:

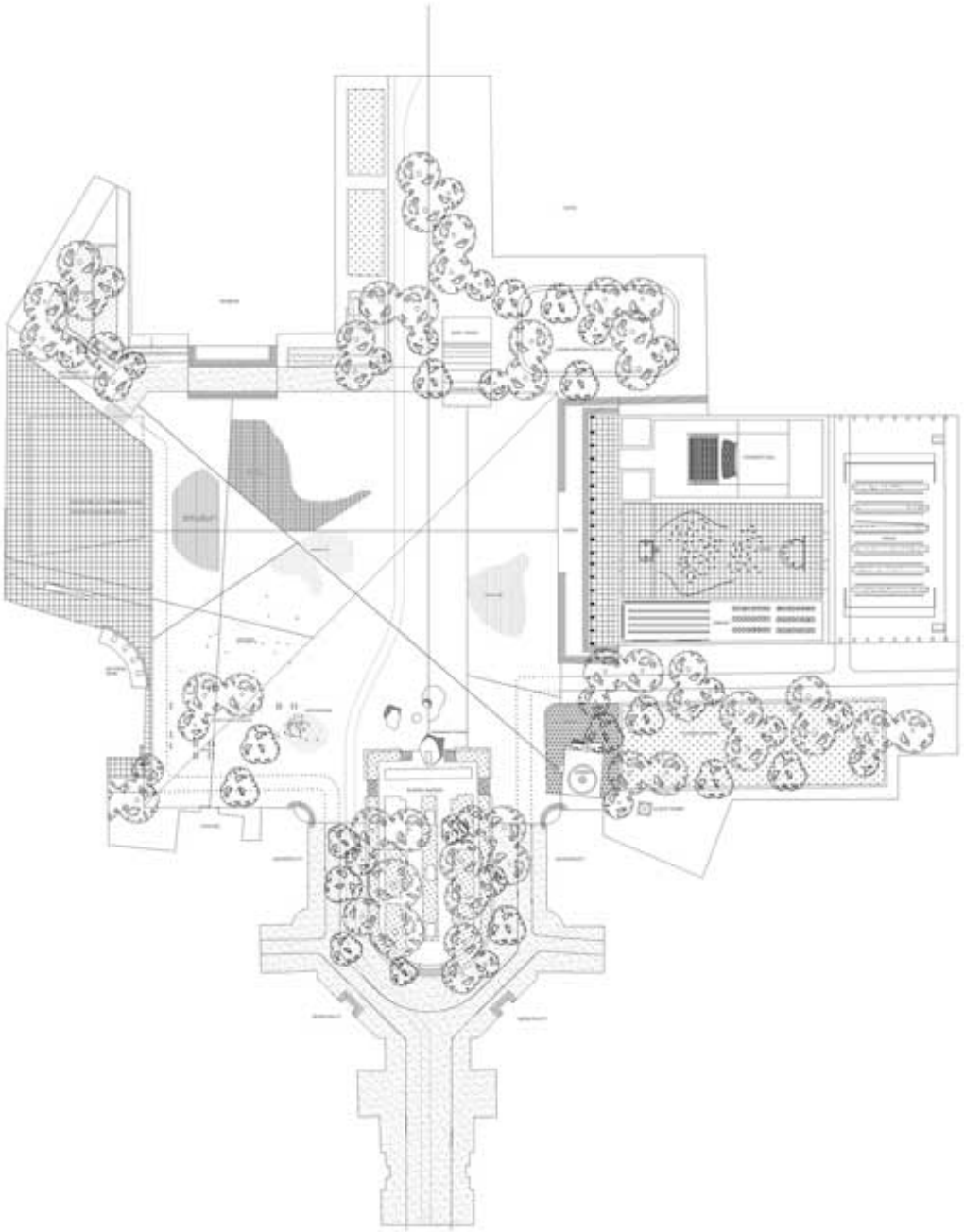
Qualities to Remodel

Rythm and order

Mast

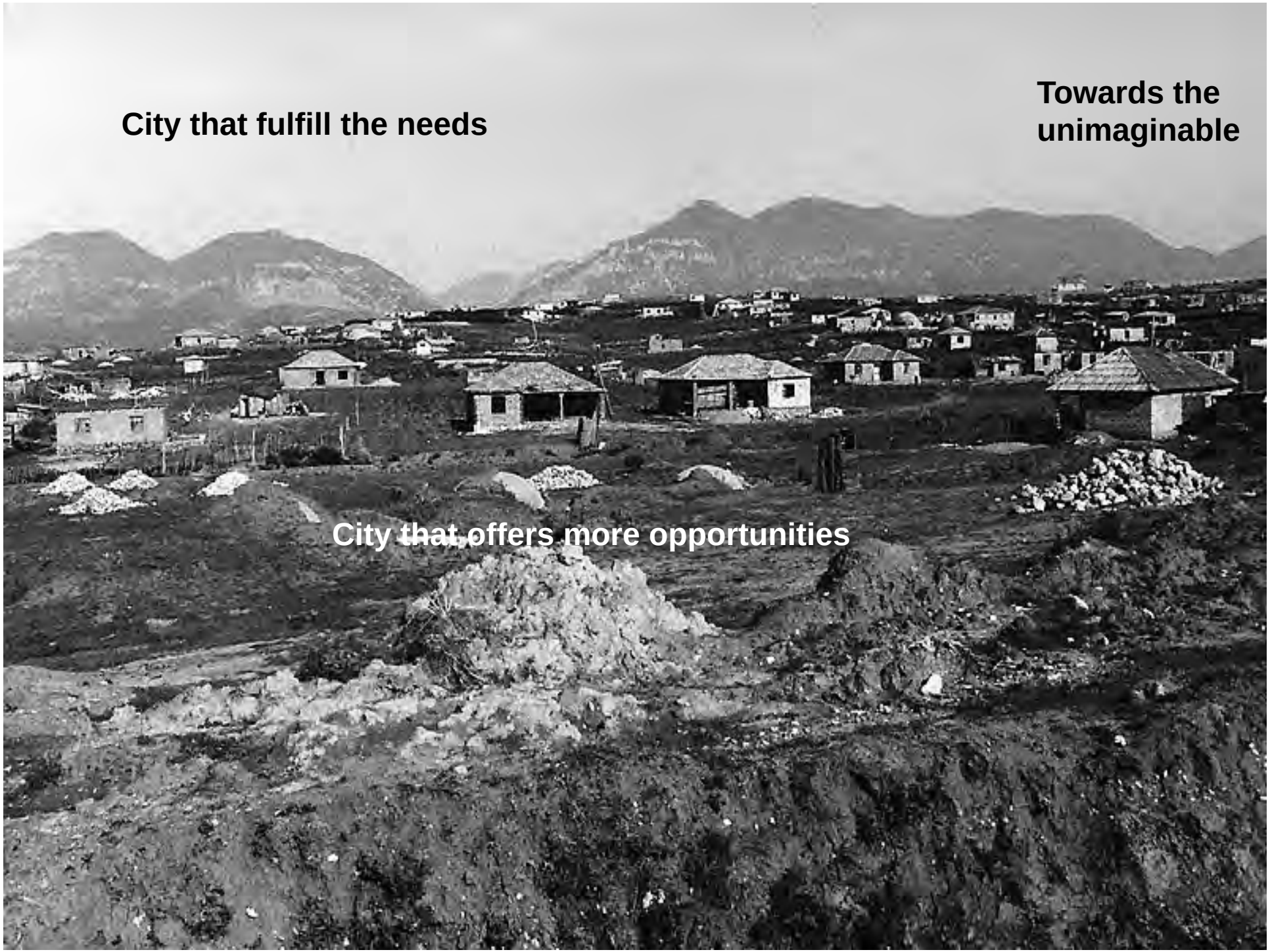
“French Plan” a more readable city center





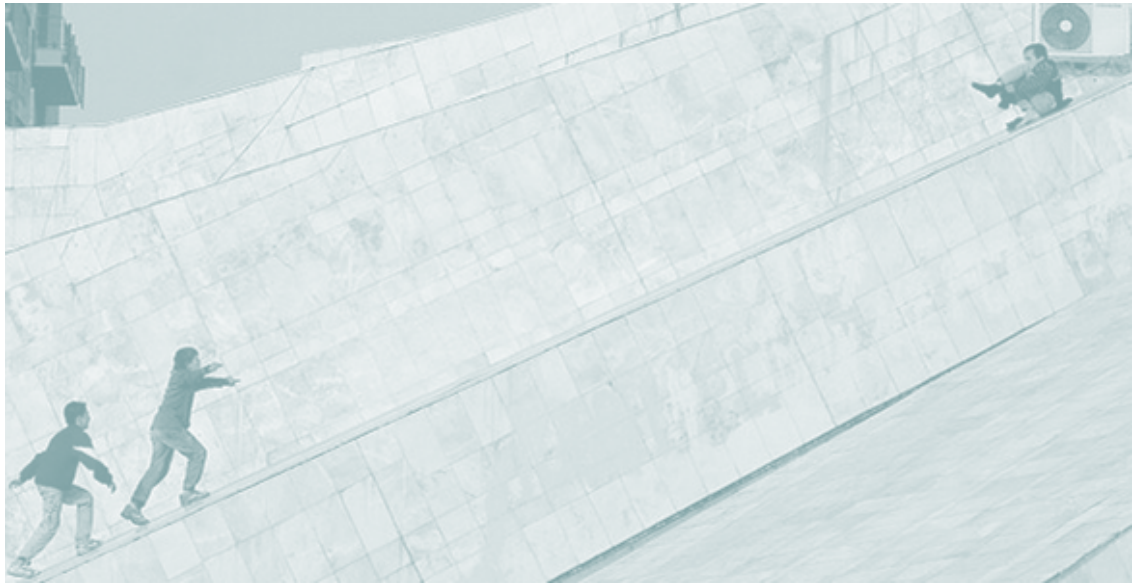
51N4E
ANRI SALA

SKANDERBERG [ ]


City that fulfill the needs
Towards the unimaginable
City that offers more opportunities

Lana River Drift Garden
View South towards the Lana River

NGADALE
SLOW
SLOW
NGADALE
Tirana International School
QSI
SUCCESS FOR ALL
International School
QSI
NGADALE
SLOW



... a place where
people and
architects have fun
with architecture
...