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Malvina Koliçi (Istrefaj)

The Typology and Design of Hotels during Communism. The Case of Albania



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department of architecture



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POLIS

The Typology and Design of Hotels during Communism  
The Case of Albania

Candidate: Malvina Koliçi (Istrefaj)  
DA Supervisor: Prof. Luca Emanuelli  
POLIS Supervisor: Prof. Vera Bushati

*External Expert: Prof. Gianni Lobosco*  
*Università degli studi di Ferrara*

Cycle XXXIII

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**Candidate**

Malvina, Koliçi (Istrefaj)

Malvina Koliçi (Istrefaj)  
*[Handwritten signature]*

(UniFe Matr. N.139625)

(Polis Univ. Reg. N. PL581N060003)

**Supervisor POLIS**

Dr. Vera Bushati

Vera Bushati  
*[Handwritten signature]*

**Supervisor DA**

Dr. Luca, Emanuelli

Luca Emanuelli  
*[Handwritten signature]*

**External Expert(s)**

Dr. Gianni Lobosco

Gianni Lobosco  
*[Handwritten signature]*



Università  
degli Studi  
di Ferrara

Sezioni

## Dottorati di ricerca

Il tuo indirizzo e-mail

malvina\_istrefaj@universitetipolis.edu.al

Oggetto:

Dichiarazione di conformità della tesi di Dottorato

Io sottoscritto Dott. (Cognome e Nome)

Malvina Koliçi (Istrefaj)

Nato a:

Kukës

Provincia:

Albania

Il giorno:

18 Maggio 1987

Avendo frequentato il Dottorato di Ricerca in:

Architecture and Urban Planning (IDAUP)

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Firma del Tutore

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Dereq Raschot

# The Typology and Design of Hotels during Communism. The Case of Albania

*Curriculum:* Architecture (ICAR14)

*Research Topic:* Design Theories, Methods and Sustainable constructions

PhD Candidate: Name: Malvina Koliçi (Istrefaj)

Home Institution: POLIS University

DA/Polis Supervisor: Prof. PhD Vera Bushati

DA/Polis co-Supervisor: Prof. PhD Luca Emanuelli

External Expert: Prof. PhD Gianni Lobosco

External Referees: Prof. PhD Nilda Valentin

Prof. PhD Gjergj Thomai

(Years 2017 – 2021)

“Nothing we achieve in this world is achieved alone. It is always achieved with others teaching us along the way”

Lee J. Colan

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Tirana, September 2021  
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## Abstract [English]

Tourism today, is considered a primary economic pillar for most countries, including Albania. The investments are immense, construction industry is prevailing while the design of hotels is based on individual requirements, sustainability and relation with the context, are considered a second-hand layer and the national policies so often are not prepared with the proper tools to approach the design or construction process.

After the 1990's the touristic accommodation industry, objecting the rigid means of communism, have followed other aspects of the society, by developing freely and unguided in democratic market. The transition provided on the way other issues regarding informality, sprawl and space occupations, quality of services in an unprepared context. Whilst, the inherited touristic settlements have been subject of misuse, privatization and in other cases part of a total function change.

Despite these developments, Albania is experiencing high demand in terms of annually visitors especially in the seaside and in the mountainous areas, which has emerged the need of thinking how to use its actual assets and define explicit principles in developing the accommodation structures which contributes in the overall development of tourism aiming sustainability and minor invasion approaches.

This research aims to understand the variation and typologies of touristic accommodation structures in Albania, by achieving inputs also in the relation with historic influences and context. Investigating the tourism sector in Albania, its trends and the national objectives towards this sector is considered an important phase of this study. The contribution of the thesis would be the analytical and descriptive analysis of the Hotels of Communism Period, with the focus on the typology of the city hotel.

The expected result is a comprehensive strategic guideline, which is extended in the policies level and in the architectural design guidelines.

The outcome is considered the identification of patterns and variables of design to be used as guiding principles towards restoration or new design processes. Having a clear inventory and documentation of socialist hotels, the process of preservation of the architectural heritage with this methodology is facilitated and an alternative to fulfil the need for touristic accommodation is considered.

### Keywords:

Accommodation Structures Typology | Hotel Evolution | Communist Heritage | Touristic Mode | City Hotels

## Abstract [Italian]

Il turismo oggi, è considerato un pilastro economico primario per la maggior parte dei paesi, inclusa l'Albania. Gli investimenti sono immensi, prevale l'industria di costruzioni mentre la progettazione degli alberghi si basa sulle esigenze individuali. La sostenibilità e il rapporto con il contesto, sono considerati un livello di seconda mano e le politiche nazionali spesso non sono preparate con gli strumenti adeguati per avvicinarsi al processo di progettazione o costruzione.

Dopo gli anni '90 l'industria della ricettività turistica, opponendosi ai rigidi mezzi del comunismo, ha seguito altri aspetti della società, sviluppandosi liberamente e senza guida nel mercato democratico. La transizione ha fornito sulla strada altri temi riguardanti informalità, sprawl e occupazioni dello spazio, qualità dei servizi in un contesto impreparato. Mentre gli insediamenti turistici ereditati sono stati oggetto di uso improprio, privatizzazione e in altri casi parte di un totale cambiamento di funzione.

Nonostante questi sviluppi, l'Albania sta vivendo una forte domanda in termini di visitatori annuali soprattutto nelle zone balneari e montane, e nelle grande città da cui è emersa la necessità di pensare come utilizzare le sue attuali risorse. Approccio alla tesi è concentrato a definire principi espliciti nello sviluppo delle strutture ricettive, concentrandosi su quelli del comunismo, che contribuiscono alla sviluppo complessivo del turismo mirando alla sostenibilità e ad approcci di invasione minore, conservando allo stesso modo l'architettura del socialismo.

Questa tesi ha come obiettivo analizzare e comprendere la variazione e le tipologie delle strutture ricettive turistiche in Albania, ottenendo input anche nella relazione con le influenze storiche e il contesto. Indagare il settore turistico in Albania, le sue tendenze e gli obiettivi nazionali verso questo settore è considerato una fase complementare di questo studio. Il contributo della tesi sarebbe l'analisi descrittivo, analitica e diagrammatico degli Hotel del periodo comunista, con particolare attenzione alla tipologia dell'hotel di città e le caratteristiche di quell'architettura.

Il risultato atteso è una linea guida strategica inclusivo, che si estende a livello di politiche urbane e turistiche e nelle linee guida di progettazione architettonica.

Il risultato è considerato l'identificazione di modelli e variabili di progettazione negli alberghi della città del comunismo, da utilizzare come principi di orientamento verso il restauro di queste strutture o nuovi processi di progettazione. Avendo un chiaro inventario e documentazione degli hotel socialisti, il processo di conservazione del patrimonio architettonico con questa metodologia è facilitato e viene considerata anche come un'alternativa per incontrare il bisogno di alloggio turistico.

Parole Chiave:

Tipologia Strutture Ricettive | Hotel Evolution | Patrimonio comunista | Modalità turistica  
| Hotel in città

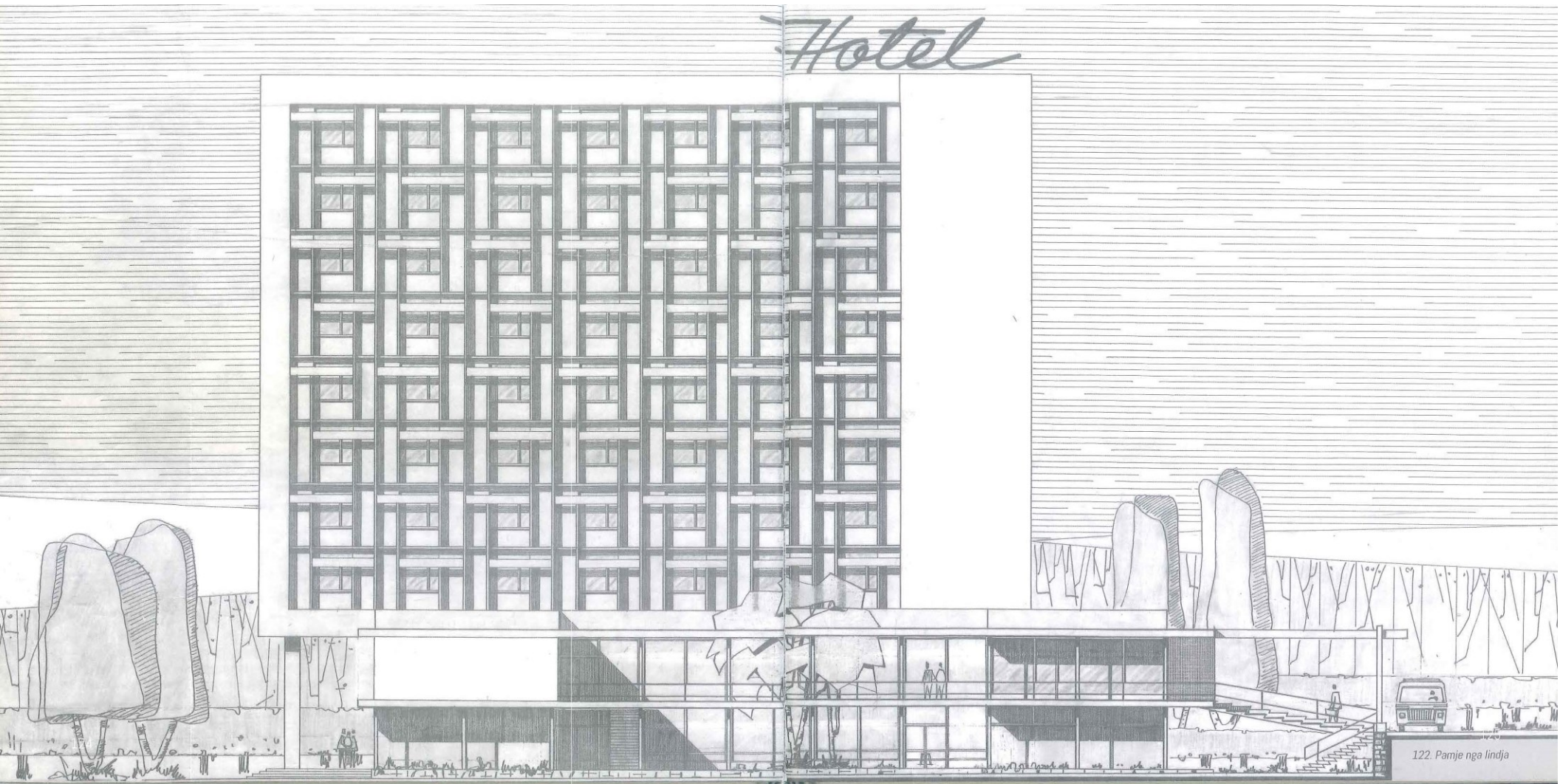


Figure 1: Eastern Facade of Hotel "Turizmi" (today Skampa). 1970. Source: (Islami G. , Veizaj, Thomai, & Fontanari, 2018)

## Chapter 1: Introduction

### 1.1 Albania, “A new Mediterranean Love”

It was the new established Ministry for Urban Development and Tourism which introduced the First Promotion Tourism Campaign for Albania in 2014. The Slogan “Albania, A new Mediterranean Love” was intended to lay the foundation of considering the tourism as a well-grounded pillar in the Albanian economy and being comprehensive to every aspect of the sector.



*Figure 2: Albanian Tourism Logo 2013. Ministry of Urban Development and Tourism*

In the first 2 decades after the fall of the communist regime, tourism has revealed itself with a mix of initiatives and investments, deriving from informal interventions especially regarding accommodation and services, to the few centralized investments in infrastructure or access.

While in 2013, the consideration of the government administration has seemingly produced a ‘concept’ which would represent the “New Touristic Image of the Touristic Albania”. A concept apparently considered a failure by the international press for its lack of genuine manifestations and originality. Even though, the hope for externalizing this sector was arisen, with the launch of this image, while the work for improving the legislation and quality of services were in focus. On the other hand, the accommodation sector, has been still left on the hands of the investors or private initiatives, without acknowledging the importance of addressing urban or architectural issues.

This thesis has come to awareness by observing the dynamics of the tourism sector in general with the ‘in-site’ challenges related to the accommodation sector, the way they can be a contributor in the enhancement of tourism performance, but specifically

turning the emphasis in the architectural and urban features of the accommodation facilities.

## 1.2 Outcomes and Challenges of political shifts in terms of tourism

Historically, Albania has been a country in a state of shadow regarding tourism for historical and political reasons. It was just after 1990 that the tourism sector, with the liberalization of the free market; that allowed private initiatives, formally or informally to determine the prior conditions of the upcoming tourism future, with a strong preview in the Adriatic Seaside.

Despite being unknown, the first traces on accommodation settlements are found on the ottoman inns (khans). Five centuries conquest of the Ottoman Empire has manifested their influence in the urban display of the Albanian cities. The heterogenic nature of this empire constrained a need for incorporating the concept of the religion and developing a sophisticated commercial network. Along with this network, a series of accommodation structures were evolved, where caravanserai and inns<sup>1</sup> are the two dominated typologies. Caravanserai is mostly found in the interconnection of commercial roads, in strategic spots where the merchants could be accommodated after a long trip with their accompanying animals and their market items. While the Inns are a peculiarity of the city-centers, aligned with the city market. These structures are strictly related with the economic development without touristic expectations, even though few of the travelers could be displaced for artistic reasons, health or family issues, which mainly categorized these structures as primarily accommodation, related strictly with economic and political objectives of the current regimen without further features such as recreational or entertainment.

The concept of the tourist settlement was introduced by the Monarchy of King Zog, especially when his foreign politics became dependent of the Italian Monarchy of the time. The diplomatic communications and the vision of King Zog, supported the initiation of the tourism, where only in 1929 in Albania were counted 27 hotels and 13

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<sup>1</sup> Inns are also known in the ottoman influenced areas as Khans or Hans

touristic cities, where were included the thermal baths in Elbasan, the region of Dajti, Theth, as well as the cities of Durres, Korca and Kruja (SOT, 2014). The hotels of this period, were evolved as enterprises and constructions influenced by the architectural characteristics of the Italian Architecture of the time, which brought a certain imposture to the urban display. Even though the first genesis for the introduction of these hotels were established in this period, they also were dedicated to the diplomatic purposes without defining the tourism as a frame itself.

After the Second World War, the country was oriented towards the communist system. The government of Enver Hoxha, for 45 years developed a solid isolation which was fragmented in two main sessions: a) *the hotels for holidays or health issues*, following the models of the European countries, with an orientation toward the socialist approach of offering the citizens paid holidays and the needed therapies and; b) *the hotels for government purposes and international visitors*, which were directly affected with the foreign policies and their diplomatic travelers and the 'Image of Albania' to be transmitted, which was cautiously treated by the Tourist Agency Albturist. Even though in a centralized economy, during these 55 years, the Centralized Designing Institute managed to design a considerable number of hotels, which offered not just the services needed but also manifested features of modernist architecture developing a new urban or peri-urban configuration, which today consists as one of the main contributors of the architectural language, altogether with other public buildings.

Following the fall of the communist dictatorship, the tourism and especially the construction of hotels, were considered since the beginning a profitable mean to initiate a business. The liberalization of the country, has been followed by an intensive construction rate dedicated for housing and business purposes.

The opening of the Albania for the international visitors raised the interest rapidly, due to the curiosity for the last communist state of the Balkans. The construction of the hotels has not followed any specific trend or characteristics, while during this research they have been observed and analyzed in order to produce certain determinative typologies regarding its architectural outcome (chapter 4).



Now, Albania is country which have been seemingly explored and valued for its nature, seaside, culture, heritage and recently also for the cuisine and mountains, with an increasing number of visitors each year, which have raised a lot of issues regarding the capacities, infrastructure, services and moreover accommodation facilities and their image.

### 1.3 Demand and Supply for Accommodation Structures. The issue of the capacities.

Sustained in the conditions that coastal tourism is for the moment dominating the market, it is obvious to conclude that 80% of the hotels registered are located in the coastline of Shengjin, Velipoja, Durrës, Vlorë, Sarandë and Pogradec for its precious climate, lake and culinary. The major part of this hotels is considered small or medium sized hotels, since they offer less than 40 rooms and belong to family business. Yet the major part of these hotels does not meet the international standards for quality of space and service to meet the requirements of the foreign market and mainly fulfill the needs for domestic tourism accommodation.

In mountainous areas the accommodation structures mainly represented by guesthouses have been constructed based in traditional principles or in modest architectural language. Till 2012 there were around 150 guesthouses in the region of Theth, Shkodra, Tropoja and Voskopoja.

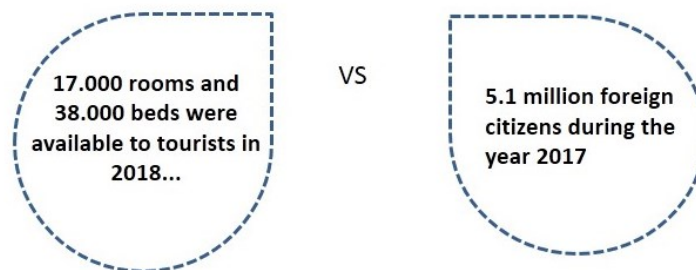
Maximal capacities in terms of available accommodation are offered during August (approximately 22.000, 53.000 beds), since domestic tourism is mostly happening during this month and 25% of the foreign visitors visit Albania during this month.

In 2018, while Albania has registered the milestone of 1 million tourists who planned to spend their vacation in the Southern Riviera of Albania [...] “1326 accommodation facilities (hotels, motels, camps, guesthouses, mountain shelters and other structures for short-term stays) were functioning throughout the country. The offer from 17.000 rooms and 38.000 beds” (INSTAT N. I., 2019) which is considered a very low offer for the demand in progress especially during the summer, by positioning Albania the last in the European Market of accommodation offer, considerably far also from the neighbor states (Monitor.al, 2019), even though this offer is quite inaccurate due to the informal offers in accommodation.

*“Albania has another challenge, which needs urgent capacity development on accommodation, by at least 2-3 times growth in 2030. In figures, it means that the country must expand its capacity with at least 15-20 thousand new beds, aiming to support a demand of 7 million visitors per year by 2030; and complementing and/or competing with neighboring countries with historic consolidation of touristic demands”* (Aliaj, Janku, Allkja, & Dhamo, 2014)

#### 1.4 “The Paradox” between the hotel construction sector and the market performance.

Referring to the records there is a considerable gap between the registered number of beds offered in Albania for tourism and the number of foreign citizens visiting the country during the year. The informality in the registration of the accommodation units make it difficult to achieve an accurate number of the actual offer in terms of accommodation. The confrontation of data between offer and supply in this sector cannot take in consideration the informal accommodation units, but on the other side has also excluded the domestic tourist.



The preferences for registration among the foreign tourists it is measured that 59% of them prefer the option of hotel as accommodation, 30% find accommodation to relatives and friends, 6% chose renting an apartment or house, 3% a motel or a pension and 2% other unspecified option. Considering that only during 2018, the external tourists have spent an average 4.3 over nights in Albania, from which 76% stayed at a

hotel can give as the first premises for the need of new accommodation structures. (INSTAT, 2018)

In Albania, there are constantly building new accommodation facilities even though the process, construction and management is generally not transparent to the public. The recent years, the state have given permits for construction covering in a monitored way thousands of square meters of territory without previous considered guidelines or criteria for hotel construction. Considering the growth of number of tourists in Albania and the need for constructing many accommodation facilities to reach the markets need.

Meantime, the period 2019-2023, the government has approved in the official documents the construction of 7 resorts and hotels<sup>2</sup>. In most cases these establishments are related with the dominating interests of the construction industry and the amount of profitability presented in the development of an urban unit, available for the real estate market rather than contributing to the tourism industry in form of accommodation.

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<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Tourism and Environment. *National Strategy of the Sustainable Development of Tourism 2019-2023*.

## TOURISM AND CONSTRUCTION MARKET

During 2013-2017, the number of hotel building permits was **134**.

In 2017, 53 were granted hotel building permits, up **about 5 times compared to a year ago**.



During 2013-2017, the number of hotel building permits was **134**.

In 2017, 53 were granted hotel building permits, up **about 5 times compared to a year ago**.

Only through 2017, the state has given building permits for 89.000 m2 surface for hotels and accommodation spaces.

=  
In 4 years 2013 – 2016 (88.000 m2)

*Figure 3: Overview of Tourism and Construction Market.  
Source INSTAT. Scheme Adopted by author*

The hypothesis raised during this research is sustained in the fact that the requirements for accommodation can be achievable through:

- Re-using the inherited accommodation structures during communism
- Defining Strategies and Recommendations for revitalizing the old villages
- Establishing a guideline of principles to be used during restoration processes and new upcoming design of hotels

## 1.5 Purpose of the study

The aim of this study is to investigate and explore the architecture of the accommodation tourism structures in post-communist Albania, with the intention to achieve comprehend the development of these touristic structures in terms of architecture, organization of space, form, shapes and volumes, under the perspective of today's global tourism.

Today tourism is considered one of the primary sectors of state economical developed, and investments take part in every level of touristic chain, where is invested enormous amount of money, to meet the construction and design needs; although design concepts, reasonability, sustainability and environment are hardly taken into account. The primary observation regarding the tourism in Albania, sustains the necessity raised by this research, which stated that understanding the variation of touristic accommodation structures and integrating them in a sustainable model of development, which also meet the needs for qualitative accommodation must be a priority, especially in a country like Albania, which has a considerable heritage from the communist era, which have not been inclusively studied or considered.

*In these terms, this study is dealing with the following research questions:*

- I. What are the main characteristics of the architecture for tourism in Albania?
- II. What effects did the change of political systems transmit in the architecture of tourism?
- III. In what extend does the architecture dedicated for tourism take into consideration the environment or surroundings?
- IV. Which are the driven forces to a specific design or shape? Is concept, identity features or spatial composition one of them?
- V. Which are the national objects and regulations regarding the tourism and how can this research contribute to this extend?
- VI. What are the needs for accommodation in Albania in the framework of tourism?
- VII. Which can be a sustainable model touristic facility in the context of Albania. What are the criteria to be taken in consideration when a new touristic accommodation is proposed?
- VIII. How are developed the communist hotels.

In order to address these questions, *the objectives* of this research study are formulated below:

- a) Understanding the tourism challenges in Albanian tourism, possibilities and capacities regarding tourism sector.
- b) Identifying strategic steps to meet the needs for enhancing the accommodation capabilities in national level.
- c) Analyse the features of tourism, identify the significant typologies in historic timeline and their contribution to tourism development, with a wide focus on the communist era and post-communist period and a guided attention towards the typology of city hotels
- d) Exploring the architectural language, design and perception of the Defining principles for further hotel design based on a model of a typological analysis.

#### 1.6 Limitations of the study

- a) Limitation of data related to the tourism development

Since Tourism is considered a new industry in Albania, there are manifested several constrains and limitations during this research. Having the component of informality still present in the overall tourism sector, including accommodation has inevitably limited the identification of the touristic settlements and specifically the process of studying of the typologies and achieving accurate data regarding the offer of accommodation.

From the touristic data point of view, there is only the National Institute of Statistics<sup>3</sup> in Albania which can offer statistical data regarding the number of tourists in Albania, the most visited regions and the needs for accommodation.

- b) The 'informality' factor as a distortive element in accommodation structures

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<sup>3</sup> From now on NIS

Another limitation during this study has to do directly with the lack of transparency and different grades of interventions in the communist hotels, which makes it difficult to assess since there are not in disposal of the research.

The hotels constructed during communism (1944 – 1990) have been managed since the phase of the Design from the National Design Institute<sup>4</sup>, which has deposited their projects in the Central Technical Archive of Construction<sup>5</sup>, A part of these projects has managed to be preserved by this institute and published in a catalogue “Hotels - before 1990 development of typology in Albania”<sup>6</sup>, still there is a significant deficiency in terms of literature and studies regarding hotels in Albania.

The inability to access illustrative materials, drawing projects of different periods who were constructed without an architectural or design project and especially the ones constructed during communism who have made structural and architectural interventions, consist in a considerable limitation during this research.

Inability to access information by the actual owners due to informality during privatization process and Lack of Prior Studies in the same nature are presented as considerable limitations.

## 1.7 Methodology

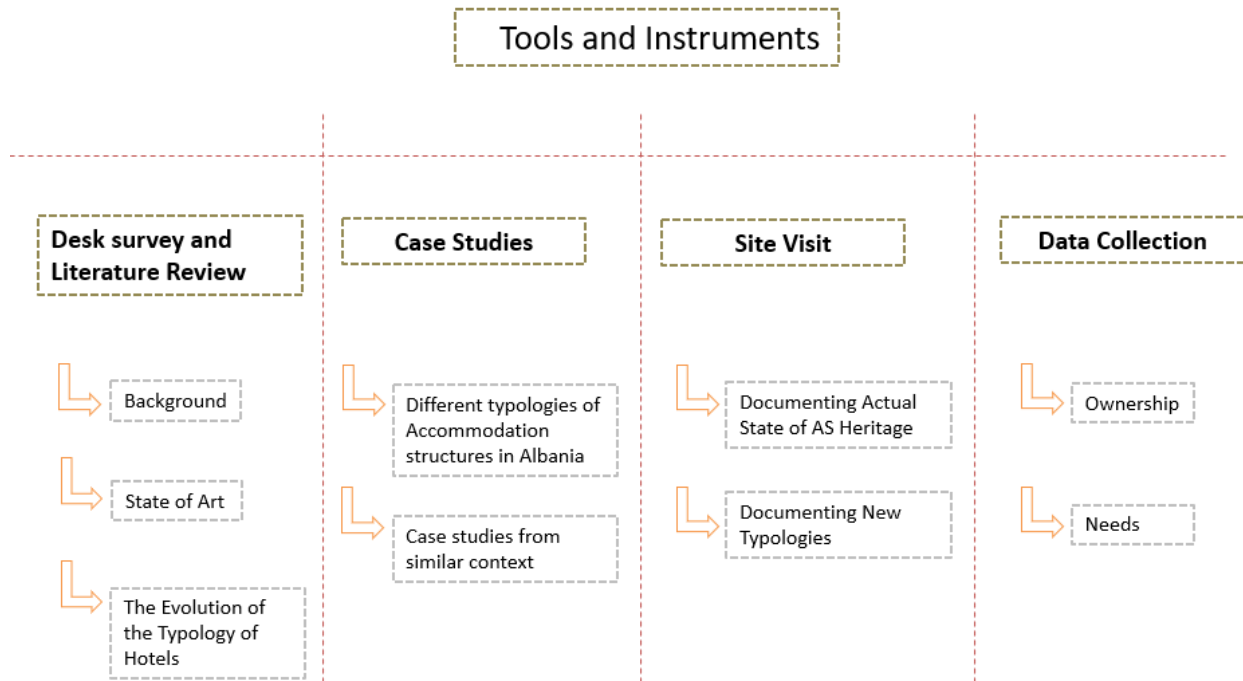
The research methodology during this research, is considered a mix method, a combination of descriptive, analytic and qualitative method, considering that each of them cannot considered exhaustive in and out itself. Whiles the combination gives the opportunity to explore the nature of tourism in Albania, the market of accommodation, architectural and urban context as continuing in diversifying the way of conceptualization and interventions regarding the heritage of hotels in the country.

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<sup>4</sup> from now on called NDI

<sup>5</sup> from now n CTAC

<sup>6</sup> This represents the only official publication regarding the architecture of hotels in Albania during communism



*\* This research is based in theoretical approach as well as an analytic and typology study*

*Figure 4: Structure of Research Tools used in the thesis*

This dissertation is elaborated in the following sections:

1. State of Art which is actually considered in relation with the Albanian Context of Tourism and accommodation, by giving specific data in the development of these components, the touristic potentials and problematics, the distribution of the accommodation in the territory of Albania, the legislations regarding tourism and prerequisites for hotel's design.

This chapter is mostly derived from the data collection from the Institute of Statistics in Albania, Official Governmental Bulletin and the data collected from the Online hubs connected with the reservations in terms of accommodation offer.

2. Theoretical Framework which is conceived as the main comprehensive pillar of the concept. In this chapter the literature review takes place, where the concept of architecture related to the tourism itself is being explored through concepts



and previous research. The Definition of Hotel itself, its evolution, and its configuration in relation with the urban morphology and design is observed while the future of the hotel's design is brought also in a discussion regarding the challenges towards meeting the needs of tourism.

The authenticity of the design in contrast with the globalization and its effects are also considered an integral part toward finding appropriate conclusions in terms of design criteria's.

3. Overview of the Touristic Settlements and Typologies in Albania is an essential step in this thesis, since it's the first phase in understanding the actual context where different architectural manifestations of hotels take place in different periods. During this step, the research tools used are focused on the research of historical literature, catalogues and photographic documentation, which considering the limitations regarding the lack of actual projects, imposes the exploration of this phase of research to be based in 'in-site' visits, mapping in the territory, photographic documentations and architectural and descriptive approach from the above tools.
4. In the chapter of Strategies and Criteria for Hotels Design and Interventions, the thesis is developed in the layers of the Macro Strategy for meeting the needs of the touristic market in terms of accommodation, the Re-use and readaptation of the inherited hotels from communism and defining criteria for the design of the new hotels. During this phase the case studies are evaluated. In the first level, national strategies of Mediterranean Countries are investigated in order to achieve a comprehension of the steps taken by more evolved touristic situations of more developed countries with similar historical and socio – economic situation as Albania. Then the approach of the hotel typology is taken in consideration to be explored as a potential income for Albanian context. During this phase also the drawing and visual aspects of the hotels are used as a tool for research.

**\_PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION  
(RESEARCH QUESTIONS)**

**\_TOOLS**

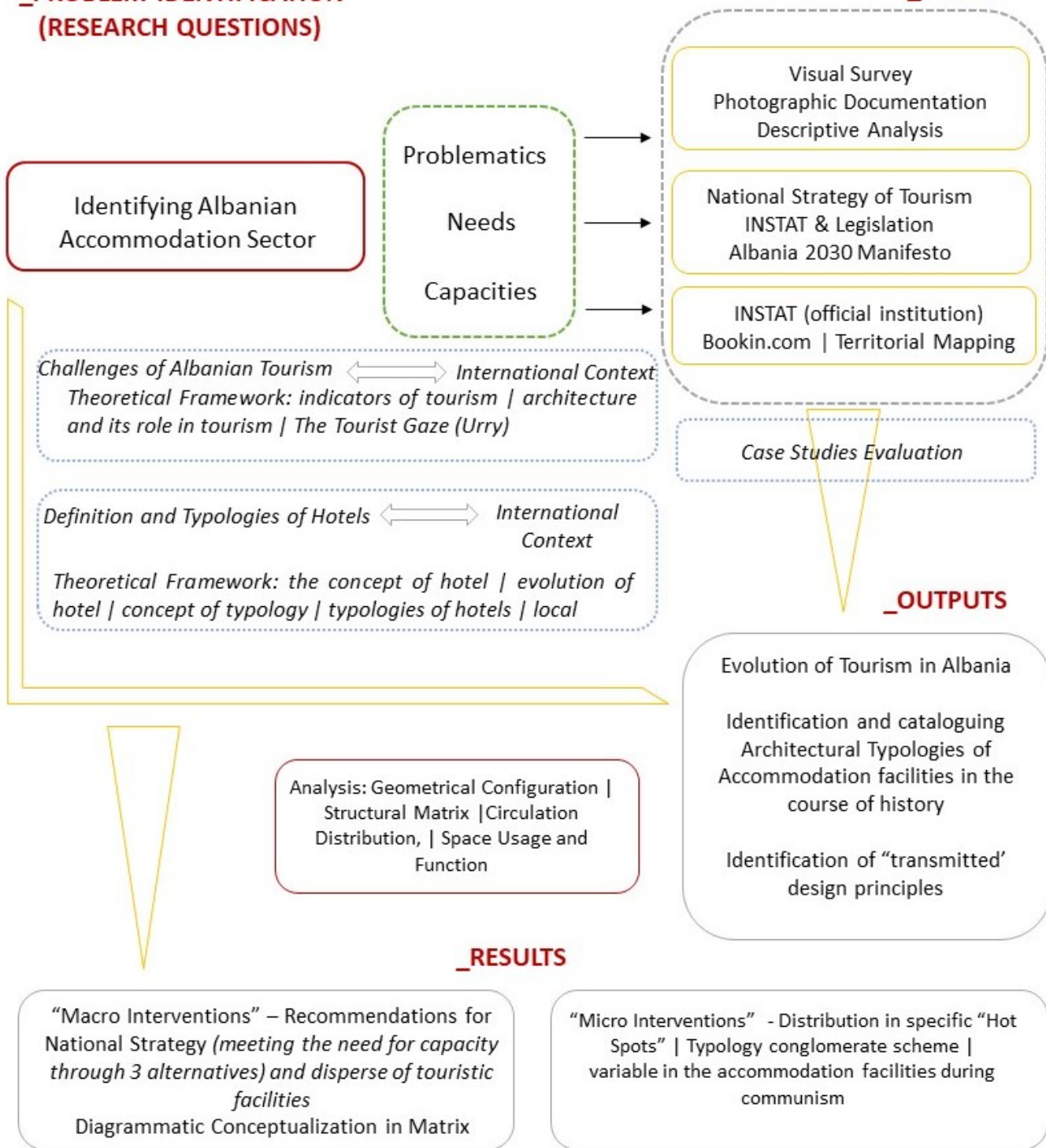


Figure 5: Thesis Framework

5. The final Chapter is focused in the Results and Conclusions is focused on the conglomerate derived from the above-mentioned chapters to generate two main matrixes related with interventions in the hotels of communism and the new design of future hotels.

## 1.8 Expected results and stakeholders

The First direct interested stakeholders would be the central governmental instances respectively represented by the Ministry of Tourism and Environment, Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy, Ministry of Economy and special Institutes like National Tourism Agency and National Institute of Cultural Heritage<sup>7</sup>. The relevance of interest for this research from the governmental units of policy-makers consists on the creation of an analytical database for the communist heritage related to the architecture for accommodation, which will serve as an inventory to be considered in the upcoming policies regarding the inclusion of these assets in the strategies for holistic management including urban development and financial issues and finding new leads of sustainable developing of tourism. On the other hand, the methodology presented in the thesis could be a step-by-step guided process to be applicable also in other type of architectural heritage with the possibility to assure a holistic management. The NICH Institute, which has not till now included architectural communist heritage in its working competences, might find the research useful in the process of awareness of the values of this type of heritage and consider a footpath for expanding their methodologies and trainings for architectural restoration and preservations, by including in their work portfolio a new set of skills for approaching heritage.

The Municipalities, as part of the local government is considered a substantial actor which could find net worthy the research, since the present of socialist hotels are present in almost every city. Considering the Albanian socialist hotel an integral part of the urban development and history, through a possibility of special interest of a

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<sup>7</sup> From now on, NICH

landmark site, can amplify the touristic performance of the cities, by raising interest in the presence of communist heritage as a value itself and the resurrection of their primary function which is accommodation for touristic purposes.

Other indirectly interested stakeholders can be considered:

Albanian Chamber of Commerce and big Investing companies who are constantly searching new development opportunities and can benefit from the perspective or outcome of the research.

Creditors and Banks as a supportive financial supporter of development in different entrepreneurships.

Citizens, visitors and tourist are also introduced as an indirect stakeholder for the experience and image of the city perceived, which is in this case related with components like aesthetics, cultural and local identity, socialist heritage, visuality, quality of construction etc.

## Chapter 2: Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework in this session is considered an inclusive relationship of concepts to underline the communication of architecture within the industry of tourism, the birth and evolution of the hotel establishment, while exploring the experience and requirements for design.

This session is also further elaborated on the concept of Typology, as a primary setting for the hotel discourse, while elaborating other external indicators like the locality and identity as an integral part of hotel's manifestation.

This approach has helped the research to underline the external factors that 'shape' the appearance of the hotel in the landscape of the city, in a touristic market and as a form of architectural manifestation

Other theoretical concepts, like the relation of architecture and tourism with the political systems, the approach towards the architectural heritage extended to the architectural language of the hotels are discussed in the following chapters.

Session A: Architecture place in Tourism Industry and its role in accommodation

This section is part of a theoretic research presented in the Conference: "Co-Habitation Tactics. Imagining future spaces in architecture, city and landscape". The Integration of this theoretical part in this research is intended to extend the comprehension and values of architecture as an integral component almost in every fragment of tourism and specifically in accommodation sector. Aligning with the concept of John Urry presented in the book "The tourist Gaze", this part, aims to achieve a comprehensive and inevitable attachment between four main components condensed under the terms 4A's: *attractiveness, accommodation, amenities and accessibility*. (Urry, 1990) These components are furthermore explained in this section in a coherent connection, by dissolving naturally in the observations of different authors and by focusing onward on the inevitable connection between architecture and the accommodation facilities.

## 2.1 Dimensions of Tourism and Indicators. The Concept of Urry

Many researches and scholars in the tourism have agreed that the main assets which influence the organizational scheme of the Tourism Sector are strictly related with: a) the organization of Space, b) Transportation System, c) Accommodation and Service Infrastructure, d) Cultural Assets and Historical Sites as well as e) Tradition and local influences.

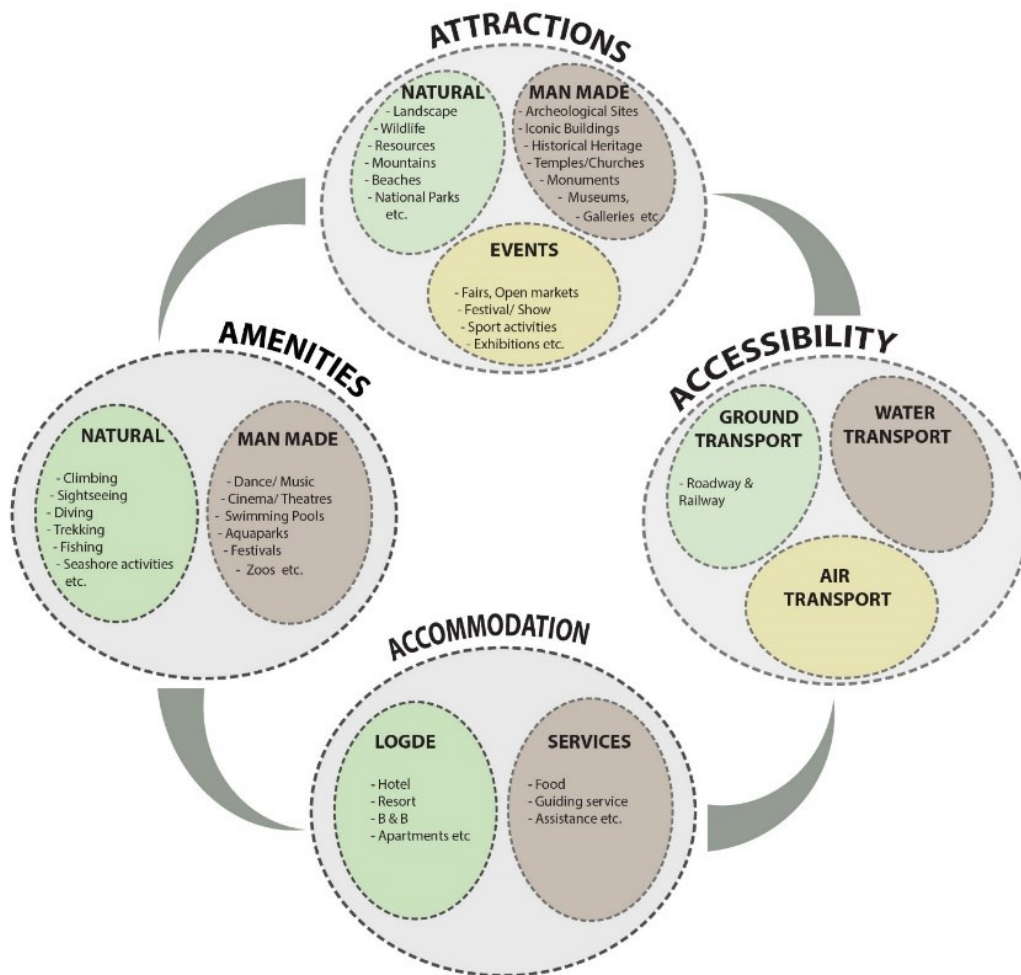


Figure 6: Components of Tourism Sector. Diagram by author based on the concept of Urry. Source (Istrefaj, 2018).

These components stress the idea of architecture being the main contributor in the tourism development of a country in many ways. It is just the place to think that it's architecture obligation, to offer quality of space, functional and well-oriented space, as well as caring for security or hygienic factors to make to guests a very positive experience. Therefore, by encroaching in space, architecture and designers have the ability of either improving or destroying it, thus depriving space, as a primary provider of the tourism offering, of its original value<sup>8</sup>.

The concept of *Urry (1990)*, "the tourist gaze" emphasizes the dynamics related to the tourist experience, organization of social components and the physical context.

"The contemporary tourist space is configured by four main groups representing the key elements for tourism blooming. Attractions, Accessibility, Accommodation and Amenities requires a national and local strategy for contributing to the growth of tourism" (*Istrefaj, 2018*)

## 2.2 Architecture and its contribution to Tourism

Architecture is without a doubt, a powerful tool in the tourism industry. "It's by making use of the composition, space, structure, functional and aesthetic aspects of architecture where most countries have initiated to establish a specific form of tourism" (*Istrefaj, 2018*).

In this context we can define architecture role in "shaping" several divisions in types of tourism by reinforcing its role as driving-force on Tourism Configuration. One of the most complex architectural configuration and the nearest one to the public access are the accommodation structure. Their varieties in size and architecture, facilities offer and other recreational spaces complete a panorama which guests are usually searching to pass holidays or vacations. From small cabins to 5\* hotels; from luxury resorts, to theme

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<sup>8</sup> *Ivana Medica, Pavlo Ruzic, Tomislav Ruzic - Architecture as a tool for Branding in Rural Istrian Tourism Destination*

parks; there is quite a wide specter of choice which is oriented by a lot of factors, commodities, facilities and even good marketing work, but of course, the presence of architecture is one of the most attractive indicators in the choice.

“Tourism always stands within the cultural and economic politics of its environment and the historical development of the tastes and habits of the ever-increasing number of tourists. At the End of the day, the preferences of the tourists and how they are changing, must be understood and this requires sustained social and cultural analysis. Expressed more directly still, tourism is a co-creation of tourists, entrepreneurs and designers and this threesome needs to be understood together” (Lasansky, McLaren 2004).

Architecture and society are developed almost at the same time and still live in a symbiotic relation. As soon as humanity established the first principles of society, the need for architecture has become irreplaceable. Enriching the functionality component of architecture with the quality of life, possibility to offer different experiences, expands. This happens because architecture is not just about functionality, but it represents the These qualities of architecture are successfully used also in the Tourism Development. The concept of architecture as “[...] among others that architecture is simultaneously a site, event and sign. It is both the structure in the traditional sense of the world, as well as the way in which that structure is deployed” (Rossi, 1984).

In this context we can define architecture role in “shaping” several divisions in types of tourism by reinforcing its role as driving-force on Tourism Configuration.

### 2.2.1 Interpreting architecture as component of Accommodation Touristic Structures

In the context of understanding the contribution of architecture in the tourism sector, it is essential to identify: “Architecture is part of every tourism component with its direct or indirect contribution to this industry. In much the same way, we understand places by the architecture that defines them” (Hornstein, 2011).



During this Research The Term “Accommodation Touristic Structures”, will be referred to buildings that provide sleeping accommodation, services and facilities for spending vacations or holidays, represented by Hotels generally. “Accommodation or lodging is, by a long way, the largest and most ubiquitous sub-sector within the tourism economy. With few exceptions, tourists require a location where they can rest and revive during their travel through, or stay within, a tourism destination” (Cooper et al. 2008, 344.)

Accommodation is key component in the tourism industry and a basic requirement for the travelers. The discourse of the influence factors of architecture as part of accommodation is related with 3 main concepts evolved in accommodation structures, related to the a) design, b) affiliation with other sites or infrastructure and the c) the model of management.

Provision of services since it consists of primer interest during a holiday or a vacation and good use of time is very valuable. “Some of the most fundamental works in psychology confirm that spatial structure and spatial behavior are interdependent” (Krolikowski, C. & Brown, G., 2008).

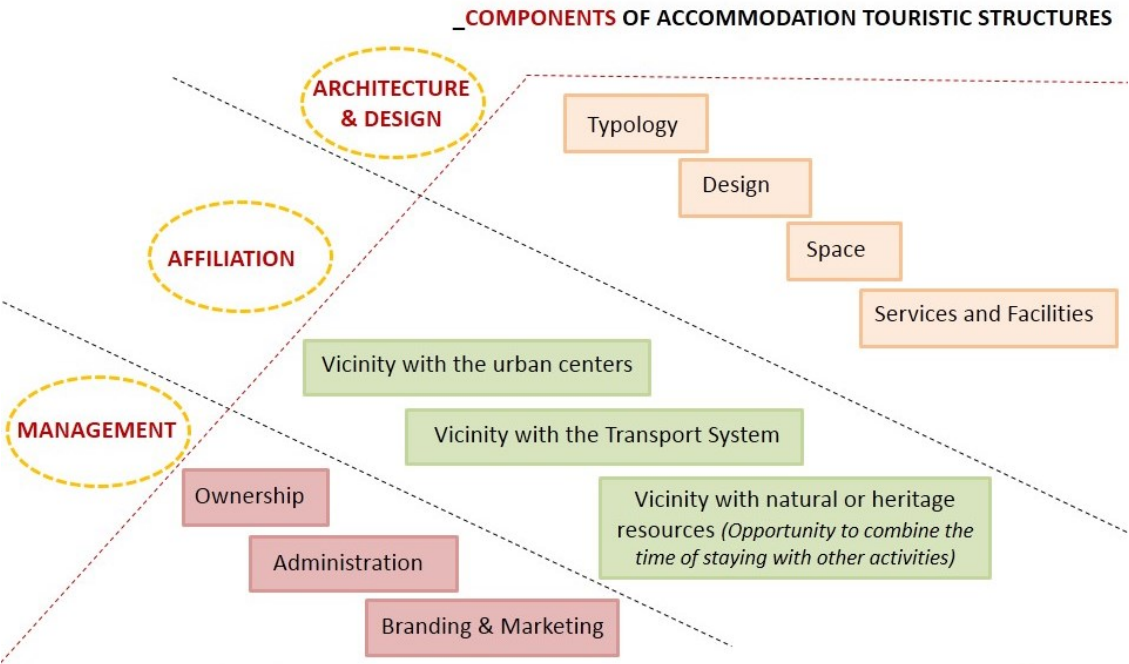


Figure 7: Components of Accommodation Touristic Structures. Source: Author

The need for services is directly related with the spatial configuration of a hosting settlement and the organization of the interior design by enabling the easy circulation and reach of the facilities.

Spatial Orientation is considered a must in the accommodation complex where the ability to be transported easily without losing time is a criterion for the tourists.

Interior design of the buildings is another estimable criterion, in comparison of external design which doesn't seem to have much impact the tourist stay in a facility, The interior side of the design, gives the possibility to create a warm ambience, and the proper required facilities, unless it is related with a certain natural or heritage site, where the exterior takes a greater attention.

Whilst the Model of Management and the Affiliation with other sites, city center or other areas of interest are supportive components in the successful integration of an accommodation settlement in the touristic market.

## Session B: The Hotel Discourse

### 2.3 The Definition of Hotel

According to the Oxford English Dictionary hotel is "An establishment providing accommodation, meals, and other services for travelers and tourists" While in Principles of Hotel Design (Architects' Journal, 1970), a hotel is defined as "a public establishment offering travelers, against payment, two basic services: accommodation and catering"

But what is a hotel today. In architectural terms, their forms and design can manifestation

- ✓ A creation of a *landmark*
- ✓ Molding the *urban structure* of a city or the *landscape*
- ✓ Creating endless opportunities for *exclusive design*

The Hotel design today is considered one of the most deliberate and creative types of projects that an architect or a designer could work on, due to its nature and function, searching for stunning peculiarity.



The hotel today, is considered one of the most competitive part of tourism, being an essential component of the tourism product and having a direct impact in the enhancement of tourism



The Hotel as an added value and experience:

- ✓ Impact the *tourism market*
- ✓ Provides the sense of "*Life of Fantasy*" or *Experience*
- ✓ Indicator of a certain "*Lifestyle*"
- ✓ Refines to a certain extent also the *local identity* with attempts to follow contemporary or modern features during the design phase
- ✓ Experience

## 2.4 The evolution of the “Hotel”

The first accommodation structures are associated with the Greek and Roman Culture, constructed in the vicinity to the thermal baths and on the popular popular amongst the government officials<sup>9</sup> or commercial routes. Similar locations were also used on the routes of the caravans of the Middle East. Their purpose was quite the same; Providing accommodation, shelter and food for the travelers of those times along with their caravans.

During the Middle Ages, related also with Christianity religious pilgrimage, all around the Europe, were positioned across these routes, accommodating structures known as “inns”, which offered mainly shared rooms and stables for the accompanying transporter animals. The same logic was also followed by the ottoman period furthermore, which managed to occupy almost half of Europe’s territory.

The first hotel, in the concept of the modern world, was opened in 1792 in New York City, Called the City Hotel, followed by Tremont House in 1892<sup>10</sup>, which was also the first hotel to provide for its customers, indoor plumbing and toilet as well as reception service.

### «The Sanatorium»

The First Sanatorium was opened in Gorbbersdorf, Silesia in by the requirements of the German Physician Dr. Hermann Brehmer (History of Tuberculosis (TB), n.d.). It is considered a birth of health and Spa facilities, by defining a new configuration of hospitality.

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<sup>9</sup>A brief History of Hotels <https://www.blog.bidroom.com/brief-history-hotels/>

Even though these structures were not oriented towards touristic use, they are considered as a leap structure, in the history of accommodation facilities, by bringing a new way of shaping space, usage of light and shadow, circulation inside the building and relation with the territory.

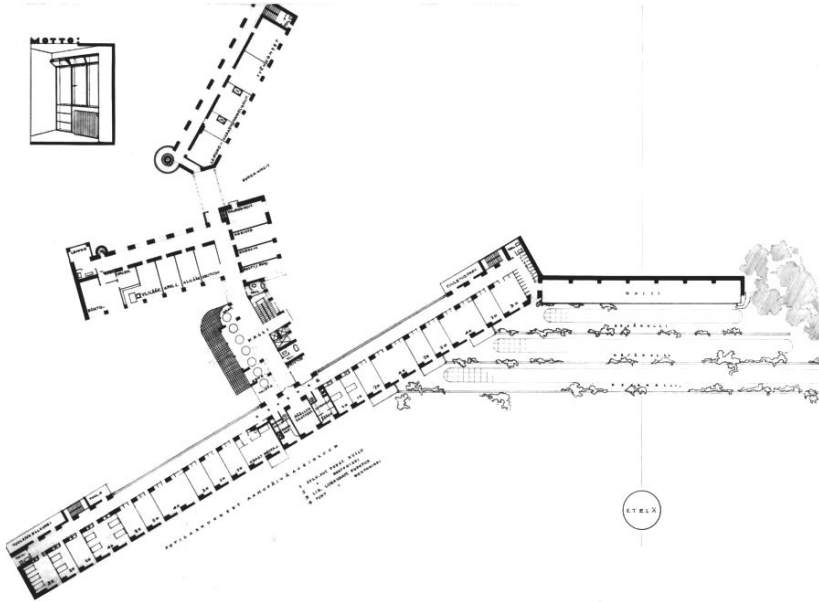
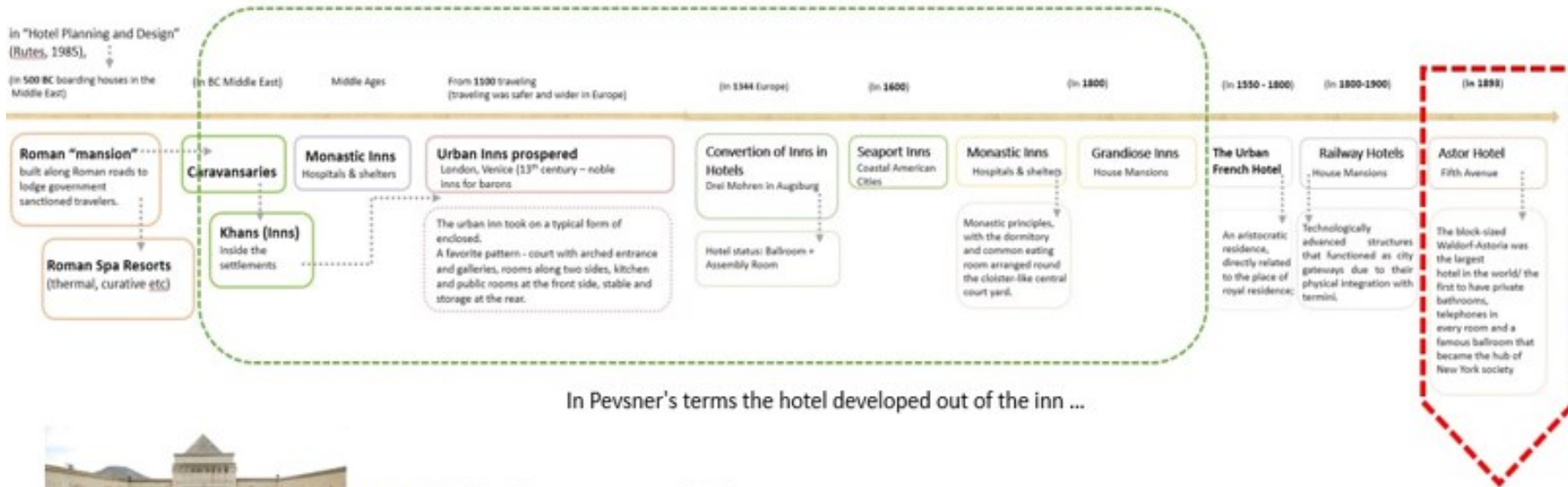


Figure 8 :Alvar Alto Paimio Sanatorium (Finland 1929 - 1933)

## EVOLUTION OF THE CONCEPT OF HOTEL



In Pevsner's terms the hotel developed out of the inn ...



Sarihan Khan, Konya, Turkey  
(Source: <https://global-geography.org/af/Geography/A>)



The Old Bull and Mouth Coaching Inn, London.  
(Source: Holland, 1971)



The Railway Hotel at Boort, in western Victoria, 1924.



Astor Hotel, Fifth Avenue, 1893

Figure 9: Hotel Evolution Timeline (500 b.c - 1900).  
Source: Author, based in "Hotel Planning and Design", from Rutes 1985

In the 5th CIAM congress in Paris in 1937 the leisure issue was addressed to the international architectural discourse<sup>11</sup> by propounding it as a right, following the example of France which established the paid annual leave as a constitutional right. Industrial Revolution and allocation of the means of transportations by train, plane and further the private car, were the main factors to create the terrain for the mass tourism industry. Presentation of the jet aircrafts in 1960's shortened the distances and made possible intercontinental travelling. But the economic boom of 1950's was the one who made affordable for the masses the travelling.

Indicators impacting in the tourism evolution and enhancing the need for different typologies

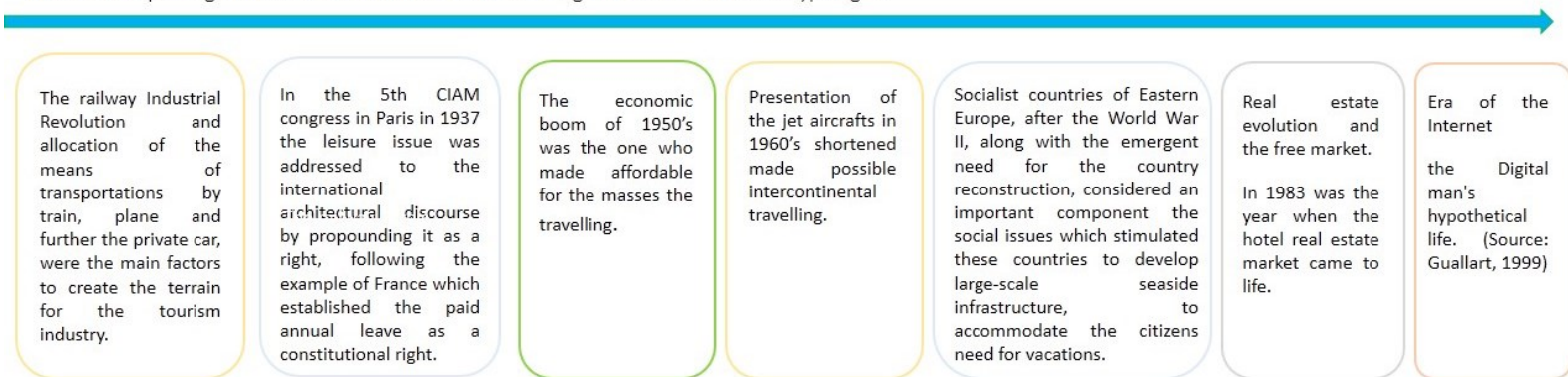


Figure 10: Hotel Evolution Timeline\_Factors of Impact\_from 1900. Source: Author

## MASS TOURISM ... « Pleasure Resorts »

Through the factors that boosted tourism itself and the development of the touristic facilities, the railway system revolution and later on the air transportation, opened a new concept and opportunity for travelling which would be presented also in the challenges for touristic accommodation structures. Along with the Economic Boom of 1950's, eventuate after World War II, the hotels devoted to «sun, sea and sand» style in a concept of the socialist Mass Tourism:

The Hotels of Mass Tourism reflect an endeavor to modernize and rationalize construction methods are evident in the use of concrete and partly pre-fabricated

<sup>11</sup> Beyer, E., Hagemann A. (2013). Holidays after the fall. Seaside Architecture and Urbanism in Bulgaria and Croatia, ISBN 978-3868592269

elements in these hotels. Hotel Design was instrumental in negotiating national identity and in turn shaping international relations within the basic concept of the socialist countries to maintain the status of 'social tourism'

Rational Tourism Package tour centrally organized by the state through a system of eligibility of vouchers.

The term 'urbanism' is currently considered in this period, but by displaying a centrally planned tourism development scheme

«Pleasure Resorts» or «Holiday Resort» conceived as both control of leisure and indoctrination with hegemonic ideology

*After the building boom of seaside resorts in the 60s and 70s, the early 80s began with the issue of establishing the tourist destinations:*

Along the Mediterranean coastline, three main strategies were developed to revitalize the touristic Model of Beach & Sun:

The first strategy was directed towards the improving of the existing touristic establishments, by offering oftentimes, the development patterns which prevailed during the 1960's. This process was manifested in designing new designated areas and buildings with specific destination, which was also sustained in the growing real estate market

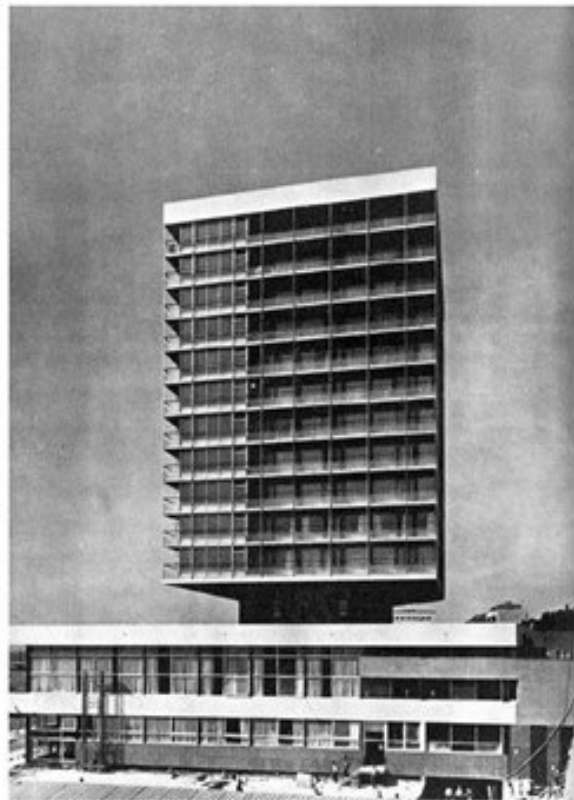
The second approach was oriented to the diversification of the touristic offer, as a formula which would increase simultaneously the touristic facilities and the tourist's interest.

The third strategy focused the intention towards the local resources as form of promoting an alternative tourism. Concepts like cultural tourism, rural tourism and agrotourism, were developed as an alternative of tourism being near nature while exploring local aspects.





Hotel Glarus, Bulgaria



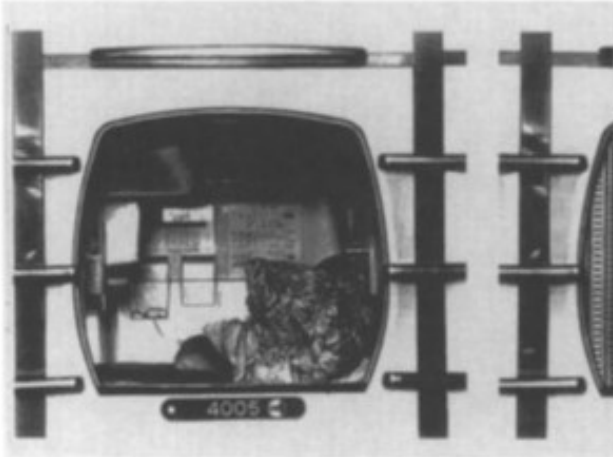
Hotel Marjan, Split

*Figure 11: Iconic Hotels of "Mass Tourism" in Eastern Europe.  
Source: (Beyer, Hagemann, & Zinganel, 2013)*

The Global Tourism along with the re-conceptualization of the alternatives of hotels, have induced the design and construction market to address innovative options regarding the architecture and design of hotels. The Capsule Hotel, proposed by Kisho Kurkawa in Tokyo, 1972 manifests one of the first examples of the attempts of architects to provide a coherent alternative of accommodation related to the requests of the global tourist, in search for individual space, great location in relation with his interests and flexibility.

This project, composed by 140 boxes, driven to site and lifted onto the two concrete cores, is located in busy down town districts, often in converted buildings, which creates a great alternative for business visitors, constantly travelling and with great access to the city and interest points.

This project is identified as a high-density minimum room space urban hotel, which creates individual capsule space in the size of the bed, stacked in layer, rather like bunk beds. Each habitable room has television and video service, other amenities for the guest like the built-in bathroom, and adjacent to them are shared bathing facilities.



The Japanese capsule hotel. (Source: [Torikai Shin-ichi, 1988](#)  
[Kisho Kurkawa in the Nakagin](#)  
[Capsule Building in Tokyo in 1972](#)

Another new typology offered in the competitive hospitality market, is the conversion of the old station, used by King Edward VII, to visit Goodwood racetrack, which has been transformed in a charming, luxury and unique hotel.

The Rooms have everything that it's needed while the interior and exterior original décor, is 'the cherry on top' for the picky travelers and those in search for unique experiences during their travelling.



Figure 12: Alternative Hotel. King's Edward VII Goodwood station:  
Source: <https://mostuniquehotels.com/>

The birth of this hotel is accompanied with the recreation of the whole royal experience, enhanced by the service of breakfast in the station's ticket hall, while the view can be oriented towards polo games at Midhurst, visit in the racetrack or experiencing the local pubs and shopping for antiques.

## 2.5 The “experience of accommodation” and requirements presented to the hotels

What is the representation of the Hotel Room? A form of escaping from the reality, an opportunity to experience a portion of life in another city? Or aiming towards the possibility of experiencing a narration or a novel as part of a personal fantasy?

There are still more essential needs, like achieving the ‘home ambience’ while traveling for work or having the proper retreat while being in vacation, which are considered primary condition for the representation of the hotel.

The today's phenomenon of the ‘grand hotel chains’, which offers the identical service in all the positioned locations around the world has raised the criterions for the hotel industries to attend to a different approach since these chains are arbitrarily offering the same physical and service conditions, to a certain group of visitors, while in other contexts the ‘surprise effect’ and variability are considered in the category of valuable Components.

All the experiences offered, have a common denominator to be taken into account, which is ‘The Temporary Habitation’ in a hotel.

The place where visitors tend to return needs to address these issues and find a way to conjugate the services, the experience offered, the innovation in design, locality and creativity, which inclusively determine the holistic experience of the visitor, which are seeking to ‘buy a story’ within the marketing domain.

In hotels, the relation between the guest and the components of architecture are related with two main divisions: exterior architecture and interior architecture. Within the frame

of the interior architecture, the urban setting and position regards the second place. This is a consequence of the formed relationship between the visitor and its proportional needs into the interior space.

While for the urban hotels, the communication, access and orientation are considered crucial, which implies the aesthetical contribution of the hotel to be allocated within the urban context.

“Of course, great hotels have always been social ideas, flawless mirrors  
to the particular societies they service.”

Joan Didion

The good architecture at the end is considered a strong component while defining the success and quality of a hotel. “The mainstream hotels which are of course by far the most usual ones will change in the future to a more differentiated design and the local aspect will get more importance into the projects. More and more, the hotels are becoming a label of distinction and prosperity – like in Dubai, Shanghai – taking over the role of architectural icon of a city that a cathedral, palace or museum has.” (Trampitsch, p. 3)

The use of high technology equipment, in the hotels of the today’s China, Dubai etc. usually comes in aid to be near the client’s needs, while a strong-concepted design has can contribute to make arouse the spectacularism of architecture

“The functional structure of a hotel should be simple enough and without a lot of variants. The real challenge exists in the quality of space. Especially the details in designing a hotel — the ethereal feeling of walking on the carpet, the special atmosphere in the public space defined by lights and the coziness and comfort given to the guestroom — should be addressed a lot. In addition, the size of the space must qualify the corresponding standards and it is far from enough by just satisfying the minimal standard area of functional space. A hotel should ensure enough space for guests to use besides the functional ones.” (Trampitsch, p. 4)

In our days trying to analyze or design a hotel, has become a challenge. For the nature of the function, it presents difficulties in analyzing the trends and new ideas of hotel designing is a direct-oriented product of the nature of tourism business travel industry.

Today, the expectations for comfort, qualitative services, and particularity, are incorporated within the homogenized international travel, so the hotel design is often endorsed as “international design”

## Session C: The Typology Discourse

### 2.6 The concept of typology in architecture

This session will provide a wider discourse regarding the typology in architecture, trying to relate it to basic cellules of requirements for the design of new hotels while searching for variables to enrich this process.

Typology can be understood as “the identification of essential *types* of building or element — can seem primarily an enterprise of systematization and ordering” (Jones, 2017). Its basic role as a guiding principle can be considered as generic frame of reference for interpretation, while the contemporary design seems to avoid the heuristic demeanor.

Durand understands the typology, [...] not a catalog of immediately applicable solutions but a system of classifications that makes it possible to familiarize oneself with the various problems that may turn up in practice but without any thought of covering them systematically” (Durand, 2000, p. 45)

Quatremère de Quincy sustains his definition of the architectural “type” in the representation of the type, not exactly as the image or aspect to be copied, but as the

idea or element which could be itself extracted to serve as a general rule for the generated model. This approach itself, considers that is also the basic for obtaining *ouuvres* which contains the same conceptual element but without visual resemblances.

In *'the Third Typology'* (1977) Anthony Vidler argues that the invention of the enterprise of typology was as much about seeking *validation* for architectural form-making as it was about the systematization of evidence. In a broad survey of the history of the idea since the mid-18th century, he identifies three currents, corresponding to *nature* (c1750-1860), *production* (1860-1950) and *the city* (1960–). (Jones, 2017)

*In his article (Jones, 2017) identifies from the middle of XVIII-th century, two main approaches towards the typology which has formed and enhanced the production of architecture:*

“The first, developed out of the rationalist philosophy of the Enlightenment, and initially formulated by the Abbé Laugier, proposed that a natural basis for design was to be found in the model of the primitive hut. The second, growing out of the need to confront the question of mass production at the end of the XIX-th century, and most clearly stated by Le Corbusier, proposed that the model of architectural design should be founded in the production process itself” (Jones, 2017)

The second analogy is extended in functionalism, where the ideological mission of architecture, was revealed in the access to nature, efficiently use of resources and proportioned spaces.

In the Third Typology, the typological model and object are no longer external to architecture, but rather are directed at the evidence of its own disciplinary and material history. (Jones, 2017)

“Typology becomes an *ontology of the city* in which the operation of validation no longer figures. The Third Typology has no grand supporting analogy; and deploys identifications as part of a critical engagement with the contemporary reality of the city. Third Typology has only a critical, and never a merely affirmative, function, which most severely limits its scope.

“Today, “type” and “Typology” stand for an accepted norm and classifying device [...] while leaving space to [...] argue for a modern reasoning of form though the means of abstraction” (Jacoby, 2013)

Typology can be understood as two parts of the same process, by underlining this concept as part of a process which comprises the historical components at the same time including the individuality of the architect or researcher.

And being a central component to understand the relationships of architecture with the city is a dominant feature of Typology.

*In Analogy with the Theoretical Concept of Abbé Laugier, expressing the house as the unit which may include comprise three layers of typology: Space, Function, Morphology ... the Hotel can it be interpreted as a typology regarding Morphology; Relation with the landscape/city considering its ‘non-standardized function’ and orienting more towards the “typological-morphological approach”, which suggests focusing on the similarities, on the universal and enduring, i.e permanent character of cities through comparative study of urban form [...] (Guney, 2007, p. 12)*

## 2.7 The typologies of hotels with social and architectural design impact

Socialist countries of Eastern Europe, after the World War II, along with the emergent need for the country reconstruction, considered an important component the social issues which stimulated these countries to develop large-scale seaside infrastructure, to accommodate the citizens need for vacations.

Since 1945, the typologies of tourism facilities in terms of accommodation were presented to the world in abundance, through the International Style. One of the first significant type was the “High-Rise Tower” Hotel which was a concept transposed from the urban context to the beachfront, initiated with the Hilton International, the Caribe Hilton (1946-1949) in Puerto Rico. This type was followed by the “Slender Tower” Typology applied in Pitsuda Trade Union Holiday Houses (1962-1967) and “Massive Slabs” in Inturist Hotel Yalta (1977).

Horizontal compositions with blocks during the modernism, were later on configured in specific shapes like the “Y” shaped which consisted on a ground plan distribution with three arms straddling the landscape. This typology is presented quite outstandingly in the Hotel de Garbe in Armacao de Pera, Portugal (1959-1964).

“Terraced hotel” Type were presented by the architects as a solution in the difficult steep terrain by generally embedding the horizontal units in the topography like in hotel do Mar in Sesimbra Portugal (1960-1963). In France, we can find examples of densely built “Village Complex” in the Village du Merlier Holiday Resort (1959-1969) representing a complex concrete cubes structure on a cliff face near Saint Tropez. While the concept of Resort is revealed beautifully in the project of Six Resort Towns, Jan Baladur’s La Grande Motte, a combination of truncated pyramid structures, where for the first time in a typological mixed with apartments and villas for sale as well as hotels and camping site could accommodate for the first time 100.000 guests.



These Resorts beside the freedom of expression in architecture were conceived in such way (which still applies also for today) that control both the leisure and, in the meantime, achieve indoctrination with hegemonic ideology (Beyer, Hagemann, & Zinganel, 2013)<sup>12</sup>.

In 1983 was the year when the hotel real estate market came to life by achieving the constructions company's and real estate's interest in building and buying hotels, an interest which is still growing worldwide.

The invention of the internet, is the one of the last contributors in the enhancement of the tourism development by affecting also the Hotels evolution. Choosing the place, the accommodation and the mean of transportation in the commodity of home by computer, mobile or tablet, has contributed to the globalization of the tourism as an industry but also as a social concept.

The Hotels of today, have to compete in this worldwide market, online or elsewhere not just by offering the commodities needed but also offering a unique experience for the visitor by balancing the profit with the sustainability and the growing curve.

Today, the travelers have the opportunity to choose between 17.5 million guest rooms all around the globe, where are offered the variations of affordable accommodation, luxury, till technological or innovation implemented in their chosen accommodation.

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<sup>12</sup> Beyer, E., Hagemann A. (2013). *Holidays after the fall. Seaside Architecture and Urbanism in Bulgaria and Croatia*, ISBN 978-3868592269



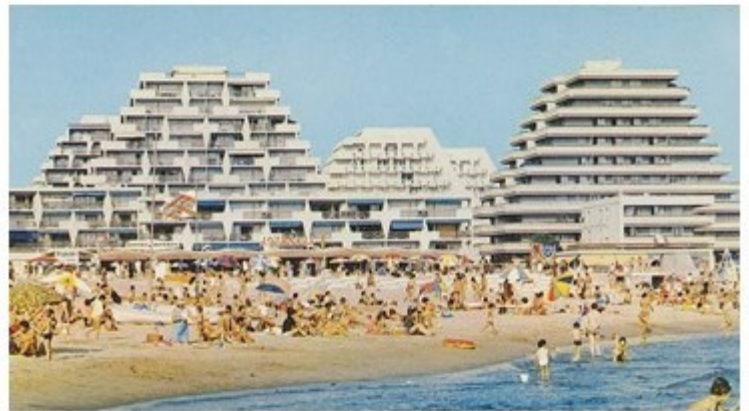
*The Caribe Hilton (1946-1949), Puerto Rico*



*Inturist Hotel Yalta (1977)*



*Hotel de Garbe in Armacao de Pera, Portugal (1959-1964)*



*Hotel do Mar in Sesimbra Portugal (1960-1963)*



*Village du Merlier Holiday Resort, San Topez (1959-1969)*



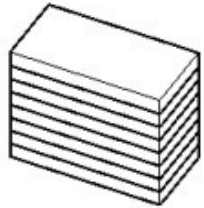
*Jan Baladur's La Grande Motte, France 1960 - 1970*

*Figure 13: Modernist Hotels worldwide:*

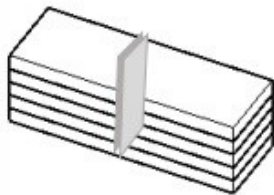
*Sources: carobehilton.com; booking.com; jet2holidays.com; tripadvisor.com; culture.gouv.fr; skyrisecities*

## INTERNATIONAL TYPOLOGIES OF BEACHFRONT TOURISM ARCHITECTURE

**“High-Rise Tower”**



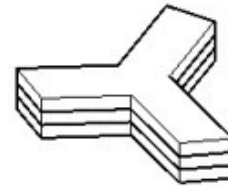
**“Slender Tower”**



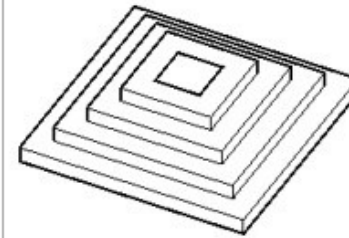
**“Modernist low-rise”**



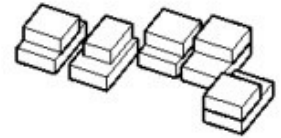
**“Y” shaped**



**“Terraced hotel”**



**“Village Complex”**



**Concept:** Transposed from the urban context to the beachfront.

- Vertical slab
- Right angle to the beach
- Oblique positions of balconies to assure sea-view
- Propeller of the expansion of tourism infrastructure in the 1960

**Concept:** The Extended Version of the «Tower»

- Massive Slabs set Parallel or oblique to the coastline
- Central Hub – stairway

**Concept:** Derivate of Slender Tower with low rise feature.

- Common Building Type of the Marshall-Plan Xenia Hotel and Motel chain
- Composed of horizontal blocks arranged in clusters, or around a courtyard or atrium

**Concept:** Horizontal compositions with blocks during the modernism, configured inn “Y” shaped.

- Ground plan distribution with three arms straddling the landscape.

**Concept: Alternative** presented by the architects as a solution in the difficult steep terrain by generally embedding the horizontal units in the topography.

**Concept:** Interlinkage of mediterranean town + holiday camps + limited public and private exterior spaces optimizing both solitude and sociability

- Complex concrete cubes structure on a cliff face.
- Typological mix mainly comprised of apartment blocks and villas built for private sale

Hilton International, the Caribe Hilton (1946-1949) in Puerto Rico



“Massive Slabs” in Inturist Hotel Yalta (1977).



Hotel Xenia in Nafplio, Peloponnese (1959-1961)



Typology presented in the Hotel de Garbe in Armacao de Pera, Portugal (1959-1964).



Hotel do Mar in Sesimbra Portugal (1960-1963).



- Camping sites, handful of hotels

The Village du Merlier Holiday Resort (1959-1969)



Figure 14: International Typologies of Beachfront Tourism Architecture in the XX-th century

## 2.8 Identity and locality as part of the design process

In the design process of a hotel, there is always an interchange between the traditional architecture and the contemporary one. These two main guiding subjects are design sometimes exchanging or contrasting each other to meet the global requirements in tourism and to offer the qualitative spaces and appropriate retreats in every component.

Also, the design can focus on integrating by reinterpretation the traditional, through reinforcement of traditional decoration and symbols, which aims to define the local identity of the physical space.

This is the main reason why architectural identity is generally accepted and understood in a historically and timeless context. Through the reflection of building design, architectural heritage preservation and revitalization, the portrayal of the architectural identity establishes itself in the layers of built form and shape, aesthetics, transmitted messages and historic narrative. ‘

While arguing with the globality requirements, standards and universal needs for the tourist retreats and accommodation, the identity factor, pops out in the surface of the touristic offers, as the primary influencer in the competitiveness of the market.

It is conscientious, that the authenticity and perceptions reflected in the aspect of identity, can create the possibility for experiencing space, excitement and entertainment by gaining simultaneously the expectation of ‘time’ related with culture and history, while being in the position of the consumer of space, within the premises of the hotel. The hotel site in and of itself contributes, through the spatial organization and component of experience, to the feeling of curios discovery and perspective perception that tourist seek in a visiting country.

## Chapter 3: Tourism in Albania

### 3.1 Essential Development Milestones of Tourism Worldwide

Tourism has been considered a modern phenomenon of the last century which along with its economical outcome, has produced significant impact in the territory and urban centers.

Originated at the ancient times, in the Greek and Roman Culture, which generated '*the first establishments for relaxation, thermal baths and socialization*', have been prompted in the tourism as we know it today, '*a commercialized tourism*' in the mid 1800's by the English Entrepreneur Thomas Cook. From his first all-inclusive trip in 1841, the concept of guided holidays, touristic tours and travel agencies, have been rapidly introducing to the middle class, as a form of enriching the livelihood, at least during the holidays.

The industrial revolution and especially the expansion of the railroad system in the nineteenth century, facilitated the initial steps towards this form of modern tourism, which now included the accommodation, the services, the tours and the leisure component.

'*Medical architecture*' was the other significant shift to a new form of hospitality. The Sanatoriums, are considered as a conceptualization of a dedicated architecture with specific needs for air, view, water and space; which would impose the architects the choices of designing panoramic accommodation establishments, generally in very nature opened space to meet the health conditions of the patients.

One of the most memorable Sanatoriums, can be considered: Alvar Aalto's Paimio Sanatorium in Finland, completed in 1933, together with Klinik Clavadel in Davos Josef Hoffmann's Purkersdorf Sanatorium outside of Vienna and Jan Duiker and Bernard Bijvoet's Sanatorium Zonnestraal.

These examples have foremost challenged architects to make great efforts toward rethinking the space, maximizing the natural lightning, relation with the landscape and redesign elements of furniture or heating till the very last detail to better suit the patients. But this form of hospitality was dedicated to health issues, which was still was limited in use.

The actual shift from aristocratic tourism to the '*mass tourism*' would happen with the presentation of the right to paid holidays, which initiated with the most industrialized countries after the First World War and culminated in the socialist system, which in and of itself in the Socialist Western Mediterranean Countries, represented a political view on the overall communist controlling strategy in most cases.

In the conditions of technological evolution, infrastructure development, the constitutional right for a minimum wage and paid holidays, the Mass Tourism became accessible for the middle- and low-income classes.

### **The premises of Mass Tourism**

***Technological Evolution***  
*(Steam engine, industrial development)*

***Infrastructure and transportation***  
*(Railway's systems and accessibility)*

*The right to the **minimum wage***

*The right to a **paid annual leave***

But the true 'liberalization of the traveling market, found space during the 1950's economic boom, when mass transportation became affordable, the air transportation

accessible and the individual transportation took more terrain in transportation, by becoming during the 60's the main favorable mean of transportation.

Vacations in the Model of 'Sea, Sun and Sand' became preferred among all the populations, while it contributed to the other stage of Tourism, known as the '*expansion of tourism*'.

The Summer Vacations, already a lifestyle, would become the incentive for the construction of numerous holiday resorts, by re-considering the spatial form of accommodation.

*Globalized Tourism* has reached its peak a few decades ago, transforming the concept of distances and spaces in the mind of today's citizen.

The need for traveling and experiencing different places and cultures has been generally accepted as a form of education. The combination with the digital age, has facilitated all the process of preparing the details of the trips regarding transportation, accommodation, other activities and tours planned, which on the other hand has produced negative side effects in terms of environmental pollution, diffusion of cultures and identities, congestion etc.

Regarding the accommodation sector, the liberty in the hospitality has created paths and opportunities to offer diverse accommodation types, flexibility and affordability, while searching for different alternatives, which also creates space for designers and architects, to re-define the 'Hotels' of today.

### 3.2 Evolution of the concept of Tourism in Albania, through the lenses of history

It is through the conditions of history and more significantly through the manifestation of the political systems power, that the history of Tourism in Albania has taken place. This important drive has actually behaved more like a boundary for the development of tourism, while also used in the benefit of the ideologies in which they were created, regardless their primary function.

The Inherited Khans, which represent the first typology of accommodation in Albania, the few that have remained, are now considered as part of the cultural heritage, and integrated in the concept of local, historical tourism.

But considering their limited use, due to functional hospitality related with commerce of the time, it was only after the Establishment of Enti Turistik Hotelier i Shqiperise<sup>13</sup>, that the Accommodation as part of touristic begin to emerge. E.T.A was an Agency created under the influence of the Italian protectorate, which in collaboration with King Zog, managed to construct in Albania from 1921 till 1940, 45 modern Hotels, distributed in Tirana, Durres, Gjirokaster, Berat, Korce, Elbasan, Fier, Kavaje, Kukes, Permet, Peshkopi, Pogradec, Sarande, Shijak, Shkoder and Vlora, including The Royal Villa in Durres<sup>14</sup>.

Their contribution in these terms, culminate with the construction of “Hotel Dei Dogi” in Durres (1938 – 1940) and “Dajti” Hotel in Tirana (1939-1940), while having also the merit, for the first Touristic Albanian Guide in Italian Language in 1939.

After the disclosure of the World War II and the immediate needs of the country, being handled, The Communist Regime of Albania, managed to Establish the First National Agency, named “Albturist” which executed each objective for 34 yes in a row (1956-1990).

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<sup>13</sup> Translated as “Hotelier Tourist Entity of Albania”, from now on ETA

<sup>14</sup> The Royal Villa of King Zog, was the first Summer House designed and constructed for a Leader



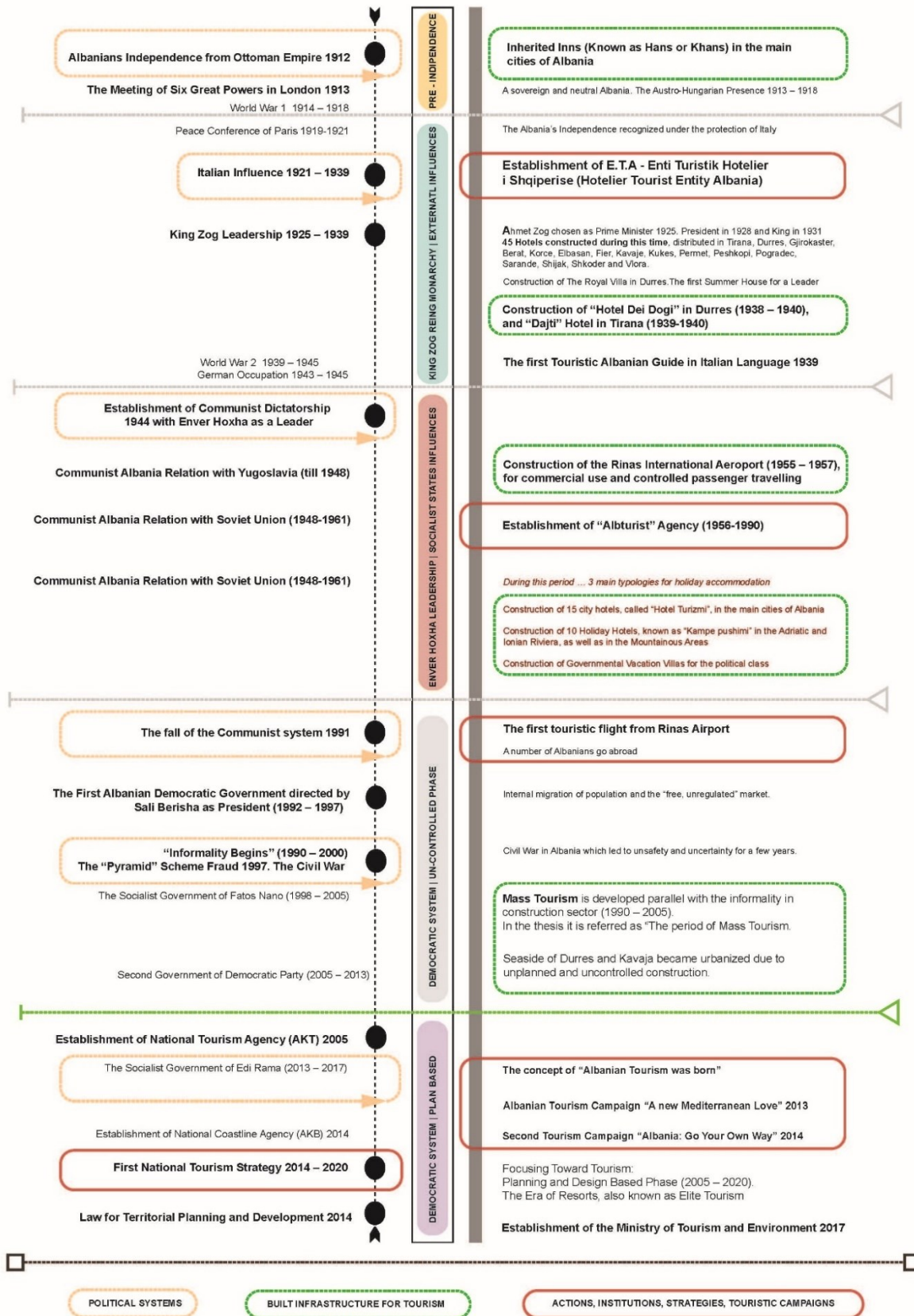


Figure 15: Timeline of the main key points of the political, infrastructural that have determined the evolution of tourism, architecture and Albanian Hotel. Scheme from the author

“Albturist” was a model, borrowed from the Soviet Union, but who was used in a very different manner. During this period, 15 city hotels were constructed, called “Hotel Turizmi) in the main cities of Albania.

The Construction of 10 Holiday Hotels, known as “Kampe pushimi”<sup>15</sup> in the Adriatic and Ionian Riviera, as well as in the Mountainous Areas also took life in the 55 years’ time of communis, together with the construction of Governmental Vacation Villas for the political class. Altogether, these constructions can be grouped in 3 main identifiable typologies for holiday accommodation.

With the establishment of Albturist, during the years 1955 – 1957, the first International Airport of Tirana<sup>16</sup> was constructed but only for commercial use and controlled passenger travelling. It was only the 1990’s which would make possible that the airport begins its use for free touristic flights.

With the political system shift in 1990, an era of intense and complex construction took place, enabled by the lack of control in the territory, which in the first decade, presented itself through informality and ‘free but unregulated market’ not just in construction but also in the offering of the accommodation facilities to the first visitors of the ‘Now Opened Albania’, regardless the uncertainty that it follows.

The informal Phase has had several effects on the territory and landscape, which with opening of Albania towards Europe and improvement of official documents regarding tourism, has resulted with a conceptual framework to regulate tourism, accommodation sector and more importantly the construction regarding accommodation facilities, by paving the way toward a project-based construction.

Now, Albania has a more comprehensive National Strategy for Tourism, a Ministry responsible for Tourism, several laws to regulate different aspects and attempts to invest as a country with the infrastructure interventions and Tourism Campaigns, as well as private investments, especially in the hospitality settlements.

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<sup>15</sup> Camps for vacations also known as Holiday Camps

<sup>16</sup> Known first as the Rinas Airport, further as “Mother Teresa Airport”, now known as TIA (Tirana Airport)

### 3.3 International Context - overview of Tourism Sector and national sensitivity today

Tourism is a key sector of today's world industry. For most countries, it represents one of the main pillars of economic growth. According to TOURISM link publication of EU, Tourism generates more than 5% of the EU GDP, with about 1.8 million enterprises employing around 5.2 of the total labor forces<sup>17</sup>.

Its complex structure has experienced over the last decades a continuous expansion, enhancing this way it's role in the overall economic direction, by contributing in a better planning and implementing of transport development and construction sector, including accommodation structures, public spaces, urban regeneration and in some cases generating also architecture for tourism purposes. By evolving both public and private sector it is better understood that when dealing with tourism industry, the effect is all-embracing.

An important effect on a country's economy, tourism gives in the services and facilities units, where employability is raised almost 10% because of tourism enhancement.

Also, travelling and export is a segment which has felt a considerable increment precisely by the tourism growth over this decades.

UNWTO, Tourism Highlights, 2017 Edition, has introduced the Tourism as the Key to Development, prosperity and well-being, by summarizing the main contributions of this industry in four units: tourist travelling's, export, growth of Worlds GDP by 10% and employment, by giving also a prediction of the raise of tourist arrivals (table on the right), a rise of at least 14 times, in just 14 years.

Domestic tourism, which represented 71.2% of all tourism spending in 2018 and had the strongest growth in developing nations, continues to support opportunities by spreading development and regional economic benefits and building national pride.

Considering these measurements, it's impossible to underestimate the Tourism Impact on the overall globe, which significantly has given a boost to the Global World.

Organizations like World Tourism Organization (where Albania is a member since 1993) or other minor structures like: European Tourism Association and Regional

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<sup>17</sup> *The European Tourism Market, It's structure and the Role of ICTs. TOURISMLink, Linking professionals with the digital market. Available at: [https://www.iby.it/turismo/papers/TOURISMLink\\_MktReport\\_V2.pdf](https://www.iby.it/turismo/papers/TOURISMLink_MktReport_V2.pdf)*

Development Programs are constantly evaluating tourism impacts and incomes to maintain clear visions of the state of Tourism progress, as well as working to develop trends and exploring new destinations in an enlargement attitude.

On the other hand, tourism is considered a social, geographical, environmental and cultural phenomena. It's crucial in this case the social and cultural exchange, which benefits not only the visitors, but also the citizens on the specific place. Meanwhile, a large quantity of travelers can be difficult to administer and it can easily lead to environmental problematic, such as over consume of water and electricity, waste management or carbon production, which specify the need for better administration.

Tourism booming, which took place after the World War II, followed by the economic boom of 1950's and the technological development of transportation, has introduced various possibilities for traveling for vacations, leisure, business, health treatment, religion or other purposes. In the meantime, it has also presented urbanization and density approaches, which clearly resulted in damaging coastal areas, evolving enormous constructions, generally without considering the impact on the environment or territory.

The reported challenges and external threats – relating mostly to unsustainable resource consumption, climate change or global economic instability – must be addressed by policymakers<sup>18</sup>.

The impacts of tourism are certainly affecting the Economic state of each country, Environment, Socio and Cultural Status and Community attitude.

The main challenges regarding tourism worldwide are: Enhancing heritage preservation, empowering the social and cultural aspects of a place, as well as dealing with environmental or sustainability issues. The next 20 years will be of continued growth for the sector. They can also be years of leadership, tourism leading economic growth, social progress and environmental sustainability<sup>19</sup>. Tourism today, needs to

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<sup>18</sup> UNWTO Publications – *Tourism and the Sustainable Development Goals – Journey to 2030, highlights*. Available at: <https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/pdf/10.18111/9789284419340>

<sup>19</sup> UNWTO Publications – *Tourism Towards 2030, a Global Overview*  
Available at: <https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/pdf/10.18111/9789284414024>

focus on long-term growth and prosperity, balancing economics with people, culture and environment all with the assistance of governments<sup>20</sup> .

In the meantime, the variety of transportation means and the technology evolution have submitted a real exposure to the open public which requires a better management as well as a better assessment of these factors in Strategic Development Plans for Tourism.

In Europe, the dominative aspect regarding the touristic development between countries is seen in the market fragmentation between the economically development countries like the ones in Central and Northern Europe and the less developed countries or in developing economies, presented by the southern countries where some Mediterranean Countries, especially the former socialist ones. The second group acts in the market as touristic destinations by offering the appropriate climate and natural conditions, low-cost alternatives in services and accommodation and the raising historical and political interest.

In compliance with the market segmentation, the tourism in the Balkan's is considered a crescent economy, despite the alterations derived from conflicts between states, civil wars or political destabilization.

### 3.4 Tourism Background

Tourism is one of the massive phenomena of today and one of the main contributors on a country's economy. In the case of Albania, Tourism constitutes one of the main pillars of economic developed, along with agriculture, energy production, and mining (Aliaj, Janku, Allkja, & Dhamo, 2014) stated also in the National Strategies for the Economic Development.

Being also in the Mediterranean region, which embraces the perfect climate condition, the agricultural productivity and the traces of ancient history combined with troubled Balkan situations, position Albania in the list of the countries with great potential in developing tourism.

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<sup>20</sup> WTTC, *World Travel and Tourism Council*, 2011.

The geographical conditions of Albania, natural resources, comfortable climate, cultural heritage, thermal waters are some of the main resources which creates space to the development of seaside tourism, lake tourism, mountainous and sports tourism, curative, cultural, archaeological tourism etc.

### 3.4.1 Albanian Touristic Data

Albania is considered nowadays as one of 10 fastest growing economies, compared to its own GDP, and it is recommended as one of the world's top 10 touristic destinations. The country has 450 km costal line, of which 300 along the Adriatic Sea, and 150 along the Ionian Sea (Aliaj, Janku, Allkja, & Dhamo, 2014).

According to the NSST, the tourism in Albania is providing each year 8.5% of the GDP and an indirect income of 26.2% considering its contribution to the state budget, entrepreneurships and family businesses. In the meantime, the tourism sector has also the greatest potential for employment since till 2017, 93.000 employers were directly working in tourism, while 291.000 were the total employees in the sector.

The forecast for the next decade is expecting a raise at least to 9.3% of the GDP, with the projection to achieve almost 1/3 of the GDP till 2028.

Based on the resources of Albania, the main categories of the tourism in Albania are identified in three groups:

1. Coastal Tourism (Seaside Tourism and Maritime)
2. Natural Tourism
3. Thematic Tourism

Coastal Tourism is currently occupying the major share in the overall tourism since the Albanian Riviera offers various type of beaches with its two different seas: Adriatic and Jon. The maritime Tourism is evolving just in the last year as a new alternative and a complementary component of the Coastal Tourism. The main issue with coastal Tourism is related with the limited time of offer since it's based in the season of summer (from June till the beginning of September). This is directly impacting not just the

incomes but also the socio-economic status of a significant part of the population working seasonally in this sector. The coastal tourism is actually the preferred one for domestic tourists and the Albanians from the territory of Kosovo and Macedonia.

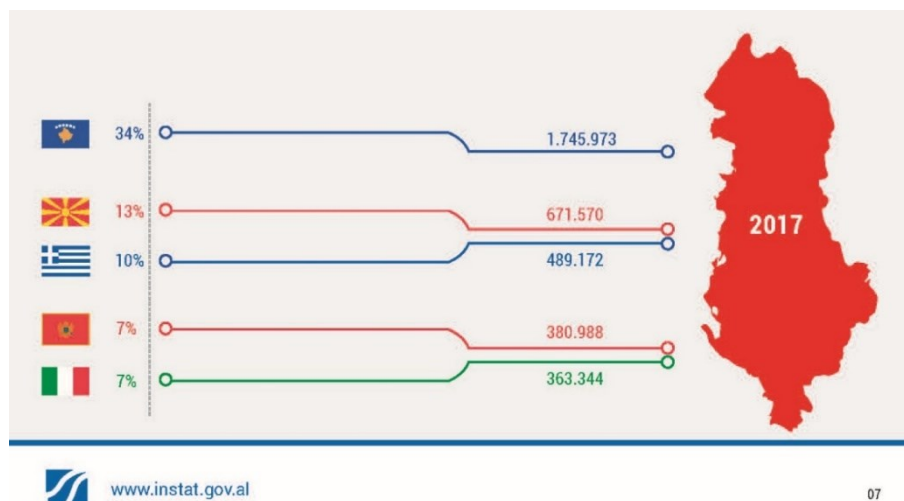


Figure 16: Distribution of Tourist's nationality in Albania.2017. Source Instat

Natural Tourism is actually the main potential in the tourism development of Albania. The intact natural resources consisting in 15 national parks, beautiful landscapes, biodiversity, lakes and other natural sites have actually attracting 2.4 million foreign visitors in 2018, on which 92.4% of them are from Europe. But comparing it with the data of nights spent and the means of transportation dominated by car, results a major number of visitors, rather than tourist spending the night in the accommodation facilities offered.

In the Thematic Tourism are included specific forms of tourism related with the historical heritage, archaeology, religion, culture, tradition, gastronomy as well as curative tourism which gives space to the cities like Gjirokastra, Berat, Tirana, Durres, Kruja, Korca etc., for profiting a part of the tourism piece.

### 3.4.2 Tourism Development in Post-Communist Albania.

At spatial dimensions, especially the last decade, Albania is confronting today the challenge of limited physical capacities for the accommodation of the growing demand on tourism.

According to INSTAT Albania:

- (i) The number of total visitors that enter our country by different means of transport (land, air, sea) has increased 10 times out of 300 thousand in 1995, to 3.3 million in 2013;
- (ii) The number of visitors in hotels has grown from 140.000 in 1995, to 220.000 in 2013 while the number of foreigners has tripled out of 40.000 to 120.000 visitors; (Aliaj, Janku, Allkja, Dharmo, 2014)

The conclusion in this Publications consists on the Fact that “Albania has another challenge, which needs urgent capacity development on accommodation, by at least 2-3 times growth in 2030” (Aliaj, Janku, Allkja, Dharmo, 2014).

Considering the fact that the informality produced after 1991, including the accommodation sector, has stagnated an accurate registration of all the hosting facilities. Adding also the factors of economic and political collapse of 1997, it is a little difficult to know with accuracy the actual offer in accommodation facilities, but after the registration processes have taken place, it is concluded that till 2018, there are 2437 accommodation facilities from which 65% are actual hotels and 35% consists on rooms, houses or apartments let by the household.

### 3.4.5 Position of Albanian Tourism of Albania in the Mediterranean and Balkan Market

Even though Albania is positioned in one of the main areas for worldwide tourism rate, in the Mediterranean and offering in just 28.748 sq.km the resources of a long variation coastline, three lakes, mountains and natural parks, a rich flora and fauna and a wide distribution of historic, cultural and archaeological fortune, is still in the position of chaotic development, with rapid need.



It is well defined than in countries like Albania, Kosovo, Montenegro or Macedonia, the tourism enhancement is a key component in the overall economy. In the historic background, especially during the isolation from communism, countries like Montenegro, Macedonia, Bulgaria and Croatia have evolved a more open approach towards tourism orienting themselves also in the attraction of external tourists since the 1950's, by investing in large-scale modern tourism facilities and promoting them internationally.

Other Mediterranean states like Greece and Turkey with their two touristic models are also considered prime competitors which offers better infrastructure, more qualitative accommodation and service with approximately the same price of Albania during the summer. Actually, these countries are also by statistics, the main attractors of Albanian tourists which cannot attain to get the accommodation in time during the peak in the coast, or who are in search for a more qualitative overall vacation experience.

It is considered by the authorities and researches that the infrastructure, accommodation capacity and the quality of services are the main reasons for the obstruction of a successful tourism in terms of accommodation, by posing emergent needs in terms of development policies and long-term sustainability.

Changes in Albanian Political System, represented the last act of deliberation in the Balkans, transforming the Albanian country, from a harsh system into a "Terra Incognita"<sup>21</sup>, with explicit challenges and curious perspective from the external eyes.

This is considered one of the main reasons, why Albanian Tourism, in contrary with other more evolved countries like Greece who have experienced decline in the recent years regarding the tourism industry development has actually evocated an increasing interest in the overall panorama of Balkan Tourism.

"In the process of mass tourism development in Europe, economically developed Northern European countries are cited to be tourist-generator countries and less developed Southern countries on the coast of Mediterranean are destination countries" (Sezgin & Yolal, 2012, p. 81), but while other neighbor countries, with similar history have taken serious and recognizable steps, in every aspect of tourism including

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<sup>21</sup> *The Concept of Albania, a "Terra Incognita" is encountered in the Book: Albanien. Albania Decades of Architecture in Political Context, to address the raising curiosity of the Western World towards Albania*

accommodation, “It is a fact that Albania refers to its tourism potential, but generates only 0.1% of total tourism revenues in Europe” (Aliaj, 2008, p. 275).

Albania is a place of intricated contradictions regarding visions, complexity in cultural and social background, uncommon way of managing the politics or economy till the way of dealing with everyday life issues. The energy created in this context is visible especially in the main cities, while the actual form of isolation of other cities or more distant villages, seems to contradict the exaggerated enhancement of the coastal most densified zones. Yet it is still the combination of ancient history, ottoman city structures, foreign influences and local attributes which can be considered the main potentially drivers for the induction of the tourism.

#### 3.4.6 Touristic “Hot Spots” in Albania. Potentials and Visions

Regarding the independent studies in the field of Tourism, the publication: “Albania 2030 Manifesto. A National Spatial Development Vision” has identified Tourism, especially natural tourism; as one of the main pillars of the economy, along with agriculture, energy production and mining<sup>22</sup>. While considering the exigency of the integration of these fields, the prosperous future of Albania, the research aims to raise awareness in the urgency of evaluating and investing.

In this vision, the limitations in the interdisciplinary relation of different assets of the country, by the previous governmental assessments, has been tackled. By pointing out the gaps of integration between fields, featured in the Economic Development Strategy as well as in the Tourism Strategy and exploring the potentials, economic conferment as well as the spatial configuration of the territory, this Manifesto concluded in the importance of a polycentric evolvement. This proposal would gratify at the same time the sustainable autonomy in production and management, as well as ensuring coherence among regions.

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<sup>22</sup> *This statement is sustained on the objectives of the National Strategy of the Republic of Albania, and supported by independent research of the publication itself*

The six original identities defined in this vision, were organically organized in: a) Alps Region (Center Shkodra) b) Arbri Region (Peshkopi, c) Metropolitan Region (Tirana), d) Voskopoja Region (Korça), e) Myzeqeja Region (Berat), f) Ionian Region (Gjirokastra).

In this study, Alps Region of Shkodra, Voskopoja Region and Ionan Region has been explicitly represented with the primary drive of tourism, while the original richness with historic, traditional or cultural heritage of the three other regions can be considered the ensuing branch along their primary economic drives like economic hub, agriculture, energy producing and mines production (Aliaj, Janku, Allkja, & Dhamo, 2014, p. 153)

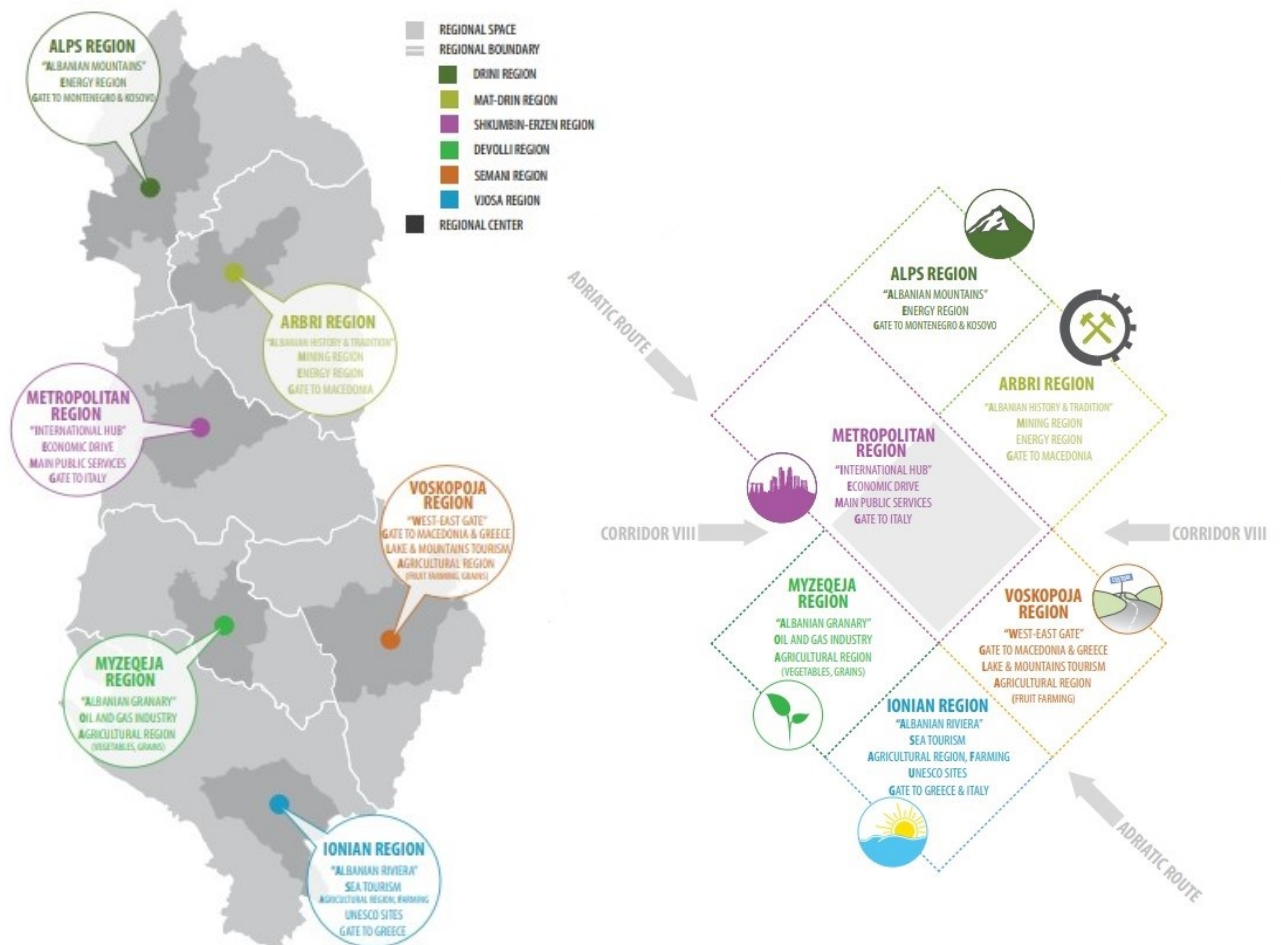


Figure 17: Polycentric Regions (Aliaj, Janku, Allkja, & Dhamo, 2014, p. 116)

The data accumulated and recommendations derived from previous analysis of the “Albania 2030”, has been confronted by an overlay technique with the distribution of the accommodation structures in the territory.

In order to achieve this comprehension, the characteristics of tourism in relation to the 12 regions has been taken in consideration, which gave a more expanded view during the study regarding the overall identity factors which contribute or aim to contribute in the future in the enhancement of tourism.

In the figure 7, each of the regions have been analyzed in terms of assets and types of activities offered; by resulting in the scheme of actual potentials of their share in tourism extension.

These findings, can be summarized in 6 major regions, proposed in the study of Albania 2030, and in three main groups<sup>23</sup> regarding their primary touristic orientation:

- Coastal Tourism (Seaside Tourism and Maritime)
- Natural (National Parks and outdoor activities)
- Thematic Tourism (Historical, Cultural, Archeological)

Referring to the figure 6, the Coastal Tourism is the most evolved type of tourism, available in the vast majority, in the western part of the Territory, also known as the Albanian Western Lowland which consists of 316 km coastline whereas the rivers and lakes coastline add up to this, respectively 48 km and 73 km coastline.

The natural coastline is related to the natural parks located mostly in the Northern Eastern and Southern Eastern part of Albania.

Whiles the thematic Tourism is located mostly in the central areas of the territory, related with the historic city centers, the architectural heritage, archeological sites and cultural aspects of territories, providing a certain identity feature, attractive for the visitors.

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<sup>23</sup> *The three main categories of Tourism are previously presented*

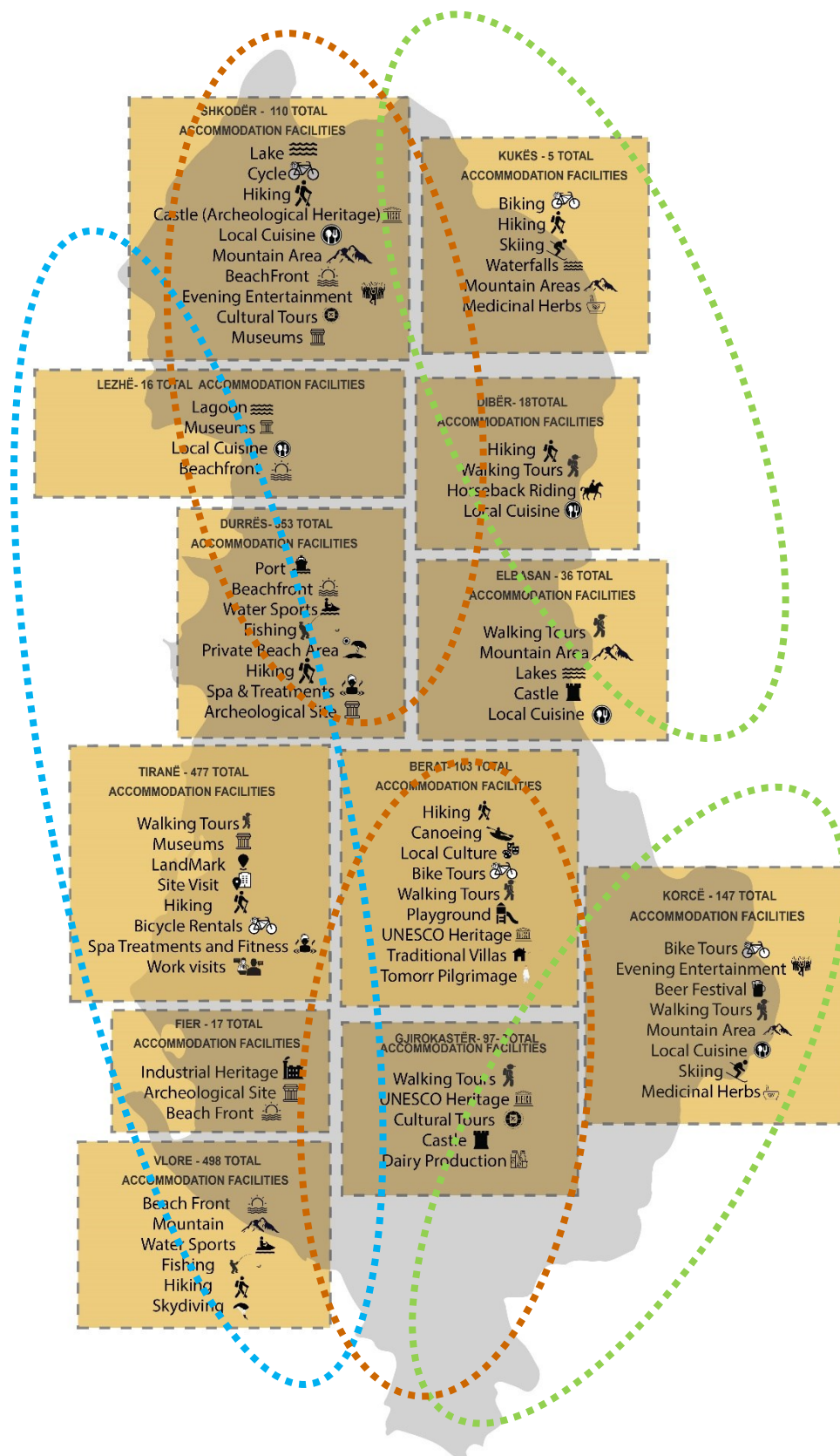


Figure 18: Types of Tourism Activities in 12 regions. Source: Author.

It is also to be mentioned the fact that considering the superposition of the touristic attractions and the surface of the territory itself creates possibility of combination of types of tourism, place the strategy of tourism management in the position of integration as well as defining unique regions with particularity to be identified.

As a further step, the components of characteristics of tourism, has been confronted with the data collected from the booking.com reservation hub related to the distribution of the accommodation facilities.

The data collection has taken place during March 2021. In order to achieve a better accuracy, the indicator of seasonality had to be considered<sup>24</sup>, by making an average of the two seasons (summer and winter)

Aside to the INSTAT limited and undiffused data, information gathered concerning via this medium regarding the distribution of accommodation structures, is considered noteworthy to fill in the gaps between lack of data and the incongruity derived from the informality, by comprehending the relation of accommodation sector in correlation with the territory, vicinity with the city and points of attraction.

Furthermore, the most attractive and frequented places have been reviewed to achieve an inclusive comprehension of the relation between 'touristic hot spots 'and the deliberation of the accommodation facilities, by diving them in 4 main categories: the accommodation in seaside, in the shore of lakes, the natural or mountainous areas and beside the historical centers or archeological sites.

#### 3.4.7 Albanian Legislation regarding the tourism development and

The intense shift of the political systems of Albania, in the beginning of 1990's situated the position of the government in front of the actual challenges regarding the new approach of the "market economy", the new concept of "private vs public" which led to

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<sup>24</sup> *Since the main branch of tourism is considered the "Sea, Sun and Sand" Tourism, and less during the other seasons, the visibility of accommodation sector in booking.com engine is higher during the three months of summer, while a different panorama actually takes places during the other seasons.*

two main comprehensions regarding the development of the economy and specifically tourism enhancement:

- The importance of the cooperation between different organizations as well as public and private sector
- Framing the concept of tourism as a new branch of economy which should be formulated from scratch in terms of legislation framework followed by the governmental support in infrastructure and resources.

The first Law which provided the immediate base cadre for the establishment of Tourism as an economic branch was approved by the Albanian government, on January 21, 1993, *Law No. 7665, "For the development of tourism priority areas"*.

Still this Law couldn't provide the contextualized legal framework needed for a clear structure on the tourism development. This situation left space for an uncontrolled and not regulated construction sector regarding touristic facilities.



Figure 19: Legal Framework of Tourism Management and Accommodation Criteria's for in Albania

It was the *Tourism Development Strategy 2002-2012* accredited by government of the time, that identified a primary direction of tourism as an important sector of the economy, by tracing the macro-economic directives, the importance of employment

rates and the overall improvement of economy as the main positive outcomes. In this strategy, the objective was orienting tourism towards cultural and natural tourism. This Strategy laid the foundation for the 'Concept of Albanian Tourism' as we know it today, supported by the establishment of the National Tourism Strategy (AKT) in 2005 and furthermore institutionalization of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports in 2007, which complemented a comprehensive framework regarding the lucidity of tourism Management.

The impact of this structure immediately displayed the impacts on the territory, by enforcing the permits for construction of hotels, reinforcing the need for detailed design and adaption with the current infrastructure and landscape.

Furthermore, in the *National Strategy of Tourism of 2007-2013* a more inclusive action plan and strategic objectives were clarified which was aiming to regulate the development of tourism especially in coastal areas and natural sites, supported also by large investments in International Touristic Campaigns such as:

- *The First Campaign "Albania, A new Mediterranean Love" in 2013*
- *The Second Campaign "Albania: Go Your Own Way" in 2014*

The aim of these campaigns was simultaneously directed towards:

- a) attracting more tourists considering the actual offer, the growth of job offers and the generated income, b) in the meantime attracting investors who were willing to commit to more complex projects which would create new incentives in the tourism development.

*The Law No. 93/2015 for Tourism* can be considered as the basic platform which has establishment the concepts like: specific definitions for the accommodation structures, services infrastructure, the institutions responsible for the tourism management, competences as well as the primary categories and classification for accommodation structures which was furthermore expanded in the Law Nr. 730/2016 and Law No. 711/2016 which define the principles, criteria, and procedures regarding the accommodation structures".



In the *National Tourism Strategy of 2014-2020*, tourism was identified as one of the main pillars of the economy and this strategy generated an inclusive platform which would create the appropriate steps toward a more coordinated, planned, strategized tourism development, while the approach of the recent *National Strategy (2019 – 2023)* is considered more holistic, by orienting the tourism growth towards sustainable tourism, which enforces the Vision of Albania “ ... as a hospitable, attractive, authentic destination for the development of economic, natural and social potentials of the country”.

This strategy is also elaborated in the context of extensive important relation between the tourism evolution and environment, which also was a product of the government strategic decision to correlate these two assets into one institution: “Ministry of Tourism and Environment” which also has chosen to decentralize certain components by delegating management towards the agencies like:

National Coastline Agency, National Agency of Protected Areas, National Agency of Environment and specific units like the Regional Committee for Tourism Development, Commission for Standardization of Tourism Activities, Inspectorate of tourism in collaboration with the designated units of the local government.

To summarize the sensitive importance of the specific steps taken towards the strategy, the tourism development actually is considered a strong component of the economy, where in 2017, it constituted 8.5% of the national GDP, with the expectation to achieve the rate of 9.3% of the GDP by 2028. Also, the employment share in the country regarding tourism is considerable since it compounds 7.7% of the whole employment. The complex nature and interaction of Tourism, has made necessary its inclusiveness in the “Law for Territorial Planning and Development”, in 2014 Tourism has been included in the Article 17, pg. 6323; as an integral part of the National Sectorial Plans<sup>25</sup> where the strategic development of the intertwined sectors like national security, energy, industry, transport, infrastructure, economic zones, education, sports, cultural and natural heritage, health, agriculture and waters.

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<sup>25</sup> Article 17, page 6232, the Official Publication of the Law Nr. 137, year 2014

The Ministry of Tourism and Environment has currently taken initiative and is participant in Balkan and European Projects like Interreg Balkan Mediterranean and EUSAIR<sup>26</sup> which bring together states of to work on areas of common interest especially those directions where states policies are interconnected due to territory, water or air.

#### 3.4.8 Albanian Legislation regarding accommodation offer and hospitality structures

In the first instance The National Strategy of Tourism 2019 – 2023, as the main document which tackles the tourism in general and accommodation needs specifically. This official document has been assessed with the focus of identifying issues, conditions or prerequisites regarding the accommodation sector.

In the Strategy, the deficiencies expressed can be grouped in six main categories defined in figure 10, where the accommodation infrastructure is tackled by the limited capacity of accommodation, not evaluated or rated quality in accommodation, poor connection with infrastructure and still with informality and ownership problematics.

In relation with the lack of accommodation, the government has taken initiatives to facilitate the process of permit for this typology of buildings, have increased in the last 5 years, the approval for construction permits, especially for resorts and have lowered the taxes for foreign investors.

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<sup>26</sup> (EUSAIR) is a macro-regional strategy adopted by the European Commission and endorsed by the European Council in 2014. The project covers nine countries: four EU Member States (Croatia, Greece, Italy, Slovenia) and five non-EU countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia) and Represents the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region as one of the four EU macro-regional strategies.



Figure 20: Problem Identification scheme from the National Strategy of Tourism

Even with these measures, the fluxes of visitors, guests and internal movements within the country, Albania is not able to meet the need for accommodation, which at the same time, constrain Albanians to have their vacations abroad.

“Such growing demand is associated by the increase of accommodation capacities from 60 hotels and 2,000 beds in 1995, to 300 hotels and 10,000 beds in 2013; which means a 5-time increase of capacities in 2 decades” (Aliaj, Janku, Allkja, & Dharmo, 2014)

The Classification of Accommodation Structures in Albania, are regulated in the process of design and construction, as well as in management level, according to legal framework:

1. Law No. 711/2016 For the Approval of the Regulation for the Conditions and Criteria’s for Designing and Construction of the Accommodation Structures<sup>27</sup>

<sup>27</sup> This Law is a derivation of the Law no. 93/2015 “For Tourism”

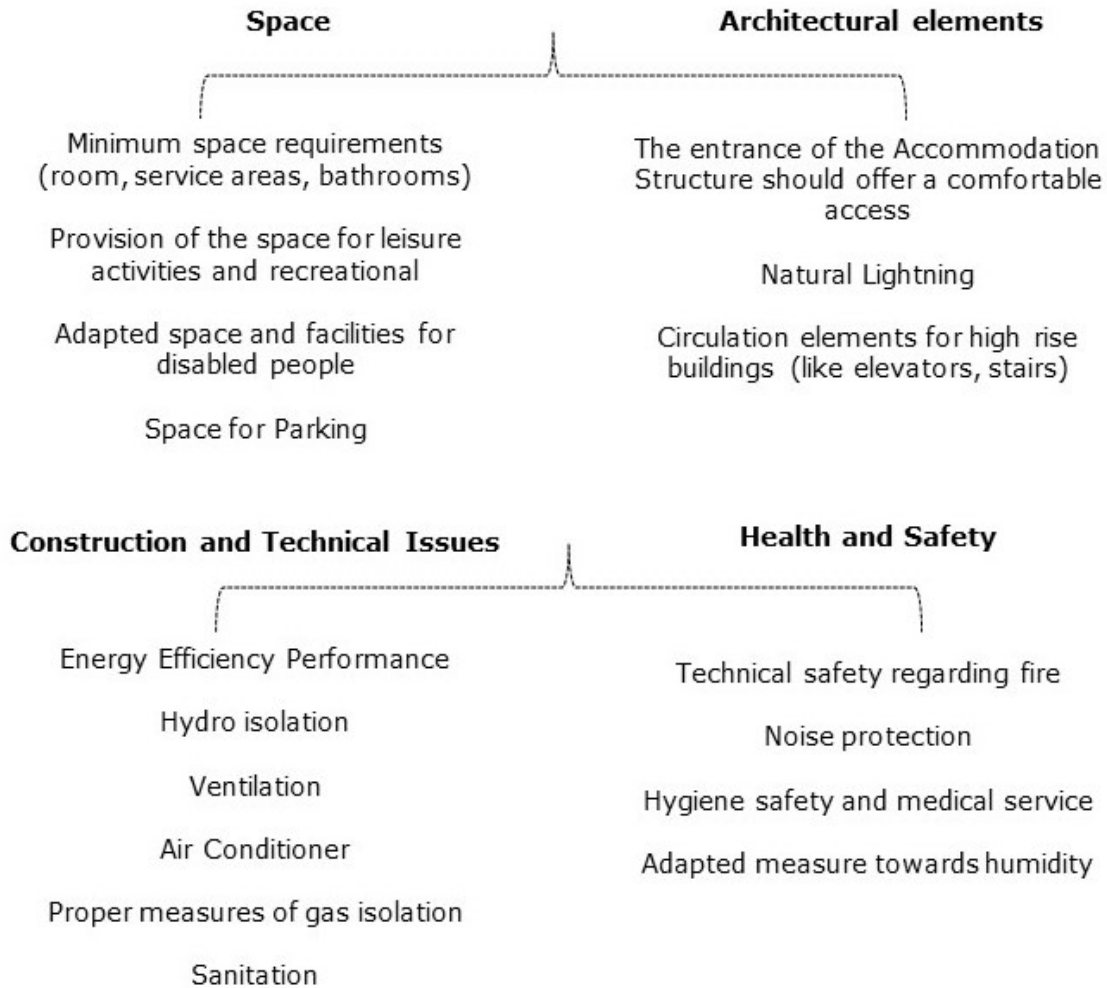
2. Law No. 730/2016 “For the Regulation of the conditions, criteria, tariffs, deadlines and procedures for the classification of the accommodation structures”.

The first Law, contains the main guideline in relation with the creation of an accommodation structure, which emphasizes the technical conditions of the design as well as the construction, by expressing the boundaries of respecting the cultural heritage. Beyond the specifications for safety due to the construction resistance, fire occasions or technical breakdowns, there are few components specified in terms of space, lightning or services which currently are limited in terms of architectural guidelines or materials.

Requirements or guidelines regarding architectural design are missing in this law, which mainly focuses in the space, safety of the guests and technical issues during design and construction.

The Second Law, aims to categorize the accommodation structures, by defining the typologies known by law to be serve as accommodation. space, reference fees and more extensively the process of applying for the license to exercise this type of business. In this Law also the Reference Fees are specified in order to avoid overindulgence.

**Requirements of Law No. 711/2016 Regarding:**



The Typologies known by the Albanian Law regarding tourist accommodation structures are organized in 8 categories as following:

- Hotel
- Guesthouses (Bujtina)
- Motel
- Bed & Breakfast
- Dormitories
- Resort
- Spa, Curative Centers
- Camping

Law No. 730/2016 defines the Standards and norms for projecting for each of the 8 categories, by addressing for each category specifically:

- Construction criteria's
- Space standard and requirements per room
- Size and type of common spaces
- Food and service
- Facilities and recreation
- Technical and security requirements
- Furniture, accessories
- Sanitary equipment's and accessories etc.

The two laws, leave out the component of architecture. Considering the nature of accommodation structures, it can be concluded that designing a hotel or another form of hospitality settlement is considered one of the more flexible typology in design, but lacking the minimal restrictions or confines regarding the Character and design of a new establishment without referring to the environment, landscape, any local identities, local materials etc., is considered during this research as one of the main reasons for speculations and overindulgence of the image of the new structures regarding the urban site where it might be actualized, historic or traditional background etc.

## Chapter 4: Albanian Touristic Accommodation Structures

### 4.1 Overview of the Architectural Typologies of Accommodation in Albania, through the lenses of history

The first traces of the accommodation structures in the territory of Albania are related to the ottoman conquest with the representation of Hans (Inns or Caravanserai) mainly for commercial functions. While the concept of the hotel was first represented during the period of Monarchy under the Italian assistance as a beginning of modern concept for tourism in the context of external affairs relations, dedicated for diplomatic affairs.

While the first settlements of hospitality can be tracked down to the ottoman periods with the typology of the inns<sup>28</sup> in the territory of Albania, there are no clear documentation regarding their actual number, considering also that few of them have been currently preserved till our days to be studied. According to (Porfido, 2018, p. 115), based on John Murray travel guide, the khans, in the territory of Albania, were positioned in the cities of Scodra, Durazzo, Tirana, Kavaja, Lushnja, Berat, Vlora, Tepelena, Gjirokastra, Saranda and Karaburun Peninsula.

In 1930 the overall number of touristic facilities was 34, diffused in 13 main cities of Albania, consequently in 1940, with 45 facilities, where almost 1/3 of them were located in Tirana, Durres and Kavaja.

In the framework of Albturist, in 1958, the total number of touristic settlements had achieved 57.

Today, according to electronic reservations hubs, there are more than 5600 accommodation units in Albania, which interpreted in relation with the type of tourism the majority of hospitality facilities is positioned in the seaside + lake shore in the amount of 66%, the 12 cities corresponding the region, take the portion of 33% of the accommodation, while the natural sites, even though they compound a considerable part of the territory, corresponds to only 1% of the accommodation in total.

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<sup>28</sup> Inns during the ottoman period are known with the name of hans or khans

Regions	1877
Seaside + Lake Shore	3737
Natural and Mountainous sites	45
Total Accommodation	5659

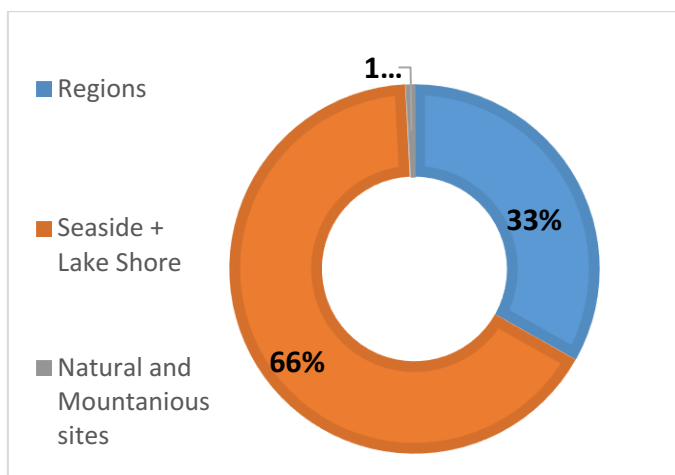


Figure 21: Division of Accommodation Structures regarding the typology of Tourism

The beginning of Communism in Albania has emerged the type of tourism based in the political ideology of the socialist state. In this period the foreign tourists had dedicated lodging facilities and treatment as an approach to display the achievements of the socialist state, meanwhile the inputs of a socialist state and the changes of the society created the second branch of the internal tourism related with the right and paid vacation for the citizens.

The fall of the communist regime, as in every aspect of the new democratic state has been producing constant challenges in tourism with the raising demand, capacities for accommodation and the typologies of hosting facilities which during the first 15 years have been generated in an uncontrollable path, followed by a more plan-based way, but lacking in managing in regional or national scale.

Considering the evolution of the typologies in the accommodation structures in the last two centuries also in the political and socio-economic conditions; in this research there are identified four main periods where tourist accommodation structures are reflected:

- Accommodation Typologies Previous 1912 (prior Independence)
- Accommodation Typologies during the Monarchy in Albania (1922-1939)
- Accommodation Typologies during Communism (1944 – 1990)



□ Accommodation Typologies during the transition phase which is divided in 2 periods (1990 – 2020):

- a) Mass / Informal Tourism
- b) Elite / Resort Era

**HISTORICAL TIMELINE FOR ACCOMMODATION STRUCTURES TYPOLOGIES**

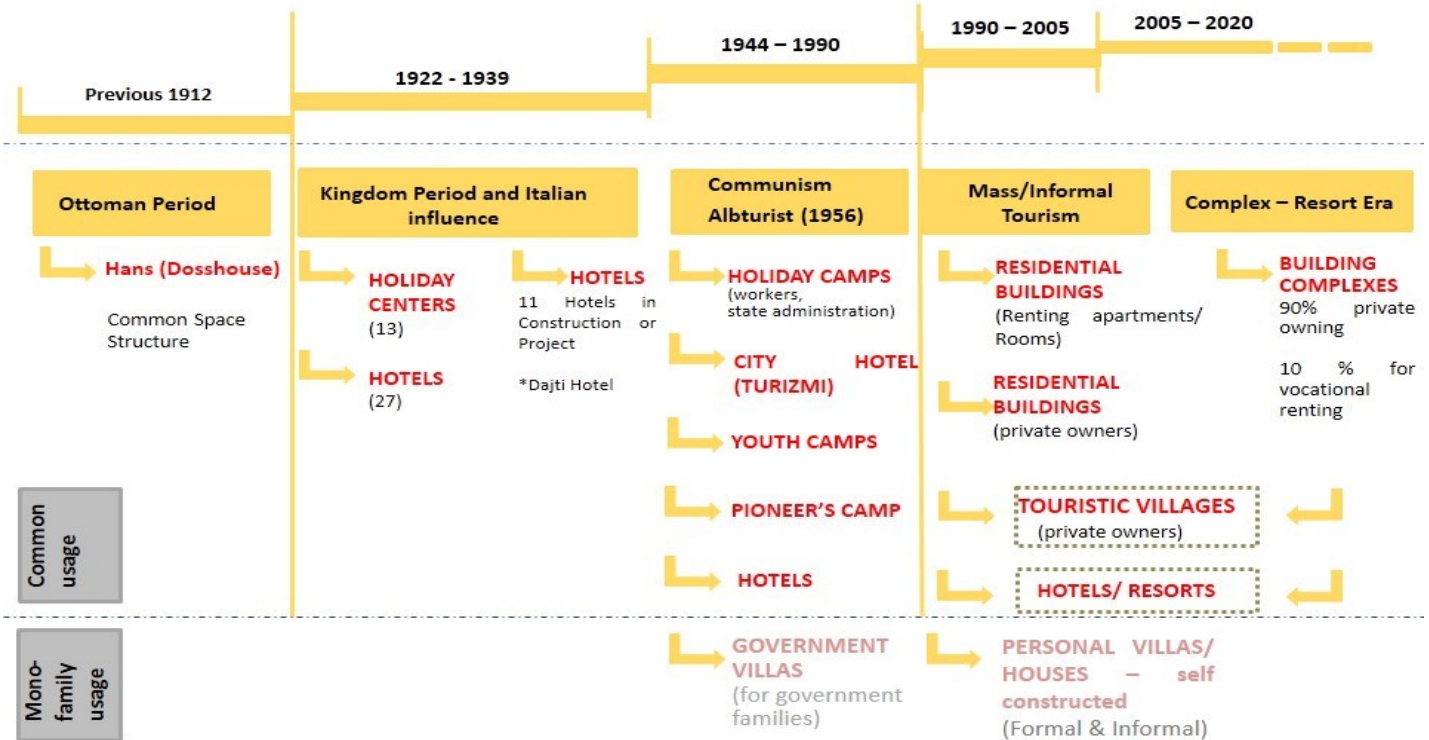


Figure 22: Historical Timeline for Accommodation Structures Typologies. Source: Author

4.1.1 First Accommodation Establishments (till 1912)

From the XIV-th Century, till the beginning of the XX-th century, the major part of the Balkan territories including Albania, were established under the Ottoman Empire, guided by the Sultan. From the beginning of this empire, the whole territory under it, served as nucleus of the centralized ottoman state, which also proclaimed a network of traveling combined with urban nodes, to articulate the power of this form of state, to meet the empire needs and develop the commercial trade. Sustained in this network, the economic potential was expanded, the craftsmen were positioned where they were

needed and the goods and ideas of every territory were brought in the core of the empire.

Meanwhile, the urban configurations of the cities occupied by the ottomans, along with the architectural features were mainly brought in other cities, sustaining this way not just the ideology but also the enforcement of the characteristics of Islam religion.

The core of the ottoman city which shthas also been displayed in Albanian cities are organized in between 3 main components:

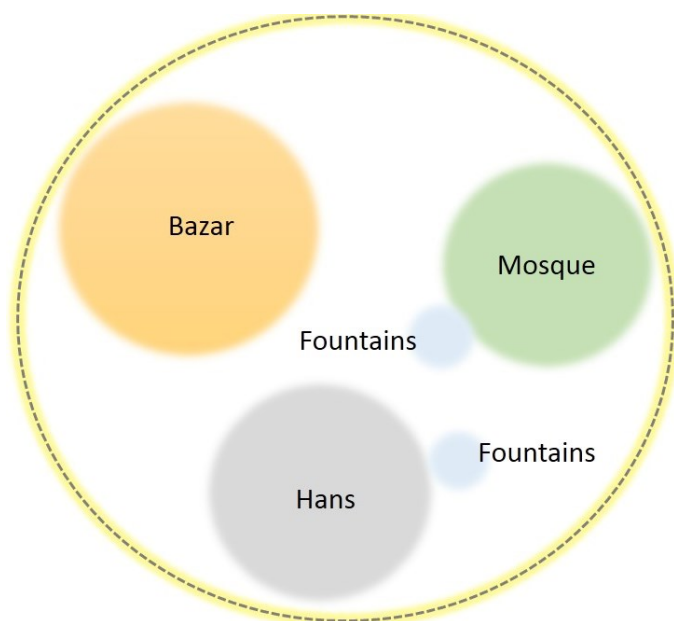
Religion – represented by the mosque, the main building typology of ottomans.

Hans (Inns) – which consisted on the 2nd main typology to provide accommodation for the merchants and travelers.

Bazar – the commercial heart of the city which is the initiating point for the whole ensemble.

Water presence – is an extensive urban elements like fountains or public bath which served not just for the functional reason but also as a part of religious practice.

Generally the urban core of an ottoman city was also actualized with the scenery of the clock tower which also satisfied the intension of the cities landmark.



The "urban core" of an ottoman city

Figure 23: The Urban Core of an ottoman city. Diagram from the author

The Albanian Territories being in the western Balkan, has been since roman times, in the crossroads of important trade routes, whilst during the ottoman period, the old routes which served the merchants for centuries were reconstructed by expanding the spatial distribution of the accommodation structures. These hospitality structures alongside the commercial roads were constructed with the indications of the ottoman architecture and during this period were known two types of hospitality structures:

a) Caravanserai

b) Hans (Known also as Khan or in)

a) Caravansarai originated by the Persian word “carvan” is a hospitality building dedicated to merchants who travel together. The typical Caravansarai is located alongside commercial roads, with the features of a monumental building, carved stone main portal, massive walls and a considerable sized courtyard.

The basic functions of Caravansarai or later called Seljuks Hans, were to provide:

- Safety which was ensured by the massive thick walls, a single entrance and small windows.
- Shelter for the traveller reserved on the first floor as well as for animals in the ground level.
- Service areas located alongside the courtyard including food supplies, bathing area, storage and religious area.

These buildings differ in size from 500m<sup>2</sup> to 4800m<sup>2</sup> and even though they didn't have an exact execution plan the main architectural characteristics are disclosed in a rectangular shape, build in local limestone, with only one entrance consisting also the most decorated element of the building with the Islamic feature called muqarnas. These buildings always provided an area for praying, sometimes even a separate own mosque in the interior, fireplaces, natural lighting reinforced by the ocul opening in the ceiling and ventilation system ensured by small holes in the structure. The water system supply was achieved by drainage and sewer which provided enough waters for the baths and fountains of the caravanserai.

The main configuration of architectural plans of this typology are categorized<sup>29</sup>:

1. *The covered plan Han* – the basic type, which consisted on a closed section for use primarily in winter and no courtyard included.

2. *The covered with courtyard plan* – the most used plan for Hans. The courtyard is generally arcaded by a vaulted system and positioned in the central or the front part of the building.

3. *The open courtyard plan* – summer Hans organized in arcades along the central open courtyard

4. *Concentric plan* – which is the evolved plan from the category 3 where the area of the animals is divided by the area of travellers.

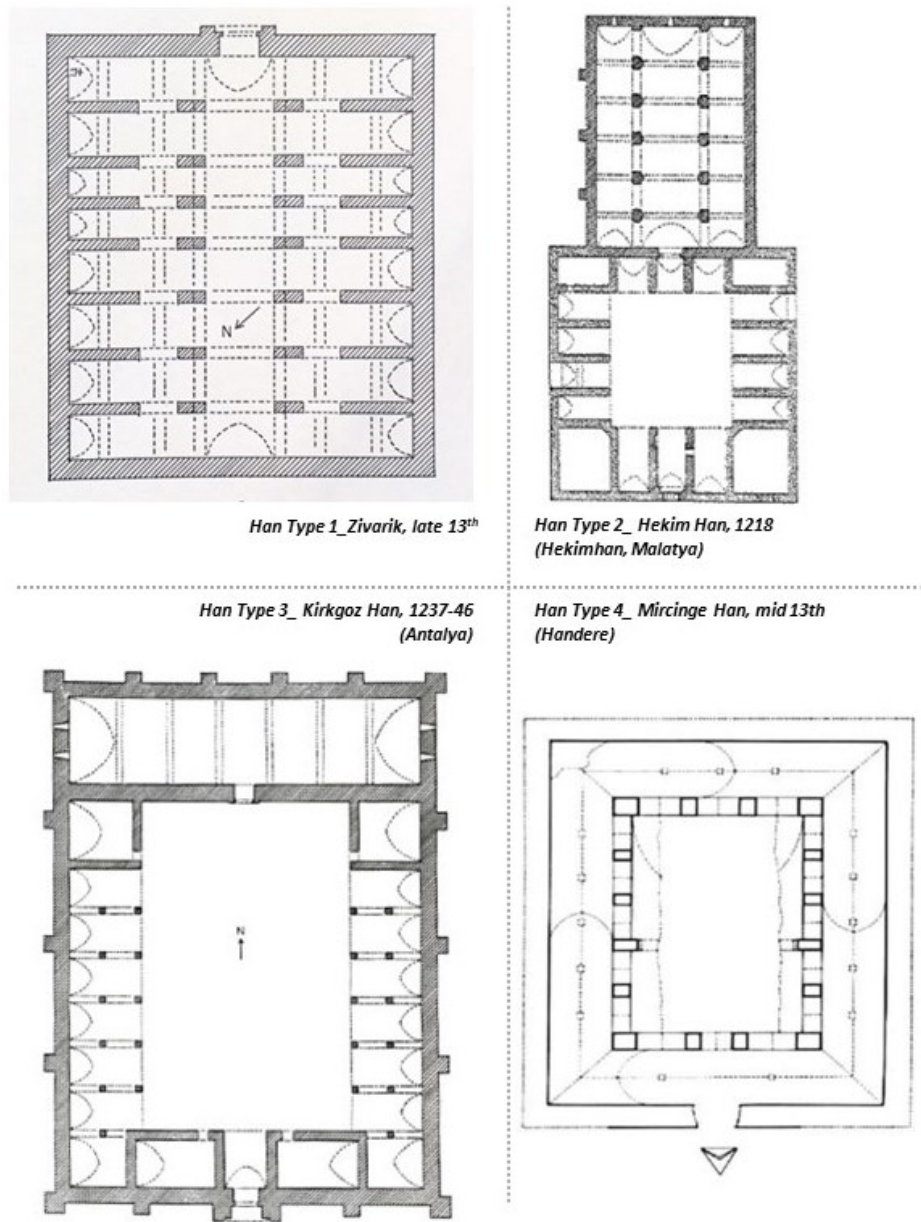


Figure 24: Spatial Typology of Khans. Source: <http://www.turkishhan.org/>

There have been no evidence of the existence of caravanserai in the territory of Albania, but since these structures have been multiplied also in the city centres, after the XIII- th century recognized as Hans, these structures have also been identified as the first accommodation structures in Albania. One of the main cities of this period,

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.turkishhan.org/plantypes.htm>

Korca, in the south-eastern part of Albania still preserves traces for 18 Hans<sup>30</sup> while recently have been returning to the restoration strategy and re-adapting the 3 remaining structures to the market. The Hans of the city are mainly related to an individual owner's name or related to the travelers which it hosted.

Han of Elbasan in Korca, is a comprehensive examples of the typology of Hans in Albania, located in the main entrance of Korca's Bazar, which according to Ashimi, G (2012) was a commercial heart for Albania, with almost 1000 shops during its peak life at the end of XIX-th century and beginning of XX-th century.

The building belongs to type 4 of the Hans. A triangle shaped courtyard cantering the fountain is the main nucleus. The ground floor is divided in spaces for shops, whilst the first floor, oriented through an open arcade gallery provides the rooms for accommodation with windows facing the courtyard. The cover is realized with vaults as a structure and roof as mantle.

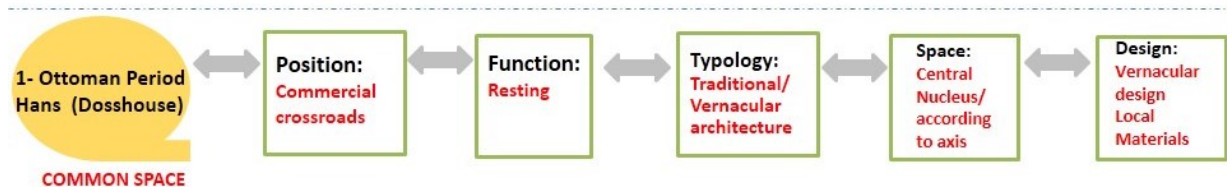


Figure 25: Representative Scheme of the Typology of Hans (Inns) in Albania. Source: Author

<sup>30</sup> Ashimi G. (20.08.2012), <http://gazeta-shqip.com/lajme/2012/08/20/hanet-ne-pazarin-e-vjeter-te-korces-dhe-degradimi-i-tyre/>



Figure 26a, b, c: Han of Elbasan in Korca  
Source: [www.foodyas.com](http://www.foodyas.com)

The typology of Hans, basically represents a replication of the traditional house, regarding its materials used (stone, wood, roof tiling) as well as by its architectural elements (presence of the courtyard, fireplace, small windows, gallery and water source). Regarding its functional and relevance, it introduces a common space for accommodation related mainly with commercial aspects or craftsmen and artist travellers, displaying an architecture with Islamic and Ottoman influences.

#### 4.1.2 Typologies of Accommodation during King Zog and under the Italian influence (1922 – 1939)

The origins of Tourism as an industry in Albania are first traced during the period of the Monarchy. The first establishment of tourism settlements have taken place during the Reigning of King Zog (1922-1939). With the orientation of King Zog towards Italian collaboration, especially after 1925, the organic structure of cities like Tirana and Durres, were gradually subject of mapping urban structures and developing urban plans<sup>31</sup>. The policy of the King for establishing Cities with well-formed urban structure was implicated also the architectural characteristics, which stated by several researches “architecture in Albania, during 1912 – 1944, even though has tried to find composing elements in the traditional architecture, still she was not capable to establish

<sup>31</sup> Tirana, the missing city. Dharmo, S.; Thomai, Gj.; Aliaj, B., POLIS Press 2016, ISBN 978-9928-228-23-9

original features, which resulted in mechanical union of borrowed architectural characteristics from neo classicism, eclectic and modern architecture<sup>32</sup>.

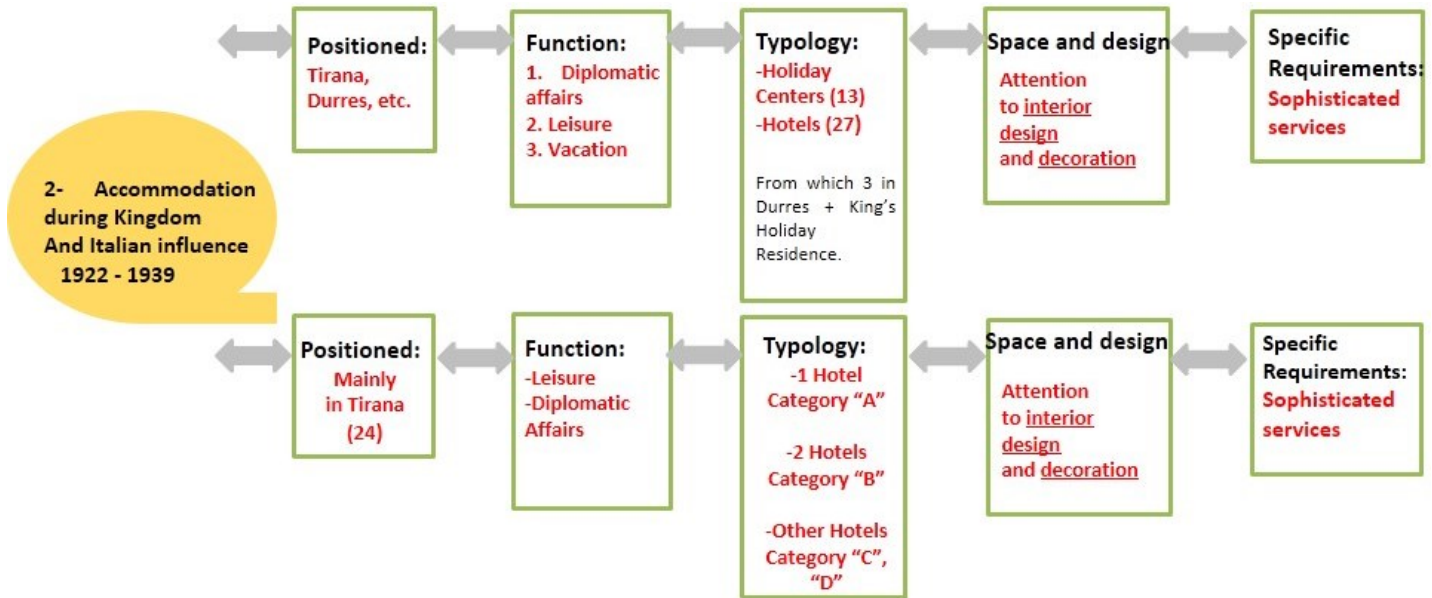


Figure 27: Representative Scheme of the Accommodation Structure Characteristics during Zog Kingdom. Source: Author

In the realm of a very turbulent foreign politics of Albania and the long road towards the recognition of the Independence of Albania by the European States, the Austro-Hungarian Empire has played a significant in the 'physical building' of the country, after ottoman post-occupation period. Infrastructural and Architectonic contribution of this Empire, was overlooked due to the following state establishment directed by King Zog, which intertwined their impact with the Italian State. The Italian Protectorate and furthermore, the four-year occupation of Fascist Italy (1939-1943), left in the Albanian territory the infrastructural foundation where the country would be further developed.

<sup>32</sup> Statement from "History of Architecture in Albania (1912-1944)". Tirana 1988, Faculty of Civil Engineering. Tirana University, from Sukaj, I.; Miho K.; Thomo, P.; Bushati, V.

The influence of Austro - Hungary in Albania, has taken place during the period of 1916-1935, contributing to the infrastructure and development of the country in the transition period from the first traces of the Albanian state, after gaining the Independence in 1912, to the First structured State of King Zog Reign.

The Austrian-Hungarian stimulus in the Albanian context was manifested in the typologies of housing, bridges and road infrastructure and less in social buildings categories like: schools, churches, hospitals etc. Since the frequent administrative changes during 1913 – 1921 impacted the territorial and political stability of Albanian State, the typology of hotel was not considered an exigency during this period, till 1922. In 1921, the Independence of Albania was finally recognized by the with the condition that Albania had to conformed under a special status, subordinated by Italian protection; preceding this way, the Italian influence which had the most contribution in the urban manifestation and infrastructural development as a foreign impaction.

It is quite understandable that the institutional relations of King, with diplomatic on other states, required the specific spaces and the adequate services that could match the royalty standard. It is recognized that it was not the quantity of touristic residencies that took the Major Attention, but mostly the requirements of the monarchy for sophisticated services and the first international promotions of the Touristic Albania. The typology of the “hotel” takes place during this period by positioning this typology in key parts of the cities in the same line with other important constructions.

Overall, during the Monarchy existence, it is thought to have been 13 holiday centres and 27 hotels in 14 cities<sup>33</sup> of Albania, (from which Durres, also the King’s Residence<sup>34</sup>). The Italian influences during the years 1939-1943 were most notable since Albania was under occupation of fascist Italian state. This regime, understands the promotion of the territory and the infrastructure investments as an expression of authority which indicates the creation of “a touristic system”, Entity of Albanian Tourist Hotels accompanied by a clear vision for the tourism development for this land on the other side of Adriatic.

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<sup>33</sup> <https://opinion.al/histori-hotelet-e-famshem-shqiptare-te-shekullit-xx/>

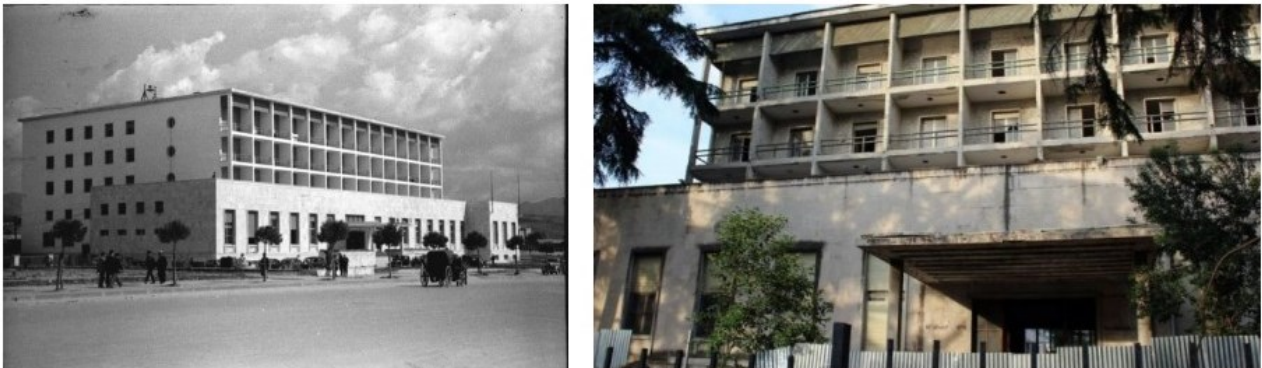
<sup>34</sup> *Tourism and holidays in Albania, from King Zog to dictator Enver Hoxha*, <https://javanews.al/turizmi-dhe-pushimet-ne-shqiperi-nqa-mbreti-zog-ne-dikatorin-enver-hoxha/>





*Figure 28: Hotel Dei Dogi, Durrës. Source: [www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com)*

During these years, several hotels were built in Albania, like “Hotel dei Dogi” in Durrës, Hotel “Dajti” in Tirana, mountainous hotel of Theth etc, each typology related with the development of several sectors of tourism.



*Figure 29: Dajti Hotel, Tirana. Source: [architectuul.com](http://architectuul.com)*

Hotel Dajti is one of the most representative examples of this period. Located in the main Boulevard of Tirana “Deshmoret e Kombit”, called by the Gherardo Bosio, “Viale dell’Impero”.

A category “A” hotel, facing the boulevard is harmonically positioned near other important institutional and cultural buildings by also restraining to the design criteria of this ensemble, respecting the volumes, height, proportions and relation with the boulevard. The hotel was one of the biggest in Balkan for the time and in modernist style compared to the European Buildings<sup>35</sup>. As a dedicated space for the European bourgeoisie and its long façade complemented the concept of the entire boulevard. The project itself transmits the pure “L” shaped volume, with elegant lines which would be serving 125 beds, in 91 rooms in 2000 m<sup>2</sup> interior surface and 12000 m<sup>2</sup> parks and green. The difference between the ground floor is visible and others, is visible since, in this floor are allocated the services.

This element is internally evidenced by the height of the ground floor and in the façade, is also treated with a dedicated volume. Construction technique, elevator, heating system and illumination were realized with the most developed technologies of time.

In summary: The architectural language of Dajti Hotel, was based in the rhythmic use of the facade’s elements, proportional and harmonious volumes in and of itself and by presenting a landmark in the city, dedicated to the ‘grandeur’ of architectural impact of the Italian influences of the time.

It’s most expressive elements beyond the main entrance is considered the interior space, which is composed in a pragmatic functionalist approach, but with a distinctive attention towards the details, materials, polyfunctionality and variability.

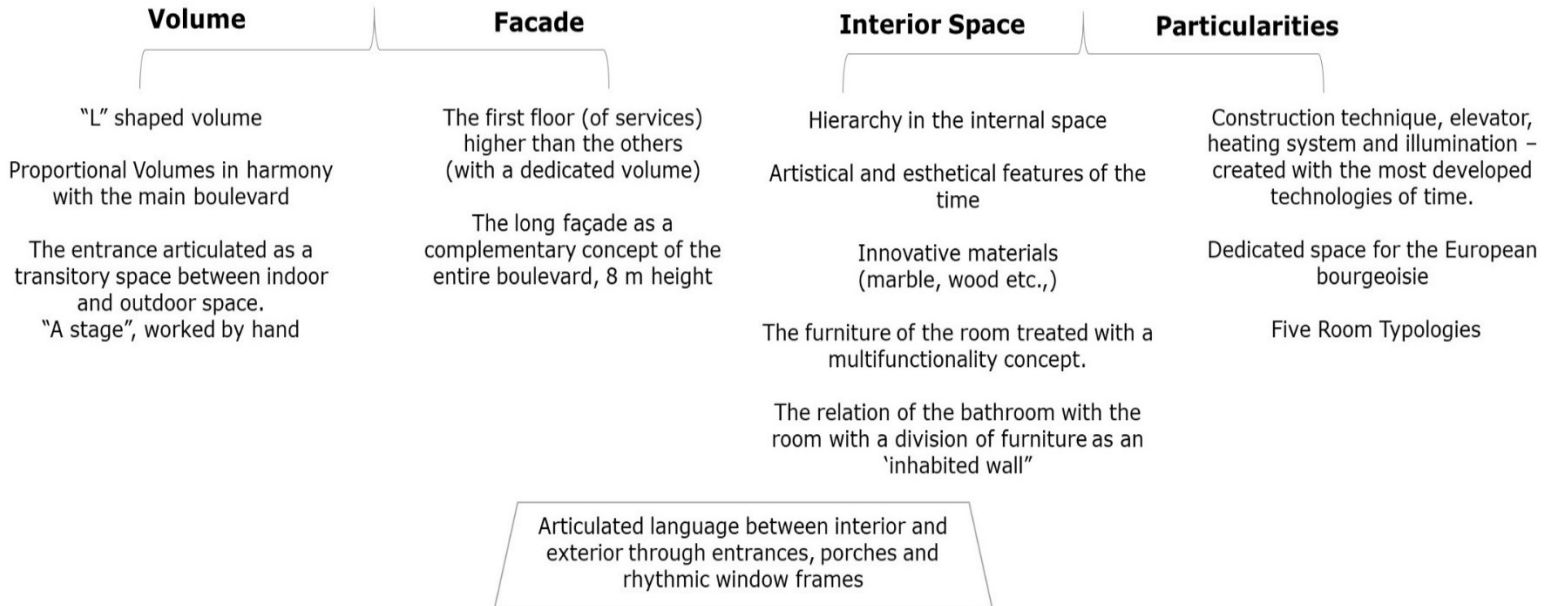
The hierarchy of the interior spaces, can be visible also in the exterior representation by having visibility also in the separability of the actual floors.

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<sup>35</sup> *Tirana Architectura e Citta, 1925-1943, Giusti,, M.A, Maschieto Editore, ISBN 88-88967-70-2*

**Name:** Dajti Hotel  
**Architect:** Gherardo Bosio  
**Location:** Main Boulevard in Tirana (today: Blv. Deshmoret e Kombit)  
**Time of Construction:** 1939 - 1940

**Capacity:** 125 beds | in 91 rooms  
**Space:** 2000 m<sup>2</sup> interior surface | 12000 m<sup>2</sup> parks and green



*Figure 30: Descriptive Analysis of Dajti Hotel.*  
 Source: Author

During this period, a portfolio of wide portfolio of hotels were constructed, with distribution in the main cities and the cities with special interest. In the figure below there is a listing of the hotels of the time.

City	Hotel	Rooms
<b>Tirana</b>	Hotel Continentale, rruga Pjeter Bogdani	40
	Hotel Durazzo	-
	Hotel Imperiale, bulevardi Vittorio Emanuele	20
	Hotel Internazionale, bulevardi Mussolini	-
	Hotel Metropoli, bulevardi mbreteresha Elena	-
	Hotel Reale, rruga e Dibres	10
	Hotel Regina, bulevardi Vittorio Emanuele	-
<b>Durazzo</b>	Hotel Augusteo	6
<b>Durrës</b>	Albergo dei Dogi, sheshi princ Umberto	-
	Hotel Europa	-
	Hotel Internazionale	-
	Hotel Iola	8
	Hotel Isola Bella	12
	Hotel Pallas	-
	Hotel Splendido, bulevardi Vittorio Emanuele III	-
<b>Argirocastro Gjirokaster</b>	Hotel Impero	-
	Hotel Reale	-
	Hotel Savoia	-
<b>Berat</b>	Hotel Colombo, rruga Mbretnore	16
	Hotel Savoia, rruga Mbretnore	4
	Hotel Tirana, Lek Dukagjini 8	-
<b>Coriza Korçe</b>	Hotel Imperial	-
	Hotel Roma	-
	Hotel Pallas, rruga San Giorgio	18
<b>Elbasan</b>	Hotel Principe	-
	Grande Albergo	8
<b>Fier</b>	Hotel Illyria	-
<b>Kavaje</b>	Hotel Adriatik	-
	Hotel Elbasan	-
	Hotel Korça	-
	Hotel Skandenberg	-
	Hotel Vlora	-
<b>Kukes</b>	Hotel Italia or "Alberghetto"	-
<b>Permet</b>	Hotel Adriatik	-
	Hotel Europa	-
<b>Peshkopi</b>	Hotel Qendra	-
	Hotel Defrimi	-
<b>Perparimi Pogradec</b>	Hotel Reale	5
<b>Sarande</b>	Hotel Bella Venezia	-
	Hotel Kastriota Pallas	-
	Hotel Pirro	-
<b>Shijak</b>	Hotel Agimi, sheshi B. Mussolini	-
<b>Scutari</b>	Hotel Imperiale, prane lulishtes	15
<b>Shkoder</b>	Grande Albergo, prane lulishtes	12
<b>Vlorë</b>	Hotel Gambino, sheshi i Xhamisë	10

Figure 31: List of Hotels Constructed during the Kingdom Period and Italian colonization.  
Source: (Porfido, 2018)

### 4.1.3 Hotel Typologies during Communism (1944 – 1990)

From 1944, when Communism in Albania took power, another panorama begins to appear. The Communist State of Albania begin focusing in the touristic development, when it realized that it served its ideological statement. To enhance this kind of statement, also the Agency “Albturist”<sup>36</sup> was created in 1956. So, the development of touristic structures is not a purpose itself, since the Tourism itself is not an aim, but a political mean to express the system ideology. The regime’s priorities were focused in the industrial sector and the agricultural development, which shifted the focus from tourism. Also, the collapse of political relations with other socialist countries, Yugoslavia (in 1948), The Soviet Union (in 1961) and China (in 1978) have emerged the further isolation of Albania towards foreign tourism approaches, unlike neighbours like Greece or Yugoslavia which followed an open attitude to the tourism dynamics of the time. These political decisions, reinforced the concept of self-perceived pursuit of “Socialism in one Country”<sup>37</sup>.

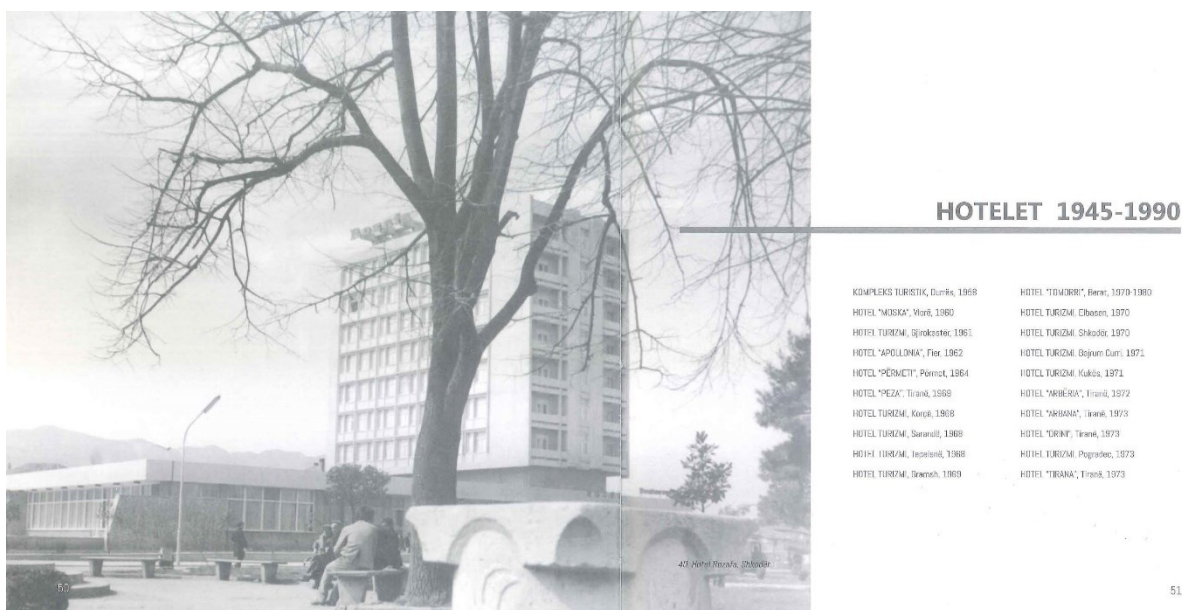


Figure 32: Rozafa Hotel, Shkoder.  
Source: (Thomai, Nepravishita, & Boriçi, 2019)

<sup>36</sup> Albturist (initially modelled on Intourist), represents the state monopoly machinery covering all tourist activities-accommodation, catering, transport, foreign exchange shopping, foreign language guides, and external franchises. (Hall, D. R.; 1984)

<sup>37</sup> Hall, D.R. (1984). Foreign Tourism under Socialism. The Albanian “Stalinist” Model, *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol 11, pp 539-555

The foreigner tourists which were allowed to visit Albania, had a hermetic structure provided by the Albturist Agency responsible for defining the lodging, itinerary and services, including the pre-selection or Visa Process, to guarantee the control and to reduce the contact with the outsiders and youth to spend vacations and curative treatments for the part of the society which needed access to curative sites.

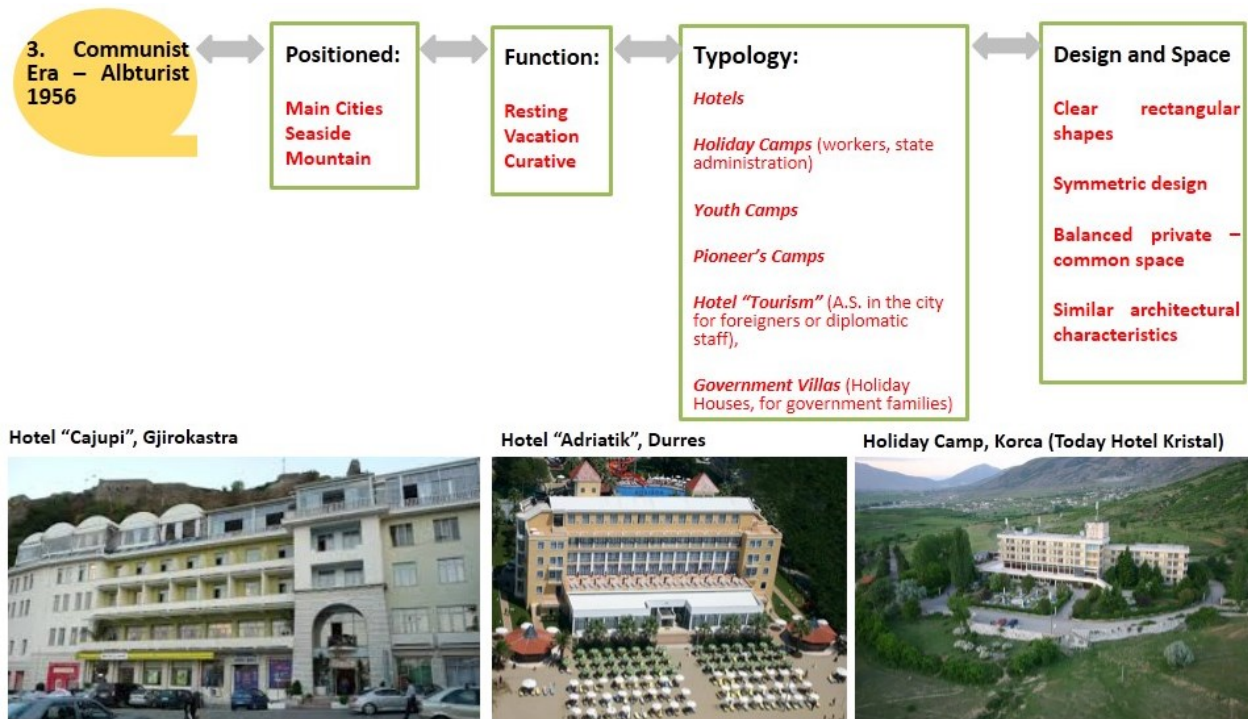


Figure 33: Representative Scheme of the Accommodation Structures during Communism in Albania.  
Source: Internet

In communist Albania, the main accommodation structures were represented in the functional typology of:

- **Holiday Camps** (dedicated to workers, state administration or specific groups of population positioned in the seaside)
- **Pioneer's Camp** (Youth Camps for spending holidays)
- **Hotels or Hotel "Tourizmi"** (an accommodation structure within the city which generally expected administrative or diplomatic staff but do not always comply standards)

- **Mountainous or Curative Hotels** (related to thermal waters and the
- **Government Villas** (Holiday Houses, designed for the government families and not open for the public) acquirement

In controversial approach with the architecture during the monarchy, which was influenced by Italian and Austrian architecture, during communism it is the eastern Russian and Bulgarian impact dominant in design, especially till 1960<sup>38</sup>.

The architecture of these structures was generally influenced by the overbearing influence of the ideology, by resulting in standardized architectural configurations, explicit simple volumes, mere concepts which were also directed by the economic factor seeking to construct with affordable cost. Attempts for manifesting audacious architectural premises were not accepted and, in some cases, punished to be in line with the rules of the socialist state. It would have been after 1985 when the architects would outmatch the visualization of the Albanian simple modernism, to surpass the ideological obstacles in order to give space more European influences.

The main region who contributed in the domestic tourism communism was the city of Durrës, which represented almost 40% of the accommodation facilities for vacations followed by waterside of Pogradec, the capital Tirana, Saranda, Vlora and Korca; as well as curative sites of Kruja, Elbasan and Peshkopia.

Hotel Adriatik inaugurated in 1958 was one of the most articulated modernist architecture, positioned in the Adriatic coastline of Durrës, even though after the 60' the concept of Tourism, and its form of management was entirely changed and controlled by the communist state.

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<sup>38</sup> *Hotels before 1990. The Development of the Typology in Albania.* Thomai, Gj.; Nepravishta, F.; Borici, O. Tirana 2019. ISBN 978-9928-131-80-5

#### 4.1.4 The Years of transition

With the fall of communism in 1990, just like every aspect of the society, the touristic accommodation structures were developed more freely. This was a phenomenon accompanied by the necessity for increased number of touristic structures, since the state was now open to be visited. From personal villas in the seaside to cabins in the mountain; from collective buildings to a resort type construction, were developed in specific parcels, without specific plans or spatially oriented till last decade. The political and socio-economic situation during 30 years of transition has shaped also the display of architecture and the urban development by eventually resulting in a chaotic dispersion of construction, alienation of the city's image, densified cities as result of internal migration and experimentation in architectural design.

“The stronger the control by state and institutions during the authoritarian regime was, the more the post-communist society tries to escape this control in the times of transition”

(Bickert & Vorpsi, 2021, p. 133)

In the three decades of aftermath for the development of Albania, especially in the tourism field, trends and evolutions regarding the manifestation of tourism and the architecture for tourism, patterns and assessing evolvments can be identified.

According to the data of the Ministry of Tourism, the number of visitors in Albania after 1991, has been raising considerably, by multiplying itself each year by positioning tourism as the main potential economic sector. Even though the difficult times of the pyramid scheme have had its impact also in the accommodation sector by injecting the insecurity and deficiency between different governments and the private investments, the cramp seems to have reached a dissolving point with the beginning of the millennium. The initiation of the governmental management over the territory and the economic raise, contributed to a different approach to build for touristic accommodation.



Considering the fact that till the end of communism, the typology of the hotel was related to the representation need of the power, the beginning of a new system has raised now issues not just in the functionality of the hotels but also in esthetical and service level. After 1991, the diversity of the typologies was a clear appearance of the situation that the country was experiencing.

The typologies of Accommodation structures in Albania after 1990's in concordance with the conditions of development are categorized in two main periods:

- a) The period of Mass Tourism. Informal Phase (1990 – 2005)
- b) Planning and Design Based Phase (2005 – 2020)

#### 4.1.5 Mass Tourism: Accommodation structures in the “Informal Phase” (1990 – 2005)

During the first part of the transitional period in Albania, the economy dynamics, the freedom of speech, competitiveness, making business as well as construction have addressed the immediate issue for meeting the needs, achieving functionality and after 56 years of harsh regime, has left the citizens, architects and policymakers, perplexed in identifying an authentic architectural language.

“The first decade from 1990 to 2000 the country has gone in a transition development the tourism, construction, structures management field was left entirely in the hands of its tourist operator” (Kapllani, 2018, p. 42).

There were several indicators which after the 1990's has posed the premises for the tourism development, beside the natural resources:

- The political opening of Albania.
- The gradually entrance of Albania in different organizations.
- The evaluation of tourism as a perspective branch in the economy.
- The revival in different sectors of economy related to tourism like infrastructure, transportation, construction sector, services etc.
- Raise of the Albanian and foreign investments.
- Remittances from the emigrants

Whiles the motor of the post-communist economy during these years were currently operating, the problematic issues regarding the tourism infrastructure were presented in two levels:

- *Urban chaotic transformations*
- *Uncontrolled construction results* followed by buildings with an uncertain architectural concepts and visualizations.

The architectural forms presented to us during this period, has been a combination and experimentation of a series styles like modernism, postmodernism, neo-classicism, baroque etc. generally characterized by the absence of plan-based project. The combination of different architectural styles, forms, materials without any specific criteria or order, in a single building has produced also a Balkan phenomenon called: "Turbo-Architecture"<sup>39</sup>. As a tool used to oppose the basic geometrical forms, modernism itself and the harsh limitations, this style had its own 'radiance' in Albania, through the need to extract local features, by returning to the oriental influences, since the authentical origins are missing.

The combination of solid simple concrete forms with turbo-architecture based buildings have given the construction landscape of the coastlines, especially in Durres, Shengjin, Vlora etc.

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<sup>39</sup> *Turbo Architecture was 'gestated' in Serbia, after the 1990's as part of "Turbo Folk" Culture. This trend, aiming to object the doctrines, mixing the local components with the oriental origins, has been extended in different areas of the culture as well as globalized. Searching to oppose and break the inherited cultural and architectural rules, Turbo Architecture is considered by Srdjan Jovanović Weiss in the Article "Turbo Architecture as "[...] Turbo architecture consciously or unconsciously leans toward Oriental sources, presenting them as authentically local. [...] Turbo architecture is against orthogonal form, but is based on technology that supports this form. Thus, it tries to bend it, twist it, decorate it, cover it, disarm its interiors with a secondary layer of materials; it unites the expressive formal possibilities of modernist technology and traditional form until its primary sources are indistinguishable". (Weiss)*

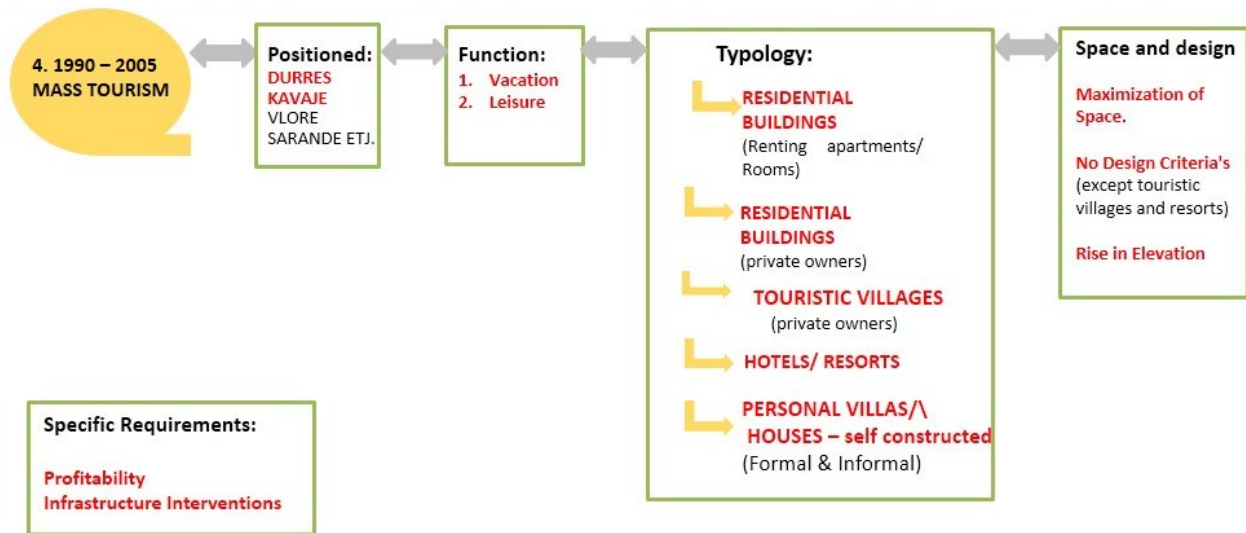


Figure 34: Representative Scheme Accommodation Structures during "The Mass / Informal Tourism.  
Source: Author

The main typologies dominating the period of Mass Tourism in the construction of accommodation structures during this period were represented by:

1. Residential Buildings
2. Touristic Villages
3. Resorts and Hotels
4. Self-constructed houses and villas

These four categories are analyzed through photographic documentation, descriptive analysis and background research separately, while in a holistic diagram the architectural language, space, relation with context, structure and materials, are visualized at the end of this section, to generate a comprehensive overview of the manifestation of these typologies.

## 1. Residential Buildings:



Figure 35. a) Residential Touristic Properties in Durres Beach. Source: telegrafi.com  
b) Dielli Residence Golem. Source: Booked.net

During the first decade after the fall of the Regime in Albania, the construction sector experienced an eventual high raise. This change has been also followed by the inability of the state to control the territory, especially in the housing sector, since the free movement in the democracy was stimulating the citizens or villagers to move to bigger urban centers for greater possibilities in employment, education, healthcare, services etc.

After the component of housing dominating the informality of construction, accommodation sector was one of the most significant which reflected major amount of informality in construction. This situation influenced the typology or architecture as well as the urban conception in the main affected areas. Legislation about urban development were still vague and the state monitoring quite in-existent which led also to additional problems for this property, related not just with the building itself, but also with the context and environment, such as the tight distance between the buildings, vicinity with the sea, lack of public or green spaces, poor infrastructure and problems in water supply and sewage system, which are still not resolved completely.

The informality in the coastal areas was mainly displayed in the forms of 4-10 stories residential buildings constructed by first constructing enterprises with two destinations:

- a) Selling the apartment to private owners which would have a second house, a vacation house in disposal. This form was the one dominating the market in the coastline
- b) Building High Rise Residencies for Rent purposes, possible and achievable only for those entrepreneurs who were investing in the tourism sector.

Despite the fact that the first typology was intended for personal use, the curve of the tourism development in Albania, harbored the need for accommodation which could be combined with potential use of these buildings. This is the reason why most of the owners have let their apartments during the season period.

The residential buildings are considered primarily a concept of 'second housing', which would create opportunities for the buying family or person to use it individually or to introduce it to the tourism market in order to achieve also extra money. They are configured as single building units, but that can be part of an integrated complex. Their height in the beginning was elevated till 4-5 stories height to be extended further more in 8 – 10 stories height.

Architecturally, these buildings cannot be considered to have specific values, they are characterized by the 'box' concept, simple volumes constructed with cheap materials which aim to maximize use of space in favor of internal used space.

Considering the informal market of the period, these buildings, were constructed with poor or no architectural plan. Since the construction market was not legally regulated, there were no restrictions regarding construction itself or architectural language, which also imposed other issues during the course of the decade 1990 – 2000 which is evidenced in the process of adding stores in elevation, to gain more profitability or extension furthermore than the original construction in the ground floor space.

Even though these buildings could be part of a holistic complex, there are not explicit traces of integration within through architectural language or with the context.

Due to lack of restriction regarding the technical or urban boundaries of construction near the coastline, these constructions generally occupy the space close to the sea. This approach was also one of the contributors of the aftermath of the strong

earthquake of November 2019, with epicenter in Durrës, which demolished a considerable amount of these buildings among others.

This typology dominates the coastline near the main seaside cities like Durrës, Kavaja, Lezha, Shkodra, Vlora and especially Saranda.

## 2. Touristic Villages

This category of accommodation structures has been emerging after the year 2000, where the economy has been having steps of recovery and a new growth curve, after the civil war and the pyramidal schemes of 1997.

The actual growth complies with a raise of expectations also in the tourism sector regarding the quality of construction in accommodation structures, the use of space, presence of open spaces, green areas and other facilities, which resulted in the first attempts for touristic villages.

Even in this case, the developer's interest (usually coincide with the construction company) was the fast-profitability. The touristic villages ended being private villas of apartments for the part of society who can afford them. This of course generated big occupied surfaces for private use, sold once and not entering the tourism market at all



Figure 36. a) Touristic villages in Qerret. b) Touristic Villages in Golem.  
Source: [albaniapropertygroup.com](http://albaniapropertygroup.com)

The typology of the tourist village's buildings is represented as a low-rise building, from 2 – 3 stores, which is intended for users of middle or high – income in the form of an individual or shared villa. The space created in the enclosed complex is considered more private, with wide areas for relaxation, green areas and the needed services. Considering the bigger investment and the targeted clients, these complexes are actually constructed under the conditions of the project-based approach, to ensure the urban design and quality of space needed. These 'villages' are the primary model of the onward typology of Resort, which is designed and sold for individuals by creating almost entirely a private space, with private beaches, spaces for parking and other facilities for each villa.

This typology has begun in the seaside of Kavaja and now it has expanded under the umbrella of the 'resort' also in other areas and in the Ionian Sea also.

### 3. Small Resorts and Hotels



Figure 37.a) Fafa Resort, Golem. Source: mtitravel.al  
b) Dolce Vita Hotel, Durres. Source: uniline.hr

The Hotel as a typology and the Small Resorts have been the last to develop during this phase, mostly in the years 2000 – 2005. The passing 10 years have offered the basic experience in the tourism sector and the raise in the number of tourists visiting Albania, raised the requirements for standards in accommodation facilities and service.

Now the accommodation facilities would have to reach not just the leisure needs mostly in the vacation season, but also fulfill other requests like: space for business, restaurants and cafes, SPA or sport activities.

On the other hand, this typology is the main profitable in the market of tourism, since it is constructed with the intension.

In most cases, their architectural language is experimental, oriented toward architectural elements borrowed from modernism, classicism and baroque as a form of manifestation and connection with the European architectonic heritage. The hotel of this time is constructed as a single building, with no extended relation with the other constructions or the landscape.

These buildings are constructed massively in concrete, combined oftentimes with steel and glass, which are considered innovative materials for the time and generated an entangled view of the façade.

These types of buildings, which varies till 6-7 stories high are built with an architectural project with permission according to the actual laws regarding construction, frequently expressing an Exaggerated use of architectural styles.

The concept of services for the guests have been introduced in this category, which has offered facilities for leisure, business, drinking and food services, while being 'at the foot of the sea'

While the typology of the first category of resorts during this period of the mass tourism, is quite similar with the Hotel, the difference lies in the representation as more complex than one unit, while expanding the services granted and offering more variability in activities during the chosen vacation, like swimming pools, different sports or water sports etc.



## 1. Self-constructed houses and villas

The further mentioned category, actually cannot be considered as a typology of touristic accommodation itself. Their involvement in the hospitality market can be understood as indirect, and oriented by the opportunity of benefiting in a dynamic and unregulated economy in 'hunger' for services.

The self – constructed villas were basically private executions generally by families who has migrated from other cities of Albania or from the local who had sought to secede from the big traditional family by using the extra income especially from the remittances. These buildings at first for housing purposes by changing their destination eventually for-profit purposes. In this process there is no project and the construction itself is conducted by the family, sometimes with external help. The seaside of Durres and Kavaja have the major number of these constructions.



Figure 38: a) Private Villa in Durres. Source: *mirlir.com*  
b) Private Villa in Golem. Source: *merrjep.al*

This typology is a product of the informality in construction, built with cheap materials, no previous design or project which reached 1-4 stories height totally or partially constructed, which now is not so popular as a touristic facility.

TPOLOGY	POSITION	ARCHITECTURE	SPACE AND DESIGN	RELATION WITH CONTEXT	STRUCTURE AND MATERIALS	SERVICES
<b>Residential Buildings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Coastline of main cities like Durres, Kavaja, Lezha, Shkodra, Vlora and Saranda.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Single Building unit</li> <li>✓ Built with poor or no architectural plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The rise in elevation (at least 4-5 stories till 8-10 stories high)</li> <li>✓ No focus on design but in function</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ No integration with the context &amp; infrastructure</li> <li>✓ Close to the sea shore</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Generally Concrete Construction</li> <li>✓ Cheap materials used</li> <li>✓ Total or partial informality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Vacation</li> <li>✓ Leisure</li> </ul>
<b>Touristic Villages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Coastline of Durres and Kavaja</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The project is Design Based built with legal construction permit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Low rise building</li> <li>✓ Single or shared Villa</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The urban design of the whole complex is designed</li> <li>✓ Presence of open spaces and Green Spaces</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Acceptable quality of materials and construction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Leisure</li> <li>✓ Vacation</li> <li>✓ Parking place</li> <li>✓ Private Beaches</li> </ul>
<b>Hotels</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Adriatic and Ionian Coastline</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Single Building unit</li> <li>✓ Built with a design project with legal permission</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Maximization of space (interior or outside)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ No connection with the context</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Adriatic and Ionian Coastline</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Leisure and recreation</li> <li>✓ Vacation</li> <li>✓ Business facilities</li> <li>✓ Parking place</li> <li>✓ Private Beaches</li> </ul>
<b>Resorts</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Complex Design with more than one unit</li> <li>✓ Built with a design project with legal permission</li> <li>✓ Exaggerated use of architectural styles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The rise in elevation (till 6-7 stories high)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The Design of the Complex inclusively conceived</li> <li>✓ No extended relation beyond</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Concrete Construction combined with steel</li> <li>✓ Use of new materials in structure &amp; façade</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Bars and Restaurants,</li> <li>✓ Health care, sports and swimming pools</li> </ul>
<b>Self-constructed houses and villas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Coastline of Durres and Kavaja (Golem, Qerret, Kavaja Cliff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Originally build for housinh</li> <li>✓ No project or design</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Single unit, 1-4 stories height</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Adapted for leasing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Cheap construction materials (concrete or bricks)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Personal yard</li> </ul>

Figure 39: Descriptive Matrix Analysis of the Typologies of Accommodation Evolved during the "Mass Tourism" (1990 – 2015)

#### 4.1.6 Elite Tourism: Accommodation Structures during “Planning and Design Based Phase” (2005 – 2020)

During the last 20 years on the overall economy of Albania, the data sustain that construction is one of the most profitable sectors for entrepreneurs. The combination of the low cost of construction with the high price in sale, makes the field very competitive among construction companies.

Adding the component of building for tourism purposes creates the perfect conditions for the birth and evolution of big resorts, beside the hotel typology.

During this period, specifically with the year 2003, beginning with Tirana, the period of the competitions begins to take place which awakened the government, the construction centre, architects and also the society about the aesthetics of architecture and the need for a new design. Different competitions for new Commercial buildings, housing complexes and public buildings raised the issues of contemporary architecture in Albania by implementing the foreign experience in the projects but also prompting the Albanian architects to invest more in the external design of their buildings. Innovative ideas are expressed after this moment in any typology of building, including the typology of hotels and resort.

- ❖ During the **Second Phase of Planning and Design Based Phase**, there are two main typologies emerging in the general panorama of tourism with more concentration along the coastline, the typology of resorts and hotels.

# 1. Resorts

These structures are mainly located in large surfaces occupying much land or in beautiful intact beaches along the coastline. The main localization is focused in the the Adriatic Coastline (Lalzi Bay and Rodon Bay) in northern part of Durres, as well as in Ionian Coastline (Palasa Beach, Drimadhes and Dhermi Beach)

The linking economic reason behind the construction of resorts is strictly related to fast profitability. Among these facilities, almost 90% of the accommodation units (villas or apartments) are built for immediate sale whiles approximately 10% are destined for leasing during the season. This formula, raises quickly the income of the construction company but as in the third category (small resorts and hotels), there is a small surface generally dedicated for a hotel, within these complexes which is actually an active component of profitability in tourism.

## Planning and Design Based Phase (2005 – 2020)

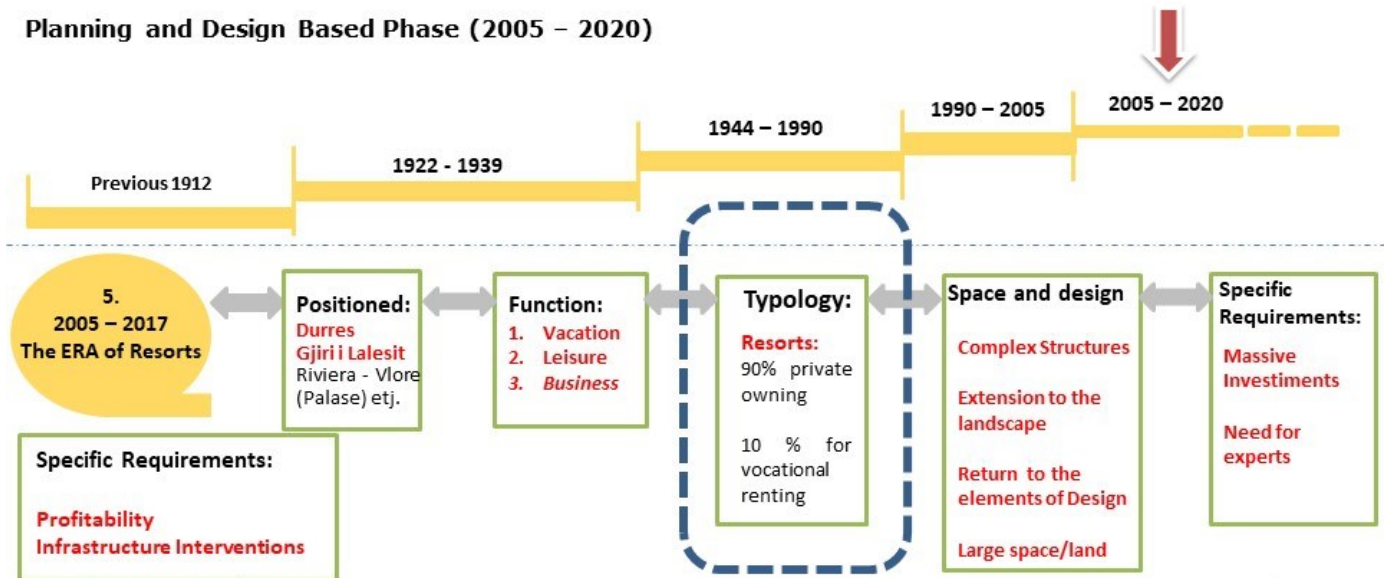


Figure 40: Representative Scheme Accommodation Structures during "Planning and Design Based Phase. Source: Author

The new Resorts concepts are widely spread in the terrain, formulated with low rise units, which try to merge with the terrain. The design is highly considered in the case of the resorts, focusing in the exterior for unification of the complex and merging with the landscape, which seems like a continuation of the concept “Terraced Hotel Type”, formulated in 1960’s in Europe (Example: Hotel do Mar in Sesimbra, Portugal 1960-1963)<sup>40</sup> .

Every unit is associated with its personal space for sunbathing, including personal pools, exclusive sea view with large windows to experience the whole view. The construction materials are chosen carefully in line with the whole design of the complexes.



Figure 41. a) Kepmerli Resort, Ksamil. Source: [pinterest.com](#)  
b) Green Coast Resort, Palase. Source: [inf-93.com](#)



Figure 42: a) San Pietro Resor, Lalzi Bay. Source: [sanpietro.al](#)  
b) Lura Resort, Lalzi Bay. Source: [euroestate.al](#)

<sup>40</sup> Beyer, E., Hagemann A. (2013). *Holidays after the fall. Seaside Architecture and Urbanism in Bulgaria and Croatia*, ISBN 978-3868592269

The Typology of Resorts in Albania, is displayed as low rise, highly spread into the landscape, by occupying massive land, by extending massively in the territory. Their structure is quite complex, sometimes following the terrain and dispersing into it, while accentuating the architecture, with expressionist volumes which create conjunction, while utilizing the contrast of materials to perform a whole itinerary within the complex.

## 2. Hotels

The typology of hotels in Albania, has had further difficulties in manifesting its architectural language in a more contemporary – oriented architecture, even though some buildings have managed to achieve it successfully. In the coastline of Durrës, as the dominating region not only with the number of accommodation facilities but also expecting annually almost half of the tourists, during the years 2005 – 2020, we can find the Typology of Tower<sup>41</sup> again as well as the “Y” shaped, “U” shaped and “L” shaped. Regarding the architectural language, these typologies of hotel are the continuation of the architecture forms, of the typologies presented in Europe in the middle of the XX<sup>th</sup> century.



Figure 43: a) *Royal G Hotel and Spa, Durrës. Source: tripadvisor.com*  
b) *Flower Hotel, Durrës. Source: tripadvisor.com*

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<sup>41</sup> Beyer, E., Hagemann A. (2013). *Holidays after the fall. Seaside Architecture and Urbanism in Bulgaria and Croatia*, ISBN 978-3868592269

Meantime, the usage of mixed architectural styles of the last centuries is still present in some newly projects, by giving its grandiose image through the lack of the originality and repetition of some elements, in a constraint way.

In terms of space and services, the quality of spaces addressing the customer's need more adequately and the extension of services comparing to the previous 15 years, are quite noticeable.

The hotel of this period, exceed its ancestor by gaining a more comprehensive architectural language, with traces of Tower Hotels Typology, "U" shaped, "Y" shaped, "L" shaped, constructed with a clear and detailed architectural project, usually by foreign studios combined with attempts to use innovative materials and qualitative construction. These hotels are conceived more creatively, even though the attempt to borrow classical architectural features is still visible.

These establishments which vary in height variation from 5 to 8 floors generally, consider the vast establishment of services as an integral part of their base functioning, by offering private beaches, swimming pools and various other facilities within.

TYPOLOGY		POSITION	ARCHITECTURE	SPACE AND DESIGN	RELATION WITH CONTEXT	STRUCTURE AND MATERIALS	SERVICES
HOTELS	✓ Adriatic and Ionian Coastline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Tower Hotels Typology, "U" shaped, "Y" shaped, "L" shaped</li> <li>✓ Distinctive focus on the facade</li> <li>✓ Project – Based, In conformity with the legislation</li> <li>✓ Exaggerated use of architectural styles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Height variation from 5 to 8 floors generally</li> <li>✓ Maximization of space (interior or outside)</li> <li>✓ Peculiar focus in interior design</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Extension to the landscape</li> <li>✓ Connection with infrastructure, but no extended relation beyond</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Qualitative construction and materials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Leisure and recreation</li> <li>✓ Vacation</li> <li>✓ Business facilities</li> <li>✓ Parking place</li> <li>✓ Private Beaches</li> </ul>	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Accentuation of the architecture (exterior and interior)</li> <li>✓ Distinctive focus on the façade</li> <li>✓ Built with a design project with legal permission</li> <li>✓ Complex structures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Maximization of space (interior or outside)</li> <li>✓ Peculiar focus in interior design</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Massive Occupation of land</li> <li>✓ Wide extension to the landscape</li> <li>✓ Separate infrastructure</li> <li>✓ Green areas and open spaces</li> <li>✓ The Design of the Complex inclusively conceived</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Concrete Construction combined with steel or wood</li> <li>✓ Use of new materials in structure &amp; façade</li> <li>✓ Massive investments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Bars and Restaurants,</li> <li>✓ Health care,</li> <li>✓ Sports</li> <li>✓ Swimming pools</li> </ul>	
RESORTS							

Figure 44: Descriptive Analysis Matrix of the Typologies of Accommodation Evolved during "Planning and Design Based Phase" (2005 – 2020)



## 4.2 Distribution of Accommodation Facilities in the territory of Albania

The twelve regions of Albania represent a disproportional distribution of the accommodation structures, where the majority of the hospitality structures is located:

a) in the regions which has access to seaside and b) the major cities.

From graphic 6, can be concluded that the accommodation sector, in relation with the offer quantity, can be divided in 3 main groups:

- a) the first group which consists of the dominant 3 regions consisting in 71% of the total offer
- b) the second group considered as medium-sized, which represents 26% of the share for the total accommodation
- c) the third group of regions which offer the minimal accommodation related to the remaining 3%

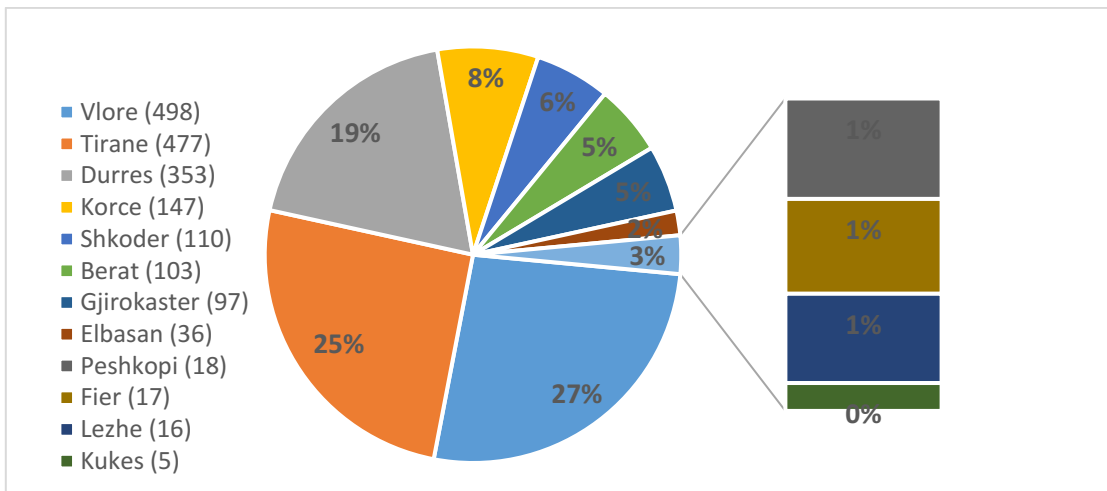


Figure 45: Distribution of Accommodation Facilities in the 12 regions of Albania.  
Source: author, based on the information gathered on booking.com

Region of Vlora contains the biggest number of accommodation structures, which is conditioned by the largest coastline and the fact that this region, contains the 2 main cities touristic cities of the lonnan sea; Vlora and Saranda.

The second largest region with higher number of accommodations resulted to be Tirana, which being the metropolitan area of Albania, capital of the state and where

more than 40% of the total population live, represent the second main region to welcome accommodation in several forms.

While the third region which would offer a high number of accommodation capacity, is considered the Region of Durres, which has been the first preferable destination for the first two decades after the 1990's and where the most informality in construction sector has taken place.

In the second group of regions, which are considered a middle-sized offer regarding hospitality facilities, including Shkodra, Korca, Berat, Gjirokaster and Elbasan, is mostly related with historical, cultural and archeological tourism and their medium sized cities and the non-evolved touristic offer.

The third group, compounding only 3% of the total offer of accommodation, with regions and accordingly cities, like Peshkopi, Fier, Lezha and Kukës are also related with the overall low economic development and infrastructure in order to be competitive in terms of touristic evolvement and accommodation capacities.

To achieve a better understanding of the accommodation sector in Albania, the research has been focused on identifying the typologies of these establishments by attaining data regarding:

- ✓ *The main functional typology*
- ✓ *The vicinity with the city center*
- ✓ *The official ratings of quality (stars)*
- ✓ *Correlation with the thematic tourism (seaside/lake, natural or mountainous, historic/archeological)*

In the research for the functional typology of accommodation offered in the twelve regions, there were identified 5 main typologies in almost every region which include: a) Hotel, b) Apartment, c) Guesthouse, d) Hostel, e) Bed and Breakfast. There are also other typologies which were noticed during the research like camping, private villas etc., but considering the limited number of accommodations they offer are included in the section of 'other typologies'.

From the following figure, the information that can be concluded is that the Typology of Hotel in a quantity more than 50% is more widespread in the regions where the tourism is still in the first phases, like Kukës, Lezhë, Diber and Elbasan. For the purpose of understanding the expansion of the concept of the hotel, it has to be mentioned that Tirana comprise mainly the more qualitative hotels and also a single hotel, in the Hilton chain.

The typology of Apartment is mainly developed in Regions like Vlora, Korça, Tirana and Durrës with more than 30% of the accommodation which is related with the concept of 'familiar vacations', while the typology of Guesthouse is more represented by the Regions of Peshkopi, Kukës, Elbasan and Korça which is comprehended within the context of natural tourism and the typology of tourists that are interested in experiencing also the form of hospitality connected with local culture.

On the other side, the Hostel as a functional typology is more related with Shkodra, Korça, Berat, Gjirokastra, Elbasan and Tirana, which actually compound only 3% - 11% of the total accommodation offer, which is constitutively understood as a form of accommodation related with the historic cities, including the capital of Albania as a primary touristic gate.

Bed and Breakfast typology is more expanded in the region of Dibra, Fier, Gjirokastra and Tirana of course. This typology speaks regarding the limited services contained within the first three regions, which restrict the possibility of choice for other options, by defining these alternatives in these regions, in the quantity of 3% to 8%.

The alternative of Resort, is also included in the research, in the category of 'other forms of accommodation' but since their sprawl in the territory is considerable and also for the fact that with the resorts, can be presented an 'all-inclusive' form of hospitality, can be mentioned the presence of resorts in the Regions of Durrës, Shkodër, Lezhë, Tirana, Vlora, in a small percentage.

Even though the number of Resorts is higher actually, especially in regions like Durrës, Tirana and Vlora, there is a number of resorts, as mentioned in the first chapter (page

13), which are not opened for the public or guests. They behave in the form of private neighborhood, with private settlements, internal services and sometimes, with a unit of accommodation, generally a hotel, inside the complex.

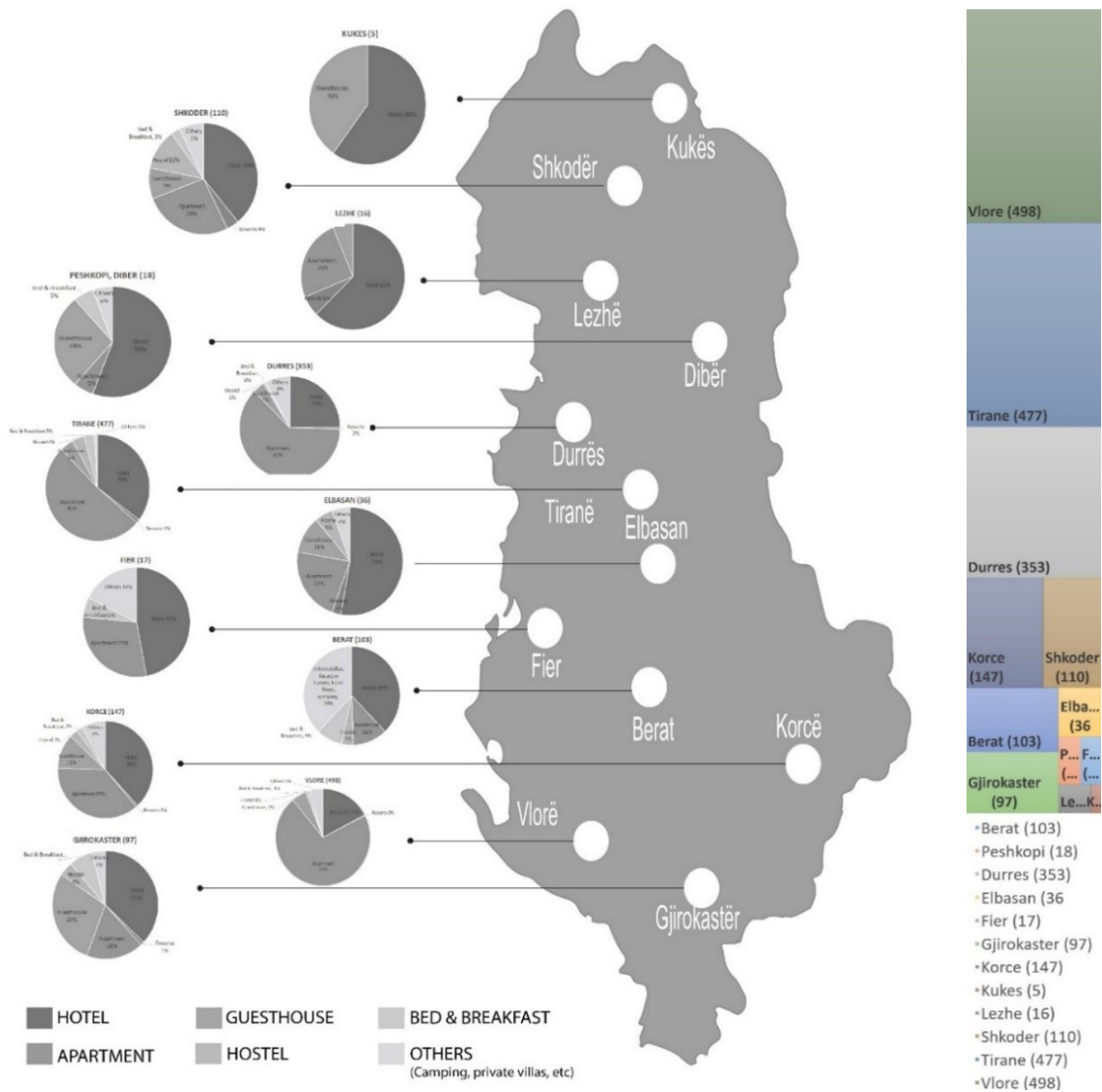


Figure 46: Distribution of Accommodation Facilities in 12 regions of Albania, regarding the 5 main typologies.

Source: Author, based on the information from booking.com

The second component taken in consideration during these analyses, consist on the vicinity of the accommodation structures with the center of the twelve cities. The measuring component is related with the size of the cities itself, where the major cities like Tirana, Durrës, Vlora, Korca, Elbasan, Shkodra and Fier can be expanded from two to five kilometers, while the other cities are expanded in less than 2 kilometers. For this purpose, the limit of two kilometers, is the boundary which is conceptualized as 'in vicinity' with the center or 'in distance'.

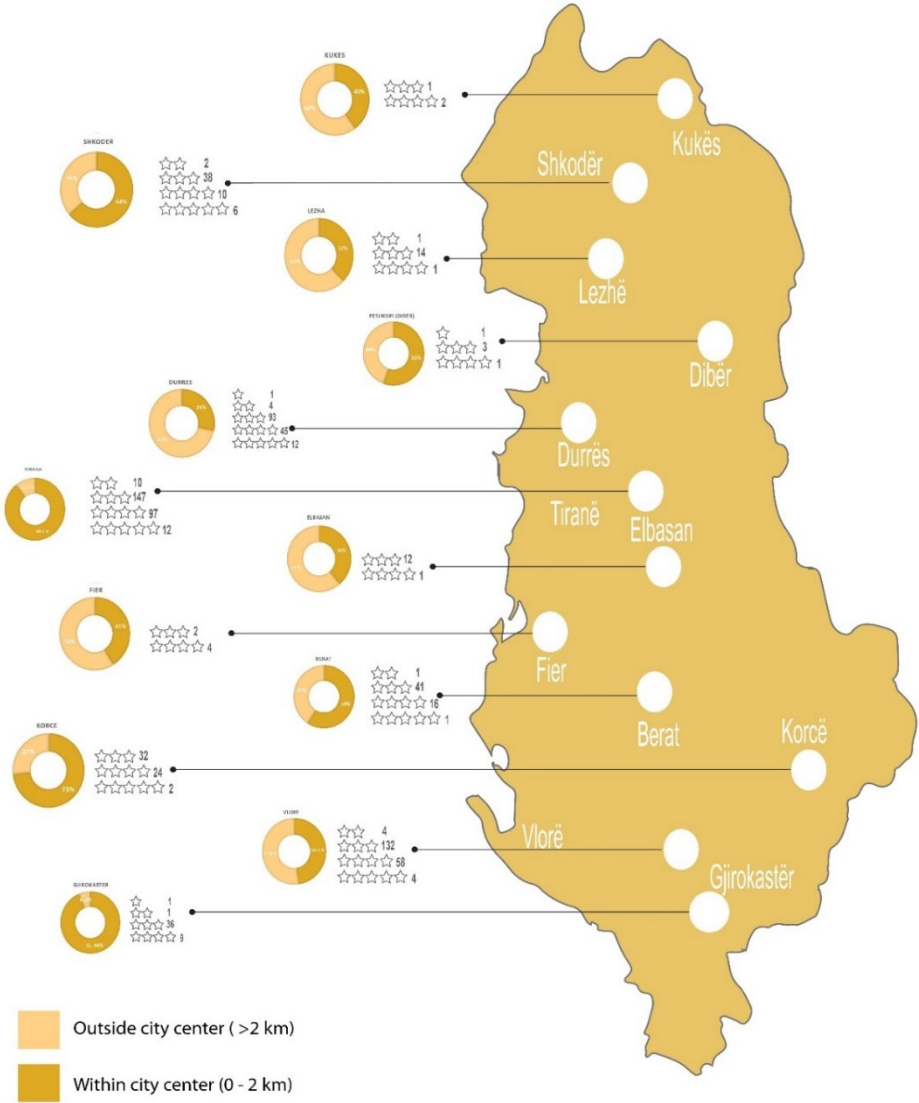


Figure 47: Distribution of Accommodation Facilities in relation with the city center. Source: author, based on data from booking.com

Gjirokastra, Tirana and Korca are considered the main cities with accommodation facilities located in the city centers, respectively with 92%, 89% and 73%, while other cities like Shkodra, Peshkopia and Berat has still more than 50% of their hospitality establishments located within the range of two kilometers<sup>42</sup>.

The cities, which has stretched more than 50% of their accommodation in the periphery of the cities or in more distant natural sites are considered as following: Fier, Elbasan, Lezhe, Kukes and Durres which is recognized in these terms as the city with the dominant 71% of the accommodation facilities outside the city center.

The rating component is also considered a measuring tool for the actualization of the quality of the offered accommodation<sup>43</sup>.

Through the cities which has more rated hotels are considered Gjirokastra, Berat, Tirana, Durres and Shkodra with facilities rated more in the category of 3\* and 4\*, while the minimal presence of 5\* rated hotels is seen in the Region of Vlora, Korca, Bera, Tirana, Durres and Shkodra.

During the process of documenting the distribution of accommodation facilities in the territory of Albania and the analysis of the typology, vicinity with the center and quality of accommodation structures in the 12 regions of Albania, the correlation with the thematic tourism has been explored in order to gain recognition of the accommodation capacity and their actual usage. Figure 10 presents a mapping in the territory and the relation with the sea shore<sup>44</sup>.

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<sup>42</sup> During this research the city center would be considered the distance from the official center of the city in expansion till two kilometers of distance.

<sup>43</sup> During the research it has become noticeable that the majority of accommodations sites are not rated, due to variable reasons, which limited the gathering of the data only to those who were actually rated, in official way and presumably by the guests itself.

<sup>44</sup> As a limit criterion for the closeness with the sea shore is defined the length from the shore of 500 meters as near the shore and more than 500 meters as far from the shore

# Maritime Cities / Villages

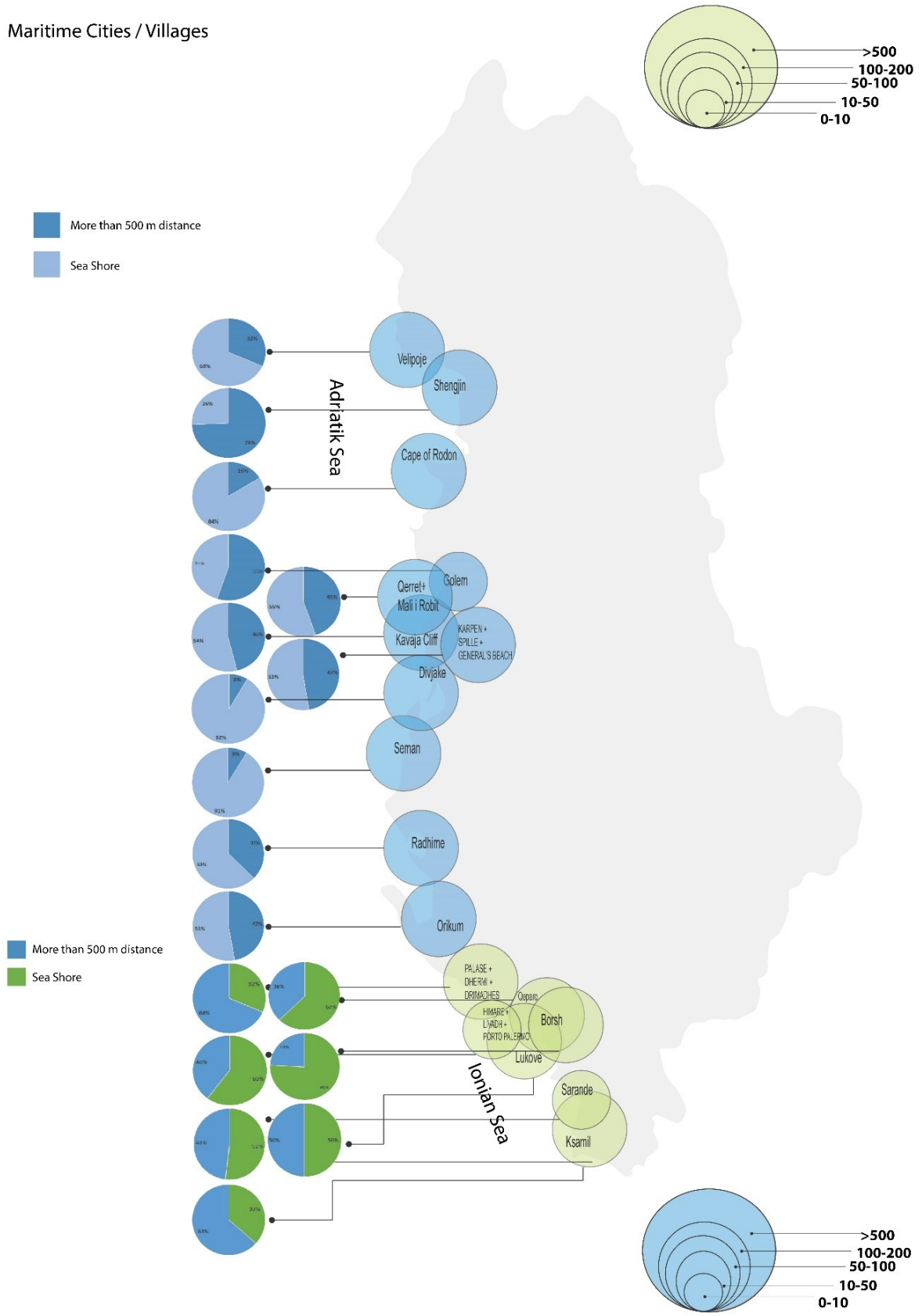


Figure 48: Distribution of Touristic Facilities in Maritime Areas or Villages.  
Source: Source: author, based on data from booking.com

Regarding the measurement of each site as a unit, in terms of number of touristic settlements, the system of 0 – 10, 10 – 50; 50 – 100; 100 – 200; 200 – 500 and 500 + is established to present an overview of the size of each defined site, grouped in small sites (0 – 50), medium sites (50 – 200), large sites (200 – 500).

The small sites, are more expanded in the territory regardless their actual surface which are understandable in the context of small villages or beaches. The cities of Shengjin, Velipoja, village of Seman and Divjaka which are positioned in the Adriatic seaside takes part in the first group, along with the Ionian famous beaches of Lukova, Jala, Qeparo and Borsh. In the other extremity, only the city of Saranda, can be considered to contain more than 500 accommodation facilities as a single unit, which is explained the unification of small beaches within the city and the misappropriation use of the territory regarding construction. On the other side, the conglomerates of units taken in consideration during this research due to the vicinity of sites, management or actual physical conjunction; results in two main sites: a) Qerret + Mali I Robit and b) Cape of Rodon + Hamallaj + Lalzi which eventually incorporate respectively 514 units and 779 units.

In the component of closeness with the seashore, in the Adriatic Riviera, the sites of Shengjin, Golem, Qerret, Mali I Robit and Kavaja's Cliff, Spille and Orikum configures approximately 50% of their total accommodation facilities in the perimeter of 500 meters from the coast. The most preserved coast in the Adriatic Region can be found in the beaches of Rodon's Cape, Divjaka, Seman.

In the Ionian Riviera, the most untacked coastline can be defined Ksamil, due to the very limited coastline in and of itself whiles the most occupied with touristic buildings appears to be the beach of Himara, Borsh, Livadh, Qeparo and Porto Palermo.

In the following scheme the distribution of the accommodation facilities is also measured in relation with the co-habitation with *natural parks or mountainous areas*, which itself can be summarized in almost 50 touristic settlements, where only the natural park of Theth and Valbona Valley, contain 27 of the facilities (54%), Dajti National Park 14% and Voskopoja village 10%.



The manifestation of accommodation facilities in the lake shore is limited in Shiroka and Pogradec, where almost 90% of the them are located in the Southern Eastern city of Pogradec.

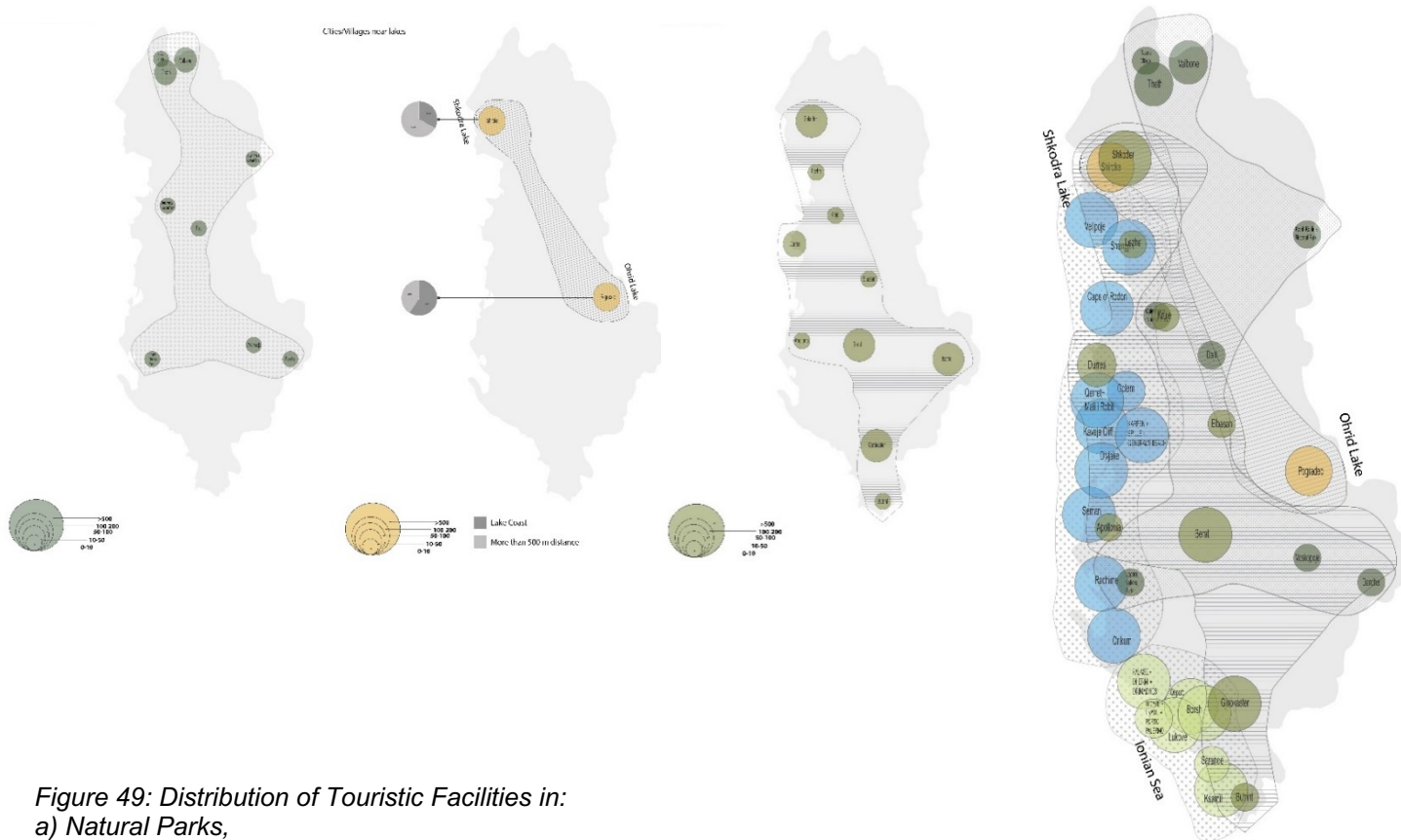


Figure 49: Distribution of Touristic Facilities in:  
a) Natural Parks,  
b) Lake Shore,  
c) Historic cities,  
d) overlay of the three

Source: Author

Between the historic cities or archeological sites (10 identified), the cities of Korca and Berat dominate the distribution of touristic settlement, with 24% each, the city of Berat and Shkodra representing 16% each and Durres with 12% of the share.

By observing the overlaid analysis of the dispersal among the most attractive touristic points, can be concluded that almost 90% of the total accommodation is currently positioned in the Western Wetland of Albania.

## Chapter 5: Architectural Communist Heritage

### 5.1 Communist Heritage in Albania as an obscene perception

Albania, was the last state which eradicate communist system in Europe. The other East European Countries participated in the revolutionary movements of 1989, where dictatorships were thrown away actively which culminated with the Fall of Berlin Wall, while the toughest communism in Europe, also known as “The Other North Korea”<sup>45</sup> just grasped the last breath of communism along the end of 1990.

The relationship of Albanians with Enver Hoxha’s regime due to its harsh dictatorship is still quite perplexed. The physical heritage cannot be understood divided by its context. This is the reason why the ‘still living memory’, the impact of that system in their lives, while still trying to adapt and alternate the rhythm of a very different society. The inheritance from the years of regime, have been managed in different ways by Albanians. Firstly, by the coping mechanism of denial and impugment by deteriorating the objects, spaces and postures, which created the need to substitute several socio-cultural and material aspects of the society.

Yet the Socialist Material Heritage, including Cultural and Architectural heritage is a legacy, constituting a significant part of the Albanian’s Identity, which needs to be lightened, accepted, studied and learned to co-exist in a respectful manner in the city.

“The newly developing neoromantic nostalgia as well as economic calculus in the re-valorization of the socialist past supports the fact that also in the future, Albania and Albanians will not be able to form an identity that is detached from the communist past. Bunkers, socialist cultural landscapes, and architecture, as well as material culture from everyday life, such as radios, porcelain, books, and so forth, play an important role in the currently developing image of Albania.

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<sup>45</sup> *‘The other North Korea’ is an audacious concept used by historians and sociologists, to depict the severe attributes of Communism in Albania, through the assumed similarities. The parallelism is mentioned in the virtual documentary by “Rare Earth” in: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kUTs9-vsO6k&feature=youtu.be>*

Therefore, the current Albanian identity is to a significant part shaped by the legacies of communism and World War II”

(Bickert & Vorpsi, 2021, p. 147)

### 5.1.1 Definition: Heritage, Architectural Heritage and Communist Architectural Heritage

The World Heritage Convention in 1972 by UNESCO, have assessed the Cultural Heritage as “[...] group of buildings and sites, outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science, while an architectural heritage can be interpreted as an “artifact”, where its elements are witnesses of the cultures, actors, and of events occurred during the life of the building”<sup>46</sup> (IGI Global, Publisher of Timely Knowledge). In the modern theory regarding the architectural heritage and its restoration, the main guiding principles for a building to be classified as a heritage lies, in its aesthetic values and historical values.

Other authors tend to see the invisible but still present aspects of the heritage, by defining it as “[...] rather a range of activities that include remembering, commemoration, communicating and passing on knowledge and memories, asserting and expressing identity and social and cultural values and meanings” (Smith, Questions du temps present, 2012).

Moreover, in the Book “Uses of Heritage” (2006) Laurajane Smith introduced the idea that heritage, despite its first perception, in the realm of balancing the identity symbolics, the value of the memory and physical place, can be considered a significant part of a political negotiation. Through the political presence, can occur a reconstruction of the meanings for social and cultural values, which allows and empowers people to claim their unique expression of values and perspectives, community continuity as well as memorial and socio-cultural meanings through the sense on the physical space and sense of identity.

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<sup>46</sup> The definitions of cultural and architectural heritage are assessed in 17<sup>th</sup> July 2021, in the website of IGI Global Publisher of Timely Knowledge: <https://www.igi-global.com/dictionary/architectural-heritage/48665>

Moreover, that it is a process, or a performance, in which the identification of values, social meanings, memories and cultural pieces, introduce the sense of identity, connecting with the present and sense of belonging in the specific social physical or social place.

Communist Architectural Heritage in Albania, is represented by collective housing units, fabrics, administrative buildings, schools, railway infrastructure, monuments, martyrs' cemetery, bunkers, city centers, socio-cultural buildings as well as hotels and holiday camps. The linking meaning behind these different types of buildings is considered the strategy behind, to induce terror, fear and extend the power of the regime.

“From strategically placed monuments and ubiquitous concrete bunkers, to socialist-realist cityscapes and party slogans on hillsides, reminders of the power of the state literally covered the landscape of Albania”

(Eaton, 2011, p. 25).

Crowley (1994) by referring to Anders research, undermines the importance of this architecture as history-telling by emphasizing the particularities of the impact that communist culture. The manifestation of the ‘new Soviet man’<sup>47</sup> as the empowered man, over nature allowed the potential to promote the economic and military power through the massiveness of architecture.

Facing the fact that the Socialist realism, has been criticized as ‘vulgar’ used in the congruence with the flattering ego of the un-cultured leaders’<sup>48</sup>, the strategic impact that it had in penetrating in the architecture of the time, is nevertheless the starting point of interest for the exploration of this architecture.

With the concept of the Architectural Communist Heritage, are understood the buildings constructed during 1945-1990 for the functions of housing, infrastructure and traveling, accommodation, socio-cultural services, hospitalizing, education, administrative services.

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<sup>47</sup> *The concept of Anders, Aman for the “Stalinist Model” borrowed in its essential concept by Albanian Socialism.*

<sup>48</sup> *Statement of Crowley, D. (1994)*

The Hotels and Accommodation Structures establishments during the period of communism in Albania, as a part of the material heritage; following their life trajectory, since the preliminary design, construction, the modality of use and ‘unpredictable’ future, hold the opportunity to discover a unique way of designing in architecture, which could be acquainted by further studies.

### 5.1.2 The “internal” and “external” perception for Communist Heritage

While for the Western World, Albania and especially the communism period, represent a curiosity in and of itself, through the variety of historical layers; Albanians are still struggling to deal with the collective trauma<sup>49</sup> of this experience, while searching to regain a sense of national identity and possibly significance of their bitter experiences. Through the brutal memories of executions, imprisoning, complete isolation with the external world and the lack of freedom of any kind; their daily confrontation with the architecture of this period is quite a challenge. Albanians are very much related with the buildings, they use them as a reference point, as a landmark and to guide their orientation in the city.

One of the ways of gaining insight, accepting and learning from the past, is by finding ways to assess the significance of the cultural and architectural socialist heritage and while learning from the history, managing to co-exist in the same space with the traces left behind by the inherited objects. Buildings of communism are the living proof of these persecutions therefore, this material heritage can be understood in a dichotomy of experiencing these traumas, denying the past and trying to erase a part of history and on the other side finding meaning through the behavior towards physical creations.

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<sup>49</sup> *The term collective trauma refers to the psychological reactions to a traumatic event that affect an entire society; it does not merely reflect an historical fact, the recollection of a terrible event that happened to a group of people. It suggests that the tragedy is represented in the collective memory of the group, and like all forms of memory it comprises not only a reproduction of the events, but also an ongoing reconstruction of the trauma in an attempt to make sense of it.*  
Available on <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6095989/>

With the struggle of memory-accepting comes the dilemma of memory-making, re-using, re-adapting, re-signifying in the journey of searching for part of the identity and belonging. Rebuilding the collective identity should be the final scope of the confrontation with communism.

“Identity is not simply something ‘produced’ or represented by heritage places of heritage moments, but is something actively and continually recreated and negotiated as people, communities and institutions reinterpret, remember, forget and reassess the meaning of the past in terms of the social, cultural and political needs and aspirations of the present”.

(Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 2006, p. 83)

The relationship of the citizens with the communist heritage has been quite controversial and mostly related with the buildings inside the city, since their urban image could neither be ignored or forgotten.

“It remains to be seen which role the socialist heritage will take in the future self-image of Albanians. In the process of European integration, the question must be asked whether this current process will become a common nostalgia that could have an anti-progressive and anti-developmental effect, or whether it is the start of a more critical and inquiring attitude on how young and future Albanians will view their own history, and if this will facilitate or interfere with coming to terms with history” (Bickert & Vorpsi, 2021, p. 144)

### 5.1.3 The approaches for Re-signifying and Re-using

The memory of the population gets perplexed with the democratic systems which have been governing Albania since 1991, which have not developed yet a holistic strategy regarding the attitude, evaluation and representation of the communist heritage itself.

Academics researching the uses of heritage in post-communist countries, address the radical reconfiguration of the memory sites (Nora 1989; Anders 1992; De Jong 2008) especially in the capital cities, where the impact in molding the identity of the state is at its highest.

The examples below are selected as few of the cases where the communist buildings have raised awareness regarding their presence and possibilities of rehabilitation or re-conceptualization of these assets. The case studies aim to identify and transmit the different approaches which were undertaken, in the realm of the free economy-market, from private initiatives or from the political instances.

### The Dictator's Residence

The Block Area<sup>50</sup> represents a neighborhood designed with low-rise villas, in the Southern Western Tirana, built for the communist leadership, including Enver Hoxha himself, where he lived the last ten years of his life. This is considered a central part of Tirana, related to the urbanistic of the city, with direct access in the main boulevard "Deshmoret e Kombit"<sup>51</sup> which served as the 'Cardo' of Albania and in the other perpendicular boulevard "Gjergj Fishta". Later on, the area was sieged by the "Enver Hoxha" Museum, constructed in 1988<sup>52</sup>, even though they didn't serve as a unity due to fall of communism few years later.

The villa of the dictator compounds a "L" shaped space, attempting to follow the design of the architecture of the 1930's, constructed with concrete and partially covered with white tiles to contrast the corpus of the building itself in its denominative boundaries like: columns and balconies.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> In Albanian known as "Bllok"

<sup>51</sup> In English "Martyrs of the Nation" This Boulevard is part of the ensemble which was first designed by the Italian architect Armando Brasini in 1925, later on elaborated by his colleague F. di Fausto and concluded by G. Bosio in 1939 as part of Tirana's master plan.

<sup>52</sup> Enver Hoxha Museum, is known till today as the "Pyramid" of Tirana

<sup>53</sup> <https://tirana.al/pika-interesi/blloku-ish-vila-e-enver-hoxhes-6928>

The Residence is equipped with a spacious garden, library, plenteous rooms for each member's privacy, an internal pool in the ground floor and secret entrance to the tunnel leading the refugee bunker, in case of needed escape.<sup>54</sup>



Figure 50: a) Location of the Dictator's Villa in Tirana. Source: google maps.  
b) View of the Villa. Source: intoalbania.com

In the beginning of the 90's, the 'undesired aura' that this area represented had still affected the emotional side of the society, which didn't have the courage to be curious for the inside aspects of the area. In the context of the free market soon the services of restaurant, bars and shops found its way into this neighborhood and perplexed with the fear-curiosity features it became in the beginning of 2000, one of the most attractive areas for youth which past their evenings and weekends in the fancy bars of 'Bllok'. This was later on translated into the value of the land in this area which created the conditions for high rise buildings to develop, previously in the perimetral side of the block and now inside the as well.

Considering the loss of the space within this block and the diminishing outlook of the communist residential villas, it can raise the debate if this approach towards this part of the communist heritage has been considered wisely, but the course of history and economic development seems to have dominated the context.

The recent initiative of the Municipality of Tirana consists on the plan for the opening of the Dictator's house by converting it in a "new cultural destination" under the premises

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<sup>54</sup> [http://www.visit-tirana.com/sq/lajme/view/317/Brenda\\_vil%C3%ABs\\_s%C3%AB\\_Enver\\_Hoxh%C3%ABs\\_n%C3%AB\\_Bllok\\_q%C3%AB\\_do\\_t%C3%AB\\_hapet\\_s%C3%AB\\_shpejti](http://www.visit-tirana.com/sq/lajme/view/317/Brenda_vil%C3%ABs_s%C3%AB_Enver_Hoxh%C3%ABs_n%C3%AB_Bllok_q%C3%AB_do_t%C3%AB_hapet_s%C3%AB_shpejti)



of “taunting the ghost of the Supreme Comrade” (Exit, 2021) as a pure contradiction to the rejection of the dictator towards the “bourgeois culture”.<sup>55</sup>

By relating the place as a space of terror and emphasizing the need of Albanians to disconnect with the frightening image of the dictator, the transformation of this villa is considered an essential step to overcome the dark part of the history into the creation of a public space. The architectural Britannic studio have been selected, but the most important step; the design process, the methodology and the physical parts of the building, where the interventions will take place; are far from being transparent, which doesn't allow the architects and the public to discuss the possible intrusions. This approach in and of itself is a representative of the irony ‘of not having a choice’.

### The pyramid and it's symbolism

According to the survey conducted by Iacono & Këlliçi in 2006<sup>56</sup>, 95% of the population of the sample asked, consensually agreed that is a necessity the preservation of the memory of socialist system in Albania by preserving the building of the time. While during this questionnaire, the majority of participants strongly disagreed toward the demolition of one of the most discussed objects of the time, the Enver Hoxha Museum.

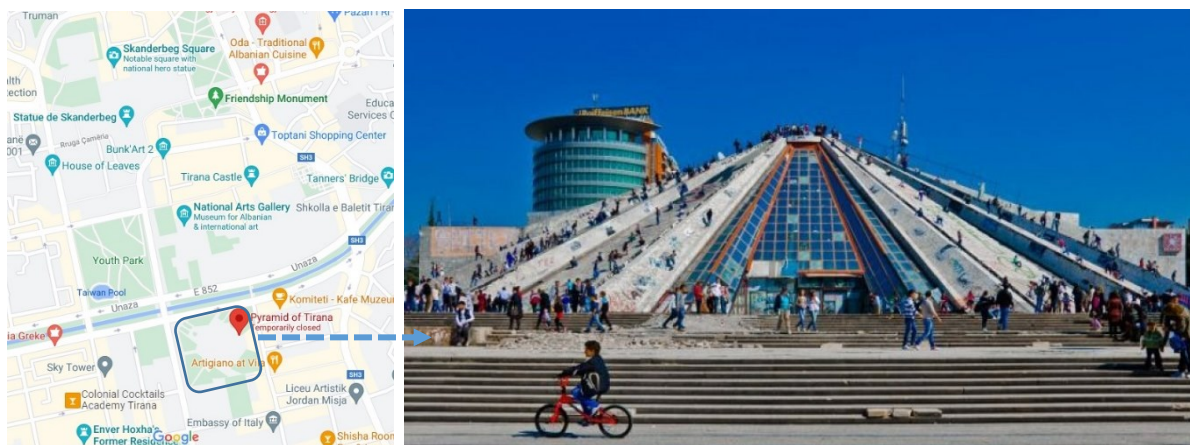


Figure 51: a) Location of the Pyramid in Tirana. Source: Google Maps.  
b) View of the Pyramid after 90's. Source: www.kultplus.com

<sup>55</sup> Concept used on a foreign article available in: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/albania-reluctantly-confronts-past-with-museum-to-horrors-of-hoxha-j37tdf5dz>

<sup>56</sup> In the *Ex-Novo Journal of Archeology*, Francesco Iacono and Klejd Këlliçi has conducted a questionnaire concerning the attitude of Albanian population regarding the communist architectural heritage with a specific focus on the building of ex-Museum of Enver Hoxha. They were able to collect data from a sample of 360 individuals.

Known by the population as the Pyramid, this unique and special building was built for the Commemoration of the Dictator. Finished in 1988, a design of his own daughter, Pranvera Hoxha and her husband Klement Kolaneci, aside two other architects Pirro Vaso and Vladimir Bregu, it represents a building which is symbolically related with the Hoxha's memory, since it is built in his honor but simultaneously, since it served a museum less than four years, it hasn't have much time in that function as to be totally alienated in the memory of population.

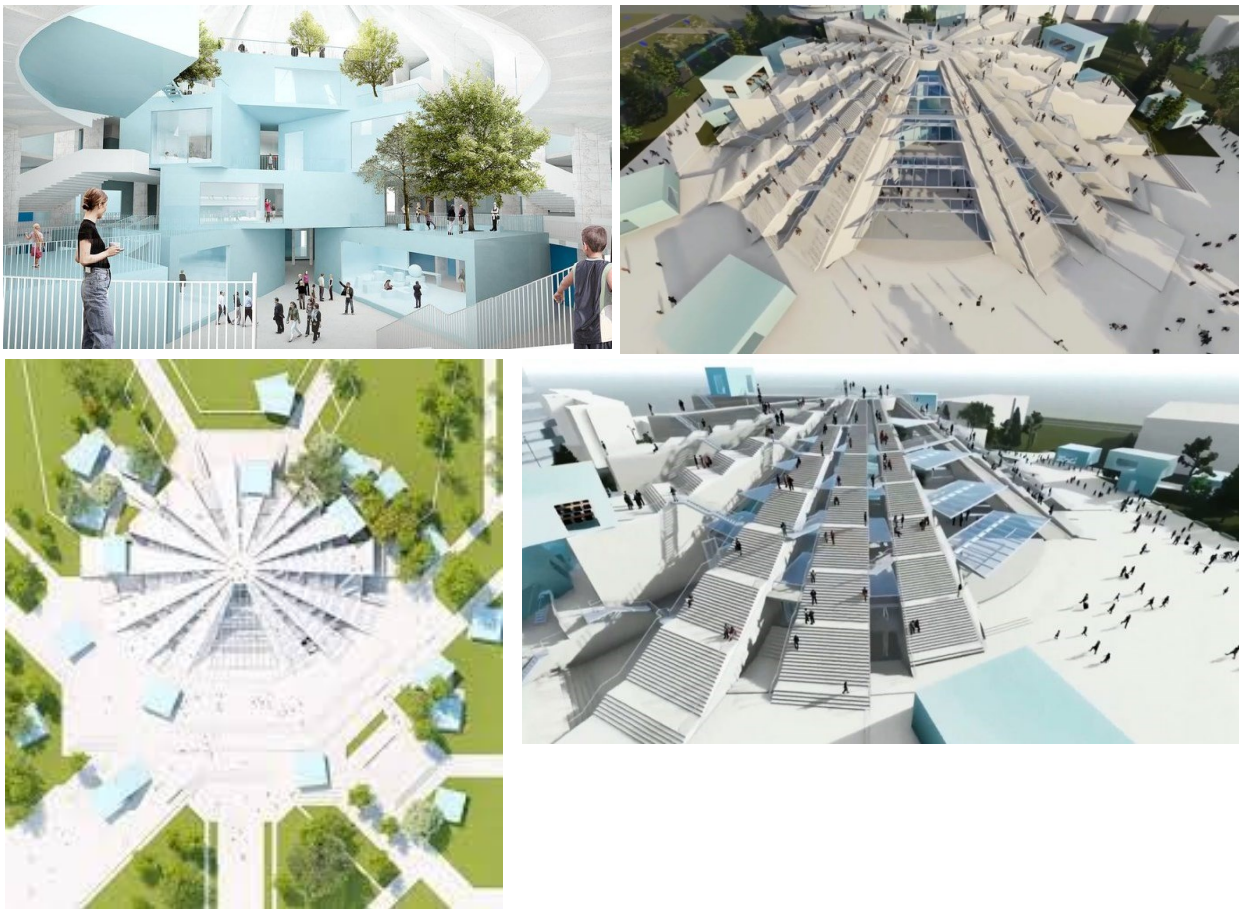


Figure 52: Images of the Pyramid Transformation Project. Source: [www.mvrdv.nl/projects](http://www.mvrdv.nl/projects)

Its architecture is very peculiar and with an extravagant shape which resembles rising from earth-pyramid, with marble wings serving as wall and sloping towards the ground, traversed by elongated windows. While the original stated concept 'eagle wings', used

for the purpose of including the national symbol, was only visible from above.<sup>57</sup> Its feature as a landmark is still visible in the “Deshmoret e Kombit” Boulevard where it is positioned, despite the colossal changes in the city skyline with the new skyscrapers built in the last decades.

After 1991 the interest towards the Pyramid has been consistently rising. Several endeavors to adopt it to alternative uses. It has functioned as conference center, space for thematic fairs, cultural center and even a center for private tv channels.

Its original shape has turned out to be also its major problem during the persistent attempts towards the discussion of preservation or demolition, since it is still a tangible symbol.

The recent resolution of the Municipality of Tirana, has selected the project of MVRDV architecture studio<sup>58</sup> in 2018, to transform this building into an ICT Center (TUMO) which will offer several creative courses for the younger generation while in the strategic and managerial point of view, aiming to be converted in a cultural pole for the city.<sup>59</sup>

The architectural interventions of the Dutch studio have preserved the original imprint of the pyramid, its extension towards the territory, but intervening in the interior space, while expanding it towards the façade through itineraries and pathways. These pathways are transformed from stretching sloping wings to fully equipped passages with stairs to create various possibilities in trespassing the interior and external space. Apart from the ongoing discussions of this interventionism, the constructing operations have begun. This is another example of the Albanian governmental segments taking ownership of the architectural heritage in the city, expected to offer needed services, while changing the ‘primary image’ of the Pyramid itself.

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<sup>57</sup> <https://tirana.al/pika-interesi/piramida>

<sup>58</sup> The video of the 2020 Project for Re-habilitation of the Pyramid: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZulveWXSm38> and <https://www.dezeen.com/2018/05/21/mvrdv-communist-monument-architecture-tirana-albania/>

<sup>59</sup> The projected presented by the major: <https://www.tirana.al/artikull/prezantohet-projekti-i-rijetezimit-te-piramides-ne-nje-qender-te-madhe-te-teknologjise>.

## The “Bunkerizimi” nutshell

For more than twenty years (1960’-1980’), Enver Hoxha’s paranoia towards the imperialism rejection was extended to the need for fortifying all the territory with the pretense of possible attacks towards Albania.

During this period, along with the military training of the population, the process of “Bunkerizimi”<sup>60</sup> took place. There has never been an explicit data regarding the exact numbers of built bunkers, which are considered to vary from 125.000 to 700.000.<sup>61</sup>



Figure 53: a) Bunk'art Museum, Tirana. Source: [www.behance.net](http://www.behance.net).  
b) Bed & Bunker, Lezhë. Source: [theguardian.com](http://theguardian.com)

The interest for these buildings has been raised recently. There is no inclusive research and rehabilitant strategy from the governmental institutions for these objects. Some have been deteriorated; others, due to land erosion by sea have terminated inside the sea, served as shelter for the homeless and some have been ‘adopted’ within a private ownership, caffè’s or shops.

The project “Concrete Mushrooms”<sup>62</sup> which has researched and documented the typologies and actual state, Bed & Bunker<sup>63</sup> and Bunk’art<sup>64</sup> Museums.

<sup>60</sup> “Bunkerizimi” is called the construction initiative to construct bunkers through all the territory of Albania.

<sup>61</sup> <https://www.intoalbania.com/sq/te-reja/bunkeret-e-shqiperise/>

<sup>62</sup> Concrete Mushrooms. Reusing Albania's 750,000 Abandoned Bunkers. Gyler Mydyti and Elian Stefa, 2012. Available at: <https://architizer.com/projects/concrete-mushrooms-reusing-albanias-750000-abandoned-bunkers/>

<sup>63</sup> Bed & Bunker is is an international project conducted as a cooperation between FH Mainz, Germany and POLIS University in Tirana to re-design and re-functionalize an existing bunker into a hostel in the Region of Lezha. Available at: <https://archello.com/project/bed-and-bunker>

<sup>64</sup> Bunk’art 1 and Bunk’art 2, are former anti-nuclear bunkers of high security transformed in museums of the communism period. Available at <https://www.bunkart.al/> and <https://www.dreamstime.com/tirana-albania-june-bunkart-anti-nuclear-bunker-transformed-history-museum-bunk-art-reconstructs-albanian-ministry-image187529439>

Conclusively, it can be discussed that the approach towards the architectural heritage in Albania, stands under the category of the “undesirable’ heritage<sup>65</sup> (Macdonald, 2006, p. 2) which has still a considerable historic, emotional and architectural work towards the acceptance and integration of the architectural communist heritage.

The interventions presented in this session are usually undertaken by the government or rarely private initiatives, which despite the ideas or design, they highlight the type of intervention which is focused individually in the ‘object’ itself.

This approach cannot be considered a comprehensive strategy for the following reasons:

- The heritage for tourism is not subject of the wider discourse in professional networks or governing institutions.
- There is still today a lack of inclusiveness of the architectural heritage in processes of analysis in terms of assets and opportunities, therefore documentation or official research regarding restoration and re-use is still limited.
- The communist heritage is not entirely included in national strategies for tourism or for the re-adaption of these buildings in a more sustainable way.
- The restored or re-adapted projects are not sustained in previous research for the methodologies of restorations available or the ones that are used in similar cases to extract the best possible attitude and tools.

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<sup>65</sup> *‘Undesirable’ Heritage is a concept developed by Sharon Macdonald, as one of the attitudes adopted for un-wished legacies and difficulties in dealing with it consciously and objectively.*

## 5.2. Tourism or Propaganda?

Considered still in the early 90's as "Europe's Last Secret" (Stiller, 2019, p. 25) because of the strict policy of Enver Hoxha to not tolerate deliberate foreign entrances and yet, the absence of research and literature has been limited in tourist information.

'Tourist Guidebook of Albania' from Albturist<sup>66</sup> 1969, was the first National Approach to Document and Regulate the communication with the foreign world through tourism, by achieving a 'dignified' reflection of the Albanian image of the time. The guidebook intended to serve as an informational source for the upcoming tourists in Albania during the communist regime, by providing necessary information regarding the Albania's general information, historic data, currency, geographical assets, archeological sites, vacationing areas, itineraries, accommodation as well as presenting the eminent achievements of the Party of Labor in Albania. The 'unveiled' aspect of this guide, consists on the manifestation of the desired 'touristic Albania' by dictating the conditions on which tourism itself was developed.

Visiting Albania under Enver Hoxha's regime was really hard to be achieved.

The outbound traveling was strictly supervised and under certain conditions related with the country interests and needs, while the arrival of tourists in Albania, was certainly a 'well-programmed itinerary'. The tourists or visitors were accompanied in an explicit itinerary, where the "potential contagion of alien foreign influences" Hall, D.R (1984) also argues that tourism was not a priority in and of itself, comparing with the other major priorities regarding industrial infrastructure or agriculture<sup>67</sup>.

This explains the actual lack of growth of the Albanian tourism and furthermore its decline after the total isolation of Albania since tourism was not even a part of the leader's excited speeches. The Dictator perceived the international connections and

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<sup>66</sup> 'Albturist' was the adopted touristic model adapted by the Stalinist Model 'Inturist' which assembled all the functions and activities of tourism under the monopolized machinery of the Party. This model was considered perfect for Albania and the system's priority and followed for almost 5 decades.

<sup>67</sup> Industrial Development and Agriculture were also part of the Soviet Union model, from where E.Hoxha acquired the main references of state building.

activities related to tourism by ‘viewing them as vehicles of “imperialism” or “social imperialism”’ (Hall D. R., 1984, p. 533).

Even though touristic guides, postcards and pictures of hotels were available, by presenting a compelling touristic destination, they represented an unrealistic view of the touristic Albania.

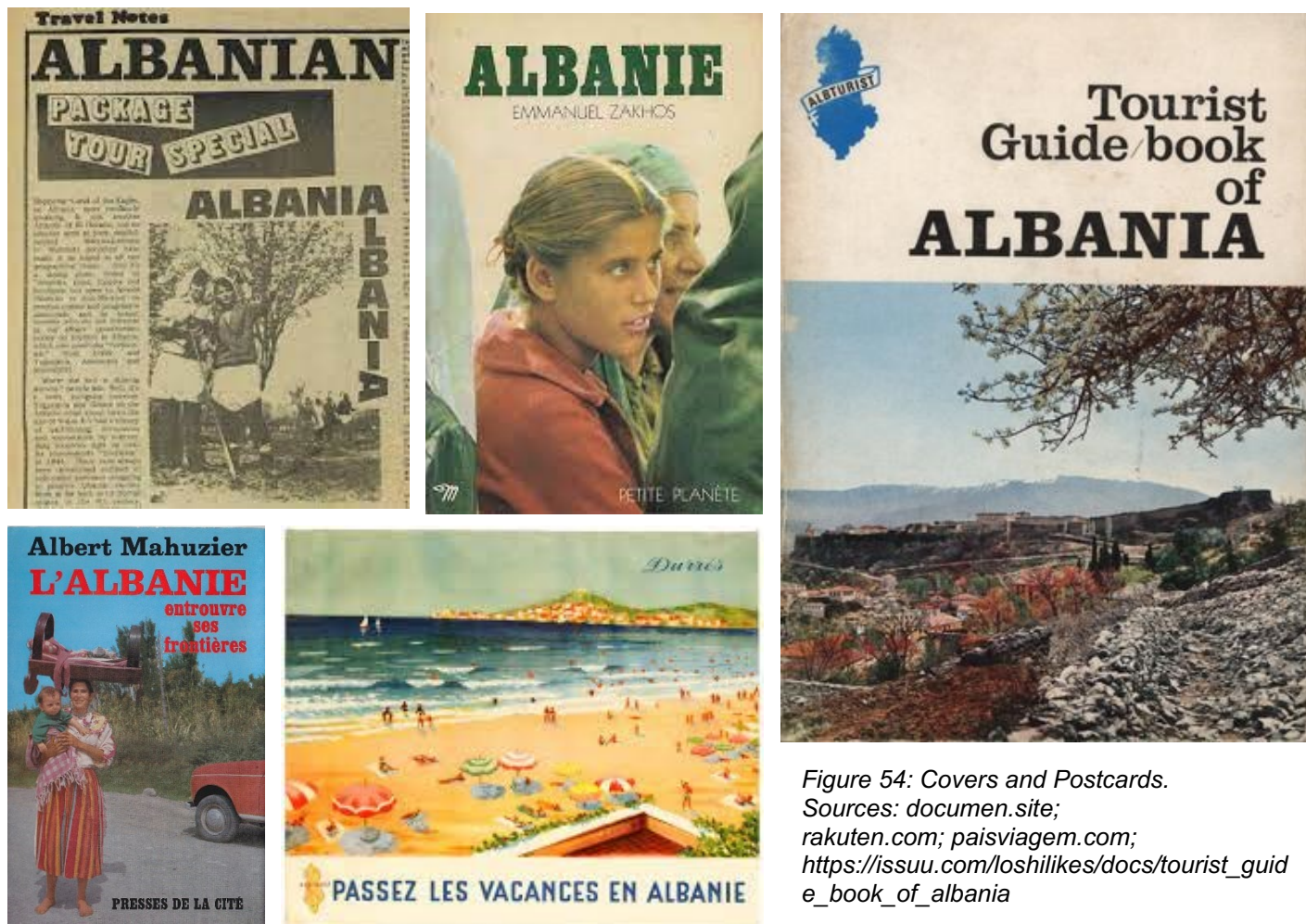


Figure 54: Covers and Postcards. Sources: documen.site; rakuten.com; paisviagem.com; [https://issuu.com/loshilikes/docs/tourist\\_guide\\_book\\_of\\_albania](https://issuu.com/loshilikes/docs/tourist_guide_book_of_albania)

The investments in touristic infrastructure fulfilled secondary objectives like: offering the possibility for rest and recreation for the population as part of the socialist politics, while serving as an ‘image-creator’ for the outside world.

The tourist facilitations were completely controlled and managed by the state company “Albturist”, but by giving low priority to the foreign tourism, they served more for domestic travelling and for citizen’s holidays, rather than attempting to welcome foreign

tourists. According to (Steenis, 2017), the annually inbound, varying from 2500 visitors in the 1940's till 30.000 at the end of the regime was very low compared to the Soviet Union or Yougoslavia.

And yet the portrayal of touristic Albania, had an opposite apparition.

*“Finally, we reach the seashore and enter the bathing beach area through the sector called «Plepat» («The Poplars»). Here there are numerous rest and recreation camps, for school children and working people. [...] In the central part of the bathing beaches zone rise the stately hotels of the Albturist — comfortable first-class hotels such as the «Adriatic»<sup>68</sup> hotel on the very edge of the sea. A beautiful bathing beach with the finest of sands and an equally wonderful sea welcome the tourists” (Albturist, 1969, p. 75)*

The foreign travelers, to visit Albania, during communism, would have to achieve an Albanian Visa.<sup>69</sup> Also, travelers to Albania or transit travelers would have to declare to the Albanian Custom, the disposal of other objects beyond personal utilitarian accessories, like radio-sets, photographic machines etc.

In the guide, along with the needed information regarding points of interest, accommodation or services, other indications, like the dressing code and hairstyle were rigorously specified. The visitors would have to be exposed and to the exaggerated delirious requests.

“For this purpose, all main border points served a special barbershop and a clothing store to “allow” tourists to adapt their style to how they had to look in order to be able to enter the country” (Steenis, 2017)

The strict control was also a consequence of the paranoid attitude of the dictator towards not allowing citizens from US, Soviet Union or China to enter in Albania, as they were considered “[...] *enemies, spies, hippie tourists and other vagabonds*” (Steenis, 2017) which did not have any place in Albania.

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<sup>68</sup> In the Albturist guide 1969, it is stated that this hotel is constructed specifically for tourists.

<sup>69</sup> According to Albturist 1969, Visas are released for one trip, entry and exit. They are valid for a months' time.





Figure 55: Luggage Labels of the Communist Time. Source: mipsh.al

Even the food to be consumed was pre-defined, through touristic packages. The imposed agenda was not considered a negation, but a ‘must’ to be agreed by the travelers.

In “[...] Stalinist Albania – tourism was tightly regulated and controlled, and foreign visitors were taken in prescribed itineraries [...]” (Light, 2000, p. 161). With the aim to manifest a specific image of Albania, accompanied by the achievements of the socialist state, this approach consists of the whole tourist’s experience.

*“Stalinist Albania may now be examined to reveal one of the “purest” forms of tourism under socialism. Stringently constrained, such a tertiary sector has been almost totally subordinated to the country’s other, more pressing internal requirements” (Hall D. R., 1984, p. 542)*

Considering tourism as an element of the ideologic dogma, Albunist managed the incoming tourists in the level of strict movement in order to present the ‘desired image’ of Albania as “The New Albania, while preventing the contact with the Albanian population, served to the objective of isolation, non-informed population towards other forms of state-management.

“Tourism is one way in which these countries can affirm their self-image and aspirations both to themselves and to the wider world. As such there are particular pieces of the national story which are considered acceptable – and unacceptable – for the tourist gaze” (Light, 2000, p. 172).

As referring to the notion that “the relationship of tourism with the political system is generally overlooked”<sup>70</sup> (Hall C. M., 1994), while it can be the focus point for the pretentious integrations and contribution to a more holistic approach towards the integration of the architectural heritage into tourism as an incentive.

### 5.3 The Architecture of Socialist Realism

During 1960-1975 an invigoration in the form of liberalism<sup>71</sup>, inspired from the apparition during the 1950's of the Stalinist classicism, released a little pressure in the architect's circles, by expressing a more sensitive approach towards space and context, which was rapidly suppressed by the ideological control over the “form” in the architectural designs and other forms of arts.

Socialist Realism was a philosophy born in Soviet Union as “an artistic procedure whose essence consists in reflecting reality captured in its revolutionary development, in a truthful and historically concrete way” (Ndreçka & Nepravishta, 2014, p. 27). By considering it as the more accurate representation of the man within the ideological system and aiming to create a new style, the rhythm found its way in culture, arts, science and architecture.

Socialist Realism' was also related with the definition of the architectural style of this period, aiming to create an architecture which would not follow the previous style, despite its inspirations, but to create a noticeable identity. This would be achieved by emphasizing the neoclassicism as the most valuable architecture and incorporating the imprint of the form. This style which was approved and supported by Stalin, was also the leading influence on the Albanian architecture for almost ten years (1948-1958)<sup>72</sup>.

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<sup>70</sup> Colin M. Hall highlighted the connection between Policy, Power and the Physical Place in 1994 to state that tourism should be understood within the context of these three components. These lenses can help further development of tourism for each site or country.

<sup>71</sup> This period is referred in the book “Under Pressure. Facts of Socialist Architecture in Albania”, 2018, as the “Island of Freedom”

<sup>72</sup> For the understanding of the phases of the architecture in socialist Albania, in this thesis the information is referred to the book “Under Pressure” (Islami G. , Veizaj, Thomai, & Fontanari, 2018)

As Mëhilli (2017) stated, the concept of Socialism was extended to the point of being a “[...] material reality: buildings, tools, vehicles and urban plans. This represented the way how the ideology would speak to the population, by identifying the country as a ‘construction site’. This site, is the emblematic origin of socialism itself”.

Considered a guiding influence, similarly to Eastern European countries, with its unique legitimate terms, this rhythm in Albanian architecture was characterized simplicity and low-cost orientation were the predominant guidance during the design and construction phase.

Their character, visualization, the ability to contribute in the urban centers, even in the situation of rejecting style and embracing ideology, but simultaneously creating urban hierarchy and achieving an absolute ‘self – manifestation’, which even though the dynamics of Albanian cities have exploited, the layer of the socialist architecture in Albania is displayed and perceived in ease.

The force of ideology in the architecture, culminated with the nationalist architecture, where the total conformism produced high contextual impact buildings, exaggerated formal and dimensional buildings. The absence of liberty in the aesthetical components, by accepting the system insistence and political guidelines represented the only way where architects could be sustained to develop their ideas and projects.

An even deeper contrast of Albanian Socialism with other Socialist countries can be seen in the opposition towards modernism. The opposition with modernism was initiated since in its conception. As Ndreçka & Nepravishta (2014) stated, in the controversy attitude towards Modernism base principals; the “Form” and the “Function”, the socialist realism found its way towards its two main concepts which were defined by “the national form” and the “socialist content”.

Modernism was considered a manifestation of the capitalism which was presumed as one of the foreign public enemies for the country. Oppositions in this regard could result in severe measures for the professionals and their families. The inability to relate with the other countries experience, obviously created the perfect conditions for the ulterior isolation of Albania.

Considering the modernism principles as capitalist manifestations, therefore 'enemy' enabled consequently control and dictation of the design process. Architects, who attempted to show in their works "modernist tendencies" were incarcerated or punished in other forms. "Socialism disintegrated as geopolitical reality but left behind an unmistakable map of familiar plans, objects and shared references" (Mëhilli, 2017, p. 4).

### 5.3.1 The meaning and the Ideology Behind Architecture of Socialism

In socialist countries it is evidential to unravel the conditions and effects of the ideology in the attempts for the urban control, shaping the image of the city, by enforcing rigid principles also during the design process of buildings, which can "[...] reveal itself as urban architectures" When trying to address this concept in the book: "Under Pressure. Facts of socialist architecture in Albania", by researching for the meaning of this character "[...] certainly not an alleged style, given that both in Italian and Albanian cases, the apparent figurative expression hides more varied and complex origins than it seems at first glance [...] even if sometimes homologated in a sort of State Eclecticism". (Islami G. , Veizaj, Thomai, & Fontanari, 2018, p. 6).

During harsh dictatorship, the power of architecture and design to communicate used as a mean to enhance propaganda and enforcing domination to the citizens, is a bitter reality. But for Albania, the relation between architecture and ideology can be accepted as a further 'push forward'.

The main urban attribute of the architecture during this period, is oriented towards aggregating evident and significant urban configurations while rejecting any local, modernist or oriental apparitions, camouflaged within the veil of 'Revisionism'. The ideology has managed to influence the ability of architecture during socialism to create a qualitative urban space and to achieve a flamboyant presence. Beyond the symbolics of the regime, the communist architectural heritage has reached the scope of creating urban hierarchy, a perceived integration between external and internal space, which imposes the further need to be studied through their contribution, shortcomings and visible features.

In a system where the 'formation' of architects was strictly under the system's observation, focused in engineering training rather than esthetical education, the purpose of the regime was clear; to intently prepare engineers, which would be able to create and buildings in congruence with the socialist ideas and solve the upcoming construction problems. Under these circumstances, the intercourse of the architecture with the aesthetic parts of the engineering has been onerous during all the extension of the system.

As it is stated in "Under Pressure" (Islami G. , Veizaj, Thomai, & Fontanari, 2018, pp. 14,15) "[...] the creative work of the architects of this period, a clear division can be noticed between the two basic components of design: form and function. The first is about the materialization of socialist ideology, whereas the second remains loyal to the typological and technical solutions".

The articulation of the relationship of this twofold concept can be found in utilitarian buildings and housing units. This way, the language of architecture was turned into a refined tool to control the city.

The Role of Architecture during this period can be evaluated in two levels:

- i) Using architecture as an instrument to impose the ideologic dogma
- ii) Re-shaping the national identity through the processes of exclusion, demolition, re-adaptation, assimilation and isolation

#### *5.3.1.1 Image of Architecture as an 'inclusive' tool for the Ideology.*

Within a totalitarian regime, which has in its core the objective to control everything it is clear that architecture is certainly used as a supportive tool of the socialist propaganda. This approach contributed to architecture is multifold and fragmented in components which would define the urban image, the outsider's perspective and impose the strong ideological principles in the everyday life of the cities.

*Dictated Principles of Ideology and the Image of New Albania, during the Rational Approach and National Form Principle:*

The rational approach of architecture was the longest period during communism, extended till the mid 70's. The ending of this type of architecture derived in the context of total political isolation of Albania.

The linguistic features of architecture during Socialist Realism in Albania, have been modified according to ideological needs and the premise for a centralized image representation.

The final phase of the architectural development in the communist Albania, was concerned with the pursuit of the 'National Form'. This Concept essentially wasn't clearly defined or sustained in previous architectural styles and principles. It represented an ideologic attitude to achieve a clear, simple and grandiose portrayal which would be intact by the foreign influences and free from unnecessary decoration. The approach of architecture has to be considered 'politically correct' and fulfill the functional needs without space for interpretation or creativity.

*Isolation from the modernist architecture and construction methods.  
Rejecting and fighting the foreign influences*

Modernism was seen as a dangerous enemy, which was aiming to induce in the revolutionary force's reactionary perspective.

Till 1970, the generation of architects who were designing in socialist Albania had a soviet education, since the first architecture school was opened in the mid 1970's. The limited resources for different educations compounded another explanatory argument for the extended influence of the soviet architecture

A period of liberalism can be noticed from the early 1960's to the early 1970's, mostly because the regime had other priorities rather than architecture, which allowed space for the architects to achieve a certain freedom in design, but was later on alleged as modern content, through an 'ideological and cultural revolution' in 1973-1975 in every

field, including architecture. The revolution obviously was followed by severe consequences for some of the professionals.

*Architecture as communication tool.*

*Usage of the facades of Buildings as daily message communicators:*

The architecture during communism has been a monopoly of the system, since architectural design were produced in the Design Institutions<sup>73</sup>. This architecture was seen as a powerful tool through incorporating the component of 'socialist content' and 'national form' which was hereby used a powerful tool to impose the ideologic dogma.

Since the leading principles were not clearly defined, the architecture of the time resulted in an evident and visible presence for the observers, which was free of decors, unattached to the context and oftentimes enveloped by national symbols or large artworks in the façade or interiors, to transmit the ideological messages.

To enforce the use of architecture as a transmitter of the political messages, their facades were frequently covered with banners and slogans, which turned their image in a show itself. Propagandistic writings on the walls were generally not just messengers, but an integral part of the everyday life.

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<sup>73</sup> *Design Institutions were centers attaché near governmental units, responsible for creating and implementing designs in alignment with ideological philosophy.*

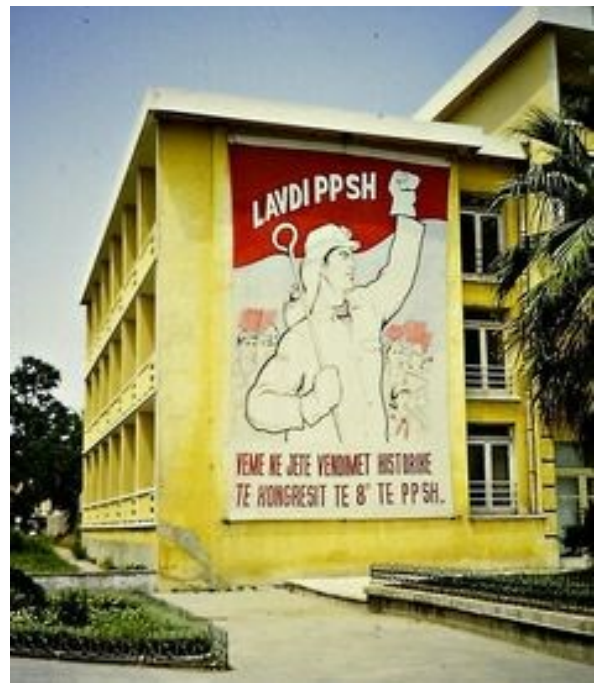
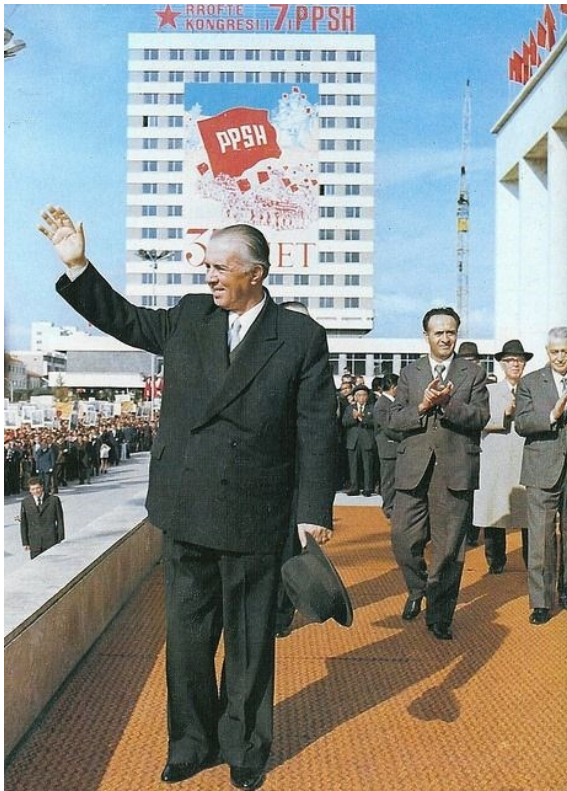


Figure 56: The 'Appropriation of the facades' during Enver Hoxha Regime.  
Sources: [pinterest.com](https://www.pinterest.com); [flickr.com](https://www.flickr.com); [agteic.com](https://www.agteic.com); [memorie.al](https://www.memorie.al)



### 5.3.1.2 Architecture as an instrument for Re-shaping the national identity

Architecture in the system has been used in the strategic approach for reshaping the national identity, which happened in the following layers:

*Demolishing churches, mosques and other inherited buildings or re-adapting the buildings for other purposes:*

The ideological movement exhibiting itself after the interruption of the diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, was extended to the point of religion rejection. With the pretended argumentation<sup>74</sup> that religious practices were impeding the countries and society development, religious symbols and literature were destroyed, the practicing the religion rituals was not allowed by law, institutions were closed and clerics were often condemned. Considering the religions as traces of the historic occupations, the extermination of these vestiges was considered non-negotiable towards the new image of Albania, as a self-sufficient country, directed towards a 'National Form'

This decision was accompanied by physical extinction of the religious objects<sup>75</sup> through demolition of the building which were not considered structurally stable or damaged and by changing its use to agricultural, sports or social facilities.

The process of readaptation would be based on the total transformation of the external architecture and image of the buildings and formalized also in constitutional level, in 1976, which [...] declared the People's Socialist Republic of Albania, the first and only atheist country in the world (Islami G. , Veizaj, Thomai, & Fontanari, 2018, p. 67)

"Condemning the 'propagandistic' architecture of Fascism, Communist authorities lived and worked surrounded by it" (Mëhilli, 2017, p. 33). By renaming the buildings, placing communist symbols especially in the facades and by filling the interiors with portraits of Stalin and Hoxha. This was the case for Royal Residences in Shirokë or Durrës which

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<sup>74</sup> "Feja eshte opium per popullin" translated as "Religion is opium for population", Enver Hoxha's Regime declared total rejection towards religion.

<sup>75</sup> Considering the multi-religious state of Albania, in this process were included Christian and Muslim buildings. According to (Islami G. , Veizaj, Thomai, & Fontanari, 2018, p. 69) This 'exterminating campaign' terminated with the closure of 2169 religious buildings and removal of 198 out of the 294 of these buildings from the inventory of cultural monuments.

served as summer holiday establishment for youth or the Palace of Brigades, which was used as an administrative building to host foreign state functions.

This process was highly manifested in the urban sites with strategic interest. From the most notable examples can be mentioned: a) the demolition of the former City Hall, part of the architectural ensemble of the Italian Colonization, where during the third phase of the socialist architectural development was substituted with today's National Museum and the dissolution of the public space of the "Old Bazaar" in 1959, with the today's building of the National Opera Theater.

#### *New industrial cities built from tabula rasa, within the socialist principles*

In the framework of the standardized design, small cities in Albania were born. Attached to an industrial cellule like: mines, factories or agricultural sites, the development of small cities like Bulqiza, Kuçova, Memaliaj etc., were sustained since genesis in the standardized design method. This approach expanded in the overall urban structure of these cities, which generated almost the same city centers, residential and public buildings, by generating very alike cities, which looked the same. This approach was also a secondary aim for the regime, related with the so-called 'public equality'.

#### *Assimilation of traditional architectural features*

During Communist Albania the traditional features and materials of construction were disregarded, in the beginning of the manifestation of communism period due to the influences from the Soviet Union and furthermore, due to the demand of the socialist architecture for achieving a National Form. The traditional construction techniques were rapidly exchanged for the standardization and the rapidness in construction that it offered, while the architectural features of the traditional architecture were on no account a reinforcing factor of the communist ideology, therefore it was never taken in consideration from this regime.

### 5.3.2 General Characteristics of Socialist Architecture

#### *The national Form*

The search for the national form was intended to be a representation of the Albanian culture and identity. This form should be transmitted clearly, while containing the socialist content<sup>76</sup>, which imposed a challenge in the network of architects, since transmitting the socialist content in a physical form, was an unclear requirement. This induced requirement involved the elaboration from professionals, artists, scholars and politics, including the dictator himself, to address the formation of the social content and national form. Re-interpretations of traditional architecture, ethnographic inputs and usage of symbolism, were elements identified to lead the process of actualization of the architecture as a national form, which is expected to be evident, compelling and with clear national character. It is to be underlined that the concept of National Form was mainly an attribute of the public buildings with a certain importance for the regime, while the buildings for everyday use were not tackled by the manifestation of this leading principles<sup>77</sup>.

*“The Scanderbeg Museum cannot be designed with large openings, by simply resolving the lighting issue, but neither with small ones similar to Kulla<sup>78</sup>'s windows. First of all, considering the exteriors, the museum should possess the characteristics of a typical Albanian building of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Lightning is an additional issue that should be resolved by the design of the interiors”*

From Enver Hoxha's guidelines regarding the construction of Gjergj Kastrioti Skanderbeg Museum in Kruja.

(Islami G. , Veizaj, Thomai, & Fontanari, 2018, p. 79)

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<sup>76</sup> The slogan used during the manifestation of the national form in art and architecture, was “Socialist in Content and National in Form”

<sup>77</sup> The National Form and the Socialist Content are considered the main leading principles of the architecture during the 3<sup>rd</sup> phase of architectural manifestation in communist Albania.

<sup>78</sup> Kulla is fortified traditional house in northern Albania, with small openings as windows for the protection enhancement of the family.

### *Prefabrication and Type*

The evolvement of industrialization, posed the inclusion of prefabrication as the preferred alternative regarding the answer to imperative needs for housing first and then the formation of the city urban structure and additional functions. The production in series and the language of architecture was not taken in consideration. Similarity, repetition and monotony were characteristics of the apartments in micro scale and the urban image in the city level.

To understand the dimensions of utilization of the prefabrication process, the plan that operated for a decade, can be considered the objective of constructing 2000 apartments within a year (Islami G. , Veizaj, Thomai, & Fontanari, 2018, p. 57)

According to Islam G. et al.; Concrete Prefabricated Panels were used all over the country, where after the transportation process, the assembling technology enabled time gaining<sup>79</sup> in any site, which led to the construction of almost 20.000 apartments, corresponding to the accommodation of 3% of the total population.

The problematics with the prefabricated structures were further more presented due to the interior low comfort level, thermal insulation and structural poor attributes to cope with humidity.

### *Standardized Design*

After the World War II, the emergent needs were focused towards rebuilding the country. Considering the lack of resources and the undeveloped economy, the regime sustained its construction processes in the volunteer work<sup>80</sup>.

While the exigency of the situation, requested the need for using the proper methods and instruments to achieve design and execution of projects.

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<sup>79</sup> This construction technology reduced the time of the construction to 65% compared to the previous traditional methodologies

<sup>80</sup> Volunteer work was actually used as a statement for the constraint inclusion of the population in construction processes as a contribution for the country.

Pre-defined and standardized designs were used to face the abovementioned requirements, due to their ability to be implemented faster and in alignment with the Albania's economic means.

Standardized Designs were used for public buildings, residential buildings, industrial buildings. The three palaces of sport built in Korca, Vlora and Elbasan (1973, 1973-1979 and 1978-1980) display the same design imprint, with few alterations to adapt to the case, without taking in consideration the urban morphology or other aspects of the context.

### *Prioritizing technological and economical solutions*

The new rational style which was developed onward in the socialist Albania, responded firstly to the immediate need for constructing the appropriate infrastructure and urban structure of the cities by taking in consideration the main restrained component, the economy and by relying on the prefabrication and standardization technology as the most appropriate for the specific needs on the period.

While fulfilling the function and addressing the technical issues by resolving the construction dynamics, the first requirement for the architecture was accomplished. This represented also the only requirement for the construction of the dwelling units. The emphasis on architecture was solely reserved for public buildings, which were furthermore treated regarding the calculated importance. The buildings designated to be positioned in the central parts of the city or buildings with specific political importance were designed with an elaborated architectural language including the use of decorations or national symbols, while the design of other public buildings, in most cases were accompanied by the guidelines of standardization and type.

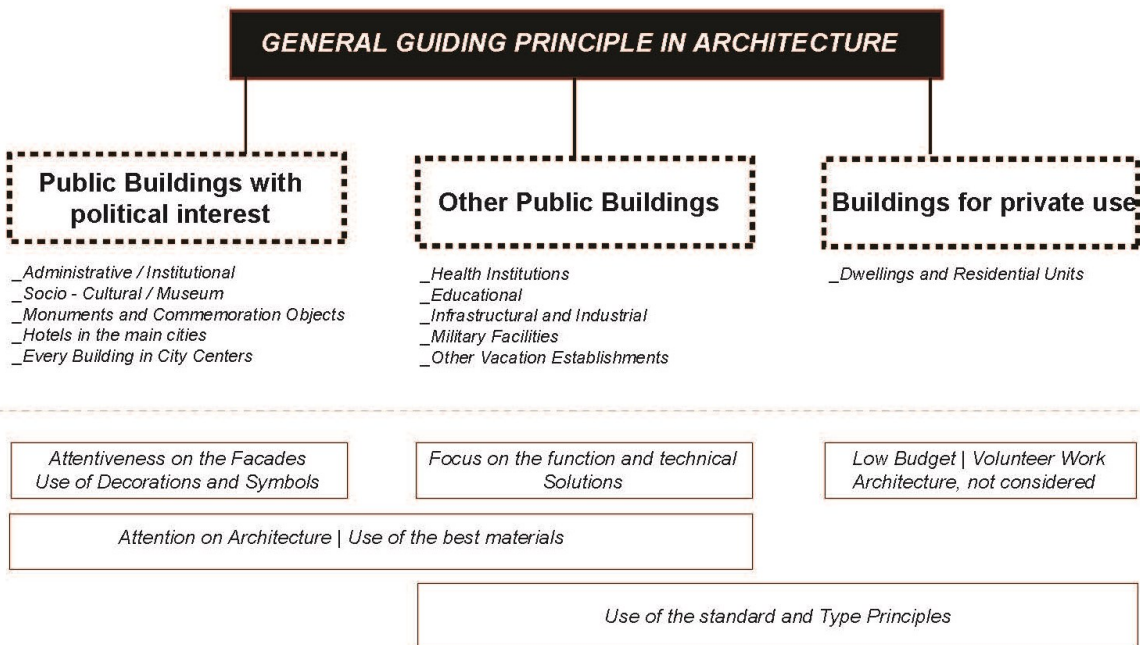
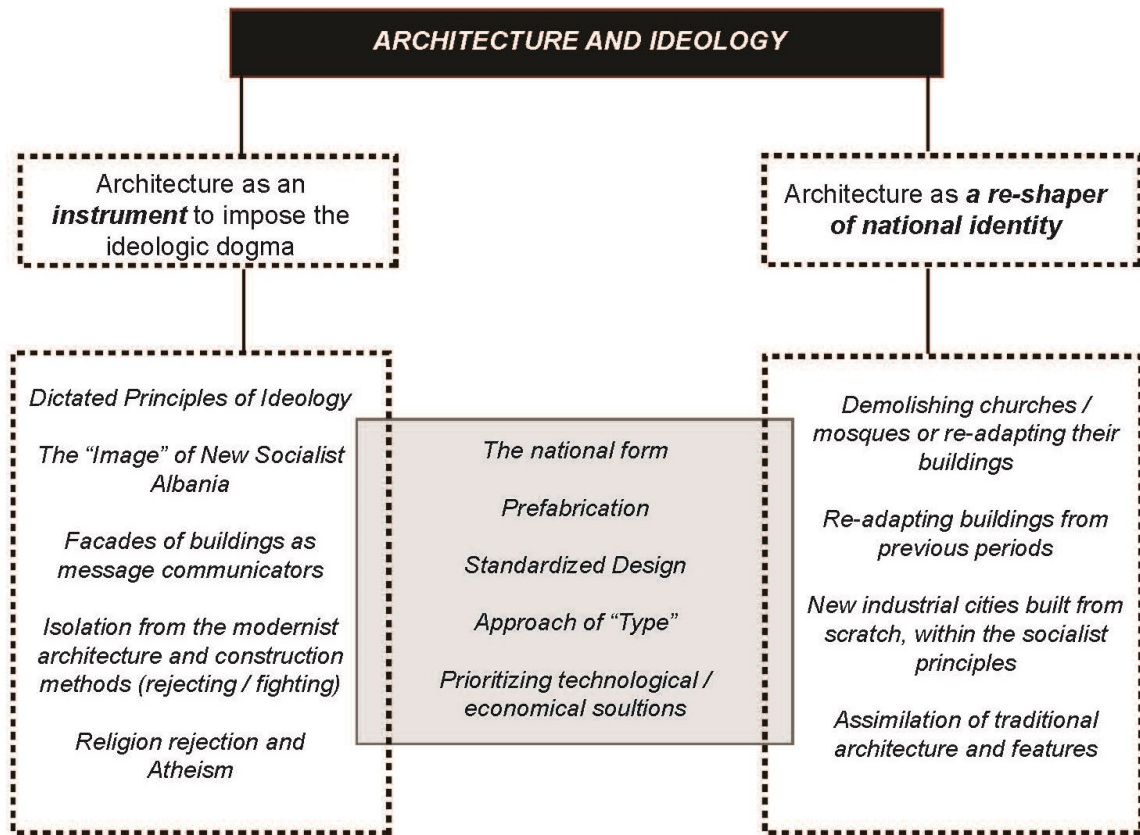


Figure 57: Inclusive Framework of Architecture characteristics and relation with the Socialist Ideology. Source: Author (based on the review of "Under Pressure")

### 5.3.3 Phases of Development of Socialist Architecture

#### **The first phase (1948-1958)**

Albania found itself at the side of the eastern block after World War II, which created the space for the state to be oriented immediately after war towards 'The Grand Russia'. According to (Kolevica, 2004, p. 40), before the Party of Labor took the leadership of Albania in 1945, Albanian citizens were quite familiar and accepting towards modern architecture, its rationality and functionalism, considering the previous architectural designs during the 1930's with the manifestation of proto-modernist architecture of the Italian contributions in Albania<sup>81</sup>.

“[...] Albanian youths sent to the Soviet Union for training in literature, engineering and architecture. The encounter with Moscow was awe-inspiring, but exposure to the socialist world could also be alienating” (Mëhilli, 2017, p. 14)

The Hoxha's model, Stalin was investing in public buildings with a language that resembled to a condensate of neoclassicism, baroque entangled with traces of religious architecture.

The Soviet Socialist Realism would have its representation in Albania, in time frame of a decade, with the construction of important projects in the capital like: The Central Committee, the residential buildings of Shallvaret and “Agimi” Complex<sup>82</sup>, Textile Combinat and Kinostudio “Shqipëria e Re”<sup>83</sup>. These buildings represent pure examples of the re-interpretation of the soviet architecture of Stalin period in Albania. The artistic and stylistic articulation of this architecture with neoclassical origins was promptly substituted after the diplomatic interruption<sup>84</sup> with the Soviet Union with the more simplified and 'stripped from decoration' architecture, which ought to be rational, immaculate and in the meantime preserving socialist characteristics.

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<sup>81</sup> Translation of the author. As a demonstration of proto-modernist architecture, the author refers to the design of Hotel Dajti, National Bank, the Maternity Hospital etc.

<sup>82</sup> 'Shallvare' and Agimi are complex of residential buildings along the main Boulevards “Gjergj Fishta” and Bajram Curri which represents a manifestation of the pure soviet architecture in Tirana

<sup>83</sup> Kinostudio “Shqipëria e Re” stands for the film-making studio “New Albania” which in and of itself

<sup>84</sup> Albania interrupted the diplomatic relations with the Soviet Government of Khrushchev in 1961, which was unfold also in architectural principles.

This moment was also the transitional point of rupture between the creativity and individuality of the architect with the new figure of the architect, as a 'performer' of the strict defined political ideology.

“[...] the attempts to mimic Soviet experience, most notable in the massive architectural offices which followed the Russian model [...] the rapid emergence of a fully-fledged socialist-realist style according to a national model in each country [...]” (Crowley, 1994, p. 65)

### **The second phase (1959-1974)**

After the outworn relationship between China and Soviet Union, Enver Hoxha oriented Albania towards China, since according to him, comprised the genuine voice of 'anti-imperialism'.

“Connecting countries from the fringes of the Balkans to East Asia, socialism magnified ideological conflicts, turning them into social and cultural crises. It engendered a shared material and mental culture across national borders without ensuring political unity [...]” (Mëhilli, 2017, p. 4)

While Hoxha emphasized that the exaggerated soviet architectural style which attempted to resuscitate the neoclassical style, with distorted columns, capitals and 'out of time' decorations, actually was not easily accepted by the population and the professionals of the time, considering also the imposing manner that this architecture was presented through the ideological indoctrination.

The principles of design were re-formulated after the breakdown of the relationship with the Soviet Union, which derived attention towards the “[...] the socialist realism as aesthetic design concept as well as the norms and rules [...] which architects and engineers should follow rigorously” (Ndreçka & Nepravishta, 2014, p. 28).

The neoclassicist elements of architecture were not further more accepted, since the façade decorations were considered ultimately unnecessary, which directed the sector



of construction towards a cost reduction policy and created space for the agricultural and industrial development. Architectural aspects of the buildings were left behind and reserved only for specific buildings, which enhanced the contradiction between low-cost residential areas, as the only objective was the functional solution with the administrative buildings with higher budget.

Albania became a 'construction site', orbited towards centralized design, with a very limited understanding of the outside world.

During this period, the buildings for housing, education and social buildings, were developed under the concept of 'floor type' to address the rationalization and standardization during the design and construction processes. Whereas also the construction schemes or usage of certain materials, were part of the defined guidelines. These limitations created the disturbance of the monotony and the justifications of low-cost constructions, having in mind also the users<sup>85</sup>.

### **The third phase (1975-1991)**

In fact, the 'alienation' for Albania began after the total isolation of the country from the external world outside its confines, which resulted in deepening the poverty along with the dramatic propaganda. With the external communication now inexistent, the communist state of Hoxha, relied totally in auto-sufficiency and invested a considerable number of resources in the military fortifications diffused in all the territory, like: bunkers, underground tunnels and hidden spots for armaments. This approach of the dictator was considered worldwide a 'genuine paranoia' but the 'anti-revisionism' and 'anti-imperialism' idea was the unquestionable direction of the leadership, while the Marxism-Leninism lessons represented the ideology to be followed.

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<sup>85</sup> *The contradiction between the buildings of communism to be used by citizens with those to be used by the political class or foreign visitors, was visible in the attention of details or architecture and construction materials.*

The discussion for the construction of the National Museum in 1976, as a symbol of the 'Albanian Revolution' generated a turmoil. Previous indications for a 'unified' object<sup>86</sup> with a treatment as a 'decorative' ribbon which would resemble the cartridge belt.<sup>87</sup> The discussion for national architecture or contemporary architecture were enclosed with a building which would be a tribute to the Albanian Socialist Realism and the overall ideology, enveloped by the frontal Mosaic.

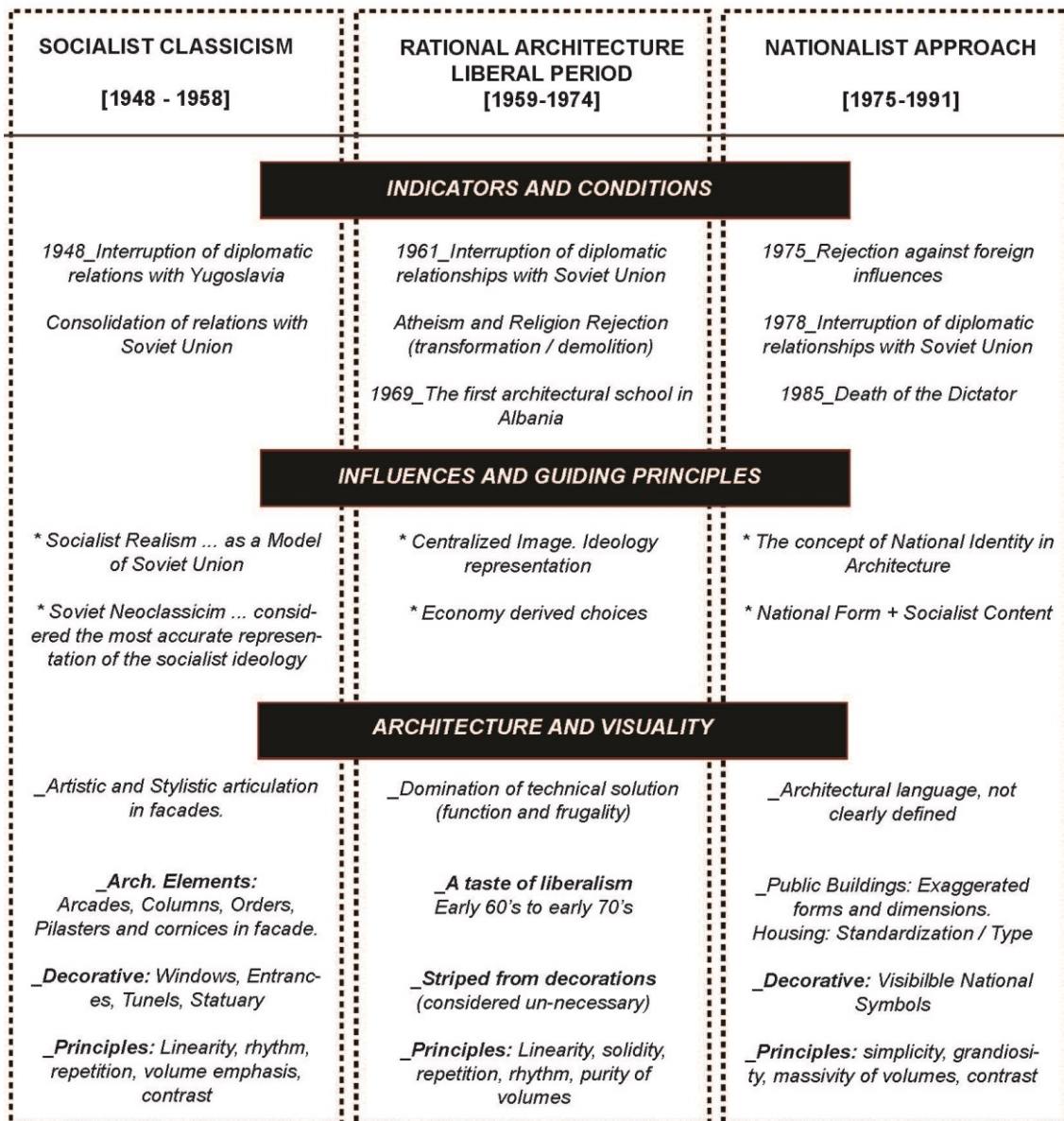


Figure 58: Framework of the three architectural periods during communism and their specifics.  
Source: Author

<sup>86</sup> In analogy with the 'unification' of the population and the Albanian revolution

<sup>87</sup> The description of the ideas of the façade for the National Museum are explained in (Kolevica, 2004, p. 229). He states that the actual perimetral decoration is part of the concept of 'cartridge belt'

**SOCIALIST CLASSICISM**

[1948 - 1958]



**RATIONAL ARCHITECTURE  
LIBERAL PERIOD**

[1959-1974]



**NATIONALIST APPROACH**

[1975-1991]



Figure 59: Public Buildings in Tirana. In columns from above: 1) Central Committee Headquarters, 2) The Residential Buildings of "Shallvare", 3) Kino Studio "New Albania", 4) Textile Factory "Joseph Stalin" 5) Martyrs' Cemetery, 6) Palace of Culture, 7) Art Gallery, 8) Kino Club "Student", 9) The Pyramid Memorial of E. Hoxha, 10) The Museum of the National Hero "Gjergj Kastrioti, Skenderbej" 11) National Museum, 12) Frontal Mosaic of National Museum.

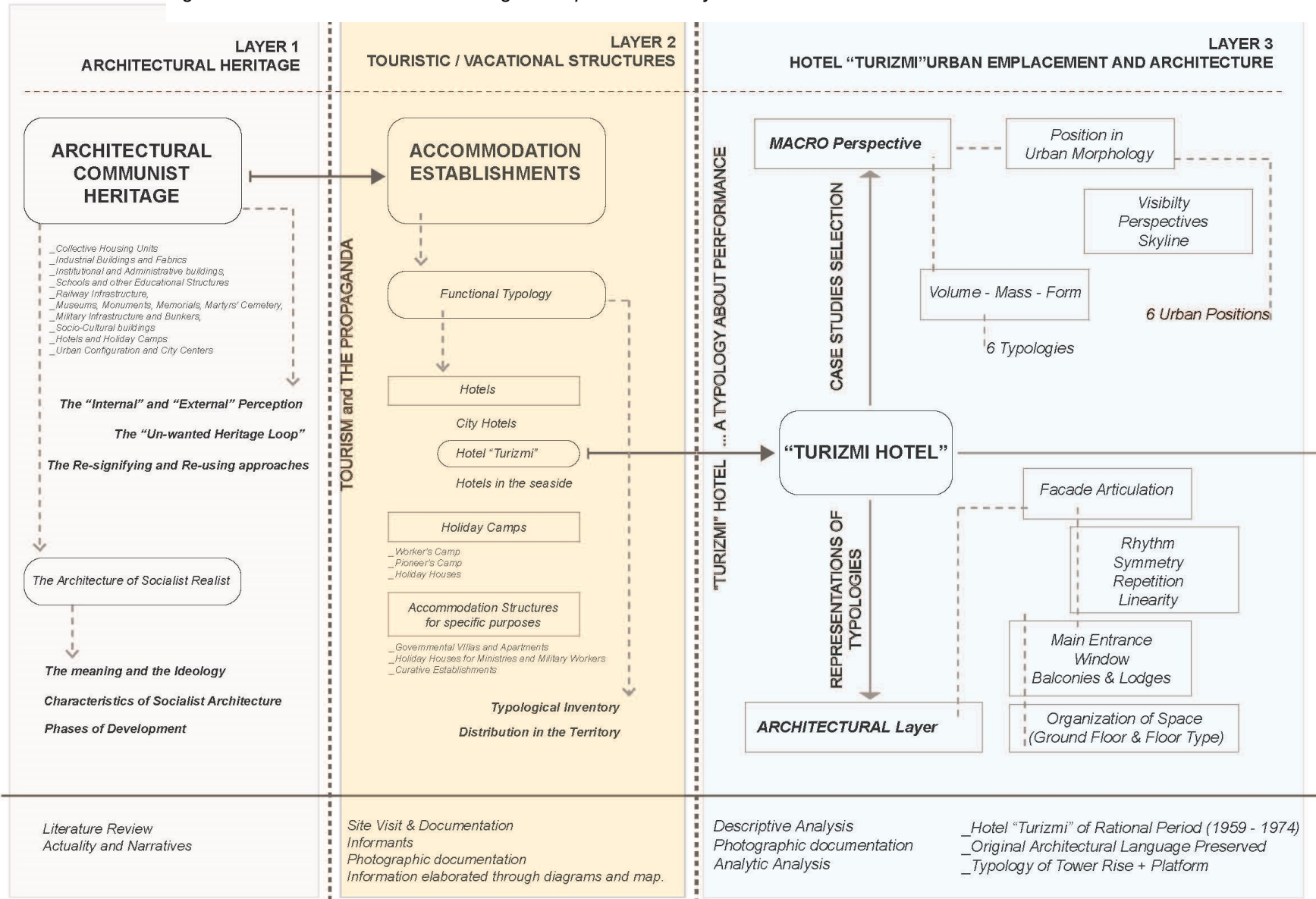
Sources: [memorie.al](http://memorie.al); [panorama.com](http://panorama.com); [flickr.com](http://flickr.com); [pamfleti.net](http://pamfleti.net); [researchgate.net](http://researchgate.net); [prointegra.ch](http://prointegra.ch); [globtourmontenegro.com](http://globtourmontenegro.com)

Chapter 6: The Hotels of Communism in Albania



Figure 60: Hotel Adriatik, Durrës.  
Source: [memorie.al](http://memorie.al)

Figure 61: Structure of the Methodological steps for the analyzation of the Communist Hotels



## 6.1 Communist Hotels of Albania through functional typology

By the beginning of the 1970's, the socialist leadership has begun to identify the role of tourism in the 'external image' of Albania and this purpose could be reached through the construction of several hotels in city centers. This approach was welcomed by the architects of the time, as one of the few changes to have some possibility of expression through architecture, since the 'modernist line' has become a fact and could be appropriate in the design of hotels. Moreover, taking part in a design group for hotels, was considered a unique possibility to design in height. (Kolevica, 2004, p. 171)

This period can be considered the more immaculate for architecture, free from the soviet embellishment and a touch of 'modernism', while with the orientation of Socialist Albania towards the Republic China in external Affairs, led architecture and arts towards a dark period.

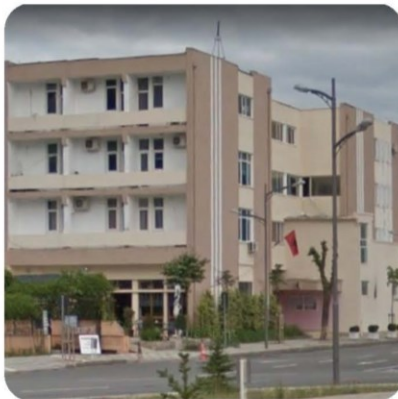
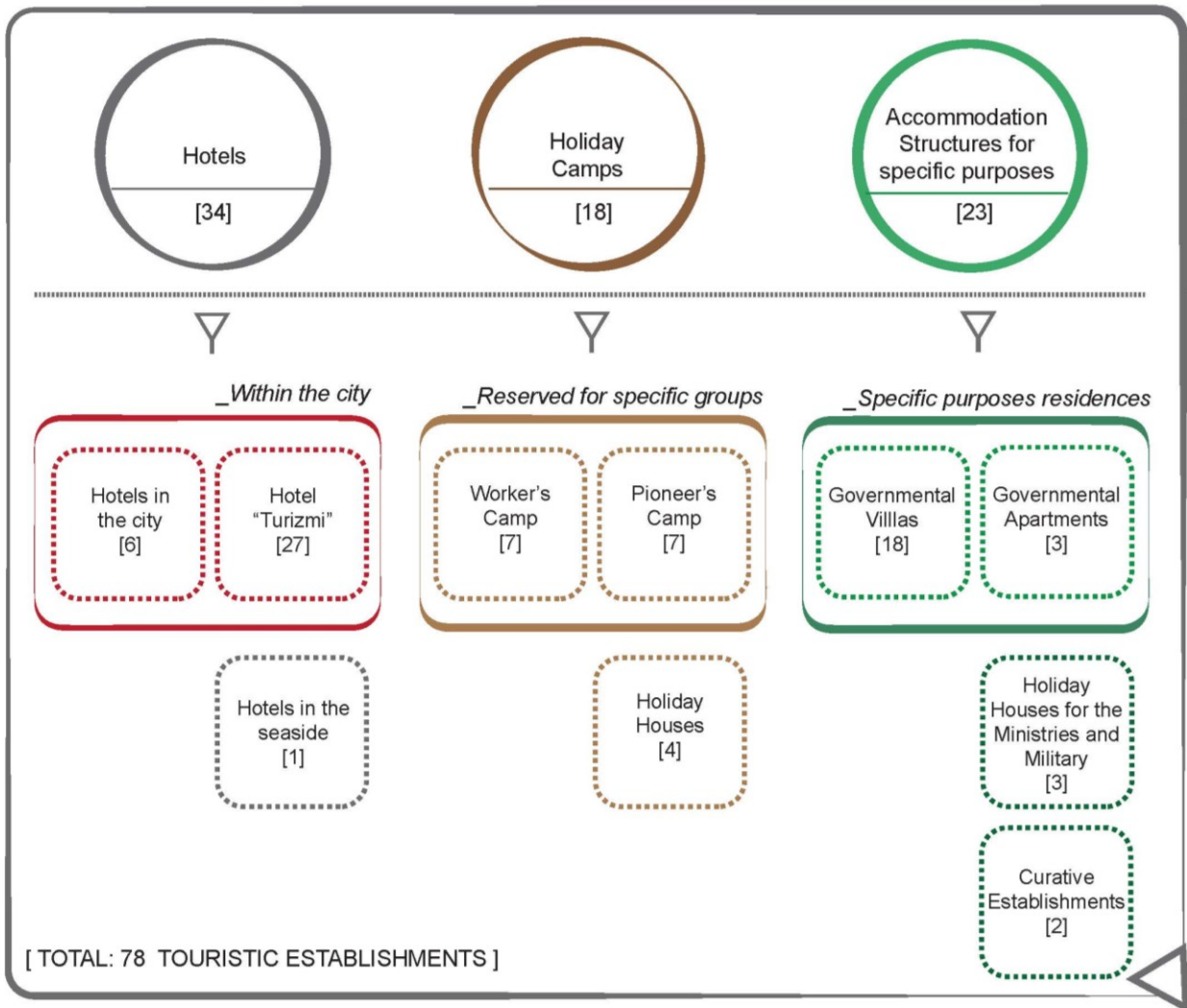
Considering the lack of data and analysis, as well as the peculiarity of the architectural manifestation of the accommodation for touristic purposes the interest in this type of architectural heritage is quite immense. There has not been an inclusive study of tourism development in Albania and these establishments, which did not touch the savor of mass tourism like other socialist countries, due to the regime's attitude.

Initiating large-scaled research in the national level, raises the requirement to identify this heritage in the level of function, approach and further physical representations. Photographing, mapping and review of the architectural drawings from the archive are the tools used in this session.

The first part of the research is focused on the identification of the typologies regarding their function of the accommodation structure.

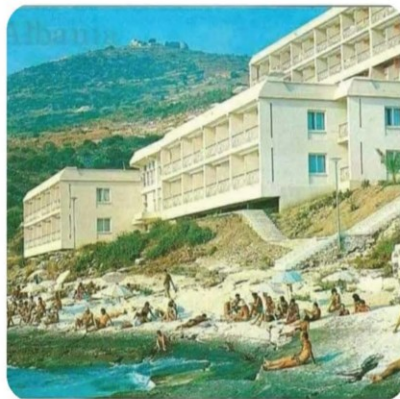
This documenting phase, identified the category of:

- a) Hotels
- b) Holiday Camps
- c) Other specific accommodation structures.



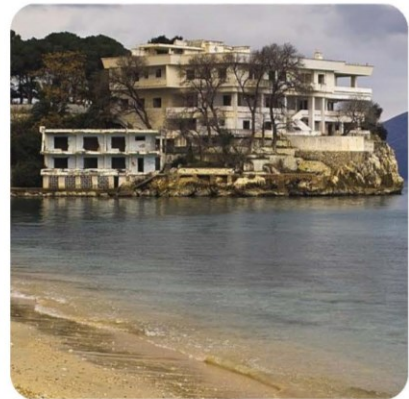
Hotel "Turizmi" Kukës, 1971

Source: google maps.



Worker's Holiday Camp in Saranda 1983

Source:  
[https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.pinterest.com%2Fpin%2F662521795158980490%2F&psig=AOvVaw2VkuVNC5vfk9b\\_w6l\\_TQeP&ust=1631464051753000&source=images&cd=vfe&ved=0CAaQjRqFwoTCL\\_-aur9\\_JCFQAAAAAdAAAAABAI](https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.pinterest.com%2Fpin%2F662521795158980490%2F&psig=AOvVaw2VkuVNC5vfk9b_w6l_TQeP&ust=1631464051753000&source=images&cd=vfe&ved=0CAaQjRqFwoTCL_-aur9_JCFQAAAAAdAAAAABAI)



Governmental Holiday Villa in Dhermi, Vlorë.

Source:  
[https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.kimagia.org%2F15742563%2Ffac%2F1sh-Vila-Enverit&psig=AOvVaw1OukG6gUZE62Z0g800j8D&ust=1631463609109000&source=images&cd=vfe&ved=0CAaQjRqFwoTCLiCvst2p9\\_ICFQAAAAAdAAAAABAR](https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.kimagia.org%2F15742563%2Ffac%2F1sh-Vila-Enverit&psig=AOvVaw1OukG6gUZE62Z0g800j8D&ust=1631463609109000&source=images&cd=vfe&ved=0CAaQjRqFwoTCLiCvst2p9_ICFQAAAAAdAAAAABAR)

Figure 62: Functional Typologies of Touristic Accommodation Structure (1945-1990). Source. Author

During the research, has been identified that the three typologies have sub variants related with the users or the place where they were positioned, while also calculated with the city's perspective or touristic offer.

The category of the hotel, could be found in the coastal area, within the socialist city in under the typology of Hotel "Turizmi", which was essentially present in almost every city or as a city hotel, like in Tirana which is the largest city. This division is due to the category of users and the model of tourism developed. Since the tourists had a very controlled agenda and were not supposed to be in contact with the local population, the hotel used by foreigners and by Albanians were divided

Holiday camps were dedicated to the use of the population during vacation. Through a channeled procedure of taking permission, which was not available for everyone and not every year, the civils could spend summer by the sea by accommodating in Holiday Worker's Camps, Holiday Houses or Pioneers Camps, known also as Youth Camps.

Mountainous establishments or curative settlements were dedicated to specific health issues which made the access strictly controlled and limited.

A particular holiday establishment in the form of villas or apartments, dedicated for the administration workers or the governmental troupe, was not able to be visited by others.

This inventory articulated in total 78 accommodation structures, which is divided in the proportions of 34 city hotels, 18 holiday camps and 23 establishments for specific purposes.



## 6.2 Mapping the Albanian Communist Hotels in the Territory

The second step of the research consisted in mapping these structures in the territory, with the objective of understanding the main points of distribution which simultaneously coincides with the sites where the attention of the regime and architectural contribution prevails the most.

Referred as on the most preferred 'resort centers', "Pogradec has a great future as a tourist center. Today Pogradec has a big and modern hotel on the very shores of the lake where the visitors may have a dip in its mild clear waters. The environment offers an Alpine-like scenery of rare beauty. The lofty mountains of Kamja and Guri i Topit stand over it like a crown." (Albturist, 1969, p. 94)

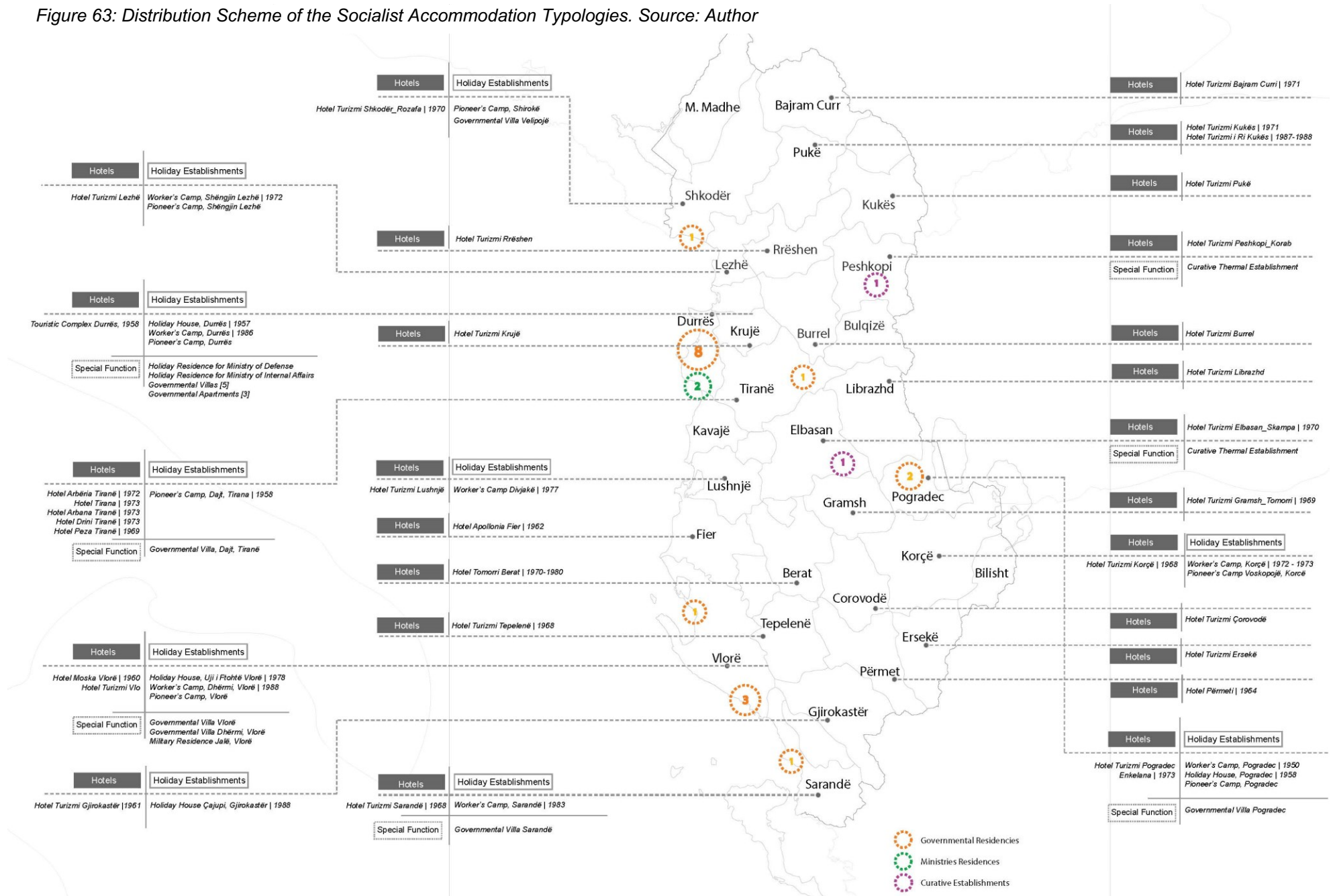
According to Hall (1986), Durres beach area was the main site for vacationing during the summer which offered a series of hotels, divided for different purposes. Tirana was considered the appropriate alternative for the cold winter, along with other cities like Shkodra, Berat, Korça etj.

Due to strict regulations and inability to enter hotels of communism, without being a part of the pre-designed itineraries, Hall (1986) stated that he calculated that during the years 1976-1980, no more than 2500 beds were offered for accommodation in Albania.

From the scheme below, which contains the three abovementioned typologies, can be evidenced that almost every Albanian city 'owned' a Hotel "Turizmi", while the Region of Tirana, Durres and Vlora contains the largest number of touristic structures. In continuation, Tirana owned 5 city hotels, while Durres and Vlora were mostly known for the Holiday Camps, dedicate to workers, pioneers and administrative staff of Ministry of Internal Affairs or Ministry of Defense.

The governmental Villas were located in Velipoja, Durres, Sarande, Vlora and Pogradec, while the curative establishments were positioned in Korca, Peshkopi and Elbasan.

Figure 63: Distribution Scheme of the Socialist Accommodation Typologies. Source: Author



### 6.3 Hotel "Turizmi" – a Typology "about Performance"

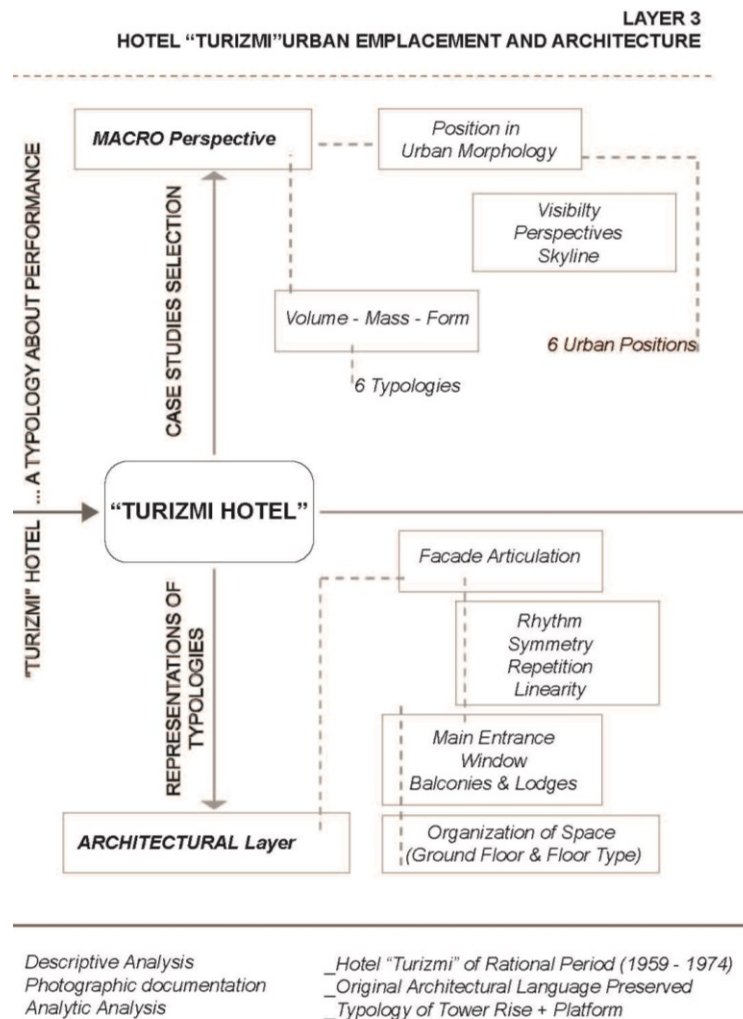
Hotels of the cities, in communist Albania, like in many other countries represent a key component of the urban centers, the primary function of which can be considered the accommodation, while simultaneously referring themselves as a landmark and generally also the peak skyline of the cities. Being an active actor on the arena of the ideologic tourism, the hotels of communism were curated for the foreigners, while preserving the indoctrinated image. This image of the New and touristic Albania was evident in the first contacts with the cities, in postcards, touristic guides post stamps, even though tourism was not an interest for the industrial Socialist Albania.



Figure 64: a) The "Turizmi" Hotel, Gjirokaster. Source: *Albturist* 1969, pg. 138  
b) Post Stamp with the visualization of Hotel Apollonia Fier  
c) Post Stamp with the visualization of Hotel Adriatik Durres

After the overall structure of the accommodation typologies and functions, the research is oriented towards the typology of Hotel Turizmi.

The selection of the city hotel has the following arguments:



- Significant part of the communist architectural heritage of almost every Albanian city and the biggest number of touristic establishments.

- An indicator on the enhancement of tourism. Restoring and rehabilitating this typology can contribute to the expansion of touristic focal points throughout the territory of Albania

- Being a type of building represented by one unit, alters and facilitate the process of analyzation and synthetizing

- Choosing only one functional typology sets the ground for generating a more comprehensive and factionary methodology which can serve as a model for other variety of typologies.

Criteria for selection:

- The hotel is still functioning as a hotel. The hotels which have transformed their function have been subject of restoration processes which has transformed several parts of the object and having changed their function in the favor of public institutions are considered ineligible for architectonic restorations, at least in the time span of few decades
- The hotel has no major interventions or damages in the façade and structure
- Is part of the city which has touristic interest or is part of touristic strategies with potential
- Volume, Mass of the Type
- Time of Construction. Constructed during the Rational Period (1959-1974)

### 6.3 Analytical Analysis of the actual conditions of and use of the “Turizmi” Hotel

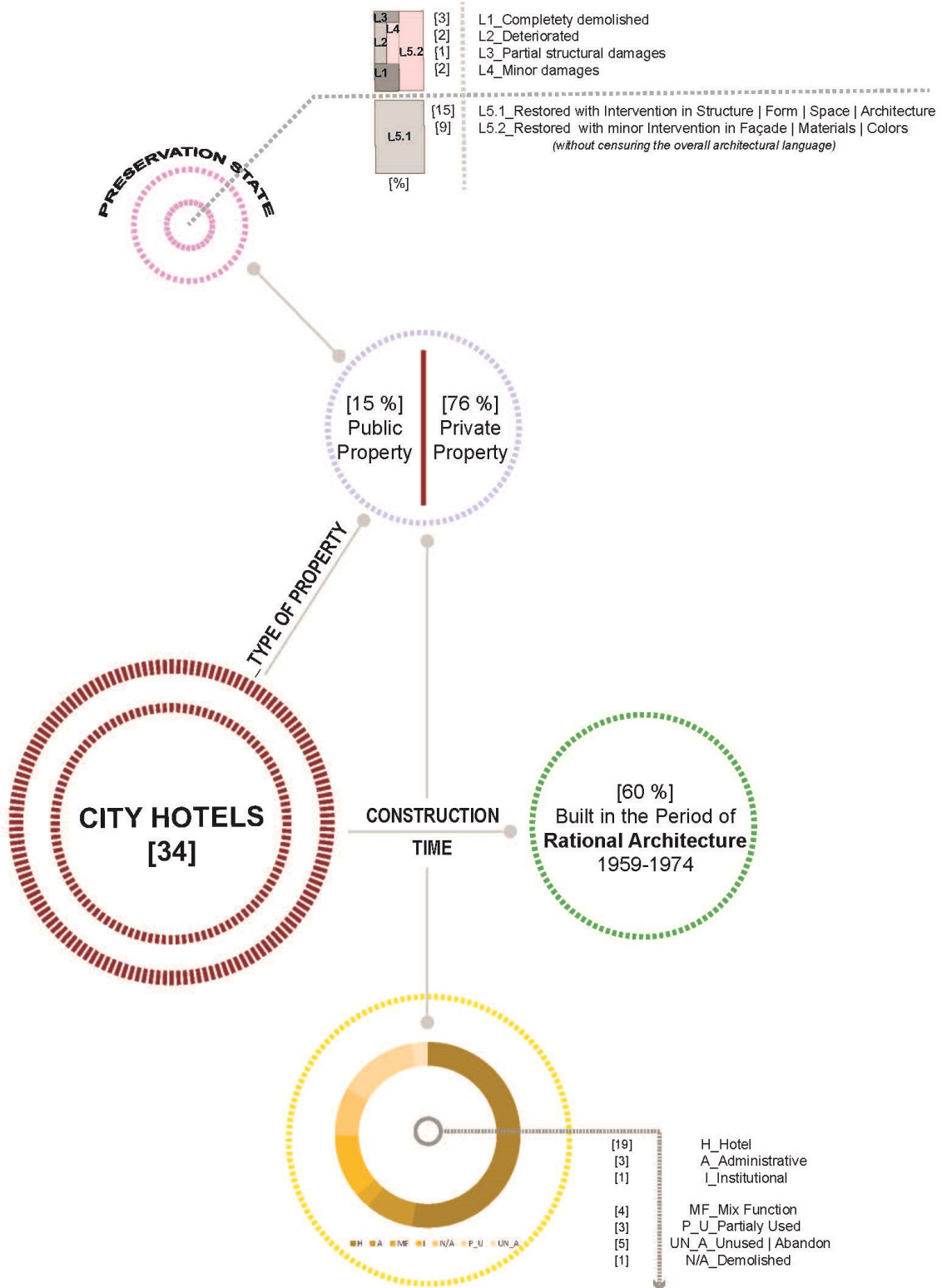


Figure 65: General Framework of the Actual Situation of the City Hotels. Source: Author

From the terrain documentation which was based on photographic assessment and the information from citizens (in the role of informants), the general situation is summarized in the scheme above.

Despite the difficulties in assessing the interventions in hotels, due to privatization and request for privacy, the information gathered served the research to understand their use, their actual physical state and type of property<sup>88</sup>.

In relation with 34 Hotels, the results show that 76% are private properties, from which around 50% are functioning as hotel. A percentage of 15% of the buildings still remains public. These hotels correspond to institutional organisms which have adapted the space for administrative use. In less than 10% of the buildings which considered with no property, are included the demolished and the ones with unresolved ownership issues.

Almost 70% of these structures are reconstructed, but only 44% of them have preserved the original structure, the architectural language and principles, while the 26% have partially or completely changed their external image. The reconstruction process itself has been a product of privation operations based on individuality, not strategic, inclusive, planned approach.

#### 6.4 Relation of the Hotel "Turizmi" with the urban Morphology

The integration of the hotel with the urban morphology is not a scope in itself in Socialist Albania, since the primary aim is to identify and discern the presence of the hotel in the widest perspectives of the city.

This can be acknowledged by the presence of the hotels along the main roads, in the main city square, crossroads or as a culminating point of an axis.

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<sup>88</sup> Appendix gives a wider information in tabular form, where the information gathered is initiated with the period of construction of the hotel, location, actual ownership and state of preservation of the original architecture

The City Hotels ("Turizmi") as a fragment ...

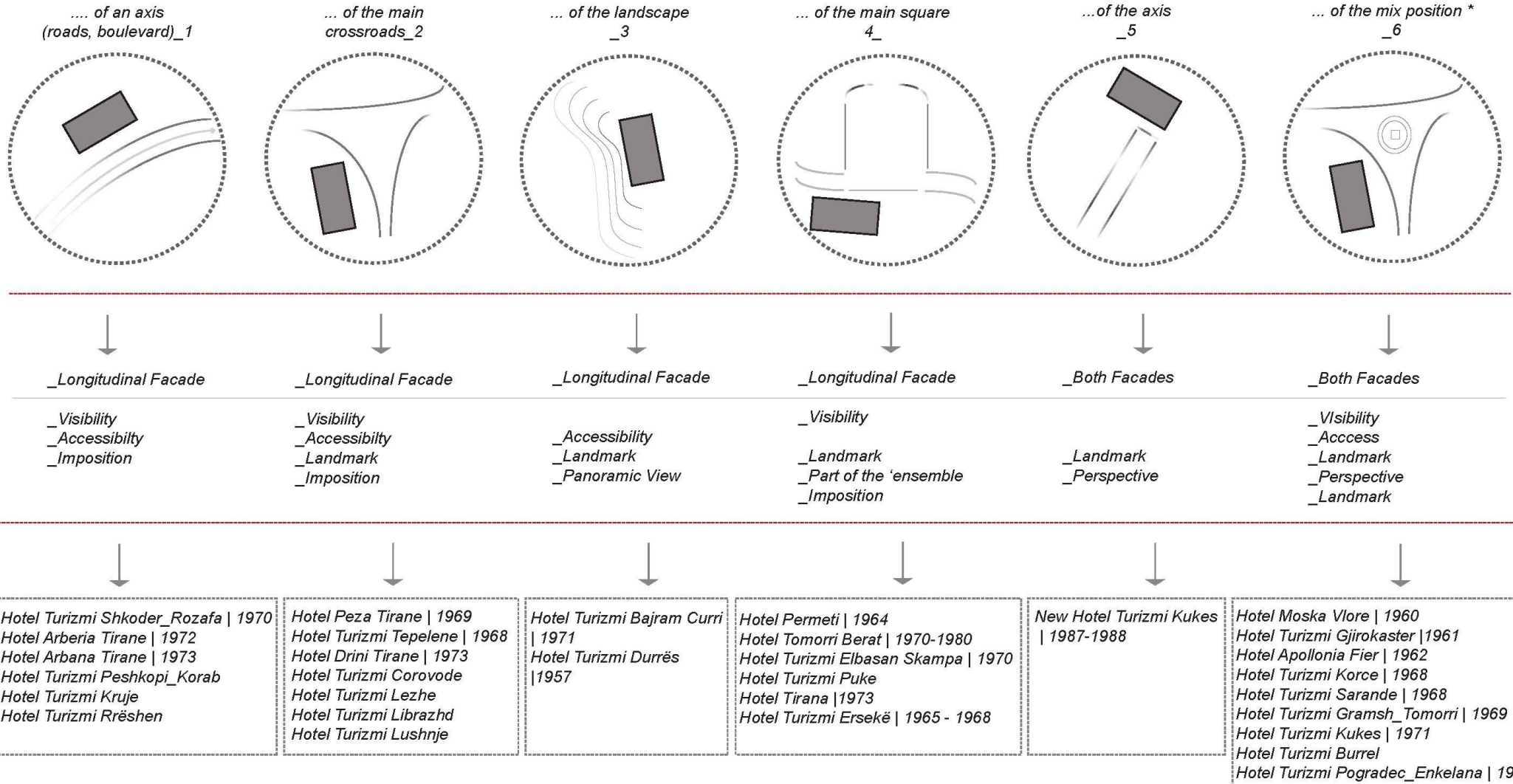


Figure 66: Modular Diagrams of Position of Hotel Turizmi. Source: Author



“The new Albturist hotel stands in the center of the city, in the square bearing Çerçiz Topulli's name and his monument. The hotel, which has an architectural design of its own, is furnished with every up-to-date accommodation.” (Albturist, 1969, p. 145.)

In most cases, the position of the hotel alters the affirmative hierarchy in the urban context, like in the city squares, where the dominance of the hotel itself serves as a catalysator of the square. Being amplified by the presence of the hotel, which always exceeded the height of other buildings and imposed the grandiosity of its presence.

By evidencing the similarities in their position into the urban fabric, there have been determined 6 modes or relation of the city hotel with the urban morphology.

- The first is the position of hotel in the main axis or boulevard of the city. This ensures the proper visibility and access from the main road. The hotels of Peshkopia, Shkodra, Kruja and Rreshen as well as Hotel Arbana and Arberia in Tirana, correspond to this type of emplacement within the city, where generally the longitudinal façade is facing the main axis.
- The second situation corresponds to the position of the Hotel into a main crossroad, which is also a preferable one for the time. This installment offers for the hotel also the opportunity to be a landmark since visibility, access and points of perspective are maximized.
- Positioning of the hotel in a specific variable landscape site is not so common for the communist hotels, since preferences are related mostly with the central parts of the city, but this position predisposes the panoramic view which is missing in other cases.
- Position of the hotel in the main city square is one of the favorites, since it's integration with other public buildings, creates a homogenous ensemble which represents one of the best ways for transmitting the ideologic dogma. In the cities of Permet, Puka, Berat, Elbasan, Erseke and in the capital, Tirana, the Hotel is noticeable from each point of the square.
- In most cases, the position of the hotel can be mounted in a combined situation which is mostly with the presence of the axis and main crossroad, square and

axis etc., while there is only one exceptional hotel in Kukes which is placed outside the city, in the end of a picturesque axis.

## 6.5 Articulation of Volume, Mass and Form in Hotel “Turizmi

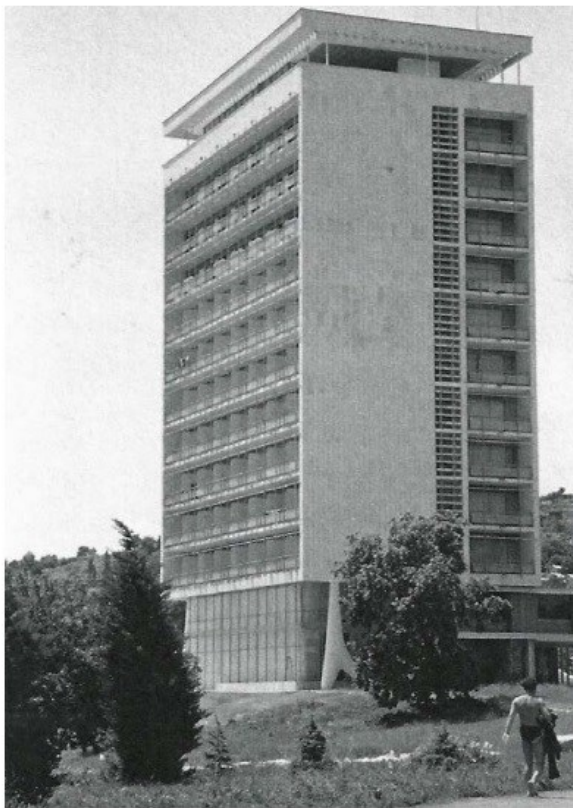
The other significant analysis considered for this level is related with the image of the hotel regarding the form and volume.

Through the process of identifying the variables and similarities in the component of form, there are identified the following models by assessing the configuration of the ground floor and the above ground volume:

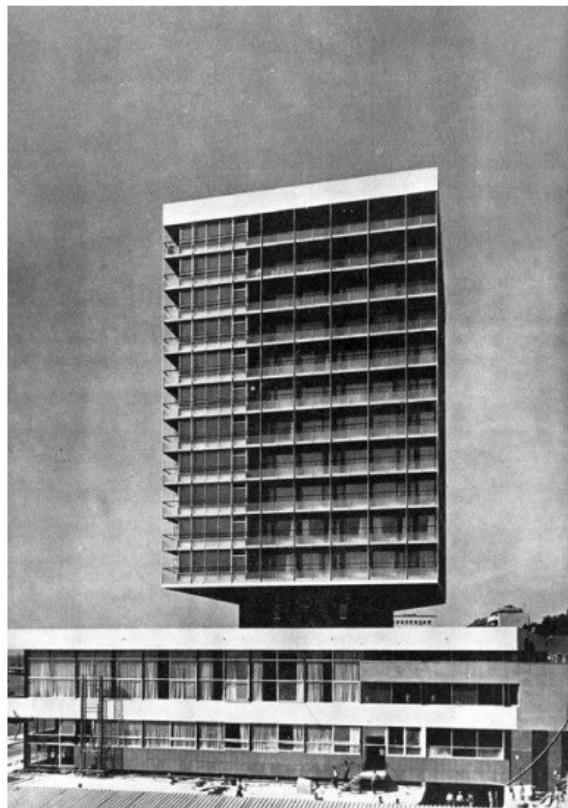
Since the presentation of the Vitruvius concept regarding the primary characteristics of architecture, *Firmitas* (Structure, Solidity), *Utilitas* (The function), *Venustas* (Aesthetics, Beauty), several architects and scholars have studied the correlation between these components by trying to identify the order or narration between them. Notations like “Form follows Function” (Louis Sullivan), “Form and Function should be one, joined in a spiritual union” (Frank Lloyd Wright), or “Form follows beauty” (Oscar Niemeyer), leads us to the recognition of “Form” as the central part of the architectural conception, specifically in a context where architecture is used as a mean to transmit or pump external factors or ideas.

According to (Ching, 2014, p. 34), “Form is an inclusive term that has several meanings. it may refer to an external appearance that can be recognized [...] a particular condition in which something acts or manifest itself [...] the manner of arranging and coordinating the elements and parts of a composition so as to produce a coherent image”.

**The High Rise Tower with Platform**, seem to be a replication of the prominent architectural manifestations of Hotel Journalist and Hotel Marjan, which are installed in a platform in the ground floor, even though the regime rejected modernism forcibly.



**Figure 5a:** The Hotel Journalist Chayka (phase II, 1967 – architects Nikola Nikolov, Lilyana Stoynova). From *Holidays After the Fall*, 123.



**Figure 5b:** Hotel Marjan, Split (architect Lovro Perković, 1963). From *Holidays After the Fall*, 224.

Nine hotels in Albania have adapted variations of this model, where the platform is combined as a solid volume with the higher one. Another variation consists on having the platform extended from aside, without including the whole rising volume, while there are cases where the upper volume is perceived as being suspended and not entirely supported in the platform

**The Mono Volume (Type B)** is the simplest form of the architectural shape of the communist hotels. While its manifested generally through plain facades, this model also allows variations in the façade by creating contrast and variations, rarely including curved surfaces.

**The ‘L’ Block, ‘T’ Block and ‘U’ Block** can be considered more evolved variations of the Mono Volume, which by adding side volumes, sometimes differentiated in elevation and approaching these shapes, create a derivative form of the Mono Volume

**The Complex Block** is considered the most developed module which is a combination of more than two volumes, extended horizontally or vertically to achieve a more complex structure.

There are very few exclusions from these models, which are recognized during this research as Distinctive, which does not fall in any abovementioned category (fig.59).




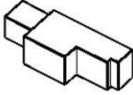
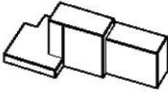
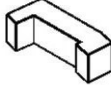
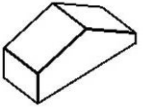
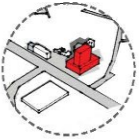

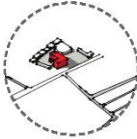
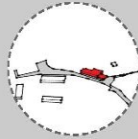


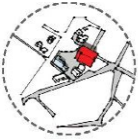

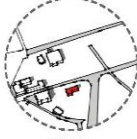


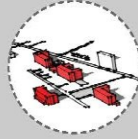
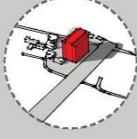
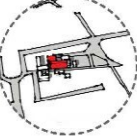
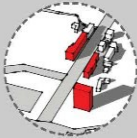





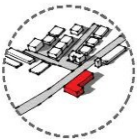
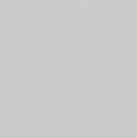
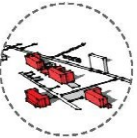





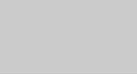

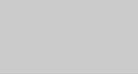
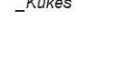
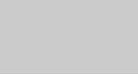
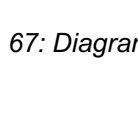
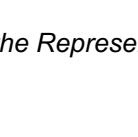
TYPE A	TYPE B	TYPE C	TYPE D	TYPE E	TYPE F	TYPE G
<b>HIGH RISE TOWER + PLATFORM</b>	<b>MONO_VOLUME</b>	<b>"L" BLOCK</b>	<b>"T" BLOCK</b>	<b>COMPLEX BLOCK</b>	<b>"U" BLOCK</b>	<b>DISTINCTIVE BLOCK</b>
						
<b>_PLATFORM INTEGRATED _PLATFORM AS EXTENSION _VOLUME SUSPENDED</b>	<b>_PLAIN FACADE _VIBRANT FACADE _CURVED SIDES</b>	<b>_CLEAN "L" _DIFFERENTIATED VOLUMES _CONNECTED VOLUMES</b>	<b>_CLEAN "T" _DIFFERENTIATED VOLUMES</b>	<b>_COMBINATION OF 3 OR MORE VOLUMES _HEIGHT DIFFERENTIATION</b>	<b>_LONG WINGS _SHORT WINGS</b>	<b>_ARCHED _PYRAMID TRUNK</b>
						
						
						
						
						
<b>_Shkoder _Elbasan _Saranda _Arberia, Tr _Berat _Lezha _Librazhd _H. Tirana _Burrel</b>	<b>_Peza, Tr _Moska, Vi _Lushnje _Corovode _Gjirokaster</b>	<b>_Kruja, Dr _Butrinti, Dr _Gramshi _Tepelene _Drini, Tr _Peshkopi</b>	<b>_Bajram Curr _Rreshen</b>	<b>_Korca _Pogradec _Kruje _Arbana, Tr _Fier _Permet _Kukes</b>	<b>_Dures</b>	<b>_Erseke _Kukes</b>

Figure 67: Diagrams of the Representative Types of Volumes for Hotel Turizmi. Source: Author

## 6.6 An Analytical Approach of the Analysis of the Architecture and Components of Design for Communist Hotels.

In this session, three hotels have been subject of analyzation in:

- ✓ Geometrical Configuration
- ✓ Structural Matrix, Circulation
- ✓ Distribution, Space Usage and Function with focus in served and serving spaces.

In the context of Similarities and variables in the typology assessment for hotels as criteria for future design, after analyzing the three projects, it can be emphasized that the architectural line used by Albanian architects during the communist era is a pure and rational line. In the three cases there is a peculiar one, but to be evidenced remains the project of Mitrojorgji, who uses a different line of language in plan.

The served spaces (where people consume most of their time) and those services (mostly transited areas) are all intertwined and they vary between projects. At the Tirana Hotel, they are collected in the central corridor, at "Hotel Turizmi, appear to be diagonally cut, while in the case of Hotel in Mjeda are distributed according to the total forms of facility.

Hotel Turism in Pogradec (1973) is visualized with the central part of the plan as the actual core and main trunk around which the other spaces are assembled and configured. Plan delivery forms are clear quadratic, with 1:1 or 1:2 ratios, in appearance, unlike the other two projects where the octagonal format prevails.

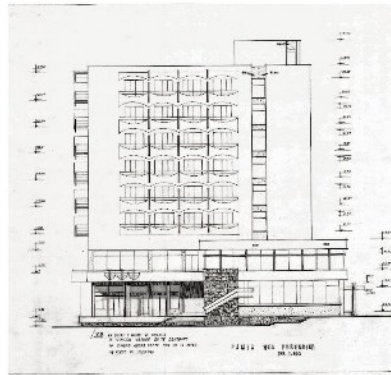
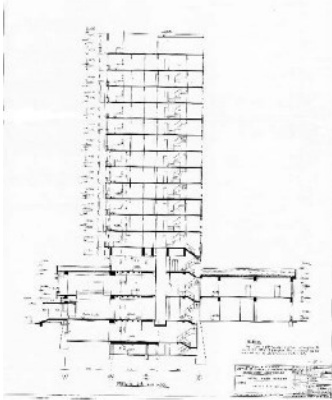
At the Hotel Turizmi in Pogradec, the architect M. Mitrojorgji has dared to use a fluid – curved element in façade to generate a different image in the exterior of the building.

Tirana Hotel (1973): Valentina Pistoli's architecture at Tirana Hotel is a classical approach, where the ratio between the height of the building belonging to the trunk of the rooms and the size of the "Plats" service, tends to be preserved. From the point of view to the layout plan, is unveiled as a three rectangular – sized approaching the cut.

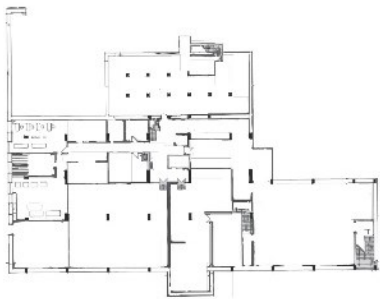
**TIRANA HOTEL, 1973**

**"HOTEL TURIZMI" (POGRADEC), 1973**

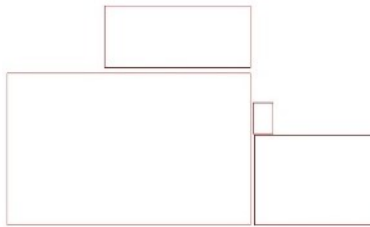
**HOTEL IN MJEDA, 1982**



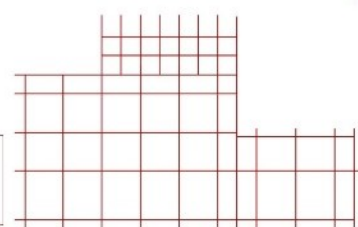
**TIRANA HOTEL, 1973**



Basement Plan ( - 3.4 m)



Geometrical Configuration

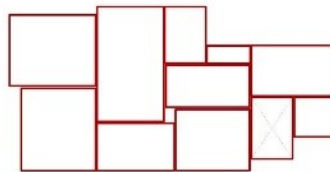


Structural Matrix

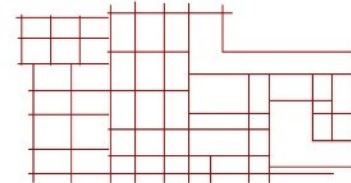
**"HOTEL TURIZMI" (ENKELANA POGRADEC) 1973**



Ground Floor ( +0.0 m)

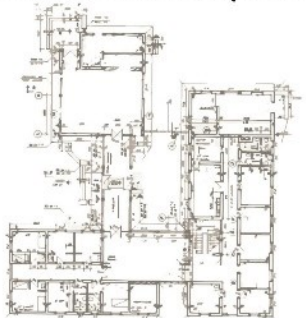


Geometrical Configuration

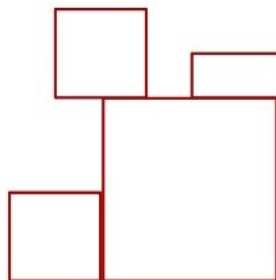


Structural Matrix

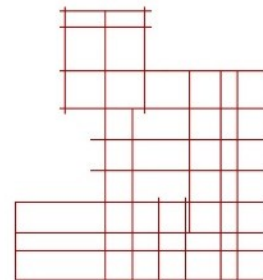
**HOTEL IN MJEDA (NEAR SCUTARI), 1982**



Ground Floor ( +0.0 m)



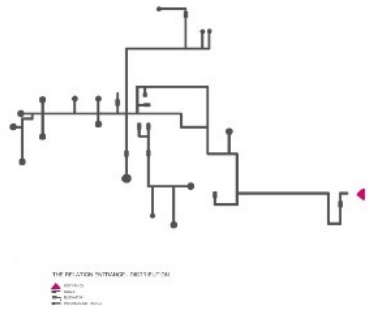
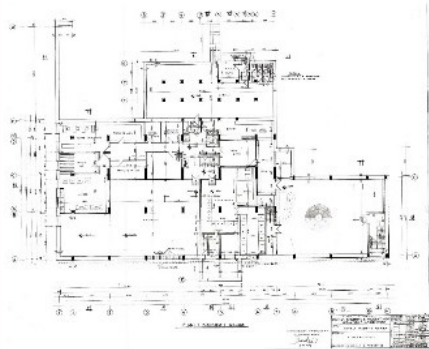
Geometrical Configuration



Structural Matrix

Figure 68: Analytical Diagrams for 3 Communist Hotels. Source: Author

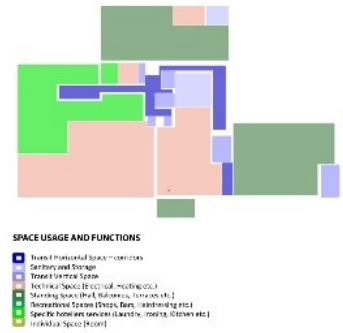
**TIRANA HOTEL, 1973 – ARK. V.PISTOLI**



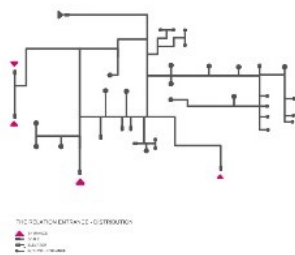
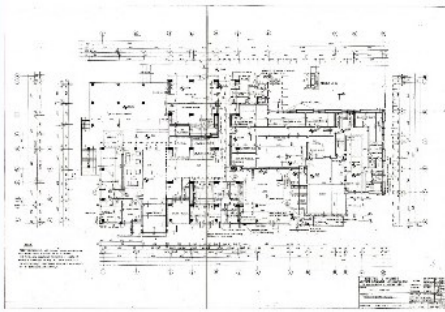
**TIRANA HOTEL 1973  
Basement Plan (- 3.4 m)**



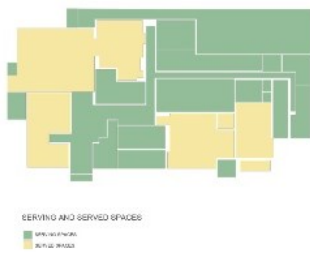
**TIRANA HOTEL 1973  
Basement Plan (- 3.4 m)**



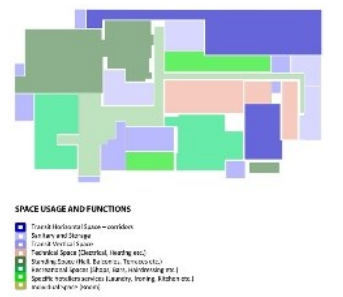
**"HOTEL TURIZMI" (ENKELANA POGRADEC) 1973 – ARK. M. MITROJORGII**



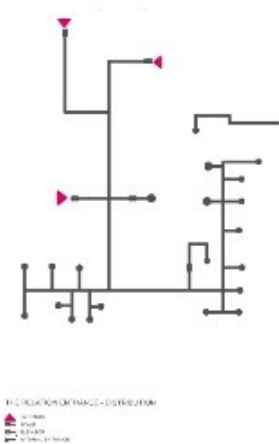
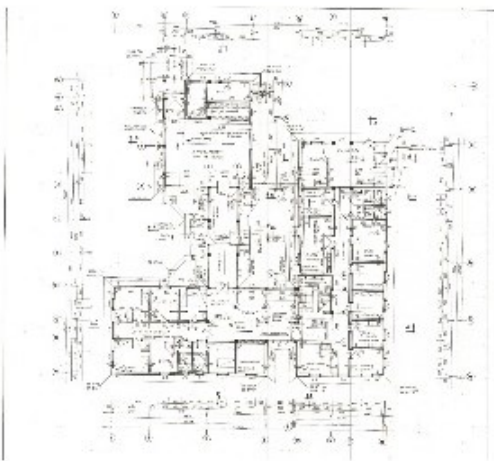
**"HOTEL TOURIZMI" POGRADEC 1973  
Ground Floor (+ 0.0 m)**



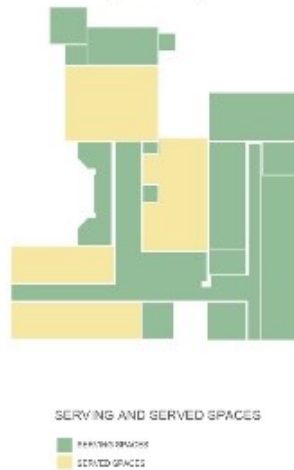
**"HOTEL TURIZMI" POGRADEC 1973  
Ground Floor (+ 0.0 m)**



**HOTEL IN MJEDA (NEAR SCUTARI), 1982 – ARK. A. KUCANI**



**HOTEL IN MJEDE (SCUTARI) 1982  
Ground Floor (+ 0.0 m)**



**HOTEL MJEDE (SHKODER) 1982  
Ground Floor (+ 0.0 m)**

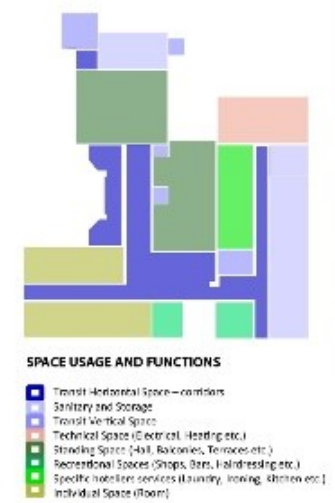


Figure 69: Analytical Diagrams for 3 Communist Hotels. Source: Author



Hotel in Mjeda (1982): This hotel represents an interesting L-shape distribution which consists of three straight rectangles in the plan floor configuration, two of which are equal, while on the second floor, the configuration is according to “L” shape.

In the final process of summarizing the conclusions, it is expected a prioritization and codification of the type of ‘hot spot’ to be intervened and the respective Typology in a vaster conglomerate, in accordance with the attributes of the region where it will be positioned.

## 6.7 Case studies through past and present

The Case studies are selected from the Category of Turizmi Hotel, which belongs to the Model of High Rise Tower + Platform. This typology is selected for the clear volumes and architectural language that it manifests and the rational period when they were constructed.

### 6.7.1 Hotel Turizmi (Rozafa), Shkoder, 1970

Hotel “Turizmi” Shkoder, known today as Hotel Rozafa, was constructed in 1970, from the architects: A. Bregasi, A. Shani and N. Titka.

The eight-floor Hotel is positioned in a strategic crossroad with a great connection with city, also with the air, since the upper staircase is wide open.

The main façade faces North East, which exhibit the principle of rhythm and modular repetition through the vertical elements which intersects the windows. On the North West façade, the staircase creates a volume which interacts with the high volume. The façade cladding on the high volume is realized from harsh granulated stone, while the perimetral points of the volumes, create console which creates dynamism in façade. The ground floor is mostly constructed with pre-fabricated elements.

A peculiarity of this hotel, is the inner courtyard, which organizes all the ground floor. The entrance of the hotel is divided from the other entrances of services like entertainment area, restaurants etc. which occupy the majority of space in the ground floor. The platform of the ground floor, being opened with wide windows around the facades enhances the light within the object and is also a place for interaction.

The floors of the rooms, are organized with a main corridor which access rooms on each side. The rooms are designed according to the “type” of the time, finely furnished and a part of them have a bathroom inside, while other rooms share bathroom. Some rooms have also access to the balconies. The hotel also has a suite with direct access to the balcony.

*Actual State:* Hotel Rozafa is one of the most well-preserved hotels after renovation process. The architecture language has remained intact, including other elements like the color. Minor modifications have taken place in the platform and the interior organization of the rooms to fulfill the needs of the actual guests.

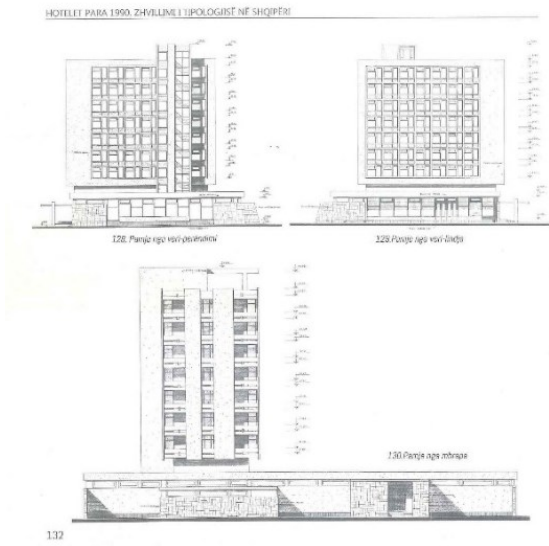


Figure 70: Hotel Turizmi Shkoder.  
 Source: (Thomai, Nepravishita, & Boriçi, 2019) and hotelrozafa.al

## 6.7.2 Hotel Turizmi (Skampa) Elbasan, 1970

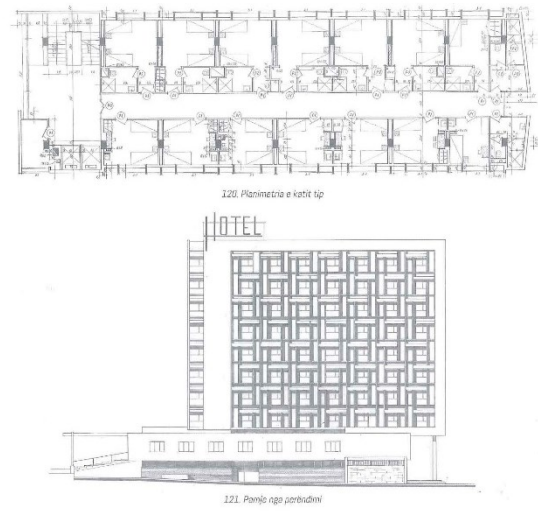
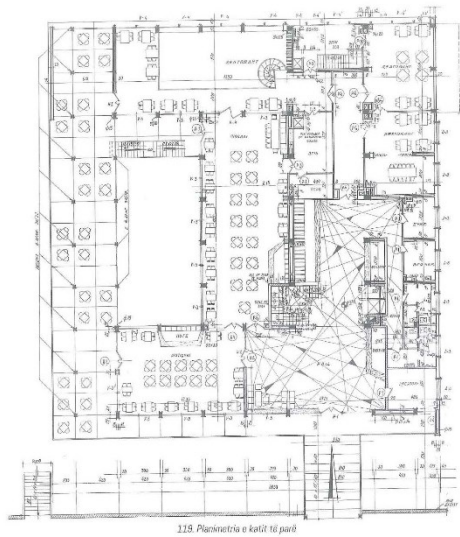


Figure 71: Two photos up. Hotel Turizmi Elbasan (Skampa).  
Source: (Thomai, Nepravishhta, & Boriçi, 2019) and photos from: [step.mk](http://step.mk); [commons.wikimedia.org](https://commons.wikimedia.org)

Hotel "Turizmi" Elbasan is designed in 1970 by Valentina Pistoli. Positioned in the city center of Elbasan and rises ten stores high. Being considered a High Rise Tower with platform, the platform itself consist on a wider surface, by utilizing the maximum of its parcel.

In a similar way with Rozafa Hotel, Skampa includes in the ground floor an atrium, which finishes in height in the open, with greenery aiming to go outside the platform. Columns of circle diameters carry the weight of the balcony to create a tavern, which can observe through the atrium, the ground floor. The building is laid down organically with the terrain through the platform and the adopted stairs.

In the ground floor are positioned all the services, which can be viewed from the veranda. Different stairs are used for the service area and for the private area of rooms, which are displayed in the other nine stores.

The floor type is composed by a linear corridor, which distributes the fluxes into the rooms, which like in the case of Rozafa, have rooms with private bathrooms and rooms with shared bathroom.

The façade is composed by an elegant play of vertical and horizontal elements, which also act like a sunshade, by offering a harmonious and in the same time dynamic view of the facades. The materials used in the façade are prefabricated elements with granulated stone and polished white marble.

*The hotel today* is restored, with minimal interventions regarding architectural dimensions. The platform has been adapted to enclosed space with retailing service, while the exterior architecture has remained intact.

### 6.7.3 Arberia Hotel, Tirana, 1972

During the 1970's with the usage of the system of Column and Beam and prefabricated items solved the majority of construction difficulties, which lefts space for the improvement of the conditions and quality of construction in public buildings.

The building was designed by S. Pashallari and has six floors and is divided in two parts. The platform which is distributed through the two longitudinal façades of the building, on the façade facing the main boulevard "Zogu I", protrudes towards the road, by displaying the main entrance, in the northern corner. The platform offers a great transparency through the high glass windows, while in the other 5 floors, the horizontality of the structure is fragmented through the repetition of the windows and unpretentious elements.

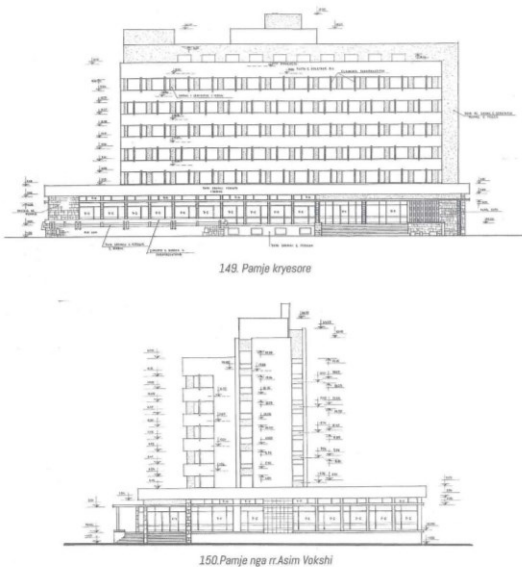


Figure 72: Hotel Arberia, Tirane. Source: (Thomai, Nepravishta, & Boriçi, 2019)

The Ground Floor is dedicated to the services, with the circulation nucleus of stairs and elevators in the middle of the space. In the private area of rooms, the linear corridor distributing the rooms in the two side. Like in most hotels of the time, half of the rooms

and respectively those facing the main boulevard, can be considered fully equipped while the others have shared facilities integrated.

The façade is enclosed with scratched granular plaster with the original color of the brick for major part of the building. The façade contains prefabricated decorative vertical elements, which create a dynamic rhythm for the façade. The colors of the façade alters from the natural nuances of a brick, to the yellow granulated stone finishing and the white color combined.

Arberia is now the headquarters for the Ministry of Justice in Albania. The horizontal linearity and the tangibility of the main façade has been totally covered by a massive concrete - glass combination, which creates 3d trunk-pyramids on the edges of the windows.

The platform has also undergone the major change of converting the façade to an inclined concrete and closed structure which serves as a canvas for the institution inscriptions and symbols.



Figure 73: Hotel Arberia, Tirane. Actually, Ministry of Defense. Source: wikimapia.org



Figure 74: Hotel Arberia, Tirane. Actually, Ministry of Defense. Source: drejtesia.gov.al

#### 6.7.4 Hotel Tirana, 1973 - 1979

Hotel Tirana, also known for a long period among citizens as the 15-floor building, considering the reputation of being the highest tallest building in the city for few decades. The building which was made possible to be constructed due to the technology of the time, was added to the low-rise ensemble of the architectural panorama of the main square of Tirana, by achieving a milestone in architecture and especially construction sector and influencing the skyline of the city.

Being conceptualized as a center for different meetings, hosting diplomatic delegations and different activities, the materials used were cautiously chosen, standards and quality are taken in consideration from the group of architects: V. Pistoli, K.Çomo, K. Kolaneci. N. Theodosiark and M. Pepa.

The volume of the building is sustained in the model of the High Rise Tower with Platform, which makes distinctive the role of the proportions in the buildings complemented by the rhythmicity transmitted by the presence of the repeated windows as a core element of the architectural language. The space between the window strips, which is created as a second layer of horizontality, is covered with carefully selected travertine and granulated stones in the totality of the wall, in the original construction.

The Platform volume compounded by two floors, is dedicated to the public functions of the building. A space formulated around the circulation nucleus of stairs and elevators and a central nucleus which raises the interior visibility between these two floors and facilitating circulation. The special altimetry, position and abundant space around this building, has created the landmark evocation from the outside viewers and the emotional experience of the height and perspective from the users of the buildings, enabled by height and transparency

The type plans for private spaces of rooms are organized harmonically around the central nucleus which takes natural light and ventilation through its vertical ends.

The project and furthermore the building, contains the necessary standards for space and facilities within the room by creating the opportunities for this hotel to be considered within the European standards.



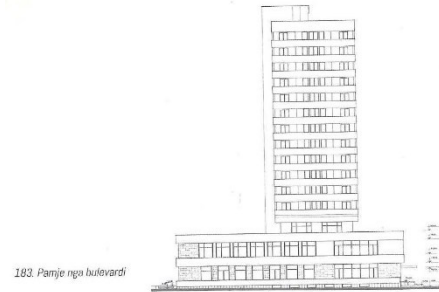
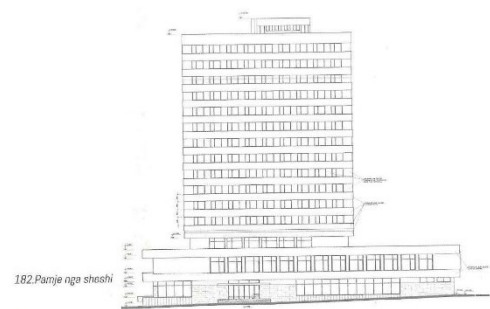


Figure 75: Left – Above. Hotel Tirana. Source: <http://architectuul.com/architecture/hotel-tirana>  
 Right - Above: Hotel Tirana, 1973. Source: (Thomai, Nepravishita, & Boriçi, 2019)  
 Bottom: Hotel Tirana after 1991. Source: Wikimedia and Pinterest

After the 90's this building has entered the process of privatization for entering the international market as a hotel and restoration processes took place from 1994 till 2015 where it was adapted to a high-quality international hotel.

The architecture of the building was preserved carefully and the main intervention have been done to the space of lodges and windows which have been substituted with a

linear continuous window, which creates a great contrast between the dark color of the horizontal continuity of the window, with the corpse of the building itself.

#### 6.7.5 Hotel Turizmi Sarande (Butrinti), 1968

Hotel Turizmi in Saranda, is designed by A. Lufi and A. Shani as a unique solution towards the difficult rugged terrain. The project of 1968 represents a series of refractions in the volume and the interior space, yet still follows the rationality of the period.

The ground floor solution has organized the space in groups around the central hall which is the first contact with the main entrance, where the division of administrative, food spaces and served areas are visible in plan.

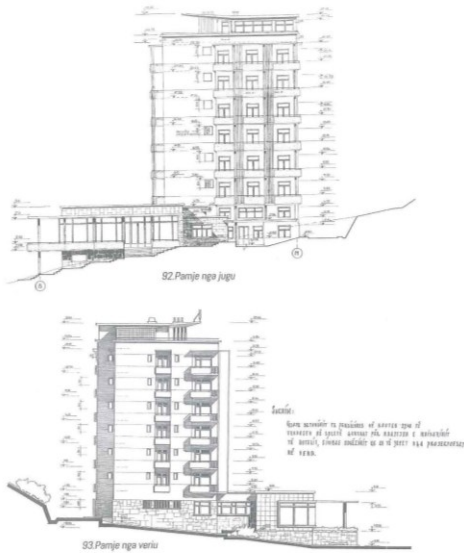
The private areas in the upper six floors are arranged according to the rational and standardized principles of the time, with a linear corridor distributing rooms on the two other sides. The presence of the balconies in the rooms facing the sea creates a more abundant space for internal use but also a dynamic in the façade which is covered with granulated stone extending to the parapets and cornices.

Within the balconies the presence of stripped round section columns and shading elements contributes simultaneously to the comfort of the room and the vibration of the façade.

The consoles and the vertical elements fragment the horizontal linearity of the building by fading a bit the effect of the solidity of the building.

The other three façades are treated with the equal care considering the four-side visibility of the building.

The main entrance is visible from the road in front which combined with the shelter and the stairs, magnify their proportions visually and contrasts the volume of the building.



*Upper Figures: Hotel "Turizmi", Sarande. Elevations and photo after construction.*

*Source (Islami G. , Veizaj, Thomai, & Fontanari, 2018)*

*Bottom Figures: View of Hotel Butrinti after restoration processes. Source: albania-holidays.com*

The restoration processes after the 1990's have preserved the structure and the architecture of the building, but the last restoration intervening with a contra positioning color, extensions in the ground floor and reinforcement of the vertical elements, have created a more aggressive representation of the object which fades the original characteristics while serving as a distinctive element in the actual dense urban development of the city.

## Chapter 7: Discussion and Results

This session is a discussion space which provides recommendations for reaching the market needs on the macro level of national strategy.

Taking in consideration that thesis initiated by arguing the need for new accommodation structures, identifying alternative means to reach those needs and coherently present principles for further design projects, who would offer a diligent approach during design project, farther the chaotic way of building currently in Albania, three main opportunities are presented further.

Source 1: Enhancing the old villages (as a continuation of the Project” 100 Villages) \_Following the Albergo Diffuso Concept

The recommendations presented in this level are considered valuable and in synchronization with the project “100 villages” of the Government of Albania, nevertheless is considered a continuation of this strategic, long-term investment

The program of 100 villages and the creation of the Albanian agritourism network

The newest government program for the villages of Albania, is the Integrated Rural Development Program (ARDP) - The program of 100 villages that aims to create for the first time the model of success in the integrated rural development of the country, according to the best European standards.

The integrated approach to rural development will target measurable rural development objectives, through a centralized focus (integrated and coordinated programming) of public, donor and private investment, in the well-defined space of 100 villages, with high potentials of socio-economic development, agro-tourism and rural tourism, nature and environment as well as cultural heritage.

Agritourism and rural tourism are activities which have a high impact and potential for rural areas and already in many villages of Albania have started operating farms that provide services in agritourism and have achieved in a short time very good economic results and social (Thethi, Voskopoja, Dardha etc.).

Within the program of 100 villages will be supported with financial and fiscal instruments the creation of a network of agritourism farms, which meet the defined criteria and standards, which will be the basis of the Albanian agritourism network. Support to create a critical mass of the number of agritourism enterprises in Albania will serve to increase employment in rural areas, create a special destination and "brand" of agritourism in Albania, along with other tourist offers, as well as for preservation of the cultural heritage and traditional values of the Albanian village.

#### Source 2: Revitalizing / readapting the inherited hotels

The Communist Hotels, contains a prosperous opportunity in and of itself, not just for the heritage values that they contain, due to its historic development and worldwide curiosity for communism period, but for the possibility to be revitalized in a context of architectural heritage that can be lived.

The example of Countries like Croatia and Bulgaria, can be a wise choice to understand, not just two different models of communist manifestation regarding the architectural and construction processes, but also two different strategies, in assessing and re-using this heritage by creating a market value in tourism industry.

The Case of Croatia coast, as a pioneer in the absorption of new architectural movements and Bulgaria, considered as the "closet Soviet Union Satellite in the cold era" have undertaken two important steps, from which the post-communist Albania can learn.

First, investing in the coastal tourism during communism, by comprehending and accepting its relevance to the country's development, while after the regime's fall the two countries followed different approaches towards the remodeling of the ownership concept, which resulted in two different strategies for the revivification of these national patrimony. The process included in the second phase, were assessment, spatial organization, intervention in architecture and structure. The definition of the ownership

was an essential concept which configured the successful or not, future of the revitalization of these structures.

### Source 3: Designing new hotels (principles)

In the process of designing new hotels, the general conditions have to be extended to the principles of design and not just in standardization of spaces, units or services.

Considering the world globalization requirements considering tourism, the components to be taken into account for developing a guideline could be configured following the components:

- ✓ Designing a storytelling through the development of the hotel concept
- ✓ Developing the attributes of creating an experience
- ✓ Prioritizing and enforcing the connection with the context
- ✓ Emphasizing the core areas, like entrance, common areas etc.
- ✓ Selection and re-interpretation of identity features of the site or region
- ✓ Use of local materials,
- ✓ Searching for the “wow” effect

## 7.1 Conclusions

Albania is considered an intriguing country to visit, due to his long isolation history during communism then for the reason of its natural, historical or other extra resources. Albania welcomes every year more visitors and tourists than a year before. The most developed type of tourism is considered to be the maritime tourism, with the most preferred regions with the biggest number of visitors and provider of accommodation, are considered the Region Durres-Kavaje, the seaside of Vlora and seaside of Saranda.

The concentration of these areas in a densified spots in the meantime, limiting the tourism to the monopoly of one type of tourism, creates disbalances, need for distribution of the touristic activities in the whole country

There is still a lack of research regarding the communist heritage of tourism in Albania. Other Eastern – European countries have developed structured documentation, furthermore strategizing their use and rehabilitate by different methodologies the use of the hotels and holiday camps, to serve the requirements of today's tourism.

The Socialist Party in Albania, managed to transform and use all the material forms and socio-cultural spaces into their own dogmatic purpose to achieve simultaneously the toughness of the regime, enforce the regime's principles and follow a delirious approach towards the tourism and foremost architecture

The research further on focuses on The Touristic Accommodation establishments in Albania with the focus in the City Hotels.

The period of construction for the majority of the hotels, more than 60% corresponds to the Rational Period, which consists of pure forms, decoration free and characterized by linearity, solidity, rhythm, purity of forms and repetition of elements.

The case studies have been analyzed in the layers:

- Relation with the Urban Morphology
- Volume Mass and Form
- Patterns of Design (Architectural elements and principles)

The relation with the urban fabric generated types and situations behind the reasons of positioning of the hotel in the actual site and the role that it played. In six situations a descriptive analysis has been performed where the trends and patterns are identified.

Analytic Analysis of the Volume, Mass and Form creates the first step towards understanding the primary visible architectural features and the impact in the territory. Seven typologies regarding volume and form were identified towards an organization of knowledge input and further possible researches

In the analysis of Hotel "Turizmi", the form is intended as a representation of the combination: shape, volume and mass, as the primary concepts from which a building is identified.

The types generated from the analysis can be divided in two main groups:

- a) Types which consist on a single volume**, without differences in facades, or height.

The Types Mono-Volume (TYPE B), "L" Block (TYPE C) "T" Block (TYPE D), "U" Block (TYPE F) and Distinctive Block, (TYPE G) are essentially structures with clean volumes, regular, symmetrical, displayed linearity. They are generally organized around a main horizontal axis.

- b) Types which are compounded by a conglomerate of two or more volumes.**



The types A and E, accordingly recognized as High Rise Tower + Platform and Complex Block, are considered more complex compared to the others, formed by a conglomerate of volumes, generally cuboid but the linearity in these typologies is fragmented through a combination of vertical and horizontal linearity. The process followed from the architects is frequently the “additive transformation” (Ching, 2014, p. 54) which constitute in a more irregular volume, altered height and dynamic composition. The combinations of the form of these structures can be understood as intersecting volumes, or Face-to-Face Contact (Ching, 2014, p. 62)

Considering the simplicity of the volumes, based on the primary volume of Cube, their composition remains perceptible, visible and easily recognizable in different perspectives or distances.

**The Variations of Tower Rise + Platform Typology**, (TYPE A) is represented by a Type compounded by two main volumes, one Vertical and one Horizontal with are altered between these combinations:

### **Platform-Integrated**

The Platform-Integrated Variation consist in the combination of the vertical and horizontal volume in a face-to-face composition maintaining its visibility, where the union of volumes is harmonically realized producing a solid conjunction and the two volumes are expressed by the same architectural language, use of materials and textures. Ex. “Arberia” Hotel, “Tirana” Hotel

### **Platform as Extension**

Consists on the combination of volumes where the Platform is partially or totally perceived as an extension of the primary vertical volume, generally on one side. This modality often enforces a configuration of an “L” shape in façade or in plan configuration and diminishes the characteristic of contrast that the previous combination represents: Ex. “Apollonia” Hotel.

### **Volume-Suspended**

The Volume-Suspended combination is quite similar with the Platform-Integrated variation, which is clearly defined by the visibility and perception of the vertical and horizontal volume. The peculiarity in this case is referred to the way of connection between these two, which is interposed by a sequence, as segmentation of this correlations which imposes a perspective of suspension for the vertical volume. Ex. "Rozafa" Hotel.

Type A is also generally intertwined by another additional volume of the vertical circulation corpus, which often is present in one the facades of the building, adding to the verticality component of this architecture.

### **The Articulation of the architectural language:**

In the case of Hotel "Turizmi" is considered the legible combination of volumes, shapes and planes in the façade, which combined together result in a constituent display to achieve a harmonic aesthetic.

Still there are underlined patterns which correlates with a symbiotic architectural language in the hotels of the communist period, especially those of the Rational Phase. The individuality of the building is emphasized by refined motions in an architectural component, like the use of the lodges, balconies which are evident through repetition, or the use of windows which are more present through the principle of rhythm.

## The Spatial Organization of the Floor Type

While the ground floor of Hotel “Turizmi” is always associated with the public space represented by the services, with a more flexible spatial organization, the other floors are designed according to the concept of “Floor Type.

The linear space organization creates interior spaces in series, by repetition process, which are usually defined by a standard. Organized around a linear connective hall, these spaces are considered with an equally importance, while other notable spaces, generally are not part of this space organization, but function in another context.

The linear organization, is related with the expression of movement and direction which aims to serve its function, even though it is not considered flexible or space differentiative

## Elements and Patterns in Design

The patterns of design identified during this research are grouped regarding two components:

The *main architectural elements* used to form the architectural language of the communist hotels are considered:

Differentiation of Clear Volume, Emphasizing of the Entrance, Open Hall sometimes combined with atrium and use of Windows, Pilasters, Balconies or Lodges for the composed architectural language.

The *Architectural Principles* mostly identified with the hotels of the city in the Rational Period are consequently:

**Rhythm and Repetition** configured by the use of windows, balconies, lodges and Pilasters

**Linearity, Solidity, Proportions** configured by the Volume and Form

And **Visibility** established by the position in the urban morphology

## 7.2 Contribution to knowledge

The thesis aimed to identify the main typologies related to touristic accommodation structures during the evolution of tourism and in the political, social and economic context by extracting the political and architectural influences. This process is actualized with a documentation in the territory, which gives a clear view of this communist patrimony.

The first phase is considered the primary important step to have the proper inventory of this heritage in order to develop further steps in the emphasis of these structures in the cities, in terms of architectural and historical enlightening, as well as a point of interest in the tourism industry, considering the history as well as the possibility for accommodation that they contain.

The main focus after the general framework and the most representative and clear type of touristic establishment is considered Hotel "Turizmi", from which the knowledge of their relation with the urban morphology, the ideologic symbolism and the exterior architectural language are explored.

Evaluation of their form and volume is defined by establishing denominative patterns. Their façade has been evaluated on the observed variables of rhythm, symmetry, proportions, linearity, repetition and analysis of the openings in the façade.

### 7.3 Recommendations for future research

- 1) A similar study can be conducted for the other functional typologies of accommodation during communist periods: Holiday Camps and for the Accommodation Structures for specific purpose, by following this methodology: Inventory of their position in the national level, documenting their actual situation and exploring their exterior architecture, by defining their main patterns or variables in architectural language.
- 2) An interesting point of view for the upcoming studies would be a comparative analysis of the touristic accommodation structures of Albania to other socialist countries. Since Albania developed a unique way of architectural design, it would be helpful to explore the possible borrowed characteristics from other states, or the differences that they sustain.
- 3) An analytical and diagrammatic analysis could be undertaken for the interior function and design of Hotel "Turizmi" Typology, as a continuation of the research presented in this thesis.
- 4) Identification of the characteristics of the National Form, visible in the 3<sup>rd</sup> period of the development of the architecture of socialism, which can extend and enhance the architectural vocabulary in the scholar's network, interested in specific aspects of the communist architecture.
- 5) Methods of restoration for these types of buildings can be explored, furthermore this research, to propose the adapt tools for enriching and not interfere with the identity of this architecture.

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## Abbreviations

NISA	National Institute of Statistics in Albania (INSTAT)
NDI	National Design Institute
CTAC	Central Technical Archive of Construction
ETA	Hotelier Tourist Entity of Albania
NICH	National Institute of Cultural Heritage
NTA	National Tourism Agency

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## Appendix 1



**ACTUAL DATABASE OF HOTEL "TURIZMI"**

NR.	NAME OF THE CITY HOTEL	LOCATION   CITY	YEAR OF CONSTRUCTION	TYPE OF PROPERTY	STATE OF PRESERVATION	ACTUAL FUNCTION	
1	Hotel Drini	Tirane	1973	PU	L5.2	A	
2	Hotel Permeti	Permet	1964	PR	L5.1	H	
3	Hotel Çajupi	Gjirokaster	1961	PR	L5.2	H	
4	Hotel Apollonia	Fier	1962	PR	L5.2	MF	
5	Hotel Arbana	Tirane	1973	PU	L5.1	A	
6	Hotel Arberia	Tirane	1972	PU	L5.1	A	
7	Hotel Enkelana 1973	Pogradec	1973	PR	L5.1	H	
8	Hotel Moska	Vlore	1960	PR	L2	P_U	
9	Hotel Peza	Tirane	1969	PR	L5.1	MF	
10	Hotel Rozafa	Shkoder	1970	PR	L5.2	H	
11	Hotel Shkelzeni	Bajram Curri	1971	PR	L5.1	H	
12	Hotel Skampa	Elbasan	1970	PR	L5.2	H	
13	Hotel Tirana	Tirane	1973	PR	L5.1	H	
14	Hotel Tomorri	Berat	1970-1980	PR	L5.1	H	
15	Hotel Turizem	Burrel	N/A	PU	L4	P_U	
16	Hotel Turizmi	Corovode	N/A	PR	L5.2	H	
17	Hotel Turizmi	Kuçove	N/A	PU	N/A	I	
18	Hotel Turizmi	Rreshen	N/A	PR	L4	MF	
19	Hotel Turizmi	Vlore	N/A	N/A	L1	N/A	
20	Hotel Turizmi	Korce	1968	PR	L5.1	H	
21	Hotel Turizmi	Sarande	1968	PR	L5.2	H	
22	Hotel Turizmi	Tepelene	1968	PR	L5.1	P_U	
23	Hotel Turizmi	Kukes	1971	PR	L5.1	P_U	
24	Hotel Turizmi	Ersekë	N/A	PR	L5.2	P_U	
25	Hotel Turizmi	Kruje	N/A	PR	L5.1	H	
26	Hotel Turizmi	Lezhe	N/A	PR	L5	H	
27	Hotel Turizmi	Librazhd	N/A	N/A	L1	N/A	
28	Hotel Turizmi	Lushnje	N/A	PR	N/A	H	
29	Hotel Turizmi	Puke	N/A	PR	N/A	H	
30	Hotel Turizmi "Tomorri"	Gramsh	1969	PR	L5.2	H	
31	Hotel Turizmi i Ri	Kukes	1987-1988	N/A	L2	UN_A	
32	Hotel Turizmi Korabi	Peshkopi	N/A	PR	L5.1	H	
33	Hotel Turizmi (Adriatik)	Durres	1957	PR	L5.1	H	
34	Touristic Complex	Butrinti	Durres	1958	PR	L5.1	H
		Kruja			PR-PU	L3	MF
		Apollonia			N/A	L1	N/A

Indicator 1	TYPE OF PROPERTY	PU - Public	PR - Private			
Indicator 2	STATE OF PRESERVATION	L1_Completely demolished	L2_Deteriorated	L3_Partial Structural damages	L4_Minor damages	L5.2_Restored with minor Intervention in façade, materials, colors without censuring the overall architectural language
Indicator 3	ACTUAL FUNCTION	H_Hotel	A_Administrative	I_Institutional	MF_Mix Function	UN_A_Unused   Abandoned
		N/A	Not available information			