Università degli Studi di Ferrara | DA Dipartimento Architettura Ferrara | UNIVERSITETI POLIS

Exploring the Urban-Rural Continuum

'Liminality' and 'Continuum' as Conceptual Tools for Identifying Spatial Typologies.

Candidate: Eranda Janku
POLIS Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Besnik Aliaj
DA Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Gastone Ave

Cycle XXXII

International Doctorate in Architecture and Urban Planning

Università degli Studi di Ferrara | IUSS

IDAUP

Università degli Studi di Ferrara | DA Dipartimento Architettura Ferrara

UNIVERSITETI POLIS

INTERNATIONAL DOCTORATE IN ARCHITECTURE AND URBAN PLANNING

Cycle XXXII

IDAUP Coordinator Prof. Roberto Di Giulio

Exploring the Urban-Rural Continuum,

'Liminality' and 'Continuum' as Conceptual Tools for Identifying Spatial Typologies.

Curriculum Urban Planning / IDAUP Topic: Urban-Rural Territorial Dynamics
(Area– SSD: ICAR20)

Candidate
Eranda JANKU

(UniFe Matr. 131829)
(Polis Univ. Reg. N. PL581N050003)

Supervisor POLIS
Prof. Besnik ALIAJ

Supervisor DA
Prof. Gastone AVE

External Experts
Prof. Claudio Carlos ACIOLY Jr
Prof. Petra HIRSCHLER

(Years 2016/2019)

Università degli Studi di Ferrara

Sezioni

Dottorati di ricerca

Il tuo indirizzo e-mail

eranda.janku@student.unife.it

Oggetto:

Dichiarazione di conformità della tesi di Dottorato

Io sottoscritto Dott. (Cognome e Nome)

JANKU Eranda

Nato a:

Elbasan

Provincia:

Albania

Il giorno:

17/06/1990

Avendo frequentato il Dottorato di Ricerca in:

IDAUP - Urban Planning

Ciclo di Dottorato

32

Titolo della tesi:

Exploring the Urban-Rural Continuum, 'Liminality' and 'Continuum' as Conceptual Tools for Identifying Spatial Typologies.

Titolo della tesi (traduzione):

Exploring the Urban-Rural Continuum, 'Liminality' and 'Continuum' as Conceptual Tools for Identifying Spatial Typologies.

Tutore: Prof. (Cognome e Nome)

ALIAJ Besnik

Settore Scientifico Disciplinare (S.S.D.)

ICAR21

Parole chiave della tesi (max 10):

urban, rural, continuum, liminality, thresholds, spatial typologies

Consapevole, dichiara

CONSAPEVOLE: (1) del fatto che in caso di dichiarazioni mendaci, oltre alle sanzioni previste dal codice penale e dalle Leggi speciali per l'ipotesi di falsità in atti ed uso di atti falsi, decade fin dall'inizio e senza necessità di alcuna formalità dai benefici conseguenti al provvedimento emanato sulla base di tali dichiarazioni; (2) dell'obbligo per l'Università di provvedere al deposito di legge delle tesi di dottorato al fine di assicurarne la conservazione e la consultabilità da parte di terzi; (3) della procedura adottata dall'Università di Ferrara ove si richiede che la tesi sia consegnata dal dottorando in 2 copie, di cui una in formato cartaceo e una in formato pdf non modificabile su idonei supporti (CD-ROM, DVD) secondo le istruzioni pubblicate sul sito : http://www.unife.it/studenti/dottorato alla voce ESAME FINALE – disposizioni e modulistica; (4) del fatto che l'Università, sulla base dei dati forniti, archivierà e renderà consultabile in rete il testo completo della tesi di dottorato di cui alla presente dichiarazione attraverso

l’Archivio istituzionale ad accesso aperto “EPRINTS.unife.it” oltre che attraverso i Cataloghi delle Biblioteche Nazionali Centrali di Roma e Firenze. DICHIARO SOTTO LA MIA RESPONSABILITA': (1) che la copia della tesi depositata presso l’Università di Ferrara in formato cartaceo è del tutto identica a quella presentata in formato elettronico (CD-ROM, DVD), a quelle da inviare ai Commissari di esame finale e alla copia che produrrà in seduta d’esame finale. Di conseguenza va esclusa qualsiasi responsabilità dell’Ateneo stesso per quanto riguarda eventuali errori, imprecisioni o omissioni nei contenuti della tesi; (2) di prendere atto che la tesi in formato cartaceo è l’unica alla quale farà riferimento l’Università per rilasciare, a mia richiesta, la dichiarazione di conformità di eventuali copie. PER ACCETTAZIONE DI QUANTO SOPRA RIPORTATO

Dichiarazione per embargo

6 mesi

Richiesta motivata embargo

5. Tutela della proprietà intellettuale

Liberatoria consultazione dati Eprints

Consapevole del fatto che attraverso l’Archivio istituzionale ad accesso aperto “EPRINTS.unife.it” saranno comunque accessibili i metadati relativi alla tesi (titolo, autore, abstract, ecc.)

Firma del dottorando

Ferrara, li 18/03/2020 Firma del Dottorando JANKU Eranda

Firma del Tutore

Visto: ALIAJ Besnik Si approva Firma del Tutore ALIAJ Besnik

ABSTRACT / EN

With urbanization acting as a global phenomenon, over time its sprawling patters have had an overall leading role on profoundly transforming the landscape of human settlements. Accompanied by migration patterns, population growth, increase of accessibility to infrastructure and knowledge, and the diffusion of innovation and technological improvements, urban limits have expanded into the hinterland, and on rural frontiers, often resulting in producing hybrid spatialities, which reside on dynamically changing territories, and manifest a creative alliance and the co-existence between various types of spaces of mixed urban and rural features, sharing a series of interconnections and interdependencies. Considering these dynamics and the blurring of the urban-rural dichotomy, albeit there has been quite a long and multi-sourced debate over the topic, to this day it still remains not sufficiently studied, peripherally addressed, and in desperate need for more in depth analysis and solutions to creating healthier, stronger, and more efficient urban-rural relationships.

Therefore, considering these anabolic effects and the multifaceted character of urban-rural relationships, this research work tries to explore alternative and effective solutions towards an integrated urban-rural approach, going beyond mere statistical and administrative urban-rural classifications, by paying attention to both, *social behaviors* and our perceptions and common understanding of urban and rural space, and our *spatial behaviors* and physical interventions affecting and changing both, urban and rural spaces. On these terms, suggesting that the break from the urban-rural dichotomy can be finally surpassed by framing urban-rural relationships under the concept of the *urban-rural continuum*, resulting in a more accurate and integrated approach for addressing territorial cohesion and sustainable urban-rural relationships. On this process, *'liminality'* and *'continuum'* represent two main conceptual tools, which facilitate navigating and entangling the urban-rural continuum, its mechanism and its spatiality, through the identification of spatial typologies.

The research work builds on a strong theoretical background in order to develop further new contemporary insights over the topic, positioning and defining new contributions within the academic repertoire, being followed by critical examinations on a series of

specific case studies and samples based in Portugal and Albania, by applying theoretical findings and on the basis of that, building a series of interpretations. The research work concludes with the identification of a *set of criteria*, which inform urban-rural territorial dynamics, and condition the rise of an urban-rural continuum, and *a series of spatial typologies*, which portray the urban-rural continuum as a spatial construct.

Keywords: urban, rural, continuum, liminality, spatial typologies, territorial dynamics, thresholds.

ABSTRACT / IT

Con il passare del tempo il fenomeno dello *sprawl* nell'urbanizzazione, che costituisce un fenomeno globale, ha avuto un ruolo chiave nella trasformazione profonda del paesaggio degli insediamenti umani. Accompagnato da modelli di migrazione, crescita della popolazione, aumento dell'accessibilità alle infrastrutture e alla conoscenza e la diffusione di innovazione e progresso tecnologico, i limiti urbani si sono estesi alle campagne ed alle frontiere rurali, generando spesso spazialità ibride, che risiedono in territori sottoposti a cambiamenti dinamici e manifestano un'alleanza creativa e la coesistenza fra varie tipologie di spazi caratterizzati da caratteri misti urbani e rurali, che condividono una serie di connessioni e interdipendenze.
Considerando queste dinamiche e lo sfumare della dicotomia urbano-rurale, sebbene vi sia stato un dibattito lungo e vario su questo argomento, sino ad oggi si presenta come un argomento non ancora pienamente studiato, affrontato solo marginalmente, e che richiede un'analisi più approfondita e la formulazione di soluzioni allo scopo di creare un rapporto urbano-rurale più sano, più forte, e più efficiente.

Pertanto, considerando tali effetti anabolici e il carattere multi sfaccettato del rapporto urbano-rurale, la presente ricerca tenta di esplorare soluzioni alternative ed efficaci volte ad un approccio urbano-rurale integrato, superando mere classificazioni urbano-rurali statistiche ed amministrative, prestato attenzione a *comportamenti sociali* e alla nostra percezione e comune conoscenza dello spazio rurale ed urbano, ed ai nostri *comportamenti spaziali* ed agli interventi fisici che influenzano e modificano sia gli spazi rurali che quelli urbani. In questi termini, si suggerisce che la rottura dalla dicotomia urbano-rurale possa essere finalmente sorpassata grazie all'inquadramento della relazione urbano-rurale per mezzo del concetto del *continuum urbano-rurale*, risultante in un approccio maggiormente accurato ed integrato per affrontare la coesione territoriale e i rapporti urbano-rurali sostenibili. In tale processo, '*liminalità*' e '*continuum*' rappresentano i due principali strumenti concettuali volti a facilitare la navigazione ed il districamento del continuum urbano-rurale, i suoi meccanismi e la sua spazialità, attraverso l'identificazione di tipologie spaziali.

La ricerca si fonda su un solido background teorico per poter poi sviluppare nuove e contemporanee visioni sul tema, posizionando e definendo nuovi contributi all'interno del repertorio accademico, e offrendo un esame critico di una serie di casi studio in Portogallo ed in Albania, i quali sono analizzati per mezzo dell'applicazione di conclusioni teoriche e, basandosi su queste, offre una serie di interpretazioni. La ricerca si conclude con l'identificazione di una *serie di criteri* che informano dinamiche territoriali urbano-rurali e condizionano la nascita di un continuum urbano-rurale, e di una serie di *tipologie spaziali* che a loro volta rappresentano il continuum urbano-rurale quale costrutto spaziale.

Keywords: urbano, rurale, continuum, liminalità, tipologie spaziali, dinamiche territoriali, spazio soglia.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

GLOSSARY OF KEY-TERMS

This section is dedicated to the collection of a series of technical terms and nicknames (due to the use of a less specialized jargon), which have been quite essential for the development of this research work. Given the broad and complex research topic, and also considering that often is difficult to find sole definitions that describe certain phenomena (especially considering place-specificity as a factor), this glossary becomes a guiding tool for operationalizing key terms and pointing out the intended meanings of terms used throughout the research work. For ease of use, it is organized in two main sections, both alphabetically organized, regarding (i) planning as a phenomenon, and (ii) territorial governance, as addressed by specific laws.

- **Planning as a Phenomenon**

Archipelago: On this research work the term is metaphorically used to point out models, which on spatial terms represent agglomerations of several areas together (of urban and/or rural character), forming complex networks with specific social, economic, and territorial features.

Central Place Theory: CPT is a term and geographical theory first coined and created by Walter Christaller in 1933, and later on explored further by a series of authors, among which also Lesley John King in 1984 in his book *Central Place Theory*. CPT explains spatial arrangements and distribution of human settlements, categorizing cities and towns on an urban hierarchy based on factors such as population size and related economic activities, services available, and interconnectedness with other cities, and/or towns (King, 1984). The theory considers three important indicators, starting with the growth and development of towns, human behavior and fundamentals of economics (Goodall, 1987). CPT is based on two main concepts: (a) threshold, which is the minimum market (income, or population) needed to ensure the selling of a particular good or service; (b) range, which is the maximum distance consumers are willing to travel to provide goods and services, so that it doesn't create extra costs, which would lead them to give up from the particular good, or service. As a result, these consumer preferences create systems of centers of various sizes, which emerge with each other, so that each center supplies particular types of goods and

services, forming levels of hierarchy, depending on factors like: spacing, size, and function of settlements. Three principles apply on the arrangement of central places, and those consider: the marketing principle, the transportation principle, and the administrative principle (King, 1984). Referring to the CPT especially while arguing on the change and evolution of the urban form, was helpful, in order to identify the role of central places into shaping interconnections and interdependences with their surrounding territories, giving rise to more elaborate and complex spatial typologies, among which, those devising the urban-rural continuum in special terms as well.

Continuum: On this research work the term 'continuum' has been considered as one of the two conceptual tools used to frame and explore further urban-rural territorial dynamics. The work evolves around authors like Ferdinand Tönnies, Robert Radfield, Ray Pahl, and Luois Wirth, who have introduced various ways of conceptualizing, understanding and translating the 'urban-rural continuum'. Considering it as both, a process (of social and spatial change) and a typology, with the overlap of specific conditions and the notion of time, it can act as a tool to describe the evolution and production of a new type of space, which is characterized by a series of interconnections and interdependencies between 'urban' and 'rural' places, "making categorization of settlements more flexible, and allowing 'rural' features to be found in largely 'urban' places, and 'urban' characteristics to occur in 'rural' places" (Halfacree, 2009: 120). The concept is extensively explored on Chapter No.3 of this document.

Conurbation: Geddes introduced the concept of 'conurbation' in 1915 in his book *Cities in Evolution*, considering it as "a large-scale city-region, comprising a series of cities, large towns, and other suburban and industrial areas, which on the conditions of urbanization, and new technologies of electrical power and motorized transportation system, agglomerate, spread and emerge into one larger continuous built-up environment" (Geddes, 2015). Commonly accepted, in many cases a conurbation is also a polycentric urbanized area, where the transportation system has facilitated easier and faster access, creating one single urban labor market, or travel to work area (Oxford Encyclopedia, 1998).

Durana: The term was first used in 2004 by Berlage Institute (Joachim Declerck, Elia ZenghelisPier Vittorio Aureli) on their research report *Tirana Metropolis*, where they

envisioned both cities, Tirana and Durrës as growing towards each other, transforming into one big metropolitan area. Due to urbanization and sprawling of both, settlements and economic activities, throughout the main national road connecting the two cities, today Durana is a reality. The case of Durana represents one of the 3 main samples for the case of Albania, and extensive research and practical work has been introduced on Chapter No. 8.

Fast Development Model: The term is used to oppose the 'slow development model' (see explanation below), as a model oriented towards and driven by globalization, mass-production and a consumerist society.

Fuzzy Boundaries: The term 'fuzzy' in itself refers to being unclear, to having shapes that do not have clear edges (Cambridge Dictionary Online, 2019). It refers to a lack of clarity, or definition (Merriam Webster Online, 2019), or as being difficult to understand, and not clearly explained (Macmillan Dictionary Online, 2019). Adding 'boundaries' to it, the term is broadly used to acknowledge the increasingly blurred character of the urban systems' borders (Finka and Kluvánková, 2015). Worldwide, there has been an ongoing debate regarding the rollout of neoliberalism and the role of state rescaling as part of it, addressing the 'hollowing-out' of certain functions of the nation-state, which have led to the reshaping of local, regional, and international governance responsibilities, into processes of 'multiscalar governance' (Allmendinger and Haughton, 2009). "A large part of this rescaling process involves not just a shifting of emphasis across the existing scales of the statutory planning system, but the emergence of spatiotemporal fixes" (Jessop, 2000: 334-335), as well as the insertion of new scales for planning intervention and the promotion of new policy scales, usually devised on, what are at first recognized as 'fuzzy boundaries' (Allmendinger and Haughton, 2009: 618). On these terms, while planning still needs to have a clear legal `fix' around well-defined boundaries, primary for developing formal plans, it also needs to be more considerate and open to a myriad of other complex dynamics and associational relationships which go beyond various geographies, over multiple spaces (on this research work, particularly related to, and addressing the 'urban-rural continuum' as a spatial typology), making it necessary to adapt and operate over other types of spaces, commonly known as 'soft spaces', and/or characterized by 'fuzzy boundaries'.

Glocalization: A linguistic hybrid of globalization and localization, the term was first used as a concept in the late 1980s, in a publication of the Harvard Business Review, where sociologist Roland Robertson coined as such "the simultaneous occurrence of both universalizing (homogeneity and centralization) and particularizing (heterogeneity and decentralization) tendencies in contemporary social, political, and economic systems" (Encyclopedia Britannica Online, 2019). 'Glocalization' as a phenomenon can be applied while exploring urban-rural territorial dynamics as well, as over time it has affected both these realms. On these terms, the 'urban-rural continuum' can portray features, which can be very particular and local, and yet simultaneously embrace features, which are rather global.

Inner Periphery: Inner peripheral areas exist as the result of multiple combinations of processes, features and evolutionary dynamics, causing significant limitations in their development potential, and affecting all kinds of territories (including disruptions in the urban-rural continuum). A core aspect of inner peripherality is the capacity of a territory to 'connect' with its environment, and this is determined not only by 'geography', but also by 'relational connectedness' (non-spatial factors and processes), which generates synergies, networks and other types of links that allow regions to have a presence when relevant decisions are made (ESPON, 2018). The ways in which local actors interact, the level of insertion in relevant networks, and the capacity of local institutions, organizations and companies to establish links with other entities in contiguous territories and beyond, illustrate the relevance of being 'connected' as well. Based on these factors, "three main concepts of inner peripherality can be identified: (i) inner peripheral areas in enclaves of low economic potential; (ii) inner peripheral areas with poor access to services of general interest; and (iii) inner peripheral areas lacking relational proximity" (ESPON, 2018: 3).

Liminality: On this research work the term 'liminality' has been considered as one of the two conceptual tools used to frame and explore further urban-rural territorial dynamics. Broadly used in anthropology, deriving from the Latin word 'limen', which means 'threshold' (Oxford English Dictionary), liminality can be considered as that particular disorientation that takes place on a rite of passage, when participants are due to change their status, but haven't yet reached to their final status, which they will be holding at the end of the rite (Turner, 1974). During the liminal stage of the rite, participants "stand at the

threshold between their former way of structuring their identity, time, or community, and the new way, which completing the rite establishes" (Overland, et al., 2014, p.194). The French Folklorist Arnold Van Gennep, was the first one to coin the term 'iminality' (Gennep, 1909: 21) in the early 20th century in his book *Rites de Passage*, while exploring the rites of small-scale societies. On the framework of this research work, the concept of 'liminality' has been used to identify: (1) thresholds as key moments (of social, political, and/or economic change), which have conditioned urban-rural territorial dynamics (coined as 'liminal times', or 'liminal moments'); and (2) thresholds in spatial terms, as areas of uncertainty and constant change (coined as 'liminal spaces'), which have played a crucial role in the transition from the 'urban-rural dichotomy', to the 'urban-rural continuum', determining the spatiality of urban-rural territorial dynamics, conditioned by the series of interconnections and interdependencies among the two. The concept is extensively explored on Chapter No.3 of this document.

Peripheral Region: A peripheral region is defined as a region with low accessibility. Accessibility is a key criterion of geographical peripherality and plays a major role in defining economic peripherality as well. However, in addition to accessibility, many other criteria are used to delineate centers and peripheries in regional research. Accessibility indicators are used in various ways in order to analyze peripherality, resulting in (i) classifications of regions into central and peripheral regions, (ii) evaluation of the impact of different policy measures such as transport investments, (iii) and measurements on the impact of accessibility on regional development (Schürmann and Talaat, 2000).

Pluriactivity (as a phenomenon): A particular way of life with historical and cultural roots, which reflects on the diversity of household economies (typically the co-existence of practices based on industry – agriculture – retail). It is marked by a profound connection to land, and can be observed in the behavior of factory workers, as well as immigrants' longing for their homeland (Ferreira, 1986). Pluriactivity was observed in particular, during the field work and elaboration of the case study of Portugal, extensively explored on Chapter No.6 of this document.

Polycentricity (also interchangeable with 'polycentrism'): The term polycentricity was first used by Michael Polanyi in 1951 on his publication *The Logic of Liberty*, to describe a way

of social organization, where within a commonly accepted set of rules, individual goals and objectives can still be followed (Polanyi, 1951). In 1961 this concept was adopted on the context of the metropolitan area governance, so to represent also a form of organization, where several political units overlap (Ostrom et, al., 1961). While exploring the urban-rural continuum, different functional relations and readings of spatial typologies resulted in polycentric configurations, thus the concept is quite crucial throughout this research work.

Polycentrism: Refers to a political or cultural system, which is made of various centers, especially centers of authority or control. The concept was first introduced as an objective of the ESDP *European Spatial Development Perspective* in 1999, with the argument that "polycentric urban systems are more efficient, more sustainable and more territorially balanced than both, monocentric territorial structures (all activities concentrated in one center), and dispersed territorial structures (all activities equally distributed over space)" (Shutina, 2019: 122-123; ESPON, 2005).

Polycentric governance: "The term refers to a complex combination of multiple levels and diverse types of organizations drawn from the public, private, and voluntary sectors that have overlapping realms of responsibility and functional capacities…. In addition, private corporations, voluntary associations, and community-based organizations play critical supporting roles in a polycentric system of governance, even if they have not been assigned public roles in an official manner. Therefore, decision-making centers in a polycentric governance system are not necessarily restricted to formal governmental bodies" (McGinnis and Ostrom, 2011: 15).

Region: There is little agreement among researchers regarding the definition of the concept of the region, therefore, both, accepting the existence of a geographic and economic unit recognized as a 'region', and theories based on more explicit definitions, are both present on the discussion over this concept. Some of these interpretations include, Christaller (1933) and Losch (1954), who tried to define the region, based on the 'central place theory', therefore considering the region as a system of central places, made of a series of both, smaller lower cities, and larger higher order cities. Hoover and Giarratani (1985), define the region based on a spatially interdependent, or 'nodal' labor market. Richardson (1979) develops further the nodal concept in order to include polycentric

regions, which according to him were featured by a series of nodes and peripheries, proving a relatively considerable internal functional integration. Karl Fox on the other hand, uses the 'functional economic area' concept to define a region, as yet another variation of the nodal approach, arguing that a central node can be quite dominant on its surrounding periphery, based on the spatial distribution of workers and employment locations, so to emphasize that workers are driven to locate nearby these employment locations (Fox and Kumar, 1965).

Regionalization: Defined as a process of political – administrative character, by which regions can emerge as units for further analysis, regarding political and economic activities, and provision of services and welfare (Nordregio, 2004).

Regional development: Although it can be considered as a broad term, 'regional development' represents an attempt to reduce disparities by supporting economic activities that generate employment and welfare, within and among regions. Implementing large-scale infrastructure and attracting inward investment, have been considered for a very long time as main objectives for achieving regional development, but by doing so, often policies have failed in reducing regional disparities, albeit considerable amounts of public funding, and haven't been able to properly assist less developed regions. This would consequently result in under-used economic potentials and weakening of social cohesion (OECD Online, 2019)[1].

Riviera: The term usually refers to a coastal region with climate and vegetation, that supports the development of the economy especially on tourism. Typically, the coast from Saint Tropez to La Spezia, is known as the French-Italian Riviera, whereas for Albania, the area from Vlora to Saranda, with all its towns and villages, represents the Albanian "Riviera". Within this research work, "Riviera" also represents one of the 3 main samples for the case of Albania, and extensive research and practical work on it has been introduced on Chapter No. 8.

[1] https://data.oecd.org.

RUrban / Rururban: Both terms are descriptive terms referring to places, or practices that combine together rural and urban elements, or characteristics. They're usually applied to peri-urban areas, or to the urban-rural fringe, but they may also be applied on less geographically specified ways. 'Rurbanization' as a term on the other hand, refers to the mixing of rural and urban forms, or to the extension of urban cultural forms or ways of life, into rural areas. While 'rurban' and 'rururban' address those threshold areas, where features of both urban and rural realms clash and co-exist, and 'rurbanization' depicts the phenomenon that leads to such, on this research work 'the urban-rural continuum' it's considered in its complexity, of being both a process and a spatial expression of the urban-rural territorial dynamics. In comparison with the terms given above, 'the urban-rural continuum' refers in particular to the series of interconnections and interdependences between urban and rural realms, spatially addressing not only one particular threshold between the two, but the full set of interconnected and interdependent areas, from fully urban, to fully rural, incorporating the series of liminal thresholds in between as well.

Slow Development Model: Referring to the 'slow movement' ideology, the term is used to coin a development model, which manifests a cultural shift toward slowing down life's pace. The term 'slow movement' itself was first introduced in 1986 as the 'slow food movement', and over time it developed into an ideology and subculture in other fiels as well, including the *Cittaslow Organization* for 'slow cities', which support and nourish their local identities, economies, and potentials, instead of being homogenized and driven by globalization.

Spatial Typology: The concept of 'typology' on itself refers to the existence of elements that define a whole. Speaking of 'typology' in urban planning and architecture refers to a taxonomic classification, typically based on physical characteristics, which are commonly found in certain spaces (either at urban, and/or architectural scales). This translates to the identification of different categories, based on various components like for instance, intensity of development (natural to rural, or urban), degrees of formality, etc. Specific individual characteristics form 'patterns', which relate elements hierarchically across physical various scales. The 'pattern language' term was first coined by Christopher Alexander in 1977, in his book *A Pattern Language*, where he considered it to be a methodology for describing good design practices, or emerging patterns of organizations

within given specific fields. Adding the term 'spatial' to the concept of 'typology', facilitates a process of identifying various spatial organizations of certain variables, or characteristics. On the framework of this research, the term 'spatial typology' is used to indicate ways (spatialities) on which both realms, urban and rural, have been spatially developing within themselves, and towards each other, in order to manifest the interconnections and interdependencies shared between the two.

Spatial Mismatch: The term refers to the situation where sprawling of jobs and dispersed employment opportunities, leave a group of population (generally minority and the poor), with limited commuting options to any of these job opportunities. John F.Kain has first written about this issue in his article *Housing Segregation, Negro Employment, and Metropolitan Decentralization* since 1968, although he claims he wasn't the one to coin it as 'spatial mismatch' (Kain, 2004).

Sprawling: A phenomenon defined as unplanned, uncoordinated and uneven growth, driven by multiple processes (Bhatta et al., 2010), which is typically followed by the expansion of development and people over space, leading to unsustainable models of development and inefficiency in using resources (Batty et al., 2003). Within this research work, especially for the case of Albania, the term 'sprawling' directly relates to the post-centralization period, where freedom of movement gave rise to a vast process of leap-frogging developments in the surrounding of main cities, or between two or more main cities. Given the very particular conditions on which Albania was during this period of time, 'sprawling' as a phenomenon came along with 'informality' (of both economy and real estate) with echoing consequences to this day.

Sun, Rock and Sea: Used with the same fashion as the 'sun, sand and sea', the term refers to the very basics of the local economy of the Albanian Riviera: the sun; the rock, its rough mountainous landscapes and rocky beaches; and the Ionian Sea.

Synekism (originally synoecism, or synoikismos): Originally acknowledged since the Ancient Greece, the term refers to the amalgamation of a series of villages into poleis, or city-states. Later on, coined as simply 'synekism' it became a concept used by Edward Soja in his urban studies, addressing the organization and agglomeration of several smaller

settlements of urban character, under the control of a bigger capital city, the so-called 'city-state'. Soja's definition of synekism, as mentioned in his *Writing the City Spatially,* is "the stimulus of urban agglomeration" (Soja. E., 2003: 269).

Territorial Development: The more technical definition of the term refers to integrated multi-sector development of an area, or territory (making no reference to scales), led by a spatial vision representing the desired future, and expanded and operationalized further by a set of strategic objectives (Romeo, 2015).

Territorial Disparities: "The term indicates the degree to which the intensity of a certain economic phenomenon differs between regions within a same country, therefore referring in particular to regional differences in GDP per capita, productivity, unemployment and activity rates" (OECD, 2003: 8).

Territorial Governance: A term used in policy and academic debates, underlining the importance of place or territory in decision-making processes, as well as the shift from government to governance, and in many cases even to multi-level governance (ESPON 2012; Böhme et, al., 2015). Territorial governance can as well be understood as an organizational mode of territorial collective action, based on the openness and transparency of the process, on cooperation and coordination, both horizontally and vertically, and in a framework of more or less explicit subsidiarity (Davoudi et al. 2008).

Territorial Rescaling: According to Keating, the term 'rescaling' refers to the reallocation of political, social, and economic systems to new territories, followed by spatial implications in terms of administrative units of governance. As a result of this rescaling process, formation of new jurisdictions takes place (Keating, 2013).

Threshold: The term 'threshold' has various interpretations in different disciplines, nonetheless the starting point of all these interpretations consist on acknowledging a level, or point at which something starts happening, or the experience of something new beginning (Cambridge Dictionary Online, 2019). Therefore, a threshold is seen as a limit at which things either start happening, or change from a previous state of being (Macmillan Dictionary Online, 2019). On the framework of this research work, the threshold is seen as

the limit between the two realms, urban and rural, or among different land uses and expressions of territorial dynamics.

- **Territorial Governance Terms**

Administrative Unit (as of the 2015 Law): subdivision of a municipality in smaller units, according to traditional, historical, economic and social ties, consisting of several cities and/ or villages. An administrative unit's territorial area, and the names of all the cities and villages that compose it are determined by law. Cities can be divided into smaller units called neighborhoods. A neighborhood area can only be created in territories with over 20,000 inhabitants. The division of cities into neighborhoods and their territorial area, are both approved with the decision of the Municipal Council (Law no.139/2015, "On Local Governance").

Commune (now abolished): One of the basic units of the Local Governance in Albania, which represented an administrative-territorial unity and a community of residents in rural areas and in special cases in urban areas as well. The law determined the size, name and center of each commune, while the council of the commune, with the consensus of its citizens determined the boundaries and the territory of the sub-divisions. The subdivisions of each commune were called villages and in special cases cities. (according to the Law no.8652, dated 31.07.2000, on "Organization and functioning of local governance", and in Law no. 8653, dated 31.07.2000, on "Administrative territorial division of local government units"). Due to the Territorial Reform and the change of Local Governance Law taking place in 2015, this LGU is no longer in power.

District (in Albanian 'rreth' / now abolished): Subdivision of Qark in smaller units. There were in total 36 districts. A district's territorial area, name and the center were determined by the law (according to the Law no.8652, dated 31.07.2000, on "Organization and functioning of local governance", and in Law no. 8653, dated 31.07.2000, on "Administrative territorial division of local government units"). Due to the Territorial Reform and the change of Local Governance Law taking place in 2015, this LGU is no longer in power.

Municipality (as of the 2000 Law): One of the basic units of the Local Governance in Albania, which represented an administrative-territorial unity and a community of residents mainly in urban areas and in special cases included rural areas. The law determined the size, the name and center of each municipality. The center was usually the most urbanized area of the municipality, also named "the city", which was designated an urban development plan. The subdivisions within each municipality in urban areas were called "neighborhoods", and they represented areas with over 15,000 inhabitants, determined by the decision of the municipal council. When the municipality included rural areas as well, the subdivisions were called villages, which were units established in a territory of over 200 inhabitants (according to the Law no.8652, dated 31.07.2000, on "Organization and functioning of local governance", and in Law no. 8653, dated 31.07.2000, on "Administrative territorial division of local government units"). Due to the Territorial Reform and the change of Local Governance Law taking place in 2015, this LGU has been redefined (read below).

Municipality (as of the 2015 Law): The basic unit of the Local Governance in Albania, representing an administrative-territorial unity and a community of residents. A municipality and its territorial area, as well as its name and center are defined by law. It consists and it's subdivided in several smaller units, namely "administrative units" (Law no.139/2015, "On Local Governance").

Qark: Territorial governance unit constituting the second level of local government. It represents an administrative territorial unit, composed of several municipalities (and communes according to the Law no.8652, dated 31.07.2000, on "Organization and functioning of local governance", and in Law no. 8653, dated 31.07.2000, on "Administrative territorial division of local government units"), with geographical, traditional, economic, social ties and common interests. Its territorial boundaries coincide with the boundaries of the municipalities that comprise it, while its center is located in one of the municipalities included within it. Its territorial area, name and center are determined by law (Law no.139/2015, "On Local Governance").

ABBREVIATIONS

AKPT: Agjensia Kombëtare e Planifikimit të Territorit (English: NATP National Agency for Territorial Planning)[2].

Co-PLAN: "A non-profit organization that has contributed to sustainable development by enabling good urban and regional governance, tackling key environmental issues, developing civil society, impacting policies, and promoting community participation knowledge-making since 1995. At the core of Co-PLAN's activity is the work with people and institutions, to foster tangible social transformation and positive change on the ground, by inducing change-driving knowledge in society for smart management of habitats. Co-PLAN fulfills this mission through means of pilot activities and advisory services financed by national and international institutions and direct involvement with communities, local government units and other non-governmental organizations in the field of urban and regional management, environmental management, and municipal finance. Co-PLAN is based in Tirana, Albania, and has developed a solid-project-outreach-network at a national, regional, and international level, including many of the Local Government Units in Albania, numerous organizations in the Western Balkans region, Europe, and beyond" (Co-PLAN online)[3].

EC: European Commission

EFTA: The European Free Trade Association is a regional trade organization and free trade area consisting of four European states: Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland (EFTA Bulletin, 2006).

ESPON: The European Spatial Planning Observation Network is a European funded programme under the objective of "European Territorial Cooperation" of the Cohesion Policy of the European Union. It is co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund – Interreg[4].

[2] http://planifikimi.gov.al

[3] http://www.co-plan.org/en/

[4] https://www.espon.eu

FAO: The UN Food and Agriculture Organization

FUA: Functional Urban Area

GLP: General Local Plan (in Albanian PPV Plani i Përgjithshëm Vendor).

KQZ: Central Election Commission (in Albanian, Komisioni Qëndror i Zgjedhjeve).

LAU: Local Administrative Unit.

OECD: The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development is an intergovernmental economic organization with 36-member countries, founded in 1961 to stimulate economic progress and world trade, by shaping policies that foster prosperity, equality, opportunity and well-being for all[5].

PDM: Plano Director Municipal (Municipal Master Plan).

PROT: Plan Regional de Ordenamiento Territorial (Regional Territorial Development Plan). The PROT is a regional scale territorial planning instrument to support, manage and administer public action in the Region, and guide public and private investment in the social, economic, infrastructure and physical-environmental fields.

SOFA: State of Food and Agriculture

WB: World Bank

WDR: World Development Report

[5] http://www.oecd.org

INTRO

This dissertation is the result of almost 7 years of research work, together with POLIS University and Co-PLAN. It represents a follow-up of 'Albania 2030 MANIFESTO' (2014), my first master thesis, which introduced an original methodology for spatial visioning at national scale, which was partly adopted by the planning authorities later in 2016. Spatial and territorial planning have been fields of interest and operation on both grounds, research and practice, giving me a full awareness on the need for constantly improving our theoretical and practical tools, to make visioning work effective and address development at territorial scale, better.

Following, this research work focuses on 'urban-rural relationships', a topic of great interest, not only globally, but especially – and in an emergent way, at local scale (intending in particular the Albanian context), in order to re-invent an alternative way for approaching 'urban' and 'rural' integratedely, through the concept of the 'urban-rural continuum'. On this framework, two case studies, Portugal and Albania, are introduced as 'research laboratories' to develop applied research, apart from the exploration on theoretical grounds.

The research, including theoretical and practical work was developed in collaboration with POLIS University (Department of Planning and Management) in Tirana, OMB – Observatory for the Mediterranean Basin, and MINHO University (Department of Architecture) in Portugal, through a series of workshops, projects, didactic activities, and independent research work and field observations.

1 CHAPTER 1: Urban- Rural Territorial Dynamics

1.1 The Oscillating Relation Between 'Urban' and 'Rural'

By fact, more than half of the population today (an estimated 54.5%) lives in urban areas, and by 2030 it is projected to peak at a total of nearly 60% (UN Habitat, 2016). Although there are different features and expressions of this global phenomenon, the urbanization process and sprawling patters have had an overall leading role on transforming the landscape of human settlements. Population growth, migration, accessibility to infrastructure and knowledge, diffusion of innovation and technological improvements, have pushed and expanded urban limits into the hinterland, and on rural frontiers, often resulting in producing hybrid spatialities, which reside on dynamically changing territories, and manifest a creative alliance and the co-existence between various types of spaces of mixed urban and rural features, which share a series of interconnections and interdependencies.

Especially on the conditions of the so called 'capitalism 4.0', followed by 'the next economy', which is centered around circular economy, new values based on the recycling processes of a new urban metabolism, are created. On these conditions, the shift towards a more open and collaborative circular society, requires that we pay particular attention to creating balanced urban-rural relationships, in order to avoid the prevailing of dominant hierarchical structures and stereotypes, and encourage the integration of peripheral and economically weaker areas in the processes of growth and innovation, nurturing the rise and development of a creative archipelago, where nodes and connections are equally important (Carta, 2017). Therefore, as researchers and planning professionals, it is our responsibility to ensure, not only politically correct, but especially, ethically correct practices of spatial and territorial development, as a response to the constantly shifting social, economic and political trends, and global changes.

In 2016, urban-rural linkages were a main policy issue and source of debate in the preparations for the 3rd United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, being materialized the UN Habitat III Agenda, which emphasized that a paradigm shift needs to take place in terms of the ways we understand and address the territory as prime resource

(UN Habitat, 2016). Nevertheless, despite the long and multi-sourced debate on the urban-rural relationships topic, and despite it being a global issue, to this day it still remains very little understood, not sufficiently studied, peripherally addressed, and in desperate need for more in depth analysis. This becomes even more alarming in confrontation with the fast rate of urbanization, which is still much higher than the rate of population growth, suggesting highly fragmented land development and low densities, consequently followed by costly and unsustainable patterns of agglomerations (UN Habitat, 2016).

Considering these anabolic effects and the multifaceted character of urban-rural relationships, exploring and searching alternative and effective solutions towards an integrated urban-rural approach, requires that we become aware of two main aspects: (1) the role and importance of *social behaviors*, our perceptions and common understandings which are generally rooted on cultural and historical backgrounds, on both urban and rural space; and (2) the interpretations of our *spatial behaviors* and physical interventions, affecting and changing both spaces.

The understanding of social behaviors informs the 'how' and 'why' the shift towards urban and rural as one single integrated space happens, looking beyond just the economic comfort. For a while now, we have been passing through a revolution, which is detaching the social processes of urbanization, from the locationally fixed settlements (either city or a region) (Webber, 1968). All the changes and benefits that came along especially with the fourth industrial revolution, where science and technology have been literally at the forefront of every event, have boosted the blooming of social systems in a way that makes 'physical togetherness' optional, rather than an absolute necessity. With infrastructure improvements and new mobility patterns, urban centers today are not exclusive in offering integrational services anymore. Today we speak of trading of information and knowledge, and this milestone has undoubtedly broken any barriers when it comes to the cultural continuum, which has happened at a faster pace than the territorial one.

On the other hand, translating social behaviors in spatial behaviors, informs a process of spatial production, in which the life cycles of urban and rural are redefined, and they're both considered as "mutual hubs in permanent innovation" (Carta, 2017, pp.40). On the conditions of this new complex spatiality, which considers urban and rural environments

equally on a process of constant change and exchange, shifting our attention towards an 'urban-rural continuum', rather than isolated singular 'urban' and/or 'rural' spaces, provides us with the opportunity to unlock real potentials for addressing territorial cohesion and sustainable urban-rural relationships.

Nevertheless, admitting an urban-rural continuum and stopping at that, is not enough, given its complex nature, as a process of social and spatial change, and as a spatial typology of various features and scales. Therefore, exploring ways to unhitch the complexity surrounding it, by identifying conditions and criteria that lead to the rise of the urban-rural continuum, as well as delineate spatial typologies in which this continuum is manifested, become emergent issues.

1.2 Objectives of the Research

The above general overview on the topic, emphasizes how over time the complex dynamics, of both social and spatial behaviors, have changed the urbanites-ruralites paradigm, given that none of them exclusively resides in only one place anymore, but they rather inhabit and shift on the space, where the series of interconnections and interdependencies among both urban and rural reals, are materialized. On these terms, *this research work suggests that marking the break from the urban-rural dichotomy by framing urban-rural relationships under the concept of the urban-rural continuum, can result in a more accurate and integrated approach for addressing territorial cohesion and sustainable urban-rural relationships.*

Despite the fact that the break from the dichotomy is already an 'old news', there is still plenty of uncertainty, which needs to be addressed on both grounds, on *theoretical terms* from an academic and research perspective (in order to expand the repertoire of conceptual tools, which are able to define and explain phenomena taking place in complex territories), and on *practical terms*, from an applicative and policy-making perspective (in order to provide policy makers and planning practitioners with analytic tools that make the concept of the urban-rural continuum operational at a territorial scale).

Therefore, the ***main general objective*** of this research work is to contribute to the theoretical discourse of considering urban-rural relationships and territorial dynamics in a

more comprehensive and integrated way, by introducing the concept of the 'urban-rural continuum'.

On a more ***specific lens, the main objective*** consists on exploring and navigating through the 'urban-rural continuum', using 'liminality' and 'continuum' as two analytical conceptual tools, in order to delineate processes, criteria, and spatial typologies in which the 'urban-rural continuum is manifested'. In order to link theory with practice, 'liminality' and 'continuum' as two main theoretical constructions, are put into perspective through real-life situations in two main case studies, Portugal and Albania.

Based on this specific objective, the ***central question*** of the research is: How can urban-rural territorial dynamics be framed under the concept of the 'urban-rural continuum', and how can 'liminality' and 'continuum' as conceptual tools enable delineating processes, criteria, and spatial typologies of the 'urban-rural continuum'?

On these terms, *from a* ***theoretical perspective***, this research work delves deeper on the urban-rural discourse, exploring the evolution of social and spatial behaviors in regard to urban and rural realms, by investigating on existing theories and previous research work, with the intention of finding space for interpretation and opportunities for building new insights over the 'urban-rural continuum' as both, process and spatial typology, employing 'liminality' and 'continuum' as conceptual tools for exploration.

'Liminality' as a conceptual tool is interpreted as twofold: **(1) a process of social change** – **'liminal periods of time'** and **'liminal conditions'**, which on the framework of the research work informs the perceptual evolution on 'urban' and 'rural' spaces); and **(2) a process of spatial production** – 'liminal spaces' (thresholds and transition spaces rising from the clash and overlap of urban and rural), which on this research work inform the spatial evolution of the 'urban' and 'rural' spaces, and the rise of the 'urban-rural continuum'.

'Continuum' as a conceptual tool is also interpreted as twofold: **(1) a process** – suggesting that the 'urban-rural continuum' is not a fixed moment in time, or a fixed spatiality, but it is rather a process of change and development over time; **(2) a spatial typology – a series of sequences of fixed constants and liminal spaces**, considering 'fixed constants' as those

commonly accepted as profoundly urban and profoundly rural spaces, and 'liminal spaces' all thresholds and transitory spaces rising from the clash and overlap of urban and rural.

From a practical perspective, theoretical findings are applied on Portugal and Albania, as two main case studies, being materialized on **(1) a set of criteria** that condition and define the 'urban-rural continuum', and **(2) a series of spatial typologies** describing the spatiality of the 'urban-rural continuum' as a complex territorial form.

1.3 Research Methodology Explained

This section makes a description of the general methodological aspects of the research work. In the meantime, Chapter 5 is dedicated to a detailed explanation of the logical frame of the research work, as well as the process behind the delineation of the case studies, after having completed the theoretical discussion, which takes place on Chapters 2, 3 and 4.

Given the main objective of the research and the very complex and broad nature of the chosen topic, there are three different approaches which can be applied:

- The first one is the 'Applicative Approach', which is based on a comparative study practice, concluding with sets of recommendations built around very specific case studies;
- The second one is the 'Theoretical Approach', which develops on theoretical grounds only, either by exhausting one single theory or by combining a set of theories;
- The third approach, also applied on this dissertation, is the **'Comprehensive Approach'**, which is a combination of the first two alternatives. It builds on a strong theoretical background in order to develop further new contemporary insights over the topic, positioning and defining new contributions within the academic repertoire, and then after it is followed by critical examinations on a series of specific case studies and samples, by applying theoretical findings and on the basis of that, building a series of interpretations. The research work concludes with a series of conclusions and recommendations on both grounds, theory and practice.

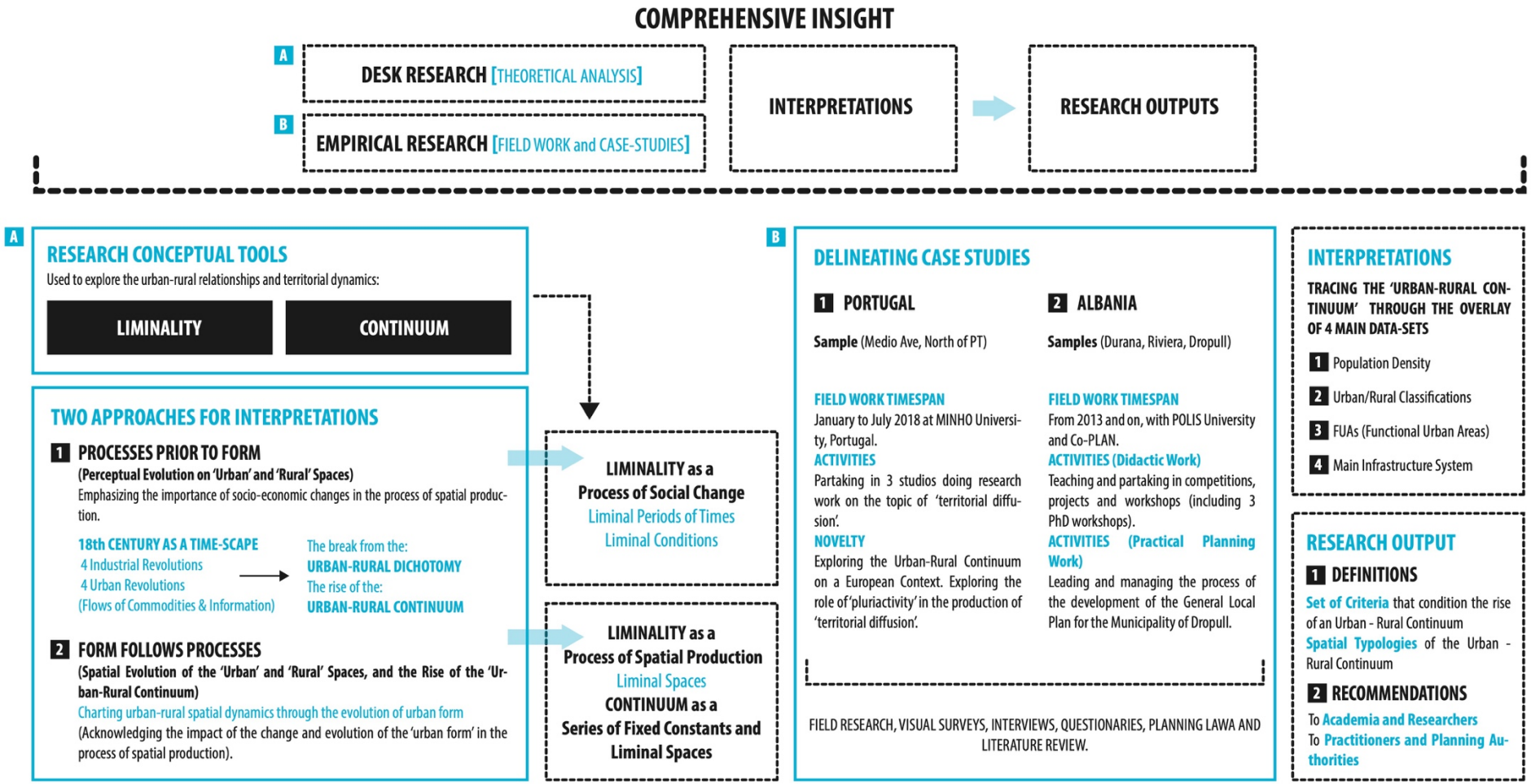


Figure 1: *Research Methodology – Conceptual Tools and Approaches for Interpretations. /* ***Source:*** *Author*

By adopting a comprehensive insight, the research work consists on the following parts:

- **Theoretical Research / Desk Review**

Theoretical research and review of literature based on books, journal papers, policy documents, studies, and other online sources of information (websites and dedicated research platforms), on the main topic and related sub-topics. All sources of information are cited in text, and a full list of sources and literature is displayed on Bibliography and References.

In order to have a comprehensive insight, the information collected from all the above sources was instrumented through a series of analysis and incorporated interpretations, in order to unhitch urban-rural territorial dynamics and reach a contemporary understanding of the spatial hybridity rising among the two, framed under the concept of the 'urban – rural continuum'. On these terms, two main approaches have guided these series of analysis and interpretations:

- **Processes Prior to Form:** considering the perceptual evolution on the 'urban' and 'rural' spaces, and emphasizing the importance of socio-economic processes in the change of social patterns. On this first approach, the concept of 'liminality' has been framed as 'a process of social change', therefore looking at 'liminal periods of time', and 'liminal conditions' that lead to the change and altering of social patterns and dynamics.
- **Form Follows Processes:** considering the spatial evolution of the 'urban' and 'rural' spaces, and the rise of the 'urban-rural continuum', as due to socio-economic processes and the change of social patterns. On this second approach, the concept of 'liminality' has been framed as 'a process of spatial production', therefore looking at 'liminal spaces', whereas the concept of 'continuum' is interpreted as spatial construct made by the series of sequences of 'fixed constants and distinct spaces' and 'liminal spaces'. By 'fixed constants and distinct spaces' are intended all areas commonly accepted as profoundly urban, or profoundly rural, and by 'liminal spaces' are intended all thresholds and transitory spaces rising from the clash and overlay of these fixed constants, hence the clash and overlay of 'urban' and 'rural'.

- **Empirical Research / Fieldwork**

Theoretical findings have been put on perspective though the delineation of two main case studies, Portugal and Albania, and a total of four main samples within these case studies. Intensive fieldwork has been conducted on both cases, materialized through on-field data collection and visual surveys, partaking in didactive events, review of planning documents and guiding of planning processes, interview and working sessions with focused groups, as well as conducting questionnaires.

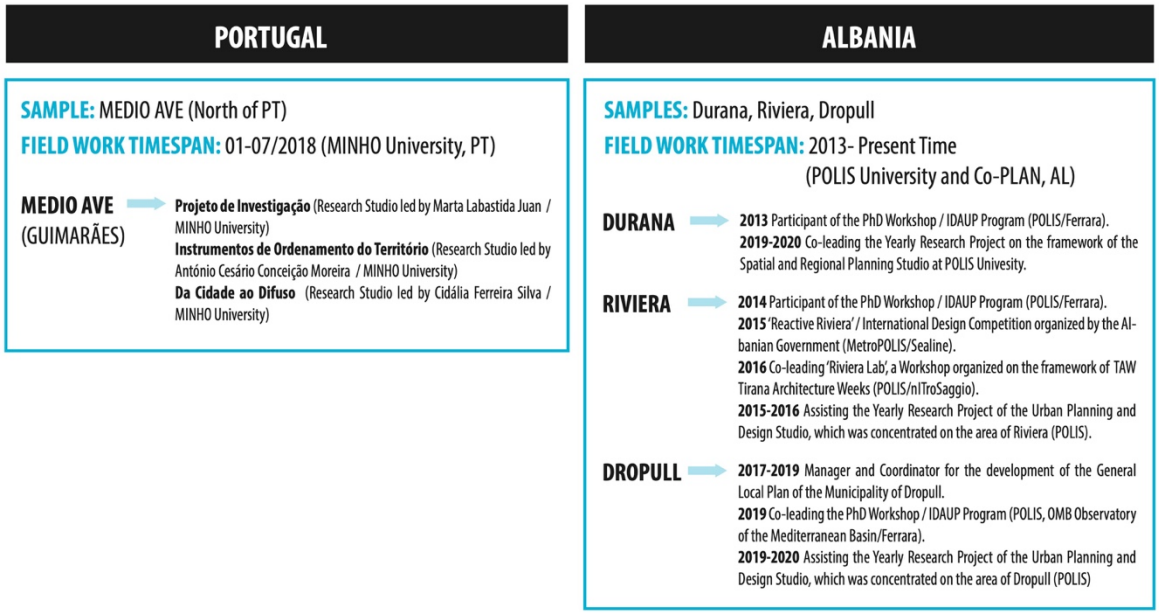


***Figure 2**: Research Activities and Fieldwork / **Source:** Author*

Portugal and Albania have been delineated as two very relevant case studies for the topic of research, followed by representative samples on each of them: 'The Medio Ave Region' in Portugal, and 'Durana', 'Riviera' and 'Dropull' in Albania. Chapter 5 introduces an in-depth analysis on the 'why's and 'how's for each of these case studies and samples. Nevertheless, three main criteria that led to the delineation of Portugal and Albania as two main and comparable case studies, include:

- *Similarities in terms of land fragmentation* (especially of agricultural land): in both countries caused from centralized governments (dictatorships), which have had different consequences in the way both countries have addressed territorial development;
- *Functional relations:* the overlay of areas of economic activities (agricultural, industrial, touristic, etc.), settlements, and road infrastructure has impacted urban-rural relationships and their spatial dimensions ('Pluriactivity' in the case of Portugal, and 'Agglomeration Practices' in the case of Albania);

- *Sprawling as a phenomenon:* both countries have experienced sprawling as a phenomenon that has led to particular spatial territorial configurations, very distinct for each country, and with great impacts towards urban-rural relationships (in Portugal in the form of 'territorial diffusion', and in Albania as 'scattered informally developed areas').

- **Interpretations**

On the basis of the results of both, theoretical research and practical field work, a series of interpretations were developed. Linking theoretical findings with very particular case studies and samples made possible to point out that the spatial dynamics of the urban-rural continuum are indeed informed by particularities that relate to time and location specificities. Considering this, the series of interpretations led to two main fundamental outputs:

- **a set of criteria** which inform urban-rural territorial dynamics, and condition the rise of an urban-rural continuum;
- **a series of spatial typologies**, which portray the urban-rural continuum as a spatial construct.

1.4 Limitations of the Study

One of the main challenges that may act as a limitation for this research work is the fact that urban-rural relationships are rather complex, so in order to properly interpret urban-rural territorial dynamics and the continuum rising among the two, and then put these interpretations into perspective in the framework of a shifted planning paradigm, may be rather challenging. Also, from one country to another, urban-rural territorial dynamics may have slightly different features, so designing and applying universal recommendations may be rather impossible and misleading. Nevertheless, trying to understand the issue on a global perspective, and then contextualize it through specific case studies can help in giving real and tangible feedback over the topic. Thus, the research work aims to be as comprehensive as possible, to not only create a full understanding of the subject and facilitate the process of drawing conclusions both on theoretical and practical terms, but also to serve as a stepping stone for future endeavors on the topic, either by myself, or others.

PART 1: THE "URBAN", THE "RURAL" AND THE "IN BETWEEN"

(THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE)

2 CHAPTER 2: The Urban – Rural Dichotomy

"In a sociological context the terms rural and urban are more remarkable for their ability to confuse than for their power to illuminate." (Raymond Edward Pahl, *The Rural-Urban Continuum,* 1966*).*

2.1 Perceptual Understandings of Urban and Rural Spaces

"Space is not a reflection of society, it is society" (Castell, 1983: 410), so as we become more and more aware of "ourselves as intrinsically spatial beings, we continuously engage in the collective activity of producing spaces and places, territories and regions, environments and habitats" (Soja, 2000: 6). Charting urban and rural territories as spatial productions of human life, requires acknowledging that structures at all levels: institutional, social, economic and environmental, coexist and are interdependent on each other, thus territorial dynamics and all the spatial features in which they are manifested, depend heavily on both, our understanding of space and our spatial behavior.

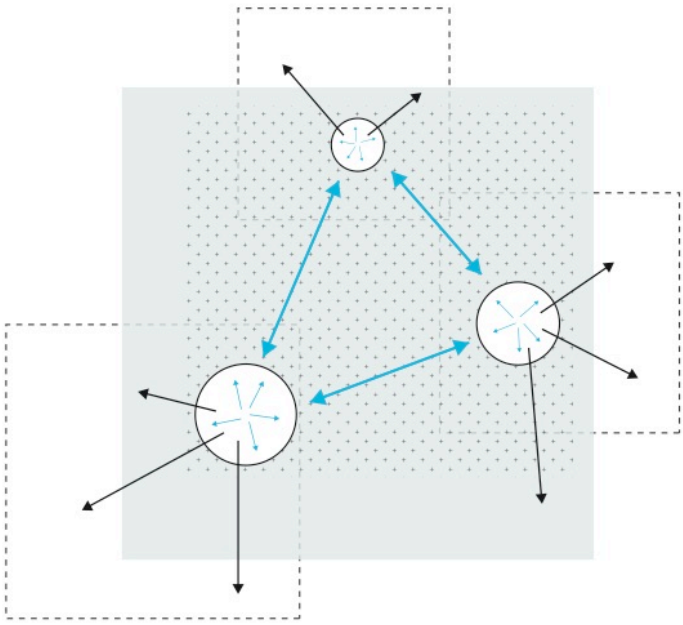


Figure 3: *Complexity of Social Systems and their Spatial Behavior /* ***Source:*** *Author*

For Castell, spatial forms are formed through dynamic relationships that exist in an overall social structure, which allow the built environment to be influenced through social processes and be produced by human action. As social systems are on constant change and evolution, the concepts that define and describe human behavior and the spaces produced, do reflect these dynamics. Hence, "from time to time, social movements will arise to challenge the meaning of spatial structure and therefore attempt new functions and new forms" (Castell, 1983: 312). This can lead us to believe, that what we're manifesting today, the altered and changed understanding of both, the urban and the rural spaces, and the fall of the dichotomy, are indeed a consequence of these movements, which over time have produced new spaces and have altered spatial forms and typologies.

2.1.1 Urban, Urbanized and Urbanization

Concepts such as 'urban' and 'rural', or 'city' and 'its surroundings', also referred to as 'the countryside', have always been considered to as two opposites of a dichotomy, where each represents a homogenous space of specific social and spatial characteristics and conditions. While 'urban' has constantly been associated with dynamics like agglomeration of human settlements, population density, built environment and infrastructure, the 'rural' has almost always appeared a bit more idyllic and pristine, with low population density, fewer settlements, mainly based in agriculture and forestry, and in general less transformed by human intervention. In other words, everything encompassing the urban, thus 'the surroundings' of the urban, and "everything which is not urban, including all the population, housing and territory, are considered as rural" (HRSA Online, 2018).

Following the distinctive 'urban' and 'rural' environments, terms like 'urbanized' and 'urbanization' have been part of the discourse that entails the dynamics among and between these two realms. For Soja "to be urbanized, means to adhere, to be adherent, a believer in a collective ideology and culture rooted in the extensions of 'polis' (politics, policy, polity, police) and 'civitas' (civial, civic, civilian, citizen, civilization)", (Soja, 2000: 50), inevitably pointing out 'power', as a distinctive phenomenon and characteristic, which prevails mainly in the city. On the other hand, Foucault relates power with knowledge and space, emphasizing that space is where the discourse about 'power and knowledge'

together happens, and that they become an object of great interest when the mesh with politics, economics and institutions becomes obvious. This once again defined "the city, as that particular geographic plexus[6], which is altogether, an economic organization, an institutional process, a theatre of social action, and an aesthetic symbol of collective unity" (Mumford, 1937: 94).

For Mumford the urban experience is as an important component in the development of human culture and personality. Putting the "physical aspect of a city and its economic functions second to the natural environment, he considers the spiritual values of the human community at the very forefront" (LeGates and Stout, 2011: 92). Mumford defined the city as both, a social institution and a physical space, and under this spectrum, he saw the city as "a theatre of social drama, where everything else: art, politics, education, commerce, only serve to make the social drama more richly significant; as a stage, set and well-designed, intensifies and underlines the gestures of the actors and the action of the play" (Mumford, 1937: 94). Thus, according to Mumford the social nucleus should be treated as an essential element in every valid city plan, and all the physical components (industries, infrastructure, buildings etc.) should only be subservient of the city's social needs. This, according to him, explains why whenever men's unified plans and buildings become a symbol of their social relatedness; and when the physical environment itself becomes disordered and incoherent, the social functions that the city harbors become as well difficult to express (Mumford, 1937). Since the drama is indeed a product of all the components that identify and express the complexity of the urban environment, everything that lies outside of the city, in its surroundings, lacks this drama, therefore, Mumford argued, "whenever the city dweller feels the need to leave his cramped quarters for the more benign environment of the suburb, his instincts and actions are well justified" (Mumford, 1937: 94).

2.1.2 Rural and Rurality

But what lies in the other side of the dichotomy, and what is the surrounding of the city? "Everything which is not urban, but lays right on its vicinity, is the rural realm and the rural

[6] An intricate network.

society, where units like villages, smaller settlements, and/ or natural areas are characterized by their own geographical, governmental, social, moral and other types of structures" (Hillyard, 2007: 67). Of course, same as in the urban realm, here as well different typologies have different behavioral patterns, different spatial characteristics and different relationships, among themselves and with the neighboring urban area/s. Despite the fact that the major part of research on spatial characteristics and classifications deals with urban aspects and levels of urbanity, rural areas and rurality are equally important and should be considered with the same priority and veracity, especially due to their important ties to food security, environmental features and cultural landscape preservation (Konjar et al., 2018; Fikfak et al., 2017).

According to Mahon, (referring Pahl, 1965; Cawley, 1979; 1980; Duffy, P.J., 1983; 1987; Harper, 1987; Halfacree, 1995; Jean, 1997; Furuseth, 1999; Walker, 1999), "places, and in particular places broadly defined as 'rural', have been studied using a range of conceptual approaches, which have sought primarily to capture the essence of rurality, or at least to place the exploration of rurality to the forefront of the research task" (Mahon, 2005: 192). The difference between academic research on the matter, and the perceptual understanding of it lies on the fact that, while the first tries to define 'rural' and 'rurality', the latter is more of a descriptive narrative, which tries to express, rather than define. (Jones, 1995). Halfacree has also written on the matter, expressing how 'rural as locality', has been constantly eclipsed by 'rural as symbolic' (an idealization and a sense of what rural is believed to be, rather than what it really feels like experiencing it), giving rise to the perception of 'rural as an idyllic space' (Halfacree, 1993). The 'rural idyll' has been defined as an "idealized, romanticized construct that presents rural areas as happier, healthier, and with fewer problems than urban areas; an idyllic place to live, portrayed as having beautiful landscapes, more neighborly communities, and a better quality of life, so as such it is a place to aspire, to escape to from the 'urban jungle'" (Rogers et al., 2013: 444). Constant comparison of rural and urban in terms of what they offer and their spatial features, as an expression of the lived experience over these two realms, has also produced various interpretations, making the urban-rural relationship key to any analysis and definitions pertaining these spaces and what lies in between them (Jones, 1995). Further on, what Jones terms as "social and cultural constructs" (Jones, 2005: 43), which are part of the mere lay discourse on both urban and rural realms, do not lend themselves to quantitative

methods and definitions, because although they tend to be place and time-specific, they generally remain conceptually generalized (Mahon, 2005).

In academic research and analytic processes, in most of the cases the definition of 'rural areas' has been reduced to just the remaining residual after the 'urban area' has been identified, leaving plenty of uncertainty related to whether which indicators each country uses to define urban (administrative borders, land use patterns and density, or functional economic ties like functional economic and/or labor market areas (Cromartie and Buchholz, 2008), and other characteristics within the term rural itself. "Rural character can be associated with various different dimensions and observable traits, including proximity to urban areas, size of towns or villages, the presence of agriculture or forestry, or the scenic values of the rural landscape, so defining what area is considered rural is indeed a social representation of space, depending on the perspective (resident, policy maker, research analyst, etc.)" (Offutt, 2016: 13). This makes whatever we consider rural very subjective and conditioned by social and cultural traits, as much as by settlement patterns and landscape, therefore agreeing upon one single, unique and universal definition, for urban as well as for rural is almost impossible.

Based on ESPON's 2006 report on *Urban – Rural Relations in Europe,* (referring Cloke and Goodwin, 1993; Cloke and Thrift, 1994; Philips, 1998) a variety of notions related to 'the rural' has emerged through academic discourses, from which four principle approaches can be identified, connected to four phases of discussion. During the *first phase* the rural realm was identified and mapped through the identification of all the non-urban areas and characteristics, like open spaces, small settlements and based on certain behavioral qualities. On the *second phase* political economy approaches and the notion of rurality played a major role. Changes in rural areas were very often seen to originate from the national and/or international economy, on a rather non-spatial basis, putting to question whether the rural places actually represented distinct localities, or even suggesting to dump the rural as an analytical category *(Hoggart, 1990).* The highlight of *the third phase* was the realization that one single definition for the rural space is impossible, and rural was eventually interpreted as a number of social spaces overlapping on the same geographical space. During this period the notion of rurality was considered as a social construct. Later on, during the post-modernist period, which represents *the fourth period*, symbols became

increasingly detached from their referential moorings, emphasizing how the socially constructed rural space had become increasingly detached from the actual geography of everyday life in the rural areas, considering the rural realm as the space where complexities and ambivalences are manifested.

"While the first two approaches are based on sharp definitional toolkits, attempting to capture the rural population and spaces by maintaining the material understanding of the rural, rooted in the presence or absence of a relatively distinct rural locality; the third and the fourth approaches try to dematerialize the rural and to place it within the realms of imagination, which in turn has clear material affiliations. Referring to these two approaches, there is no confidence in that both urban and rural can be defined by using conventional indicators" (ESPON, 2006: 68-69).

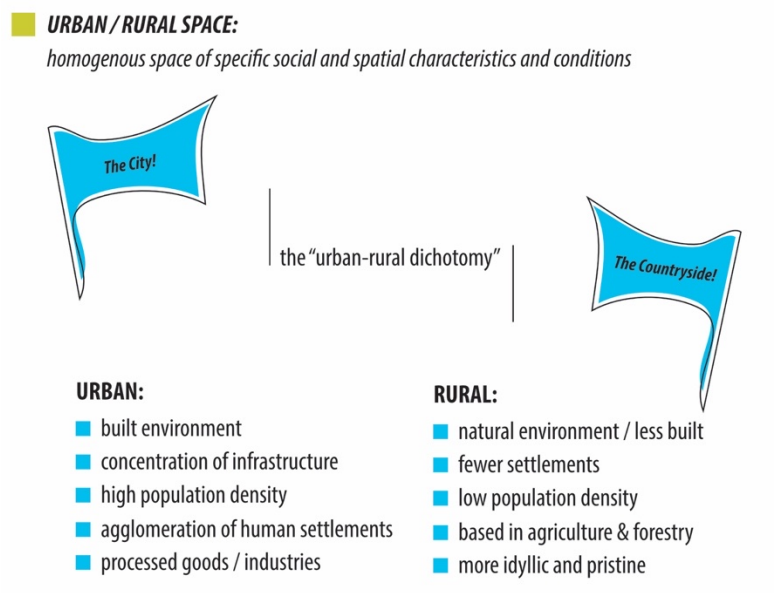


*Figure 4: The Urban-Rural Dichotomy / **Source:** Author*

2.1.3 Two Opposing Perspectives: Pro and Anti Urban Views

Although urbanization can be tracked back from the rise of the first cities around 5,000 years ago, it wasn't until the 18th and 19th centuries (highlighted by the First Industrial Revolution) that the acceleration of the urbanization rate and all the associated social problems, made room for the urban – rural dichotomy, leading to two main distinct and opposing perspectives and schools of thought: the anti-urban view and the pro-urban view

(Davoudi and Stead, 2002). According to Davoudi and Stead, "the first one idealized and regretted the disappearance of rural life, and can be tracked back to rural-urban migration during the Industrial Revolution and the social, economic, environmental and health problems that followed; whereas the second saw urbanization in terms of natural progress and development, and considered cities as generators and centers of culture, knowledge, innovation and economic growth" (Davoudi and Stead, 2002: 2). On the framework of this dichotomy, any kind of mixture between the two realms was considered a 'degenerate mixture', and approaches to considering both urban and rural integratedly, weren't practiced.

- **The anti-urban view**

Rural-urban migration and the increasing influx of rural population into urban areas were the main arguments on which the anti-urban view was based on. The increase of poverty within cities, the rise of slums and a series of other social problems arising from the first two, were mere proof that although the rural population had made it to the city, the city couldn't still digest this new concentration of population (Hall, 1994). It was by this time when the sprawling of urban areas, the rise of suburbia, and the expansion of the urban way of life over rural, began to be promoted as evils, which should be controlled and stopped. Planning practices aiming at restricting development within the city limits and the growing anti-urban sentiment, kept fueling the desire to return to an idealized rural life. This rural idyll did not only fail to acknowledge the growing problems of underdevelopment in rural areas (e.g. agriculture decline, lack of economic diversification, lack of access to jobs and services), but it also promoted in-migration, population moving from urban to rural areas, from which those that loved and supported working in agriculture, and the rich urbanites, those that worked in the city, but lived in the countryside due to its tranquility and landscape values. Over time, this became a very socially selective process, leading to a progressive gentrification of the countryside, especially through the practice of 'scare housing' (Philips, 1993). In-migration combined with out-commuting too, have produced cumulative adverse impacts, amongst which increasing of housing prices, making living in the rural area unaffordable for the real and local rural population; reducing demand for local services; and endangering of local employment due to more competitive job opportunities in the urban areas, or due to the change of the rural employment patterns (Davoudi and Stead, 2002).

- **The pro-urban view**

On the other end, urbanization, which was seen as an inevitable development on the transition from agrarian to industrial society, and the rise of migrating communities from rural to urban, became the main features of the pro-urban view. During this period the flourishing of scientific and technological innovation was considered tightly related to the urban realm, looking at cities as incubators that fostered the flourishing of advanced culture, innovation, and scientific and artistic knowledge (Davoudi and Stead, 2002). The city was as well seen as an engine of economic growth, and the rise of the city was linked to the rise of the institution of authority and complex economies, based on complex social systems (Le Gates and Stout, 1996). According to Davoudi and Stead (2002), and based on Davis' (1965) definition of urbanization[7], one major event of the 'pro-urban view' was the distinction between 'urbanization' and 'urban expansion and economic growth', arguing that the eventual end of urbanization of any specific context, doesn't necessary relate to the end of city growth, which can simultaneously happen upwards and outwards in both developed and developing countries.

2.2 Definitions and Typologies Proposed by International Organizations

As the boundaries between urban and rural become more and more blurred in spatial, social, economic and cultural terms, a clear division between the two, both in highly developed and in developing countries, becomes increasingly complex (UN SD, 2017). Over the time, in order to explore and determine urban and rural areas, beyond what perceptual understandings allow us to define as such, various classification systems and methods based on statistical data, have been generated. The benefit of these classifications is to better understand the different characteristics of the urban and rural areas in a consistent and transparent way, and at the same time to show that no single urban/ rural typology can be used for all the geographies (Pateman, 2011).

[7]"Davis (1965) defined "urbanization" as the rate of change of the proportion of the urban population, arguing that an increase can take place without the growth of cities by, for example, a decline in the rural population. Following the same argument, urban populations can grow without an increase in urbanization provided that rural population grows at an equal or greater rate" (Davoudi and Stead, 2002: 5).

On the other hand, although statistical data in general facilitates a comparative study approach, from one context to another, the results might defer greatly, based on the specific processes that characterize each of these contexts, the criteria taken in consideration during the classification, and the spatial reference units. For instance, in several developed countries distinctions between urban and rural have been at some point desaturated (ILO, 2018), due to the easily shifting nature of dynamics like employment opportunities, implementation of technology, development of infrastructure and the preferential changes in the ways of living (which are not necessarily driven by the change of the first three arguments), thus promoting similar environments, in both urban and rural realms. But sharp differences between urban and rural still characterize many developing countries, where processes like high rates of urbanization in particular, pose many challenges and fuel most of the differences.

Population size and density within specifically defined geographic areas are two main criteria taken in consideration in defining urban and rural areas, in both developed and developing countries, but in the latter, the existence of certain types of infrastructure, patterns of economic development (agriculture / non-agriculture), provision of educational and health care services, or even national definitions based on categorizations of specific areas, are perceived as additional important factors in producing the main distinctions between urban and rural (ILO, 2018: 12). In the European context, from one country to another, the number of criteria taken in consideration varies from one single indicator (e.g. Austria) to an extensive set of indicators processed by advanced analytical methods (e.g. England), to meet different policy needs. According to ESPON "across the EU15+2 countries, an extensive mix of criteria is common. Very few countries consider the agricultural share of workforce (Belgium, Italy, England, Romani), or commuting (Belgium, Italy) when distinguishing urban from rural population; countries like Belgium, Germany and Slovakia also include the centrality of a place or spatial unit, while new member states and accession countries rather attach urban and rural population to legally established settlements like cities and villages" (ESPON, 2006: 157).

Different countries use different spatial reference units, which has a major impact on the outcome as well. In some contexts, cities and other localities are sorted as referential units

(e.g. the new member states and countries on the accession process); depicting municipalities or parts of them stands for the most common practice in the majority of countries; and considering the built-up area as a reference morphological unit is yet another practice (e.g. mainly in countries like Austria, France, Ireland, the Nordic countries and Portugal). Among all the European countries, only Belgium applies its criteria to commuter catchment area, while in other cases combining spatial reference units it's also a popular practice (ESPON, 2006).

Below, a series of definitions on 'urban' and 'rural' from various organizations aims to emphasize the fact that having one sole definition over the two terms throughout all the countries, is almost impossible, therefore various classification systems and methods exist.

2.2.1 **Own Definitions on 'Urban' and 'Rural' –** UN DESA, The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (Statistics Division)

According to the UN DESA (2017), when there are no regional recommendations, each country should have its own definitions of urban and rural, based on their own needs. Classification by size of locality can also replace the urban – rural dichotomy, when and where density along the continuum becomes a main concern, from thinly populated areas, to most dense built-up localities. Admitting that population density may not be enough of a criterion, other additional criteria include the percentage of population involved in agriculture, provision of services like electricity and piped water, the access to educational and health care services, transportation systems, and recreational infrastructure. For UN DESA, the urban – rural classification should be applied at the smallest administrative or census unit (ILO, 2018).

2.2.2 **The 'Agglomeration Index' –** The World Bank

The World Development Report on Agriculture for Development (World Bank, 2008), used the country specific definition of an urban area, to calculate the rural population as the difference between the total national population and the urban population. The report used agriculture and its share in the national economy, to define three main categories: (1) agriculture based; (2) transforming; and (3) urbanized areas. Within each of these

categories, suitable and favored areas for developing agriculture are defined based on (1) access to markets and to (2) agroclimatic potentials. Later on, *The World Development Report on Reshaping Economic Geography* (World Bank, 2009) identified as urban those settlements with a minimum of population size and density, located within a reasonable distance from another sizeable settlement. The report also emphasized the importance of 'agglomeration economies' and 'clusters', and the impact that travel time and transportation costs to these facilities, have, stating that remote populations usually experience higher costs in taking advantage of all the benefits that come with urbanization. This set of data was then used to create the 'agglomeration index', which incorporated the global population grid in order to define spatial units of equal size (ILO, 2018). For obvious reasons, the 2008 and 2009 approaches, have produced different configurations of urban and rural (non-urban) areas.

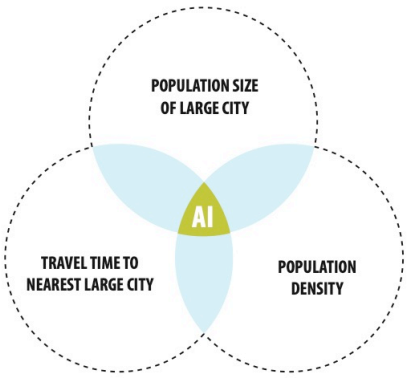


Figure 6: (on the right) Concepts of the Urban-Rural Gradient and Travel Time in the AI / ***Source:*** The World Bank / ***Graphic Interpretation:*** Author

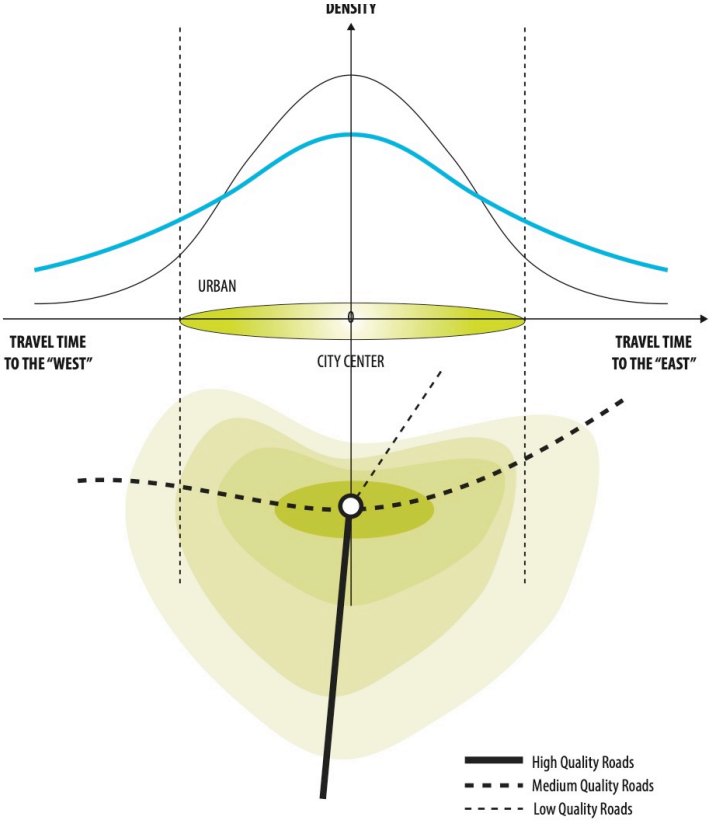


Figure 5: (above) Key Indicators Constituting the AI / ***Source:*** The World Bank / ***Graphic Interpretation:*** Author

2.2.3 The 'Rural – Urban Spectrum' – The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO): The State of Food and Agriculture (SOFA)

Working with the WB's WDR 2009 'agglomeration index', the SOFA report presented yet another approach, adapting the index to the 'rural – urban spectrum' concept, which identified a continuum between urban and rural sectors, with two distinctive extremities: (a) the capital, any other big cities and the larger regional centers; and (a) all the sparse smaller market towns and rural spaces (United Nations FAO, 2007). The report emphasized that within this continuum there is a series of connections created by households located in settlements of various sizes, from small individual and isolated villages, to very large cities; and indicators like (1) sets of agglomerations, (2) geographic constraints and (3) level of institutional development, can impact heavily on the transformation of rural settlements. The index was then adapted to come up to specific populations that are located nearby and around cities of various sizes, and which differ by the travel time.

	URBAN AND PERI-URBAN (Travel time to urban centre < 1 hour)	PROXIMATE RURAL (Travel time to urban centre 1-3 hours)	RURAL HINTERLAND (Travel time to urban centre > 3 hours)
	Percentage of population (%)		
TOWNS (Population: 50,000 - 100,000)	High Density (HD) / Low Density (LD)	(HD) / (LD)	(HD) / (LD)
SMALL CITIES (Population: 100,000 - 500,000)	(HD) / (LD)	(HD) / (LD)	
LARGER CITIES (Population: > 500,000)	(HD) / (LD)	(HD) / (LD)	

Figure 7: *Distribution of Global Population along the rural-urban spectrum /* ***Source:*** *FAO (2000) /* ***Graphic Interpretation****: Author*

Notes on Figure 7: Figures in parentheses are shares of population living in Higher-Density (HD) areas and in Lower-Density (LD) areas with a threshold of 1,000 people/km^2. Towns of fewer than 50,000 people are not captured, as urban or peri-urban.

2.2.4 The Regional Typology and the Concept of 'Remoteness' – The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

The OECD introduced the 'regional typology', sorting administrative units specific to each of the countries taken in the consideration within the analysis. The sorting used two criteria for the classification: (1) population density and (2) size of urban centers within a region, classifying regions of member countries in 3 categories: (1) predominantly urban – less than 15% of the population lives in rural local units[8] , (2) intermediate or significantly rural – between 15 and 50% of population lives in rural local units, and (3) predominantly rural – more than 50% of population lives in rural local units (OECD, 2011).

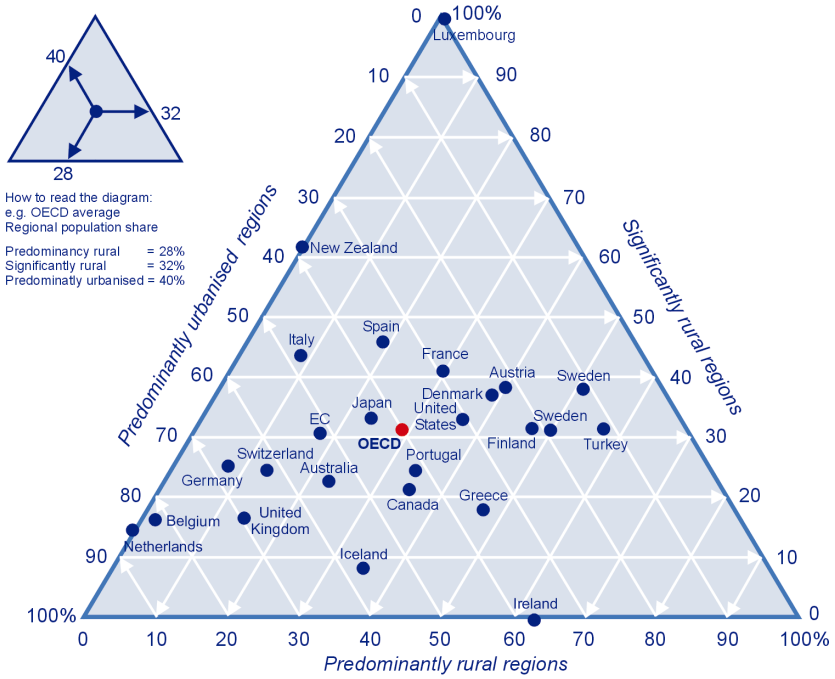


Figure 8: *Distribution of population by type of region (Regional populations share in national totals, %)* ***/ Source****: OECD. Creating rural indicators for shaping territorial policy. Paris, 1996.*

Using a consistent scheme, the local units were then grouped into larger agglomerations (regional areas), and the above classifications were reconsidered based on the presence and size of an urban center within the larger regional area. By adding the travel time to reach a highly populated center, and incorporating the concept of 'remoteness' the 3 classifications above, became 5: (1) predominantly urban, (2) intermediate close to a city,

[8] A local unit is considered 'rural' if its population is below 150 inhabitants per square kilometer.

(3) intermediate remote, (4) predominantly rural close to a city and (5) predominantly rural remote (OECD, 2011).

2.2.5 The Urban – Rural Typology and the Concept of 'Remoteness' – Eurostat / The European Commission (EC)

Employed by Eurostat (2011), the urban – rural typology used a 3-step approach. Firstly, it identified populations in rural areas, which were considered all the areas outside the urban clusters[9]. Secondly, regions were classified on the basis of the population share in rural areas: (1) predominantly rural – population share living in rural areas is above 50%, (2) intermediate – population share living in rural areas is between 20 and 50%, and (3) predominantly urban – population share living in rural areas is below 20% (Eurostat, 2011). Taking in consideration that extremely small regions could distort the results, regions which were smaller than 500km^2 were combined with other smaller neighboring regions. Thirdly, the approach took in consideration the size of the urban centers within the region: when a predominantly rural region had an urban center of over 200,000 inhabitants, which represented at least 25% of the total regional population, it became an intermediate region; when an intermediate region contained an urban center of over 500,000 inhabitants, which represented at least 25% of the total regional population, the region became predominantly urban (Eurostat, 2011). By employing the concept of 'remoteness' of the OECD, the 3 classifications above, became 5: (1) predominantly urban regions; (2) intermediate regions, close to a city; (3) intermediate remote regions; (4) predominantly rural regions, close to a city; and (5) predominantly rural, remote regions (Dijkstra and Poelman, 2011). A region was considered predominantly urban and close to a city if more than half of its population could reach the center of a city of at least 50,000 inhabitants within a 45min drive. Other ways, if less than half of the population could reach the center of the city of at least 50,000 inhabitants within a 45min drive, the region was considered

[9] **Urban clusters** are clusters of contiguous grid cells of 1 km^2 with a density of at least 300 inhabitants per km^2 and a minimum population of 5,000.

remote, and predominantly rural, or intermediate. *(Map of Urban-Rural Typology of NUTS3[10] regions including Remoteness on Appendix 1.)*

The same methodology was adopted by the Albanian authorities in 2014, in order to designate urban and rural areas, and urban and rural population, as an attempt to comply to European requirements for providing comparable data, and on the framework of the European integration (Albania is still not part of the EU, albeit being a candidate country since 2009). More on the use of the methodology, and the outcomes expanded further on Chapter No.7.

2.2.6 **ESPON ATLAS** – ESPON

Deriving from the OECD's 5 categories of urban – rural typologies and their remoteness, the *European Observation Network for Territorial Development and Cohesion* (2014), subdivided the two predominantly rural typologies in to 4 other categories: (1) agrarian – areas characterized by an agricultural primary sector; (2) consumption countryside – areas with visitors for recreational purposes; (3) secondary sector and (4) private service sector – areas with diverse economic sectors and exhibit employment structures similar to those of urban areas. *(Map of The Structural Typology of Rural Regions on Appendix 2.)*

2.2.7 **The New Degree of Urbanization –** The European Commission (EC)

By using the population grid (the distribution of population within and between local administrative units) employed by the EC's urban – rural regional typologies, definitions of urban and rural areas aim to be more accurate, being reorganized in 3 main typologies: (1) densely populated areas – cities, (2) intermediate density areas – towns and suburbs, and (3) thinly populated areas – rural areas (Dijkstra and Poelman, 2017). The grid considers the population density of 1 km^2, based on population registers or other detailed data sources. Nevertheless, for countries that do not use the grid, the EC uses land use and/ or

[10] **NUTS regions** – The standard geographical regions used by the European Union for statistical monitoring and policy delivery, organized in a scalar hierarchy. NUTS 1 regions are divided into NUTS 2 regions, which are divided into NUTS 3 regions, which are divided into Local Administrative Units (LAUs).

land cover information to build larger population data sets[11]. Since the urban – rural regional typology uses the same population grid, but at the scale of the region, they share the same data, but overviewed at different scales (regional, versus area). *(Map of The Degree of Urbanization for Local Administrative Units Level 2 (LAU2) on Appendix 3.)*

2.2.8 Measuring Global Urbanization using a Standard Definition of Urban Areas

The method uses the same population grid concept introduced by the EC, employing data provided by the WorldPop[12], which uses high resolution census, plus additional alternative data, modelling the population using a 100m x 100m grid cell resolution. The method only takes in consideration the population, which is a reliable and consistent data across the world, and excludes other criteria like commuting time, economic drivers, access to infrastructure, provision of services etc. 15 density thresholds ranging from 100 to 5,000 people per square kilometer have been tested using the GIS, and the outputs included urban clusters of all population sizes and high-density clusters of 50,000 people and above (Deuskar an Stewart, 2016). One of the main achievements of this method is the fact that it once again proved that no definition of urban is definitive, but it rather depends on each national context.

2.2.9 The Functional Urban Area (FUA) – The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Eurostat and European Commission (EC)

The 'functional urban area' is an attempt to establish a harmonized definition for the 'urban area', using the smallest administrative units for which there is national commuting data available (both European and non-European OECD countries) as building blocks. The method uses data like population density to identify urban cores, and the travel to work flows to define those surrounding areas whose labor market is well integrated with the main urban cores. Three main steps represent the way this methodology works: (1) use the population grid to identify core municipalities, (2) connect various cores, which

[11] Global Human Settlement Layer, https://ghsl.jrc.ec.europa.eu/ghs_pop.php

[12] The WorldPop project, initiated in 2013 provides open access to population distribution datasets, http://www.worldpop.org.uk

although non-contiguous are part of the same FUA, and (3) identify the urban hinterlands (OECD, 2013).

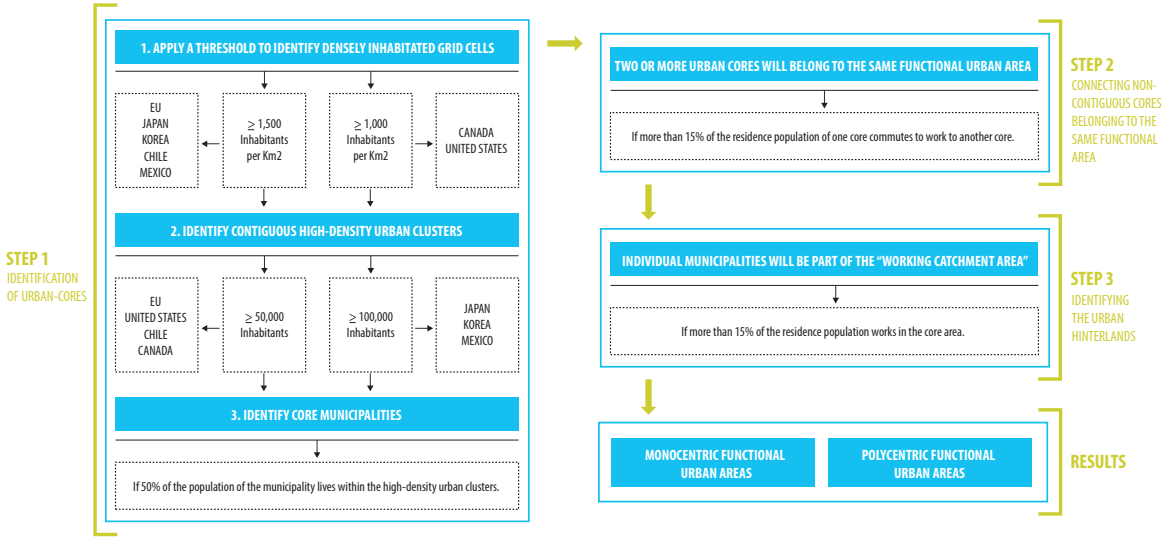


Table 1: *Procedure to Define Functional Urban Areas in OECD countries /* ***Source:*** *OECD /* ***Graphic Interpretation:*** *Author*

2.2.10 **The Labor Market Area** – U.S Department of Labor-Bureau of Labor Statistics (USBLS) and Eurostat

"The 'labor market area' is a functional geographic area or region beyond the administrative boundaries, defined for purposes of compiling, reporting and evaluating employment, unemployment, workforce availability and other related topics" (European Commission Online, 2013). The 'labor market area' is also considered as "a contiguous geographical area, conceived as a regional phenomenon and not necessarily tied to any specific city (more than one city can be part of it)" (European Commission Online, 2017), in which individuals can live and work and change jobs without having to relocate[13]. The difference between FUA and LMA, is that while the FUA is based on commuting flows to a central place, and covers a limited territory around the city, the LMA is the result of the commuting flows between local administrative units, and it can cover the entire territory of the country as well as the territory of the EU (ILO, 2018).

[13] U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics program, Federal Statistical Area Delineations: https://www.bls.gov/lau/lausmsa.htm

2.2.11 **A Single International Definition on 'Rural'** – UN, The Wye Group Handbook

For the purpose of their study on the *Rural Households' Livelihood and Well-being : Statistics on Rural Development and Agriculture Household Income*, the Wye Group[14] introduced a methodology that tried to establish a single international definition on rural, introducing two measures: (1) irregular spatial units – based on domestic political or administrative borders, which also meant limited comparability, and (2) equal size spatial units – based on gridded data for facilitating cross-country comparison. Thus three dimensions of rurality were considered in the definition, in order to anticipate any heterogeneity in circumstances across developing countries: (1) sparse settlements – defined by analyzing population density, population size, and built up area; (2) remoteness – defined by considering road travel distance, and straight line distance; and (3) land cover – defined by identifying cultivated and managed vegetation, artificial surfaces, and vegetated areas, plus natural surfaces, snow and glaciers, and water bodies (ILO, 2018).

2.2.12 **'Rural' and 'Rurality'** – Waldorf and Kim

Waldorf and Kim (2015) gave an overview on the definitions and measures of 'rural' and 'rurality' developed and employed in the U.S. Putting to question the relevance and subjectivity of the 'threshold'[15] in defining urban – rural classifications, they introduced a continuous measure instead, namely the 'index of relative rurality' (IRR), which was suited to capture variations in rurality across space and over time (Waldorf and Kim, 2015: 14-19). The IRR was indeed an aggregate index consisting of 4 main steps: (1) identifying the dimensions of rurality – where 4 dimensions were considered (size, density, remoteness and built-up area); (2) selecting variables – which was highly dependent on data availability;

[14] The Wye Group is compounded by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, United Kingdom, United States of America, Italy, Canada, Netherlands, Poland, World Bank, and academic researchers, https://unstats.un.org/unsd/methodology/citygroups/wye.cshtml

[15] **Waldorf and Kim** list 3 main arguments on the relevance and subjectivity of applying a threshold: (1) thresholds are dependent on the set of spatial objects to be classified; (2) thresholds by design create artificial similarities and dissimilarities; (3) thresholds create discrete measures that are cumbersome to deal with in modelling frameworks. They also bring to attention that in many cases the arguments behind the threshold choices are not clearly spelled out. Nevertheless, they do point out that one of the great advantages of the threshold-based rural-urban classifications is their simplicity (Waldorf and Kim, 2015, p.19).

(3) rescaling variables – a standard deviation scale which ranged from minus infinity to plus infinity related to rurality, were introduced instead of the already in-use selection of variables, like miles for the distance, percentage for the built-up area; (4) selecting a link function – where the function had to reflect how the four dimensions jointly determined the rurality of a place (Waldorf and Kim, 2015).

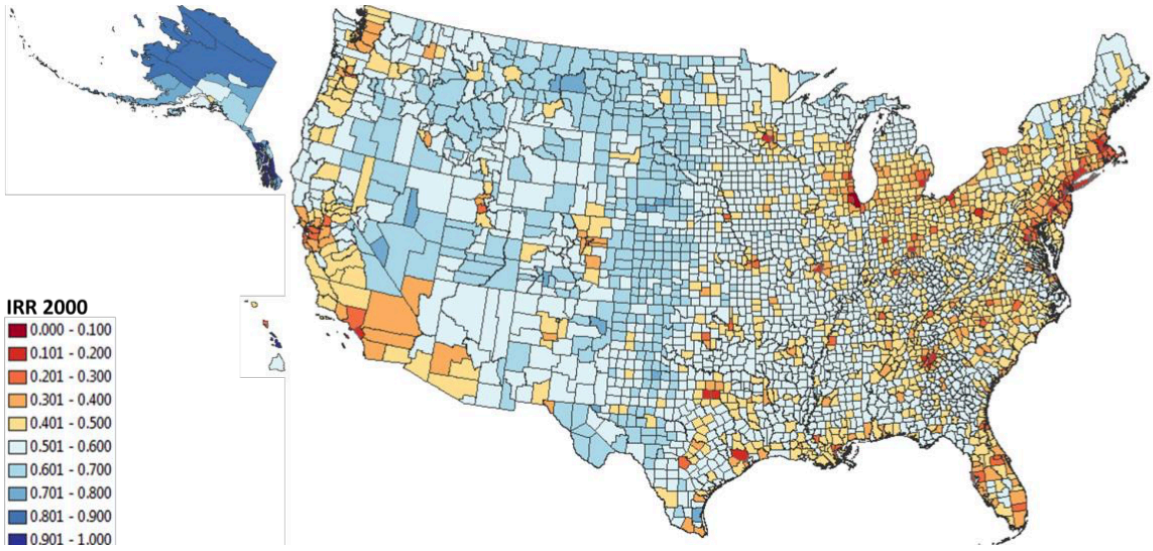


Figure 9: *Index of Relative Rurality (IRR) for U.S. Counties, 2000 /* ***Source:*** *(Waldorf and Kim, 2015: 15)*

2.2.13 Rural – Urban Continuum Code – United States Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service

The RUCC typology is a classification scheme that distinguishes metropolitan counties by the population size of their metro area, and nonmetropolitan counties by degree of urbanization and adjacency to a metro area (USDA, ERS, 2013). Each metro and nonmetro categories have been subdivided into three metro (using the Metro Statistical Size) and six nonmetro (using population size and adjacency to a metropolitan area) categories, so a number from 1 to 9 is assigned to each of the U.S counties, so county data can be broken down into finer residential groups, beyond metro and nonmetro, especially for analyzing trends in nonmetro areas that are related to population density and metro influence (USDA, ERS, 2013). Both the scaling from 1 to 9 and the name-coding 'Rural – Urban Continuum Code' suggest a continuous increase of rurality.

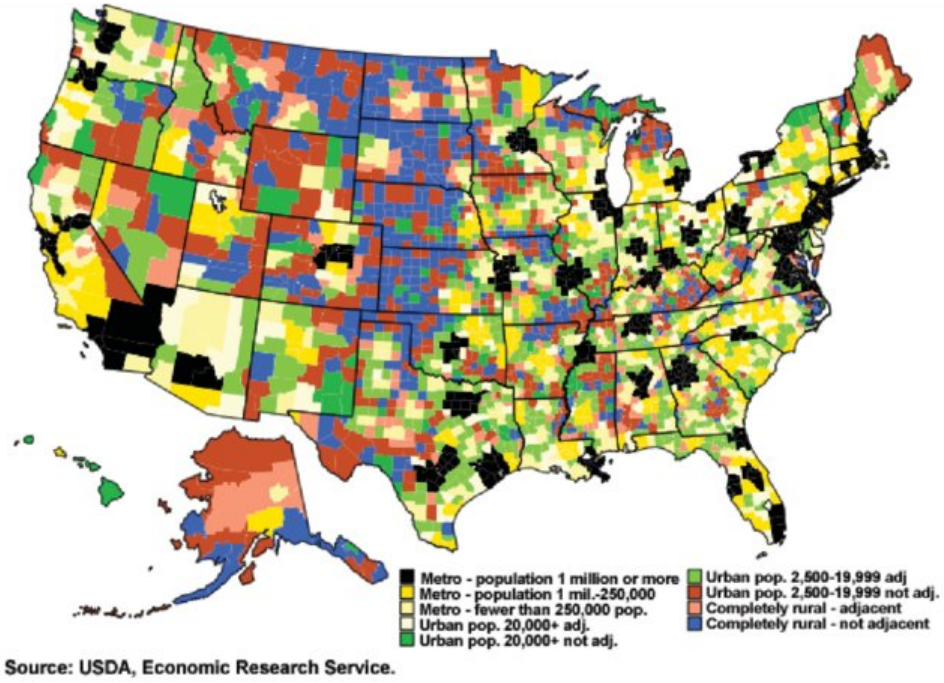


Figure 10: *Rural-Urban Continuum Codes of U.S. Countries, 2003 /* ***Source:*** *(Lohr, 2009: 2)*

In conclusion to this chapter, although a very broad array of various criteria based on geographic and socio-economic realities has been used in many countries, in defining urban and rural areas, it is obvious that there is no single and internationally relevant definition over the two terms. Thus, in different contexts, depending on the local geographic characteristics and socio-economic realities, the perceptual understandings of both urban and rural, as well as the statistical methodologies applied, produce various and different definitions.

On the other hand, insisting on designing a classifying system or methodology, which would be fit for every country, would be misleading, considering that urban and rural in reality are not two dichotomous terms anymore, and that there are a series of connections between the two, throughout their physical spaces, people, economics and environments. *A first argument* to base this assumption on, is that in different contexts, urban and rural have different interpretations, especially because both these terms (and the environments they coin) are directly related and informed by place-specific social ties and cultural traits. Different places also, experience social changes at different rates and conditions, and this contributes to the ways urban and rural are understood and constructed. *Secondly*, due to the break from the dichotomy, urban and rural areas can't be fully identified anymore,

therefore having an accurate denomination and mapping of the two, can be quite challenging and almost impossible.

As stated by the UNSC (United Nations Statistical Commission)[16] the traditional urban – rural dichotomy as we know it, is already an outdated concept and that it should be re-evaluated by constructing a continuum of localities based on settlement density, percentage of workforce in farming, access to facilities like health care and education and access to infrastructure. Within this continuum then, more than just separately identifying what urban and rural are, a more harmonious approach, which looks specifically into the functional relations between the two, in what is considered to be a new form of the territory defined by the absence of clear boundaries between urban and rural space, is needed.

3 CHAPTER 3: Charting the Outdatedness of the Dichotomy - Conceptual Tools

3.1 'Liminality' as a Conceptual Tool

3.1.1 The Use and Meaning of Liminality

In anthropology, as of Turner, liminality (deriving from the Latin word limen, which means 'a threshold')[17] is the quality of ambiguity or disorientation that occurs in the middle stage of a rite of passage, when participants no longer hold their pre-ritual status but have not yet begun the transition to the status they will hold when the rite is complete (Turner, 1974). During the liminal stage of the rite, participants "stand at the threshold between their former way of structuring their identity, time, or community, and the new way, which completing the rite establishes" (Overland, et al., 2014: 194).

[16] The United Nations Statistics Division, "Population density and urbanization", https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sconcerns/densurb/densurbmethods.htm

[17] Oxford English Dictionary. Ed. J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner. 2nd ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989. OED Online Oxford 23, 2007;

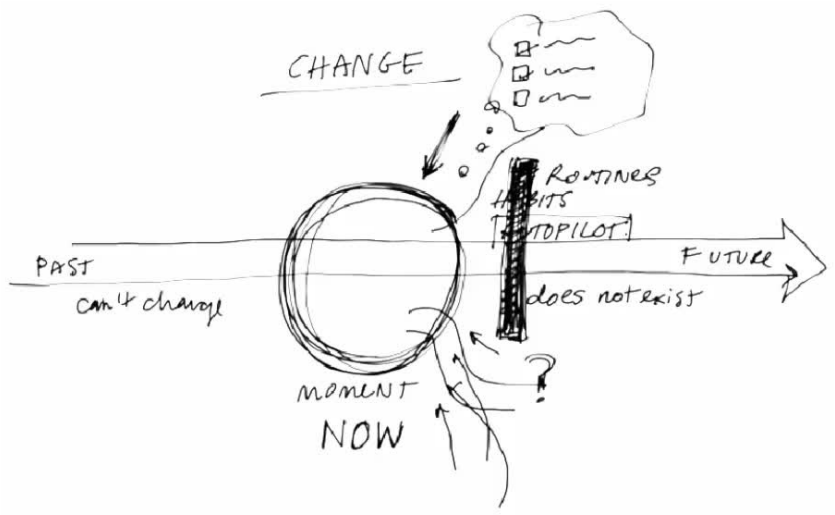


Figure 11: *'Liminality' as a concept – Liminal Thinking Process /* ***Source:*** *http://liminalthinking.com*

The French Folklorist Arnold Van Gennep, was indeed the first one to coin the term 'liminality' in the early 20th century, in his book *Rites de Passage*, while exploring the rites of small-scale societies. According to Van Gennep there are two different types of rites, "those that result in a change of status for an individual or social group, and those which signify transitions in the passage of time" (Gennep, 1909: 21). According to Szakolczai such rites share a specific three-fold sequential structure, which is made-up by the following stages: "(1) *pre-liminal rites*, or rites of separation, which consist of leaving a former behavior, and breaking with former practices and routines; (2) *liminal rites*, or the transition rites which represent the passage through the threshold that marks the boundary between two phases; (3) *post-liminal rites*, or the rites or re-aggregation, which celebrate the successful completion and overpassing of the transition" (Szakolczai, 2009: 141).

Further on, Van Gennep categorized these social rites in four different types, as following: (a) *Passage of people* from one status to another, or transforming from an outsider, to an insider of a certain group (example: marriage); (b) *Passage from one place to another*, for instance moving house, or moving into a new city; (c) *Passage from one situation to another*, such as starting a new job, starting school, graduating etc.; and (d) *Passage of time,* where moments like the New Years, birthdays, etc., are acknowledged (Gennep, 1909).

On these terms, "'liminal periods' (hereafter also considered as 'liminal times') are considered both deconstructive and constructive, given that they represent the act of passing from one state, or position to another, through re-integration rituals" (Thomassen, 2006: 322). While leaving old, established, integrated and standardized positions, "the liminal rite is characterized by uncertainty, imprecision, lack of a defined framework, and a general absence of identity, which can often be dangerous" (Fourney, 2013: 7). Nevertheless, considering also that 'liminal thinking' is a form of the art of finding, creating and using transitions and thresholds to create change, it represents a kind of mindfulness that enables creating positive change (Gray, 2016), "in a complex interplay of power, place, and social and spatial forms" (Fourney, 2013: 12-13).

3.1.2 Liminality Under Political and Cultural Changes

Later on, Victor Turner (2008) continued researching on the same topic of liminality, emphasizing that liminality can serve not only for identifying the importance of in-between periods, but also to understand human reactions to liminal experiences, so to say, "the way in which liminality shapes human personality, the sudden foregrounding of agency, and the sometimes-dramatic tying together of thought and experience" (Thomassen, 2009: 14). Thus, Turner was aware that liminal situations carried some aspect of imitation, emphasizing that the ritual's middle phase represented a "mimetic enactment of a crisis" (Szakolczai, 2009: 154).

Considering that many of the challenges we face within our society, either of political, economic, or environmental inheritance, usually come around two very important notions: 'transition' and 'crisis', understanding how 'liminality' not only provokes crisis and transitional situations, but also makes use of them to produce positive change, becomes quite crucial. According to Szakolczai, the term 'transition' implies a short, temporary situation, which can be very chaotic, even painful, and in this case, liminality can be particularly helpful in understanding the formative aspects of transitory periods and uncertain times. 'Crisis' on the other hand can be seen more or less a 'dramatized' version of 'transition'. "And the way these two notions intermingle with each other, is that, in history when mainstream sociologists and political scientists talked about the 'transition'

to the industrial society, or to democracy, critical theorists preferred talking about the 'crisis' of capitalism, or modernity" (Szakolczai,2009: 156).

So, "in time 'liminality' has broadened to describe not only rites, but also political and cultural changes" (Thomassen, 2009: 51). While on liminal periods of time, it is common to experience reversed social hierarchies, altered traditions, and doubting future outcomes (Horvath et al., 2009). Consequently, "the dissolution of order during liminality creates a fluid situation, which enables new institutions and customs to become established" (Szakolczai, 2009: 141). This takes even brighter nuances when considering that, "liminality is not only cumulative over time, but also additive at the point of emergence, so situations that are liminal in more than one way (for instance the coexistence of both, individual and social liminality – major socio-political events), can produce particularly strong and lasting effects" (Szakolczai, 2009: 159). Recalling modern European politics from 1914 to 1918, although on a period considered as the century of progress, science and democracy, the world still experienced a protracted warfare of unprecedented proportions; "which soon after led to the emergence of a new type of political system: Communism, Fascism, Bolshevism, Nazism – followed by an amount and kind of suffering that was never before experienced in human history" (Szakolczai, 2009: 164-165).

3.1.3 The Spatial Production of Liminality – Liminal Spaces

In geography, a 'liminal space' is defined "as a space resulting from passage and transition, an area of uncertainty, often also a mobile border, where the concept of liminality facilitates the understanding of the dynamics between the spatial form of the border and the border function of space" (Fourney, 2013: 2). Given the complexity of 'liminality' as a phenomenon, the 'in-betweenness' it represents, and the wide fields it applies on, it's almost impossible to detach the understanding of the 'spatial production of liminality', from its anthropological interpretation.

Starting from its anthropological construction, as 'an intermediate state between otherness and norms', "a liminal space is that particular area where the relationship in a social structure is managed, and where the social status of this relationship is determined; being interpreted also as the state that facilitates managing and controlling the

transformation of social statuses and ensuring compliance with social norms" (Fourney, 2013: 2-3). But departing from this very classical anthropological meaning, more recent interpretations consider as a strategic value, the capacity of 'liminality' to subvert the norms, due to the very particular relationship it shares with them. Therefore, considering 'liminality' to represent a state, which enables self-construction and the rise of new categories, through processes like hybridization and mixing, and the rejection of the imposed norms (Bhabha, 1994). On these terms "'liminality' seems to have already departed from being a mean for managing otherness at the service of the norm, being instead, a state during which a process takes place, and in this process, otherness is not placed in a relationship with a social, or political institution, but rather in the production of its own reference system" (Fourney, 2013: 3). From this point of view, the spatial production of 'liminality' can also result in spatial typologies, which within their character as 'transition spaces', are able to produce and alter particular thresholds that have a character of their own.

Indeed, there is a variety of geographical objects and spatial dimensions which can be considered as liminal spaces. Ranging from "very specific places, to bigger areas, or to entire countries and larger regions; from edges, borders and frontiers, to disputed territories, wastelands, or no-man's lands, margins, peripheries and crossroads or airports, and even other spaces on which people pass through, but don't live in" (Thomassen, 2009: 16), these 'liminal spaces' reveal a "dialectic process between already known normative categories of identification, and the recognition of a state that does not belong to any of these categories" (Fourney, 2013: 7-8).

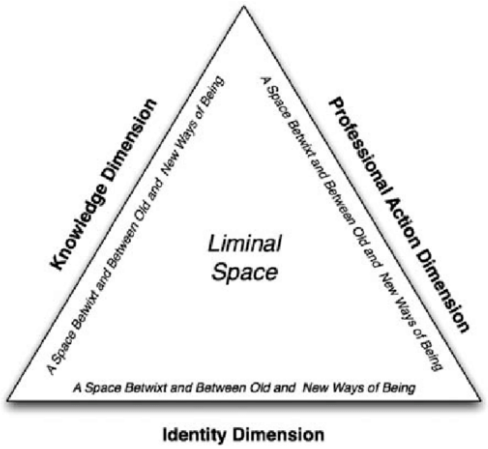


Figure 12: *The problem as a provoker of a liminal space /* ***Source:*** *Barrett 2008, pp.131*

Geopolitically, territories can be considered as the result effect of their own relationships, and epistemologically we can consider the geographical categories as norms resulting from political and planning actions (Debarbieux and Fourny, 2004). According to Fourney, looking at liminality from this perspective, and considering 'liminality' as a useful mean for examining the relationship between 'space' and 'norm', could help in perceiving it as part of the geography of mobile space, because it gives weight to the joint movement of meanings and reference systems that define places, and it considers the threshold as a space in constant change, and constantly re-defined (Fourney, 2013).

Transition features can make experiencing of liminal space, discontinuous, and can emphasize the everchanging aspect of the threshold among the series of fixed constants and distinct spaces (for instance, what we commonly accept as urban and rural). Therefore, using 'liminality' as a conceptual tool to explore urban-rural territorial dynamics can help in identifying those key moments in time (liminal times), and those series of repetitive thresholds (liminal spaces) between the established urban and rural, which are indeed spatial interpretations of the transitions between these spaces. Adding 'continuum' as a second conceptual tool, and considering it as both a process and a spatial typology, makes possible identifying and putting the series of interconnections and interdependencies among the urban, the rural, and the thresholds between the two, into a continuous spatiality of urban-rural territorial dynamics: the 'urban-rural continuum'.

3.2 'Continuum' as a Conceptual Tool

3.2.1 The Use and Meaning of the 'Continuum'

The term 'continuum' itself carries various meanings depending on various points of view. It can be considered both a process and a space, and with the notion of time overlapping, it can act as a tool to describe the evolution and production of new spaces in time.

It can be "something that changes in character gradually, or in very slight stages without any clear dividing points"[18]. It can be "a coherent whole characterized as a collection, sequence, or progression of values or elements varying by minute degrees"[19]. On another hand is can also be specified as "a continuous whole, quantity, or series of closely connected events, no part of which is perceptibly different from the adjacent parts"[20].

By placing these definitions on an 'urban-rural' context, the 'continuum' can be used as a device to classify, and as a conceptual tool for analyzing and understanding the processes of social change, which take place on a territorial space, which is neither of the two (only urban, or only rural), but is yet made of them both. The idea of the 'urban–rural continuum' evolved in particular, during the late 19th and early 20th century, from attempts to understand and classify the changing character of society due to a mix of impacts coming from urbanization, industrialization, and capitalism, which had various impacts across space, inscribing a continuum of differentially altered places (Halfacree, 2009). Halfacree also emphasized the sociological character of any place, which according to him, could be read off from its location along this continuum, and together with all the various aspects of the continuum concept (e.g. planning, environmental, etc.), "it reflected both, its deep embeddedness within cultural understandings of space, and a careful and cautious theoretical appreciation, that context matters in understanding everyday life" (Halfacree, 2009: 1).

3.2.2 Defining the 'Urban – Rural Continuum' as a Concept

Due to its bond with social behaviors and sociology, the 'urban-rural continuum' is difficult to be defined and spoken of in simplified general terms (Benet, 1963). The 'urban-rural continuum' as a concept takes life by the assumption that "rural and urban are not as generally assumed, antagonistic to each other, but they're indeed positively related in terms of the resemblance in certain essential elements, which are characteristic of both" (Rajagopalan, 1961: 61). Therefore, as the separation and distinctions between the two realms are increasingly difficult to make, the 'urban-rural continuum', a term especially

[18] Cambridge Dictionary Online, 2019: https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/continuum

[19] Merriam Webster Online, 2019: https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/continuum

[20] Collins Dictionary Online, 2019: https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/continuum;

used by sociologists, emphasizes that there are no distinct breaking points between urban and rural, and it defines "a coherent whole characterized as a collection, sequence, or progression of values or elements varying by minute degrees" (Housing and Land Rights Network Online, 2019). On this basis, the 'urban-rural continuum' intends a series of urban and rural communities, with different features regarding population and settlements sizes, lifestyle, and cultures, which are interconnected and interdependent with each other, not necessarily and only as linear constructions, or gradients from intensely urban to profoundly rural. The term has rather been used to describe the linkages between urban and rural, whereby no sharp differences can be seen among both interlinked areas. Hence, framing the "relationships between and among city-regions, urban centers, agricultural zones, and all other forms of human habitat, to emphasize the need to approach regions in their actual complexity and entirety, conveying the sense of an urban-rural symbiosis, rather than paring out artificial and unsustainable divisions." (Housing and Land Rights Network Online, 2019).

The German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies's *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*[21] in 1887, was the first study to lead to the 'urban-rural continuum' concept. His central thesis was that "human societies had changed through history from being characterized by 'Gemeinschaft associations' (hereafter community associations) – communities built around kinship, neighborhood, cooperative behavior, and place attachment – to becoming 'Gesellschaft associations' (hereafter society associations) – societies of impersonal and instrumental relations founded on formal contract and exchange" (Halfacree, 2009: 119). This switch did not only signify historical change, but it carried a sense of social geography as well, given that it made possible the mapping of the spatial dualism between urban and rural: relating 'society' with the already established negative 'city' associations noise, pollution, stress, etc.), and 'community' with the already established positive 'country' associations (nature, peace, innocence, purity, relaxation) (Halfacree, 2009).

This dualistic interpretation was pushed forward by the American anthropologist and ethnolinguistic Robert Redfield, who argued that such dualistic interpretation was over-simplistic, proposing instead, a more flexible idea on the continuum. With a PhD in cultural

[21] Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft – translation from German: Community and Society.

anthropology, Redfield was very interested in the problems of folk societies, especially on those of the Mexican culture, therefore the village of Tepoztlan[22] became his laboratory of research. He tried to understand the behaviors of Mexican peasants during the 1930s and late 1940s[23], while the rapid urbanization of Mexico, through the establishment of urban traits, such as setting up of industries, led to a blurring of the differences between urban and rural zones. Coining it as 'the folk – urban continuum', "instead of seeing 'real' places as either urban or rural, the degree to which they expressed urban (or rural) characteristics, allowed them to be placed on a scale that stretched from the totally urban at one pole, to the totally rural at the other" (Halfacree, 2009: 120). This particular conceptualization of the continuum made the categorization of settlements more flexible, given that it allowed 'rural' features to be found in 'urban' places, and vice versa, 'urban' features in 'rural' places too.

There has been a constant controversy, whether the urban and the rural realms are to be treated separately, as two dichotomous categories, or not. With no doubt, there are differences that consist on the basis of population density and size, occupational profiles, social mobility, environment, etc. Louis Wirth (1938) on his work on the social distinctiveness of the city, would state that within urban – rural continuum there are still two distinct ends, a more urban one, where the society is seen as more loose in association, with an unstable membership, great social responsibility and with a tendency for inter-individual contacts to occur only in one situational context (workplace, recreational areas etc.); and a more rural one, where the society is seen as being close-knit, rigidly stratified, highly stable, integrated and homogenous in composition, with contact happening in several different contexts. On these terms he'd consider the continuum between urban and rural as both, a classificatory device and as marking a process of social change, which occurs on both the ends and between them, not always being followed by the growth in settlements or increase in population (so to emphasize processes like migration and

[22] Tepoztlán represents a place with a strong sense of community organized around traditional symbols - symbols that are still potent enough to generate a replication of its ancient barrio structure. The people use traditional categories and oppositions to understand and to encode their new experiences, in the conditions of modernization and becoming a larger society. (Bock, P.K. 1980, "Tepoztlan Reconsidered", Journal of Latin American Lore 6:1, p.129-150. University of New Mexico).

[23] "Rural Urban Continuum and the Necessity of Integrated Planning", 2017 on "Geography and You" online. https://www.geographyandyou.com/population/urbanization/rural-urban-continuum-necessity-integrated-planning/

outmigration, but also the role of commuting, and the constant replacement of the original rural population by the commuter community). For Dewey this social change was as well characterized by acculturation, which with time was seen to reduce differences between urban and rural communities, desaturating the usefulness of both concepts as two profoundly opposite ends. Therefore, admitting that "phenomena like 'urbanism' and 'ruralism' can't be exported, and that there is no such thing as 'urban culture' and 'rural culture', but only various culture contents somewhere on the so called 'urban-rural continuum'" (Dewey, 1960: 65).

On the basis of all these interpretations was the fact that the supposedly clear-cut division between two very distinctive ends of the continuum, one urban and the other rural, over time had been progressively destroyed, due to the growth and expansion of cities, in particular with the rise and development of suburbia, or with the emergence of polycentric urban clusters, "leading to the disruption of any simple gradation fundamentally with their displacement of the gravitational dominance of a clear urban core" (Halfacree, 2009: 122). Instead, a combination of 'urban' and 'rural' ways of life was seen to take place along the spatiality of the continuum, and this suggested that 'urban' people could be found in the rural extremities of the continuum, same as 'rural' people, 'communities' and 'isolated individuals' could also be found in the city and toward the 'urban' cores of the continuum. This mismatch has been, and still is very vivid along the continuum, and is grounded on the very basic argument that spatial form is tightly related to social form, and that social patterns and ways of life, cannot be ripped off by the spatial component [as Pahl (1968) suggested], or be determined within static environments along the continuum (Halfacree, 2009). Later on, Pocock and Hudson (1978) would also argue that "the dichotomy, even by considering the continuum, is not meaningful in the sense that both rural and urban are elements of the same civilization, and on this basis, there should not be a separation of the two categories"[24].

3.2.3 Defining the 'Urban-Rural Continuum' as a Spatial Typology

[24] "Rural Urban Continuum and the Necessity of Integrated Planning", 2017 on "Geography and You" online. https://www.geographyandyou.com/population/urbanization/rural-urban-continuum-necessity-integrated-planning/

However, prior to the rise of the 'urban-rural continuum' as a concept, initially by Tönnies, then Redfield, later on by Wirth's addressing of the matter, and Pocock and Hudson's claims of the irrelevance of the urban – rural dichotomy, which built more on the social aspects to building the 'continuum', Park and Burges had charted on similar grounds since the 1925, in attempts to understanding this urban – rural hybridity on spatial terms in particular. They tried to spatially explain that the expansion process, from the main city center, outwards, was best described "by a series of concentric circles, which designated both, the successive zones of urban extension, and the types of areas differentiated in the process of expansion" (Park and Burges, 1925: 50).

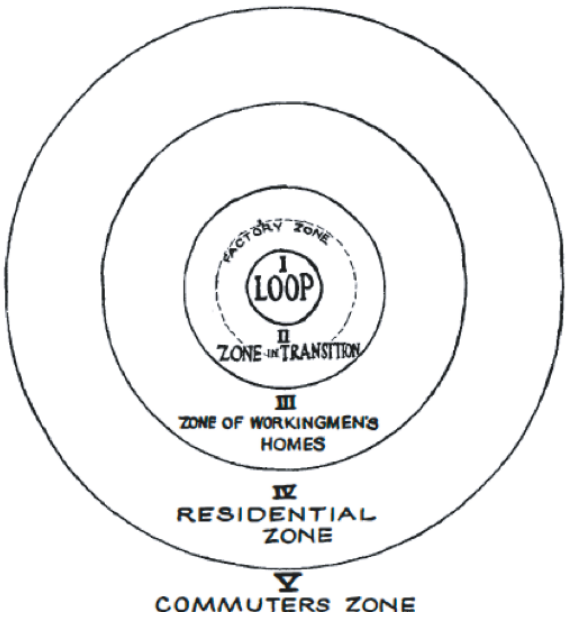


*Figure 13: The Growth of the City, The Chicago case / **Source:** Park and Burges, "The City"*

In their chart they introduced the ideal construction of the tendencies of any town or city to expand radially from the central business district – on the map, namely 'The Loop' (circle 1), to the downtown area, which is normally an area in transition, being invaded by business and light manufacture (circle 2 – the Zone of Transition) (Park and Burges, 1925). This second circle is followed by an area populated by all the workers, which have escaped the deteriorating previous circle, but still want to remain within the vicinity of their working environment (circle 3 – Zone of Workingmen's / Homes). Outward this third circle, there lies a residential area of high-class apartment buildings or of exclusive 'restricted' districts of single-family dwellings (circle 4 – Residential Zone). Further out the fourth circle, lies the commuters' zone, the suburban areas or satellite cities, which are at a thirty to sixty-minute

ride from the central business district (the first circle). Park and Burges named this tendency of each inner zone to extend and invade the next outer zone, 'succession'.

In the expansion of the city based on Park and Burges' model, "a process of distribution takes place, which sifts and sorts, and relocates individuals and groups by residence and occupation, and this differentiation into natural economic and cultural groupings, gives form and character to the city itself" (Park and Burges, 1925: 56-57). They also argued that the division of labor, explained on the Chicago case, illustrated as well some levels of disorganization, reorganization and increased differentiation, which although on the one hand could facilitate social organization up to some degree, on the other hand showed how rapid urban expansion can be followed by increased crime, diseases, insanity and suicide, in other words social disorganization.

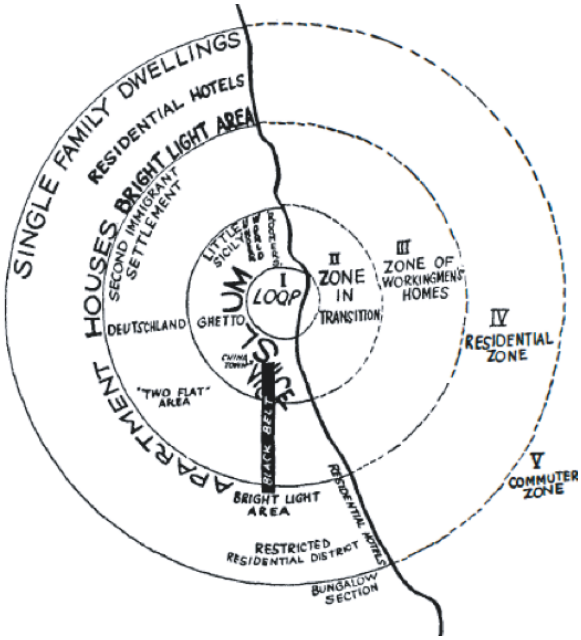


Figure 14: *Urban Areas / The Chicago case /* ***Source:*** *Park and Burges, "The City"*

In 1977 Cloke came up with a model of the structure of the urban-rural continuum, which showed how "connectivity and road infrastructure in proximity to significant urban centers, can promote land-use changes in the urban – rural continuum, and that there is no single typical rural settlement, but rather a spectrum between declining villages in the deep countryside, to suburbanized villages and overspill towns in the urban fringe" (Cloke, 1977).

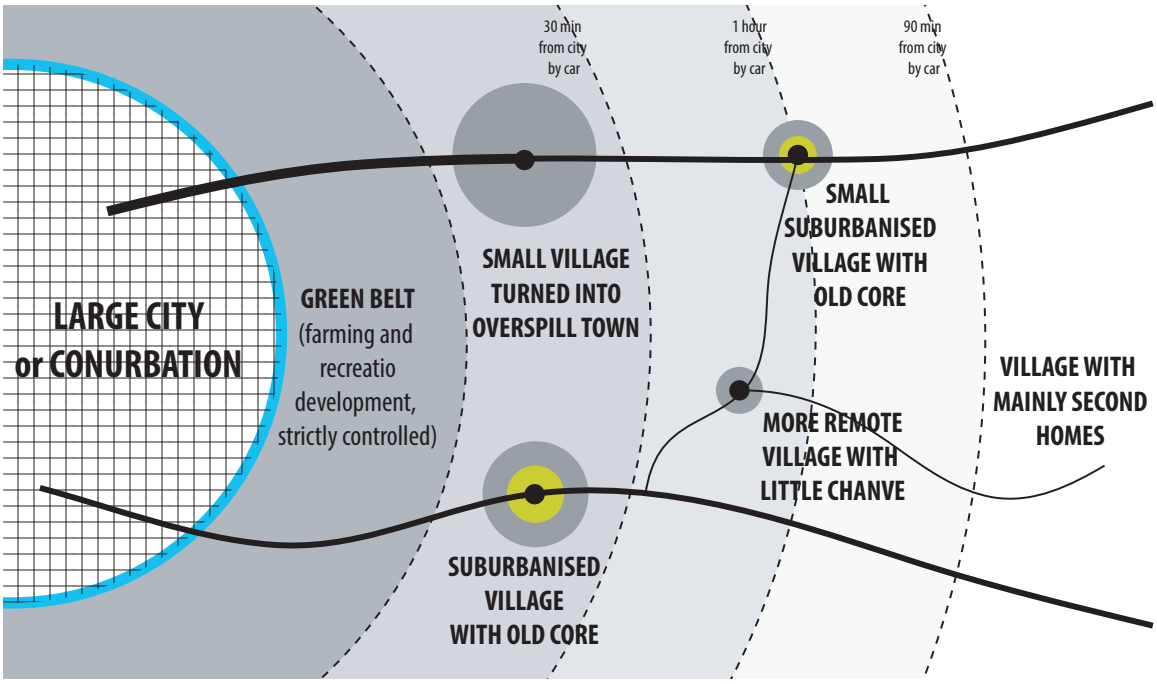


Figure 15: *Cloke's Model /* ***Source:*** *JAGS Geography South Wales /* ***Graphic Interpretation:*** *Author*

New Urbanism and Smart Growth Movement during the '80s, brought up the 'urban to rural transect' model, which even though not directly related with the 'urban-rural continuum' concept, portrays features of an integrated urban-rural relation, being defined as a series of zones that transition from sparse rural farmhouses, to the dense urban core, where each zone has a fractal character, in that that they contain similar transitions within themselves as well (Duany and Talen, 2007). The transect has 6 main zones, shifting from rural to urban: first 2 zones have profoundly rural character (the rural preserve and the rural reserve, basically protected areas and areas of environmental, or scenic quality); the 3rd zone is the so called 'edge', which is the transition area between countryside and the town (it is mainly a residential area, with single family houses, with few mixed-use areas, where civic buildings are located); the 4th zone is the 'general', which is primarily residential and has urban character (higher densities and more frequent mix of uses); the last 2 zones have a profound urban character (center and core, basically a small neighborhood center or a large town center serving several neighborhoods, and a central business district serving to an entire region). The novelty of the 'urban to rural transect' model was in the break from the conventional zoning practice (entirely based on land uses and activities), bringing on focus the principal matters of typology and community form (commonly known as the urban form).

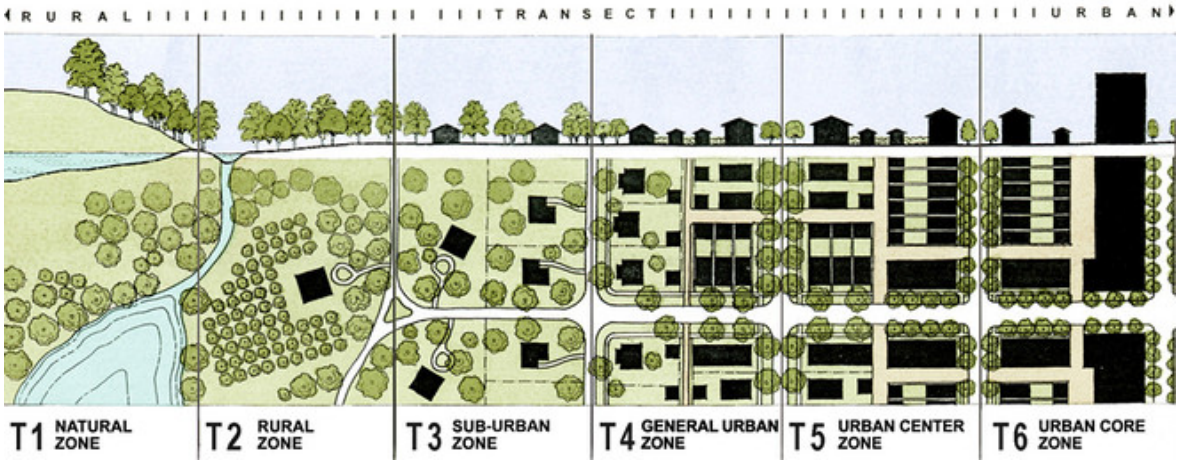


Figure 16: The 'Urban to Rural Transect' Model / Source: www.dpz.com

So, from Tönnies's 'community and society' interpretation over the continuum, to Redfield's 'folk – urban continuum', to the 'succession' concept of Park and Burges, to the Cloke's 'spectrum model', and to the more recent 'urban to rural transect' model, there has been a constant academic work, in order to understand the dynamics changing the urban and rural as two dichotomous realms, into an altered urban-rural hybridity, which has a particular spatial configuration.

Today, we're still witnessing cities, which have unfixed and always expanding structural boundaries, characterized by settlements of dispersed population (most of which of migratory character). As economic activity follows the dispersed population (or vice versa), the expansion of employment and consumer population goes beyond on the hinterland of cities, leading to their further expansion, and to their peri-urban areas and their respective peripheries.

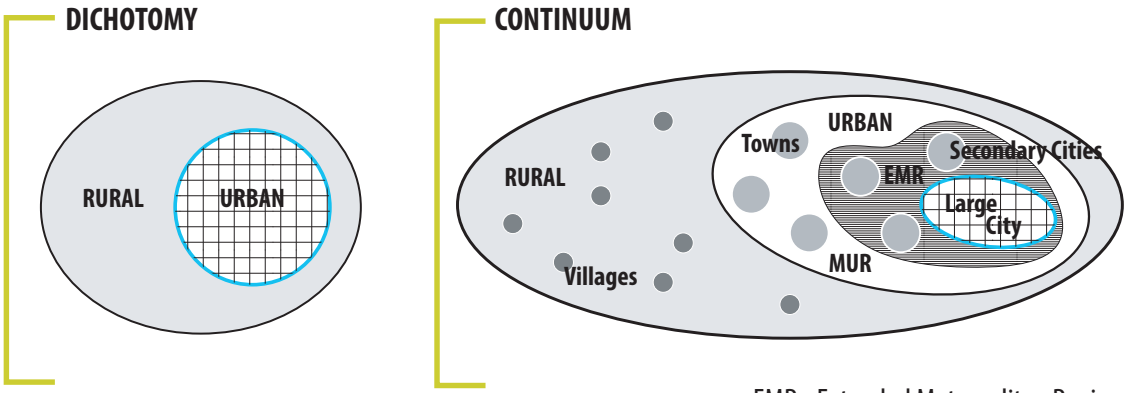


*Figure 17: Perspectives about the Urban Spatial Structure: From Dichotomy to Continuum / **Source**: adapted from World Bank (2009), World Development Report 2009: Reshaping Economic Geography / **Graphic Interpretation:** Author*

Therefore, the hinterland, described as the area which lies beyond what is visible or known, has been transformed in "the place within the urban – rural continuum, where the urban, rural and countryside can mix and clash"[25]. It is here where liminal spaces (those thresholds and transition spaces) and the sates of liminality are manifested, and where thresholds are constantly erased, transformed and re-defined, altogether producing a new territorial form, that of a continuum between urban and rural.

3.2.4 The 'Urban – Rural Continuum': Process or Typology?

In the recent decades the 'urban – rural continuum' has been considered a new form of territory, in base of the absence of clear boundaries between urban and rural space, while the intertwining of the two has enabled a greater economic stability, especially of the countryside and a new, richer cultural environment. "The idea of the urban – rural continuum in society proceeds with the transfer of characteristics and qualities of the (1) urban environment into the countryside – knowledge transfer, infrastructure and technology, settlement density and in general a more manufactured environment; and of the (2) countryside into the urban environment, which is closely related to food production and self-sufficiency of broader functional urban areas" (Konjar et. al, 2018: 164-165).

The difference between city and village as physical forms is not nearly as large as in social or functional terms. The concept and the archetype of settlements' organization is essentially governed by same rules, same guidelines (Konjar et. al, 2018; Drozg, 1995). Considering social networks and their dynamics as crucial and fundamental in the shaping and re-shaping of spatial structures of both urban and rural realms, it has been argued if whether the continuum should be considered as a process, rather than a typology. According to Pahl, "there is a series of continua, which together form a process, acting not so much on communities as on groups and individuals at particular places in the social structure; and rather than a continuum it would be better to imagine a whole series of

[25] "Rural Urban Continuum and the Necessity of Integrated Planning", 2017 on "Geography and You" online. https://www.geographyandyou.com/population/urbanization/rural-urban-continuum-necessity-integrated-planning/

meshes of different textures superimposed on each other, together forming a process which is creating a much more complex pattern" (Pahl, 1966).

Considering the continuum as a process, especially of social change, allows us to agree upon the fact that there is no single definition of the spatial characteristics of the continuum either. Given that a process in itself is always developing and generative, the urban-rural continuum considered as a process, will as well continuously produce spaces and spatial typologies, which will be both, place and time specific, especially under the conditions of today's highly complex and ever-changing societies.

4 CHAPTER 4: Beyond the Urban – Rural Dichotomy (the Rise and Evolution of the 'Urban – Rural Continuum')

4.1 Processes prior to Form

"Tradition has broken down… Rural influences neutralize the town. Urban influence neutralizes the country. In a few years all will be neutrality. The strong, masculine virility of the town; the softer beauty, the richness, the fruitfulness of that mother of men, the countryside, will be debased into one sterile, hermaphrodite beastliness" (Thomas Sharp, *Town and Countryside: Some Aspects of Urban and Rural Development*, 1932: 11).

4.1.1 Liminal Periods and Their Significance – The Four Urban Revolutions

"The evolving spatial specificities of territorial development and the development dynamics that emanate from them, almost always become attached to a narrative framework, which is associated with the rise of a collective consciousness" (Soja, 2000: 71). Acknowledging the role of it in the geohistory of urbanism and city space in particular, but also space in general, is very important, especially when considering the urban-rural continuum. By default, looking at the continuum as a process, over time there has been a series of liminal periods in which all these systems have played a crucial role in defining and redefining interconnections and interdependencies between urban and rural, producing in

return liminal spaces and various spatial typologies, which materialize all the complex dynamics within this hybridity. Therefore, the evolution of the urban- rural relationships as a concept is tightly related with the study of other fields like economics, geography and regional planning, and the 'urban-rural continuum' term in particular has been used to mark the break from the former urban-rural dichotomy.

Over the years urban and rural realms have shared interconnections and interdependencies of various ways, but three main phases describe best these reciprocal exchanges. *The first phase* represents the time when societies were predominantly rural, and the urban-rural relationship was mainly related to the needs that the city had for agricultural produce, and in exchange, the needs that the countryside had for the industrialized services and commercial products offered in the city. *The second phase* revolves around the period of the post First and Second Industrial Revolutions, when the balance of the urban-rural relationship began to shift more towards a higher dependency of rural areas, on urban services and economies. *The third phase* stretches out until today and is characterized by two-sided exchanges, demonstrating much more complex and dynamic interconnections and interdependencies between urban and rural (Davoudi and Stead, 2002). Especially with the Fourth Industrial Revolution taking place and globalization trends, visible and invisible flows of people, capital, goods, information, and technology, on the one hand, have promoted certain common features between urban and rural, influencing some degree of independence among the two (e.g. rural areas competing with urban areas for employment, agriculture no longer being an exclusive rural feature only, etc.), on the other hand have blurred their physical and functional differences, producing particular spatial typologies, which manifest both urban and rural.

In the turmoil of these constant changes and exchanges, according to Soja (2000), three main epochal moments, referred to as "Urban Revolutions[26]", have shaped the knowledge we have today about civilization and urbanization. The term 'revolution' itself represents the culmination of a progressive change in the economic structure and social organization of communities (Childe, 1950), which in the placed context is followed by the evolution and

[26] The term 'urban revolution' itself is used in anthropology and archaeology, and it was first coined by Vere Gordon Childe, an Australian archaeologist, in the 1930s, to describe the process by which small, kin-based, nonliterate agricultural villages were transformed into large, socially complex, urban societies.

change in the spatial organization of settlements and living units as well. Recalling these three moments is very important in understanding when and which processes have not only changed the 'urban' as we know it, but given the tight trails of interconnections between 'urban' and 'rural', these three moments and the changes that each of them represents, become crucial in describing when and which conditions have made possible the rise of an 'urban – rural continuum' as well.

The First Urban Revolution was evident in Jericho in the Jordan Valley and Çatalhöyük in southern Anatolia, both known as the very first cities, rising as pre – agricultural urban settlements of hunters, gatherers and traders. Under the impact of what Soja coins as 'synekism[27]', "both cities incubated the development of full – scale agriculture and organized animal husbandry, inverting what has been seen as a historical sequence in which the so – called Agricultural Revolution preceded the development of the first true cities" (Soja, 2000: 4).

The Second Urban Revolution[28], was anticipated by two important events, the invention of writing and the maturing of the city as an urban governmental unit (the city – state, or polis). Starting with the Sumer city of Ur, during this period "the expansion of the complex of social production and the scale of social organization centered in the city begins, going beyond the simple agrarian society, to new territorially – defined forms of social and spatial control and regulation-based kingship, military power, bureaucracy, class, property, slavery, patriarchy and empire" (Soja, 2000: 5).

[27] Synekism is a concept in urban studies coined by Edward Soja, which refers to the dynamic formation of the polis state — the union of several small urban settlements under the rule of a 'capital' city (or so-called city-state or urban system). Soja's definition of synekism, as mentioned in his book *Writing the city spatially*, is 'the stimulus of urban agglomeration'. (Soja. E., 2003).

[28] Soja considers this moment as a Second Urban Revolution in the geohistory of the cityspace, despite the fact that archeological and sociological texts acknowledge this moment in history as the first and only Urban Revolution.

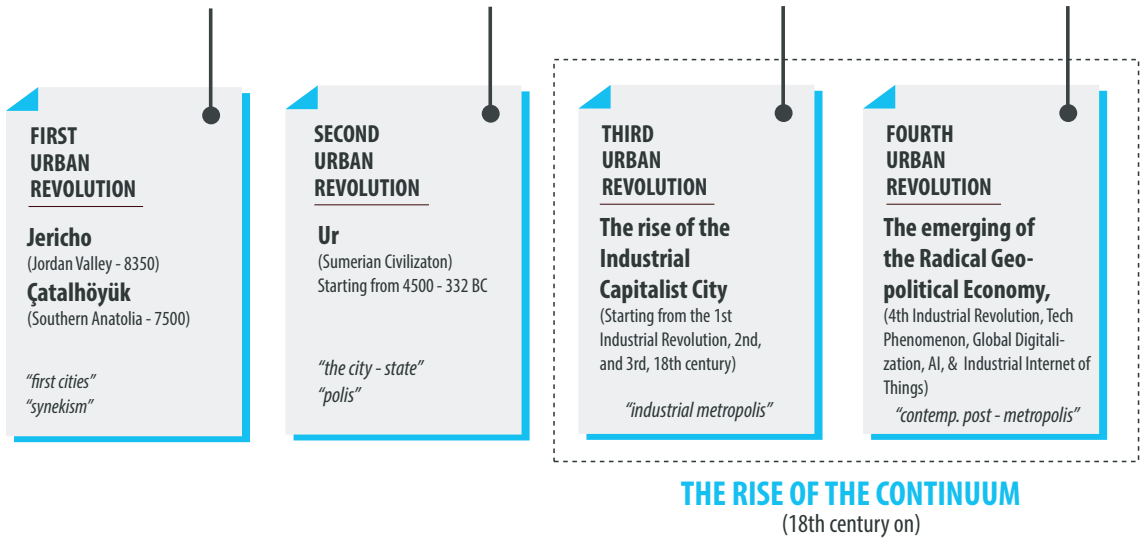


Figure 18: *The Four Urban Revolutions, and the Liminal Period, which made room for an 'Urban-Rural Continuum' /*

Source: *Author*

The Third Urban Revolution was triggered by the insertion into cityscape of large manufacturing industries, which promoted the development of a fully symbolic and expansive relation between urbanization and industrialization processes on a scale and scope, which was never before achieved. "The rise of the industrial capitalist city in which the social production of space became primarily concentrated inside the city core, leading into radical transformations in terms of size and internal organization of city space, pushed towards a more general process of societal urbanization, into the creation of the modern industrial metropolis" (Soja, 2000: 5). The 'metropolis' represents indeed a model of the highest economic and social order, becoming a symbol of modernity and representing a space of constant transformation (Chambers, 1990: 55, 112). It was during this period that the expansive recomposition of population and the associated urbanization and mass migration, lead to societies, which for the very first time were manifesting urban, over rural population. "These trends also restructured earlier distinctions between city and countryside, urban and rural, the sacred and the profane, in order to make room for a new urban order in which the production of a social surplus, was taking place in both, inside the city and in the surrounding of the city proper" (Soja, 2000: 77).

With the 'radical geopolitical economy' school emerging, with the expansion of critical urban studies into new frontiers, and with the emergence and manifestation of the IT revolution, new spatial models and concepts of a contemporary post – metropolis rose,

marking the very beginning of a *Fourth Urban Revolution*, which stretches to this day (Soja, 2000). Globalization, connectivity, technology and big data have not only made geographical togetherness irrelevant, but they have foremost produced mass inequality based on digital divide, resulting in new spatialities due to altered interconnections and interdependencies between the urban and non-urban.

4.1.2 Modernity and Postmodernity – When the Roaming Really Begins

With the number and magnitude of events happening from the 18th century on, 'modernity[29]' and 'postmodernity[30]' (in socio-economic terms also coined as Fordism and Post-Fordism[31]) became two very important periods of time, symbolizing the most dynamic changes in the political and socio-economic geography, and as a consequence producing some of the most significantly elaborate and complex spatialities of urban life. Therefore, it is on and through these two moments that this research is framed under, with the scope of investigating events and spatial dynamics in the urban realm, which have directly impacted the rural and the relationships between the two, followed by the production of an urban-rural continuum.

[29] **Modernity –** It represents a topic in the humanities and social sciences, and is both a historical period ('the modern era'), as well as an ensemble of particular socio-cultural norms, attitudes and practices, taking place in the wake of the Renaissance, during the so called 'age of reason' of 17th-century thought, and the 'enlightenment' of the 18th-century. According to Michel Foucault (1975), "modernity as a historical category is marked by developments such as a questioning or rejection of tradition; the prioritization of individualism, freedom and formal equality; faith in inevitable social, scientific and technological progress, rationalization and professionalization, a movement from feudalism (or agrarianism) toward capitalism and the market economy, industrialization, urbanization and secularization, the development of the nation-state, representative democracy, public education (etc.)" (Foucault, 1977: 170–77).

[30] **Postmodernity / Postmodernism –** With the fall of modernity, postmodernity followed. In Western philosophy, "postmodernism is considered to be a late 20th-century movement characterized by broad skepticism, subjectivism, or relativism; a general suspicion of reason; and an acute sensitivity to the role of ideology in asserting and maintaining political and economic power" (Britannica Online, 2019) https://www.britannica.com.

[31] **Fordism** – From the late 20th century, stretching to present day, another period followed Fordism, coined as Post-Fordism, marking the break from the transition of post-industrial modern societies, and symbolizing a movement beyond its established regime of accumulation and mode of regulation, to a significantly different economic order, a deconstruction and reconstruction of the Fordist and Keynesian political economies, which relied heavily on the growth of labor processes and workflows based on information and communication technologies and digital labor (Soja, 2000).

What was earlier described as the first two 'Urban Revolutions' can be considered as crucial moments where human society has been modernized, based on the creative dynamics within the urban realm, or even the urban spatiality, and relating to phenomena like agglomeration economies, synekism, and phronesis (Soja, 2000). The Third Urban Revolution on the other hand, is marked by three very important moments in history, the First, Second and Third Industrial Revolutions, and the following liberal social revolutions empowered the institutionalization, which made room for the restructuring and culturally homogenization of both, real and imagined territorial communities, in order to meet all modernization demands of the urban-industrial capitalism. The last and Fourth Urban Revolution is earmarked by the Fourth Industrial Revolution, with the emergence of the technological phenomenon, global digitalization, artificial intelligence and the industrial internet of things.

The early 18th century marked the transition to industrialization, which influenced major changes in the urban life, establishing the first very models of the compact industrial capitalist city space, which then later and until the early 19th century, with mobility and expansion of infrastructure networks led the way to the rise of major cities with surrounding streetcar suburbs and spawning satellite industrial centers. This marked the end of the earlier city as we knew it, and the rise of a new, much more complex and dynamic urbanized spatial form, which conquering from the two World Wars until the 1970s can be described with the rise of Fordism[32] and the effects of Keynesian[33] state management on both, mass production and consumption, and urban development. It is during this period of time when the 'modern metropolis' emerged in its finest form, a metropolitan region with its monocentric urban core, where the most important political, economic, and cultural activities were centered, surrounded by the vast sprawling

[32] **Fordism** – Coined after Henry Ford, it is considered as "the basis of modern economic and social systems, and the era of capitalist mass production and mass consumption development, stretching from the 1920s to at least the early 1970s" (Soja, 2000: 170).

[33] **Keynes (Keynesian Economics)** – The term is coined by the British economist John Maynard Keynes, and represents "macroeconomic theories supporting the idea that during recession, economic output is strongly influenced by aggregate demand (total demand in the economy), which doesn't always necessarily equal the productive capacity of the economy, but it is instead influenced by a host of factors, and at times behaves erratically, affecting production, employment, and inflation" (Jahan et al., 2014: 53). The term also represents the role of the welfare state and state stimulated mass consumption (symbolizing the post war economic system).

suburban periphery. “The extensive and culturally homogeneous, administratively fragmented, and relatively disarticulated ‘middle-class’ suburban world, drew selectively on the attractions of both the central city and the more open spaces of the countryside, and was increasingly dependent on the automobile to allow both city and countryside to be at least potentially accessible” (Soja, 2000: 239). From the late 20th century, stretching to present day, another period followed, coined as post-Fordism, marking the break from the transition of post-industrial modern societies, and symbolizing a movement beyond its established regime of accumulation and mode of regulation, to a significantly different economic order, a deconstruction and reconstruction of the Fordist and Keynesian political economies, which relied heavily on the growth of labor processes and workflows based on information and communication technologies and digital labor (Soja, 2000). So, it is during these two periods of time, starting with the industrialization and Fordism, and continuing with post-industrialization and post-Fordism, that the periphery began to be perceived as an active space, becoming a very important threshold, that very significant liminal space, which marked the break from the urban-rural dichotomy, establishing a series of direct and indirect interconnections and interdependences between the two realms.

On the meantime, the transitions to and from industrialization, from modernism to post-modernism, also mark three distinct periods of crisis-generated restructuring processes, which have led the rise, establishment and development of new spatialities of the urban life. Each one represents turbulent times of experimentation, redirection, and change on the conditions of selective deconstruction and reconstruction of long – established economic, political, and cultural practices, in new and different forms (Soja, 2000). The first restructuring period followed the Age of Capital and lasted to the end of the 19th century, a period which was also known as the Long Depression in Europe. The second began circa 1920s, through the Great Depression, until the end of World War Two. And the third occurred between the late 1960s and early 1970s.

The 21st century however, with the rise of global economic nationalisms and political isolationisms has put to question a momentum of ‘peaking democracy’ and ‘end of globalization’ in today’s society, making room for uncertainty and perhaps, yet another crisis-generated restructuring process with consequences on the spatiality of human life as well. For O’Sullivan (2019) the end of globalization in many ways is marked by the poor and

inconclusive response to the global financial crisis, where economic growth has slowed and growth has become more financialized, with increasing debts; and where wealth inequality, multinationals dominance and the dispersion of global supply chains, have become hot political issues. Hence, this situation has made room for a multipolar world emerging, where trade tensions, advances in technologies (e.g. quantum computing), and the regulation of technology represent just some of the fissures around which the world splitting is based on[34], and we've already been witnessing sounding consequences at a global scale and at all levels of governance, deriving as a result of all these dynamics and tensions.

4.2 Form follows Process: Charting Urban-Rural Spatial Dynamics through the Evolution of Urban Form

On his book *The City and the Grass Roots* Manuel Castells stated that "space is not a reflection of society, it is society" (1983: 95), therefore spatial forms will be produced, as all the other objects around us, by human action. All these spatial forms will express and perform the dominant class' interests, according to given specific modes of production and development. They will express the state's power relationships, will be realized and shaped by the society's rules and moral principles, and at the same time will be earmarked by the opposition and resistance of the over-exploited groups within the society. And all of these dynamics will transform an already inherited spatial form, which is today a product of former history, transformed over time through a series of interests, projects, protests and dreams (Castells, 1983). For Castells, from time to time social movements will arise to challenge the meaning of spatial structures, and this will lead to new functions and forms.

4.2.1 Late 19th Century Industrialization and the Rise of the Modern Industrial Metropolis

[34] Based on Michael O'Sullivan's *The Levelling: What's Next After Globalization?,* and an interview for The Economist on June 28th, 2019, https://www.economist.com/open-future/2019/06/28/globalisation-is-dead-and-we-need-to-invent-a-new-world-order

By the 18th and 19th centuries, with the rise of the first Industrial Revolution, the use of mechanical power and the creation of the factory system, not only transformed many of the existing cities, but also made room for a new wave of urbanization, which gave birth to the 'modern industrial metropolis' (Pounds, 2005), which grew to represent both, large concentrations of national manufacturing and specialization in national-market industries. While prior to 1860s the industrial sectors of metropolises were relatively at a small scale and nationally unimportant, from 1860-1920 a period of large-scale urban-industrial growth took place, leading to dramatic changes in cities and in the manufacturing processes (Meyer, 1990).

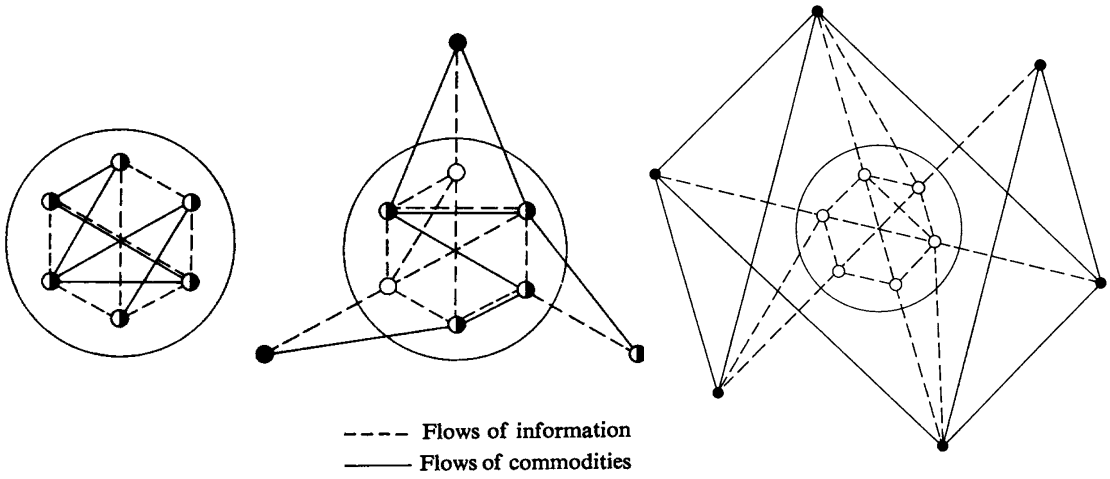
Farmers and rural population slowly started moving to the bigger towns, which became large industrialized cities, registering for the first time in history the greatest number of urban populations. Migration flows and the following urbanization stimulated the booming of new industries by concentrating workers and factories together, so as a consequence the new industrial cities soon became the main source of wealth (Hobsbawn, 1962). The increase in the division of labor within and among factories increased labor productivity, and the technological improvements, promoted the development of new and improved mechanized production systems and enhanced productivity. On the other hand, developments in the transportation and commuting systems at national scale and scope, improved the quality of services and were cost-effective, promoting feasible large-scale production (Meyer, 1990). So, at the bigger picture, economies slowly completed their shift from rural (based on agriculture) to urban (based on manufacturing).

Referring to Soja, the classic 19th century competitive industrial cityscape, had gone through a series of spatial and functional re-compositions in order to make room for the new spatial fix to the challenges facing the urban-industrial growth.

"The classic cityscape began to disintegrate in many different ways, in a sequential and selective decentralization of factories, residences, offices, warehouses, retail stores, public services and other urban activities, not only stretching the concentric zones outward in a sprawling and increasingly haphazard process of suburbanization, but also making each of the existing zones much less homogeneous than they once were. All this, made city-space and urban life become increasingly fragmented, not just in terms of residential land use,

but also in patterns of local governance, social class, race, and ethnicity" (Soja, 2000: 114). City life began to be treated as 'pathological' or 'deviant', as a result of the high rates of pollution, environmental stresses, crime and theft. The "growing capitalist spirit inherent of urban areas led to a reinvented sentiment toward rural settings, as opposed to the emergent anti-urban myths that depicted cities as loathsome centers of fornication and covetousness" (Ruskin, 1880: 319).

On these terms "the 19th century was very crucial in terms of spatial dynamics, and it can be read through the interplay of urbanization and industrialization, as well as through the empowerment of a new scale in the multi-layered hierarchy of nodal regions, which shaped the spatiality of social life, a scale of socially constructed individual and collective identity, and citizenship located between the city-state and the mosaic empire" (Soja, 2000: 78). During this period the city-state, also framed as 'the nation-state', was seen as a product of cities and the new kind of urbanism together, which would be sustainable and well-managed, only through the implementation of comprehensive, hierarchical and centrally managed expansion of economic and political power, beyond the immediate city-region.



The three stages can as well inform the spatiality of urbanization during this period of time: (a) T=1, Clustering in the Central City; (b) T=2, Incipient Decentralization of Production; (c) T=3, Effective Decentralization of Production and Centralization of Control

Figure 19: *Locational Patterns and the Dynamics of Industrial Activity in the Modern Metropolis* ***/ Source:*** *Allen J Scott (1982), "Locational Patterns and the Dynamics of Industrial Activity in the Modern Metropolis"*

NY and Chicago in US were two examples of such, which despite going through a series of decentralization and expansion processes, also experienced a process of re-centralization,

concentrating financial and banking activities, corporate headquarters, and office buildings in what would be called 'the Central Business District' in the civic center. "They also took responsibility for planning and managing the expansion, and restructuring the city-space, in tandem with local government officials, and accommodating arrangement that was accompanied by a significant return of the 'higher classes' to residences in the city center" (Soja, 2000: 114).

4.2.2 An Alternative to the Industrialized City – "The Garden City of To-Morrow"

As a product of the 'garden city movement', which started in 1898, Ebenezer Howard's 1903 treatise *Garden Cities of To-Morrow* introduced an alternative to the overcrowded and polluted industrial cities of the 19th century. The garden city concept would host nearly 32,000 people in about 2,428 ha, spatially organized in concentric patterns, with open spaces, public parks and six radial boulevards, extending from the center. Planned to be a self-sufficient model, the garden city would have self-contained communities surrounded by parks, and with proportionate and separate areas of residences, industry and agriculture. Whenever the population would exceed the planned total of 32,000, another garden city would start developing on its vicinity, creating a cluster of several garden cities linked by transit routes (road and rail) and confined by permanent greenbelts, as satellites of a central city area of 50,000 people (Goodbell, 1987).

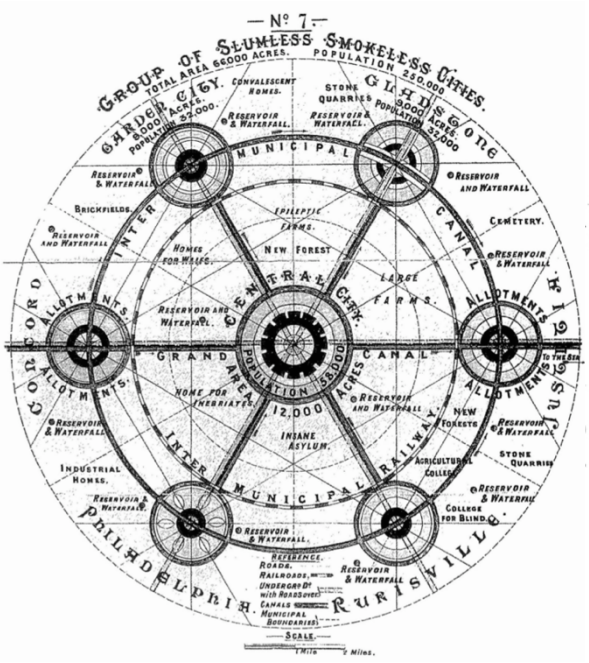


*Figure 20: **(on the left)** Howard's Social City diagram / **(on the right)** The Garden City / **Source:** Sir Ebenezer Howard, "Garden Cities of Tomorrow", 1902*

What was revolutionary about the 'garden city' model was the fact that by incorporating vast open spaces, it combined together the town and the country, in order to provide the working class an alternative to working on farms or in crowded, unhealthy industrialized cities (Howard, 1902: 2-7), and to give urban slum-dwellers the best of both worlds. This was achieved by capturing the primary benefits of both environments, the countryside, and the town, and by avoiding the disadvantages presented by both, in what would be coined as 'the marriage between the town and the countryside'.

Following his 'garden city' concept, Howard came up with the 'Three Magnets' conceptual diagram, which summarized the political, economic, and social context underlying his utopian vision for the future of British settlements, through three illustrated magnets, from which, one illustrating the advantaged and disadvantages of town life, another those of the country life, and a third one communicating Howard's proposal of a Town-Country. The diagram aimed at charting the dilemma of 'where is best to live at', introducing the 'Town-Country marriage' as a direct response to the industrial workers torn between inner-city slum conditions and the lack of affordable opportunities in the more rural settings.

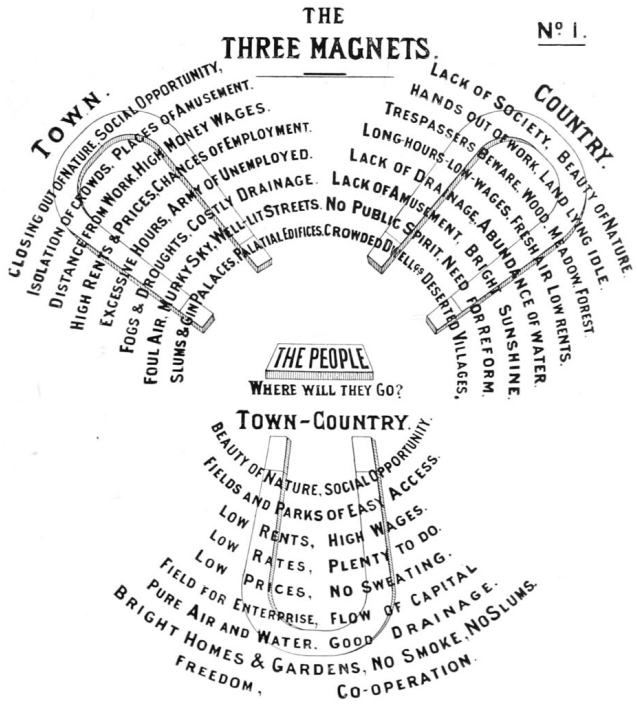


*Figure 21: The Three Magnets / **Source:** Sir Ebenezer Howard, "Garden Cities of Tomorrow", 1902*

The ‘Garden City’ concept was initially applied in two cases, Letchworth and Welwyn in England, but both experienced challenges regarding financial sustainability. Although Letchworth slowly attracted more residents by bringing in manufacturers through low taxes, low rents and more space, the real estate market was still unaffordable for the blue-collar workers to live in (Fainstein and Campbell, 2003), therefore, it didn’t immediately inspire government investment into the next line of garden cities. Welwyn, on the other hand, was financially supported and implemented by Howard himself, but on this case was the vicinity to London (nearly 20 miles away from it), which prevented Welwyn from becoming self-sustainable. Nevertheless, in the overall, both cases were examples of how on the congested and polluted conditions of industrial cities, the ‘Garden City’ concept for new towns was indeed economically viable, and morally satisfactory as well.

4.2.3 The Great Depression and the Rise of Totalitarian Regimes – Industrialization, de-Industrialization, and the New Urban-Rural Balances

Beginning in the US, the so-called Great Depression took place during the 1930s, and is considered to be one of the longest, deepest and widespread worldwide economic depressions of the 20th century (Duhigg, 2008). After a major fall in stock prices, which happened in 1929, and with the stock market crash following, it soon became worldwide news, causing the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) fall by an estimate of nearly 15%. Consequences were severe, in both rich and poor countries, translated in major drops of personal income, tax revenue, profit and prices. International trade fell by nearly 50%, unemployment reached as high as 25-33% (Frank and Bernanke, 2007), and construction was stopped in many countries. Cities which depended exclusively on heavy industries and mining experienced a huge hit, port cities exclusively suffered the fall in world trade, while farming communities and rural areas suffered majorly due to crop prices dropping by nearly 60% (Cochrane, 1958).

Different countries experienced the Great Depression differently in terms of economic development and spatial dynamics. In US it wasn’t until 1929 that people and governments came to realize that ‘business as usual’ in terms of investments and expansion wasn’t either advisable, nor feasible anymore, so a period of reverse migration followed, where people

left the crowded industrialized city centers, heading back into their rural family farms (Boyd, 2002). Suburbia stopped growing, and left the inner-city centers experience the hit of the depression, with a major downturn in employment, especially in construction and heavy manufacturing. In Great Britain the depression wasn't as severe, yet many industrial cities in the Midlands, Scotland and the North were relatively heavily impacted (Gray, 1985). On the other hand, Manchester and Liverpool, after suffering a long period of severe unemployment, took a great turn through the implementation of big projects, boosting local economy and promoting new urban redevelopment. France in Europe was still significantly rural, and the Depression impacted city centers more in terms of employment from 1931 and on. This economic crisis pushed many unemployed city dwellers to return to the countryside, a process which increased the population of the periphery with nearly 10% (Jackson, 2002). In other parts of Europe, like Germany and Italy, the Depression hit almost every region and city, making room for new forms of totalitarian regimes to take over.

With unemployment becoming common everywhere, production levels hitting their lowest points ever, financial instability and war debts rising, inflation becoming a phenomenon, and with the decline in production and trade, unprecedented problems followed, making voters and statesmen search for radical solutions to the crisis they were dealing with. Among others, this also meant pressuring governments to interfere in economic decisions, like they had never before. All these conditions made room for the establishment of Nazism in Germany, where Hitler promised to restore Germany's economy and to rebuild its military; the even greater empowerment of Mussolini's Fascism in Italy, which had come to life even before the Great Depression; and the construction of 'mixed economy', which was epitomized by the New Deal in the US. The establishment of totalitarian communism was another practice in the Soviet Union, where the Great Depression helped solidifying Stalin's grip on power. His planned economy, devised by five-year plans, put emphasis on rapid industrialization (especially development of industries based on iron, steel, electrical power, and other heavy machineries) and 'collectivization' of small peasant farms and produce under government control. Same practices were also followed by several Soviet Union's allies, including Albania, where centralized dictatorship led by the Communist Party lasted the longest in the European dictatorship history, until 1990. Welfare capitalism was another response to the Great Depression in countries like Canada, Great Britain and

France, where governments assumed responsibility for promoting fair distribution of wealth and power, and for ensuring security to the risks of destitution, unemployment and bankruptcy (Mintz and McNeil, 2018).

The outcome of all these dynamics established a series of new relationships and attitudes regarding both, urban and rural environments, promoted massively by the propaganda of the centralized and totalitarian regimes. The outcome of both industrialization and urbanization in cities (congestion, poor sanitary conditions and unemployment) and the crisis that the war opposed to the economy and physical environments, grew a general hostile attitude towards the city, which was backed up by the politicization of an anti-urbanism attitude, aimed at destroying everything urban (Cavin, 2005).

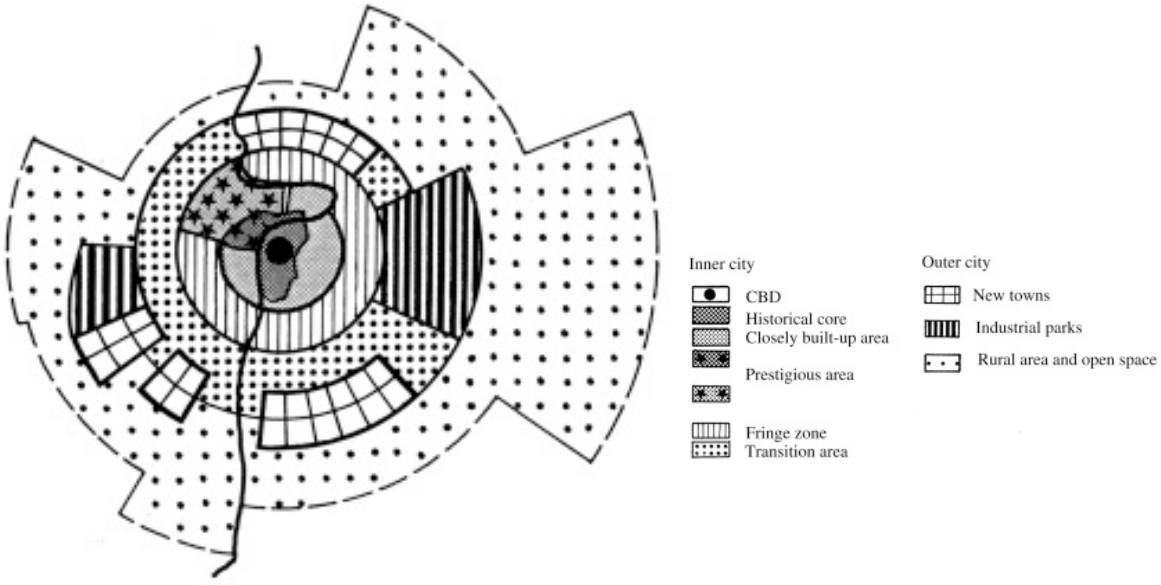


Figure 22: *The model of a socialist city: Prague /* ***Source:*** *Elisabeth Lichtenberger, "Wien-Prag: Metropolenforschung (Vienna-Prague: Metropolitan Research)", 1993*

On the other hand, glorification and defense of the rural realm started taking place, reconstructing everything that the war had destroyed, in a way that was favorable to the countryside (Cluet, 2010). In many countries (including France, Germany, Italy etc.) propaganda to re-root people in agriculture instead of industry took place, looking at the countryside as the only place where true national values were to be found, while considering cities and their industrialized urbanization as a threat, opposed to these values (Cavin, 2005). The opposite of the above, happened in the Soviet Union and other ally

countries, like Albania, which changed their national economic direction, from agricultural to industrial, making use of vast areas of natural resources, for industrial purposes. The Soviet industrial model influenced both, legislative platforms and practical work, making the shift from agricultural-industrial to industrial-agricultural, being followed by the creation of a series of new industrial towns, and the transformation of several villages and rural areas into industrial sites (Bici, 2007).

4.2.4 The Countryside after the Two World Wars – Counter-Urbanization Dynamics and the Rise of Sprawling

As globalization and industrialization processes had been underway for decades, giving rise to world trade, a world capital market and worldwide migration (Broadberry et al., 2005), with the two World Wars happening, development was put in reverse. Influenced by the conditions of war, European countries in particular faced several challenges, which were instrumental in the continuous shift between the perceptions and attention given towards both, urban and rural realms. Although until 1914 most of the economic landscape in Europe and overseas was primarily agrarian, the development of industrialization and the state-nation pushed forward the modernization the countryside as well (including military service, education and communication, according to Eugene Weber), linked the rural realm with the industrial economy, and marked the differences between urban and rural ways of life through migration (Ermacora, 2015). As the production-consumption balance was being continuously altered by military activities, and by the emergence to supply urban areas, governments intervened in the agricultural sector by introducing food policies, which were oriented towards consumption. This was then followed by the 1916-1917 'turnip winter'[35] and the restriction of credit and paralysis of shipping and trading, resulting in 're-realization' of urban spaces through 'war-gardens' and extending of arable lands throughout the affected countries (Chickering, 2007). Nevertheless, from 1916 onwards, as agricultural prices were soaring, and shortages in cities were increasing, producer-consumer tensions (rural and urban) gained a momentum, and alongside the rural-urban

[35] The Turnip Winter (German: Steckrübenwinter) of 1916 to 1917 was a period of profound civilian hardship in Germany during World War I.

strains, during the 1916-1917 winter living conditions in the countryside as well hit critical levels (Ermacora, 2015).

While during the 19th century and especially the period during the First World War, ruralisation dynamics and rural population, which was massively mobilized both in armies and home fronts, represented the majority in almost every belligerent nation; the early 20th century (including the period during the World War II) experienced the beginning of the urbanization of rural spaces (Berry, 1976), coined also as 'counter-urbanization' (Champion, 1989). This process in some way was contradictive with the classic models in contemporary geography, which were based on the crucial central role of main cities in the 'central place theory[36]" and on the "rank-size rule[37]" (Padros, 2009), giving rise to what would be later coined as 'sprawling' and 'suburbia', and the development of a series of new satellite towns. After the Two World Wars yet another re-interpretation of the city took place, considering it as the nexus of civilizatory progress, leading to the marginalization of the rural realm (Dymitrov et al., 2016). It constituted a process of de-concentration of the

[36] **Central Place Theory** – CPT is a term and geographical theory first coined and created by Walter Christaller in 1933, and later on explored further by a series of authors, among which also Lesley John King in 1984 in his book Central Place Theory. CPT explains spatial arrangements and distribution of human settlements, categorizing cities and towns on an urban hierarchy based on factors such as population size and related economic activities, services available, and interconnectedness with other cities, and/or towns (King, 1984). The theory considers three important indicators, starting with the growth and development of towns, human behavior and fundamentals of economics (Goodall, 1987). CPT is based on two main concepts: (a) threshold, which is the minimum market (income, or population) needed to ensure the selling of a particular good or service; (b) range, which is the maximum distance consumers are willing to travel to provide goods and services, so that it doesn't create extra costs, which would lead them to give up from the particular good, or service. As a result, these consumer preferences create systems of centers of various sizes, which emerge with each other, so that each center supplies particular types of goods and services, forming levels of hierarchy, depending on factors like: spacing, size, and function of settlements. Three principles apply on the arrangement of central places, and those consider: the marketing principle, the transportation principle, and the administrative principle (King, 1984). Referring to the CPT especially while arguing on the change and evolution of the urban form, was helpful, in order to identify the role of central places into shaping interconnections and interdependences with their surrounding territories, giving rise to more elaborate and complex spatial typologies, among which, those devising the urban-rural continuum in special terms as well.

[37] **Rank-Size Rule** – or Rank-Size Distribution was created by George Zipf in 1949, and it claims that "in an ordered group of cities representing a specific country, the product of the rank and size of a city is constant" (Dziewonski 1972: 73). "In the case of cities' distribution by population, when the natural logarithms of the rank and of the city size (referring to the number of people) are calculated and represented graphically, a remarkable log-linear pattern is attained, which is called the rank-size distribution. If the slope of the line is equal or close to -1 (a straight line), the relationship is known as Zipf's Law" (Planning Tank Online, 2019) https://planningtank.com.

population, which consisted on a shift from a state of higher concentration, to lower concentration (Berry, 1976), aiming to design newly de-concentrated and dispersed urban models as new forms of urbanization.

Therefore, from the Great Depression and following the end of the World War II, a second round of 'crisis-generated urban restructuring', as coined by Soja, re-shaped the city-space once again. "Backed by the powerful alliance of big government, capital, and labor, the growth of mass – production and its space-consuming assembly lines, along with the even more space-demanding rise of consumerism and mass suburbanization, led to an increasing dispersal of the once highly centralized location of factories and blue-collar workers in and around the downtown area of the central city" (Soja, 2000: 114).

The phenomenon of 'sprawling', defined as unplanned, uncoordinated and uneven growth, driven by multiple processes (Bhatta et al., 2010), is typically followed by the expansion of communities without any concern about consequences, resulting in unplanned, incremental urban growth, often regarded as unsustainable, due to an inefficient use of sources (Batty et al., 2003).

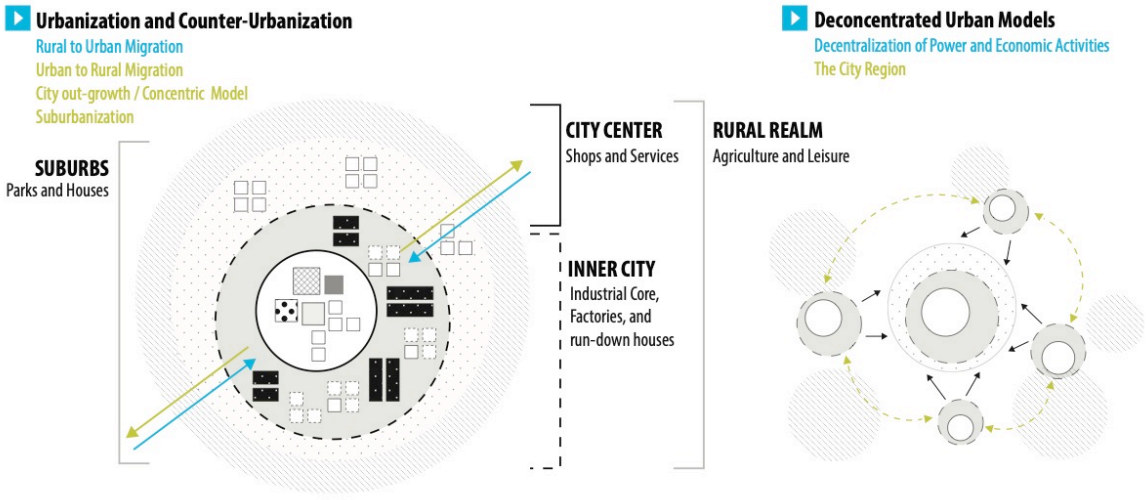


Figure 23: *The Spatial Dynamics due to Urbanization and Counter-Urbanization /* ***Source:*** *Author*

Different countries measure sprawling differently. Some of them use the average number of residential units per acre in a specific given area, while others consider decentralization, discontinuity, or even segregation of uses as measuring units. Therefore sprawling has been characterized as urban development exhibiting at least one of these features: (1) low

density, or single use development – comprising of low density residential, commercial, industrial and institutional areas, spatially separate from each other, and linked through infrastructure systems and open vast land, leading to sprawling of jobs and as a result spatial mismatch[38], land consumption, and segregation / the degree to which land uses are mixed is also used as a sprawling indicator (Bhatta et al., 2010); (2) strip development and/or strip malls – comprising of business and commercial areas, all with access on main roads, taking up big spaces, and sharing large parking areas / typically this form of big-scale commercial agglomerations, which on the past year have incorporated various entertainment activities too, competes with both, social, and small scale business and commercial activities taking place in the city center (Crawford, 2002); (3) scattered development; and (4) leapfrog development – areas of development interspersed with vacant land (Ewing, 1997, Chin, 2002).

Based on these features, several controversies follow the 'sprawling' phenomenon. Dispersion leads to higher costs in covering the needs for infrastructure and transportation systems, and it also produces an automobile-dependent culture. Land taken up from the 'sprawling' development model is mainly farmland, forests or additional wilderness areas, located the periphery of cities (Hasse and Lathrop, 2003). Therefore, 'sprawling' doesn't only convert agricultural land to urbanized land (hence opting industrial over agricultural-based economy), but it also leads to a series of environmental precedents, given the high rate of land and habitat loss, and damages regarding biodiversity and ecosystem services. In response to these consequences, a series of actions to manage and control sprawling of development through 'smart growth' policies, have been practiced worldwide, including the implementation of 'green belts' (e.g. Patrick Abercrombie's Greater London Plan in 1944) and 'urban growth boundaries'; promotion of inner-city densification and brownfield development; and encouraging transit-oriented development and cycling infrastructure.

Although 'sprawling' 'peri-urbanization' and 'suburban development' have been often used to denote similar development dynamics, often also used as synonyms, it has also

[38] **Spatial mismatch** refers to the situation where sprawling of jobs and dispersed employment opportunities, leave a group of population (generally minority and the poor) with limited commuting options to any of these job opportunities. John F.Kain has first written about this issue in his article *Housing Segregation, Negro Employment, and Metropolitan Decentralization* since 1968, although he claims he wasn't the one to coin it as 'spatial mismatch' (Kain, 2004).

been argued that 'suburban development' in particular, doesn't always constitute 'sprawling', depending on the form it takes (Ewing, 1997). For instance, although the Los Angeles Metropolitan area in the US might be considered as a "sprawling city", it is the densest major urban area in US, surpassing NY and San Francisco. On the other hand, NY, Chicago and San Francisco are surrounded by vast areas of very low density (Eldlin, 2017). Detroit as well, is characterized by sprawling and dispersed development, despite the fact that it has experienced a great loss of population. Same dynamics, sprawling despite population loss, were also experienced in a series of European cities during the 1970-1990, including Amsterdam, Brussels, Copenhagen, Hamburg and Zurich (Kenworthy and Laube, 1999).

4.2.5 The New Towns Movement and the Fringe Suburbia

The environmental consequences of the industrial revolution inspired many planning professionals and environmentalists to initiate several movements, aimed at achieving greater social and environmental justice, among which Howard's *Garden City of To-Morrow,* which was followed by the *New Towns Movement*. The 19th century sanitary conditions in cities were yet another proof, of how bad the life in urban environments was, and that immediate action was needed. During this period of time Frederick Osborn used the term 'urban disease' to indicate all these urban problems, which were all by-products of the industrial revolution (Osborn, 1942). The latter had already manifested itself through a mix of both, expansion of industrial sites near population bases and cities, to meet labor demands, and migratory flows, which brought rural populations near cities.

These dynamics on the one hand, caused population loss in rural areas, followed by rural decay, while promoting dense and polluted urban areas, and on the other, poor and dense urban conditions promoted uncontrolled outmigration, where those who could afford it moved out of the cities into the fringe suburbs, leaving centers into further deterioration (Osborn and Whittick, 1977). With all the efforts that were put in making the New Towns a reality, most of the attempts failed, due to the lack of real governmental support and action, which had to go beyond the scope of municipal powers alone. "Even those few examples of implemented new towns resulted in being only 'garden suburbs', "located on

the edge of existing cities, an antithesis of the scope of the 'Garden City' movement" (Hall and Ward, 1998: 45).

Followed by the post-World War I need for housing, and given that for various reasons suburbs had already proven to be easier to develop, than the new towns, new suburbs were prioritized over new towns for almost two decades, with approximately four million houses of high standards built over this time, even though often in the wrong places (Osborn, 1942). The 'suburb trend' gave rise to 'satellite towns'[39], which included provisions for industries and were rather extensions of existing cities, than new towns (Osborn and Whittick, 1977).

Decentralization of housing and industrial activities also took place during this period, relocating some of them out of the main cities, into the existing cities' satellite towns and garden cities. 'Planned decentralization' became eventually a turning point for the New Towns policy (Gibberd, 1980), although the emergence of the World War II, postponed it from acting immediately. Post-war rebuilding initiatives brought the decentralization ideas into action, displacing people and industries into a mixture of satellite suburbs, existing rural towns, and new towns (e.g. the County of London Plan, 1943; and the Greater London Plan of 1944) (Osborn and Whittick, 1977). Nevertheless, with the establishment of the New Towns Committee in 1945, a process of establishment, development, organization and administration of new towns began, which together with the New Towns Act of 1946 and the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947, led to the development of 28 New Towns in Britain over the following half-century (Hall and Ward, 1998*).* Similar challenges accompanied the New Towns movement in other parts of the world as well, European and non-European, from which in US, it wasn't until the 1960s that these policies took place, given that before, grants were concentrated on managing slum clearance[40], improving and increasing housing supply, road construction and comprehensive renewal projects (Osborn and Whittick, 1969).

[39] Examples of 'satellite towns' during the inter-war years: Manchester's Wythenshawe and Liverpool's Speke and Knowsley.

[40] Slum clearance, slum eviction or slum removal is the removal for rehousing, by the state, of those people who previously lived in slum areas, in order to break up continuous zones of poverty, and to prepare the area for demolition and rebuilding. This process affects low income homes, as well as illegal squatting sites (Collins Dictionary Online, 2019).

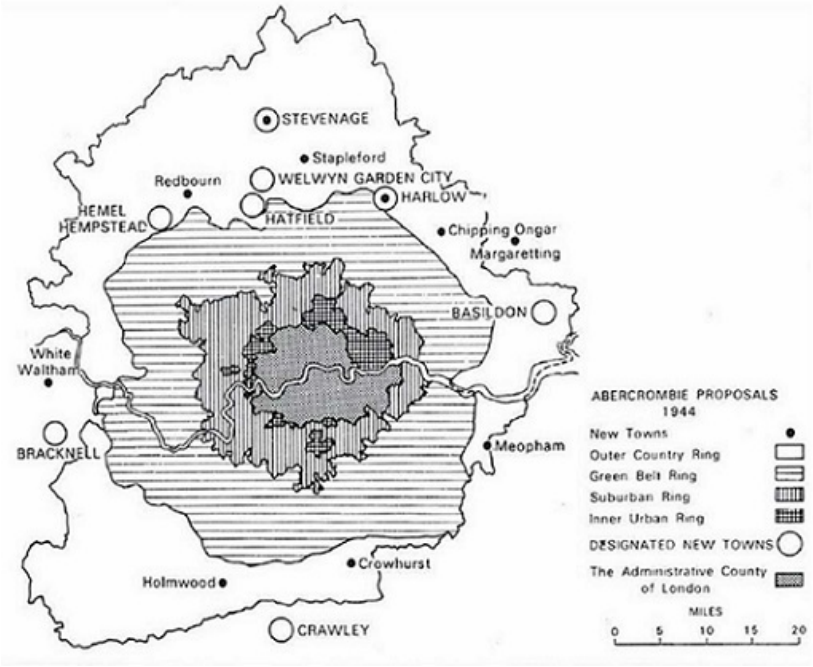


Figure 24: *Greater London Plan 1944 /* ***Source:*** *Patrick Abercrombie, "Greater London Plan", 1944*

Nevertheless, starting around this period of time as an 'Anglo-Saxon' phenomenon, and as "a practice of escaping from the crowded city centers, towards quitter peripheries, in a more affordable way than the 'new towns', 'suburbia' became a way of life, which despite being manifested in many and various contexts until present day, initially got very popular especially in US and UK" (McDonald, 2009: 30). The first suburbs date back in the 1850s in the US, and "they started as merely small towns close to, and linked by railway, to bigger cities like New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, or Cincinnati" (Teaford, 2008, p.4-5), which at a second phase grew enough to become suburbs. One of the very first suburban areas in America, which started as a housing project, developed by Llewellyn S. Haskell, had houses with ornamental shelters and entrance lodges (Vergauwen, 2013), which made the suburb look like "one large estate, akin to the English nobleman's country home, but brought within the range of the common man" (Wilson, 1979: 83). This very idyllic image, mostly rural than urban, was a product of Haskell himself, who believed that "perfection on Earth was possible through correct living, and the natural terrain, curving lanes and three-to-ten acre lots, were intended to provide a setting for such a faultless existence" (Teaford, 2008: 6). Apart from that, they emerged due to the railway development, and were designed "with special reference to the wants of citizens doing business in the city, and yet wishing accessible, retired and healthful homes in the countryside" (Teaford, 2008: 6).

Fast-forwarding to the more contemporary suburbia, they came to represent the escape from the city apartments of crowded and busy living areas, towards bigger and quitter houses, with green gardens and safer environments for families to raise their small children, while still commuting for work to the bigger and crowded city center (Huq, 2013). Finding comfort in the suburbs, while still maintaining a job in the city, was indeed what determined the second phase of suburbia, which emerged mainly due to the impact of highway construction and the boom of the automobile industry. Today suburbia is a mixed-use residential area, which is either part of the city and its adjacent periphery, or stands separately as a residential community, within a commuting distance to the city, either being part of the city's administrative border, or being separate and governed by larger administrative units. Some of the key variables which define suburbs today, include their (1) peripheral location, being located at the edge, or periphery of the urban core, although with time, further urbanization taking place, and the city growing, suburbia becomes part of the city, given that it is where the urban core expands to; (2) relationship to the urban core, due to its functional dependence, often including political and administrative dependence as well; (3) relationship to the countryside, especially when related to the idyllic values of the natural and rural settings that the vicinity with the countryside provides, and its aspirations for a country way of living (this characteristic was especially important during the 19th century, while the Romantic/Picturesque Movement was taking place); (4) density, which is relative to the urban core; (5) housing typology, which is mainly low rise single-family houses with gardens; (6) social segregation, which may be based on class, race or ethnicity; (7) transportation system for easier commuting to and from the urban core, to which it is tightly related; (8) cultural traits (McManus and Ethington, 2007: 321).

Anyhow, in different countries, suburbia has various characteristics. While in most cases it has been manifested as a quality escape from the congested urban centers, where mainly middle and upper class can afford a living, sometimes the notion of suburbs may also refer to people living in poor conditions, who are intentionally kept at the city limit, for economic, social and/or ethnic reasons. France and Sweden represent two European counties in which suburbia has room for both, the middle and upper class, and poor as well. In other countries like Brazil, suburbs are usually denser and filled with high rise and mix-used inner areas, concentrating investment and infrastructure at a better interest

compared to the rest of the municipal area. During the 1920-1930s in Rome, Italy, the suburbs were built intentionally, to keep the poor and criminals arriving from other cities, in control and reasonably remote from the city. But, with the city growing, these suburbs today have been absorbed by the city and are part of it, while new further suburbs, called 'exurbs' have been built. In Russia suburbia represents areas of high-rise residential complexes, typically two-bedroom apartments, which aren't mercenarily poor areas. The Chinese suburbia on the other hand is quite new as a phenomenon and consists of multiple rows of apartment blocks, which end abruptly into the countryside[41].

4.2.6 Introducing Interdisciplinarity: From Conurbation to Regional Scales in Planning

With modernism at the forefront the 1920's and on, mechanization of the city, functionality, order and zoning became some of the main principles guiding urban planning. Pioneered by Le Corbusier's work, the modern city was seen as a machine working accordingly to specific rules, and it represented an entity where everything was easily distinguished, including the main principles of human activities like living, working, leisure time and going around.

But following these rules in city planning, taking in consideration the real needs of citizens was totally ignored. Looking at human beings merely as simple gears, or machines, made it impossible to realize the complexity by which human beings are characterized, and the needs that they have for engaging with one another and with the surrounding environment. Therefore, environments lived by human beings, among which cities, were equaled with the same needs, which urban planning had to consider and giver answer to. This is why this period of time also symbolizes a turn in terms of reconsidering the relationship between the production of urban space and social interactions.

Patrick Geddes was one of the pioneering theorists to innovate the theory of urban planning during this time, introducing new concepts and planning tools, including

[41] Mayer, A., (2011). "(Mis)understanding China's Suburbs"
https://www.chinaurbandevelopment.com/misunderstanding-chinas-suburbs/

'conurbation', 'region' and 'regional planning', which applied methods that included studying geographical and historical features along with the cultural landscape. He had what would now be called 'a truly interdisciplinary vision', which was based on the interdependence of all branches of learning (Hewit, 2016).

This was also materialized in the *Outlook Tower*, also considered a manifesto of cultural evolution, which served as an interactive museum and sociological observatory, where people could survey altogether, their city's geography, history, and culture, in order to identify themselves as participants in its evolution. Geddes emphasized the goal for cooperative adaptation, suggesting an organic relationship between the biological environment, human, social life, and between the many regions, nations, and countries of the world (Hewit, 2016). Therefore, his planning work promoted practices, which helped communities evolve into coherent and cooperative forms, using organic or ecological thinking to connect cities with regions, and then regions with ever-larger formations until a global or cosmopolitan scale is reached (Hewit, 2016). In order to apply this scheme, Geddes suggested the "'civic survey', which was based on the motto 'diagnosis before treatment', allowing local communities, cities and regions, to acknowledge and appreciate their own interdisciplinary values first, and then embed themselves into broader spheres" (Geddes, 1947: 24).

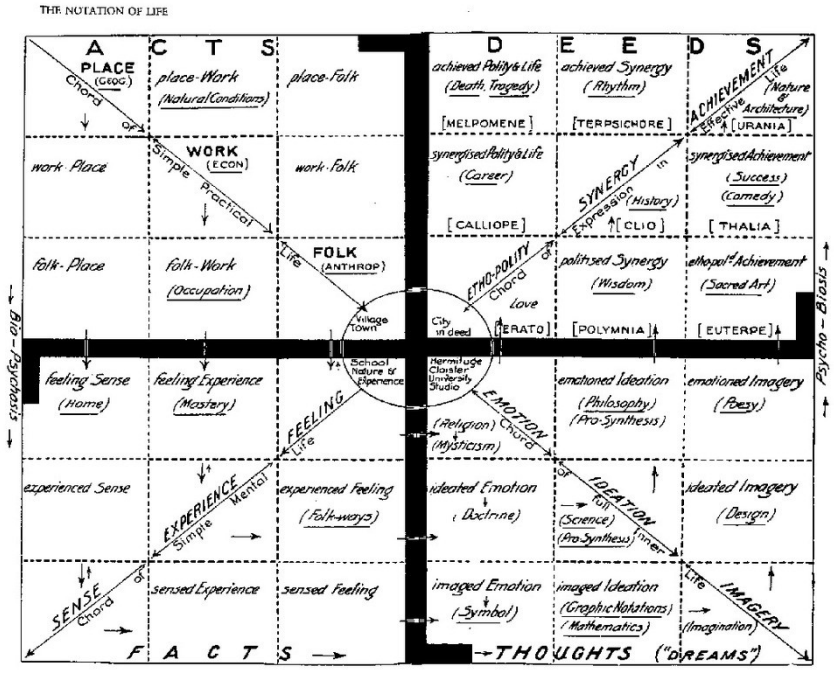


Figure 25: *One of Geddes complex maps of a participatory holistic view of life /* ***Source:*** *Patrick Geddes, "Cities in Evolution", 1915*

His also introduced a series of spatial concepts, which materialized his theoretical approaches to territorial and town planning. In 1909, while assisting on the planning of the Zoological Gardens in Edinburgh, he developed a regional planning model called 'valley section', which illustrated the complexity of the interactions between biogeography, geomorphology and human systems, demonstrating how natural occupations, like hunting, mining, or finishing were supported by physical geographies, which in return determined patterns of human settlements (Thompson, 2004). The aim of this model was to demonstrate the complex and interrelated relationships among humans and their environment, encouraging regional planning as a model and practice, which was able to respond to these conditions (Geddes, 1918).

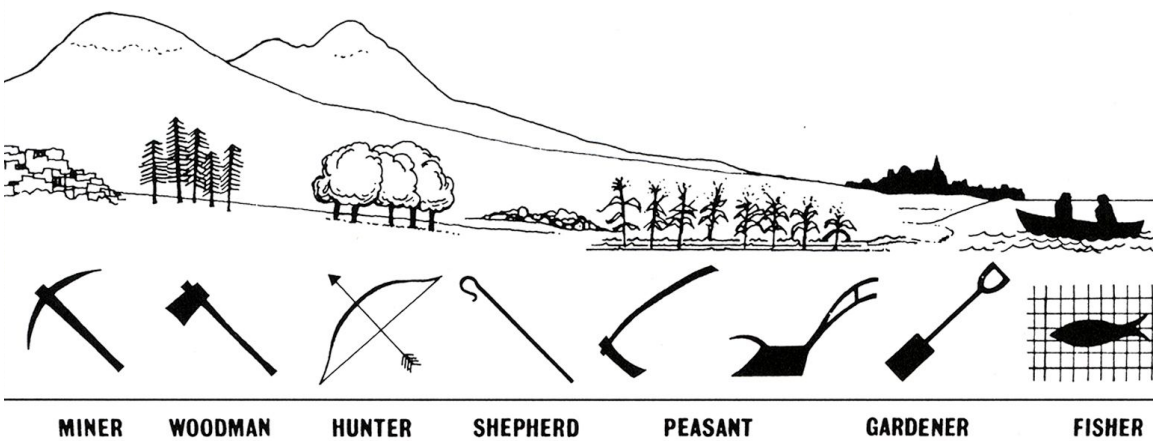


Figure 26: *Valley Section diagram /* ***Source:*** *Patrick Geddes, 1909*

In 1915 in his book *Cities in Evolution* Geddes introduced the concept of 'conurbation', which according to him was a large-scale city-region, comprising a series of cities, large towns, and other suburban and industrial areas, which on the conditions of urbanization, and new technologies of electrical power and motorized transportation system, agglomerate, spread and emerge into one larger continuous built-up environment. (Geddes, 2015). Commonly accepted, in many cases a conurbation is also a polycentric urbanized area, where the transportation system has facilitated easier and faster access, creating one single urban labor market, or travel to work area (Oxford Encyclopedia Online, 1998).

Two key factors determined the dynamics that characterized the rural-urban relation in the following years: (a) improvements in infrastructure and mobility, which facilitated migration and sprawling promoting de-concentration and the creation of 'new towns'; and (b) as a consequence of de-concentration and urbanization of rural realms, environmental awareness became an issue as well (Bowler, 1992; Harper 1991). At the end of the 20th century urbanization of society, including the diffusion of the urban economy and urban way of life, even in the most remote areas, contributed to a reduction of the traditional distinction between urban and rural populations (Pumain 2004), which is where the beginning of the blurring of the dichotomy starts. Migration to rural realms appeared as a clear expression of the profound transformations after 1970 redistribution trends, and a number of concepts emerged around the new process of de-concentration: counter-urbanization, core-periphery migration, dispersal, resurgence, population turnaround, turnaround migration, population reversal, rural renaissance, urban exodus, etc. (Solana 2008; 2012). Increased mobility patterns also contributed to the extension and expansion of cities' living spaces and areas of influence, into rural realms and closer to the metropolitan centers, through sub-urbanization and peri-urbanization (Solana, 2008, 2012).

While 'conurbation' has been majorly used in the European context mainly, 'metropolitan area' was an alternative term used later in the United States (around 1950s), indicating the same agglomerating dynamics. Examples of conurbations, or metropolitan areas include: The Greater London in England, Ruhr in Germany, Paris metropolitan area in France, New York metropolitan area etc.

On the meantime, several conurbation and metropolitan areas, which are adjacent and connected through infrastructure in larger continuous urban regions, are called 'megalopolises', a term coined by Geddes in 1915, and then later used by Oswald Spengler, Lewis Mumford and Jean Gottmann. Other alternative terms to the 'megalopolis' are 'megapolis', 'megaregion' and 'supercity'. The urbanized Northeastern seaboard from Boston to Washington D.C in the United States, also referred to as the 'Northeast megalopolis', including the metropolitan areas of both cities, was first identified by Gottmann in 1961, and then later in 1967 it was Herman Kahn who gave it a new name,

the BosWash region, or the 'supercity'. The equivalent of the Atlantic BosWash, in the Californian Coast, was the urbanized SanSan region, from San Francisco to San Diego.

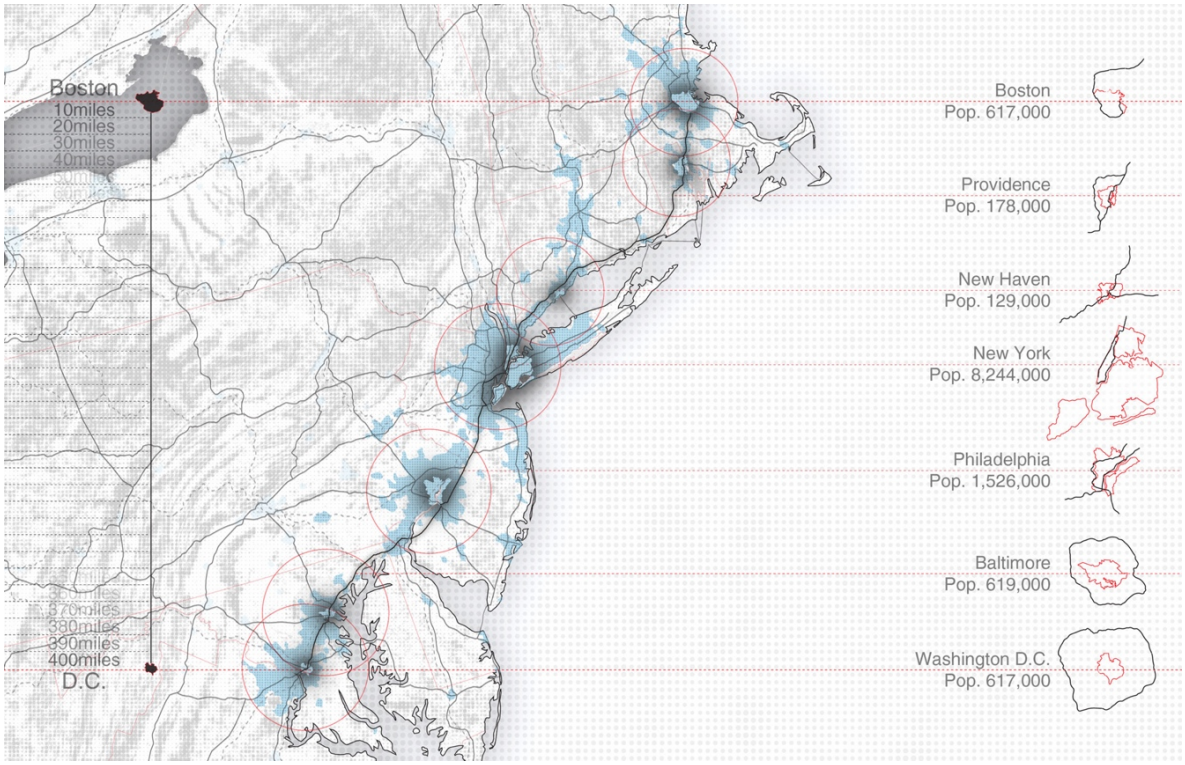


***Figure 27**: The BosWash Region / **Source:** Höweler + Yoon Architecture, "Shareway 2030", 2012*

In 1989 in Europe Roger Brunet and Jacques Chérèque came up with the 'Blue Banana', a discontinuous corridor of urbanization spreading over Western and Central Europe. After his observation of 'active' and 'passive' spaces, Brunet developed a concept of a West European 'backbone', which was a reference to an urban corridor of industry and services stretching from Liverpool to Milan (Brunet, 1989), which is still to date, one of the main and biggest European megalopolises. Following the same analogy, the 'Golden Banana', or the 'European Sunbelt' is another more contemporary Mediterranean megalopolis, which was identified and coined in 1995 by European Commission's *Europe 2000* Report. It stretches from Valencia to Genoa, and represents an agglomeration of countless new industries and urbanized regions.

Figure 28: *The Blue and Golden Bananas of Europe* / **Source:** *Author*

4.2.7 Charting Today's Planetary Territory – The Metamorphosis of the Periphery

Since the Great Depression, during the early 1970s the world economy experienced its steepest decline, which made obvious that 'business as usual' was not an effective practice anymore, especially in the conditions of severe social resistance. Squeezed profits and lower productivity, accompanied by tougher international competition, made room for trade imbalances and cuts in raw material imports, causing a general stagnation of mass consumption and welfare provision, which were indeed the very basis of Fordism and of the Second Industrial Revolution. The following technological and organizational changes produced new patterns of territorial development, restructuring the geopolitical economy of city-space and shaping the post-Fordist industrial metropolis (Soja, 2000).

Coined by Soya as the 'third crisis-generated restructuring process of capitalism', affecting all aspects of human life, in all scales, from local to global, with an echoing to this day, led to a Fourth Urban Revolution, which came as a result of the emergence of the '70s economic recession, the crisis of modernity and the growing environmentalist movement, making room for alternative modernisms and new forms of modernization, giving rise to

the ‘global post-metropolis’, as an incomplete extension and outgrowth of the Fordist regional metropolis of the Third Urban Revolution (Castells, 1960; Soja, 2000). Two processes defined the formal complexity of the post-metropolis, de-territorialization, and reterritorialization, which simultaneously converging, consisted of both, weakening of the idea of ‘place’ and ‘territorially bound societies’, giving rise to concepts like ‘borderless world’ and ‘end of geography’; and the emergence of a new spatiality, in which the ‘urban’ and ‘non-urban’ were rather seen as inseparable, with very porous, to no boundaries, and where new human geographies, to some extent different and far more complex, than those known in the past, were produced.

“While the earlier city was a discrete geographical, economic, political and social unit, easily identified in tis clear-cut separation from rural space, the contemporary metropolis has grown towards drawing that ‘elsewhere’ into its own symbolic zone. The countryside and suburbia, linked up via the telephone, the TV, the video, the computer terminal, and other branches of the mass media, are increasingly the dispersed loci of a commonly shared and shaped world. Town and cities are themselves increasingly transformed into points of intersection, stations, junctions, in an intensive metropolitan network, whose economic and cultural rhythms, together with their flexible sense of center are no longer even necessarily derived from Europe or North America” (Chambers, 1990: 53). What Chambers described was indeed a transformation, which had been taking place over time and for which a series of events had been making room for. With the Third, and especially the Fourth Industrial Revolutions taking place, globalization and information technology together have given rise to the “worlding of the city, through its emplacement in a wide global metro-network of hitherto dispersed loci, that increasingly absorbs everyone, everywhere, into commonly shared economic and cultural rhythms” (Soja, 1990: 152), which are manifested not only in the hardscape and physical materiality city-space, but also into an immaterial city-space, the cyberspace and digital communities. Hence today, the city can be everywhere and there is no longer a definable ‘outside’ to it. The sweeping urban fringe and its endless suburbs, ribbon development or underground economic areas and the patches of sprawling they drag along themselves, the overgrown city boundaries and satellite towns, have weakened earlier separations between the ‘obvious natural exterior’ and the ‘artificial urban interior’, hence ‘the urban’ and ‘the non-urban’, or ‘the city’ and ‘the countryside’, producing one single archipelago of various features.

Distinctions between the natural and the artificial, between the city and everything else outside the city, may it be the countryside, suburbia, or other, have been blurred, and this is why for Chambers, it's now impossible to map the postmodern metropolis, given that we can no longer define its extremes, its borders, confines, and/or limits (Chambers, 1990; Soja, 2000).

Operating in this archipelago of various features, the confront of both, 'industrial urbanism' and 'regional urbanism' took place, starting from the early 1980s. By this time, the concept of the region, did not only represent a unit of social life, but it became a byproduct of far more complex political economic processes, making 'regionalism' and 'regionalization' two very important buzz concepts of the 20th century. With globalization of capital and labor happening as well, the regional political economy aimed at considering both, internalist (endogenous factors at microscale) and externalist (exogeneous factors at macroscale) perspectives on local and global scales of economy, emphasizing how difficult the separation between the two had become (Storper, 1997). During the 1990s a combination of both these perspectives, coined as 'glocalization'[42], tried to explain the impact of globalization on the post-metropolis transition, emphasizing that its impact was inter-scalar, encompassing various spaces, from the very individual space, to the household, the city, to the metropolitan region, the nation-state and the planetary space of today[43].

Saskia Sassen also argued that the combination of global integration and the spatial dispersal happening in parallel, made the city take over new strategic roles in controlling various resources, while finance and specialized service industries restructured the urban social and economic order, giving rise to a new city, 'the global city' (Sassen, 1991). According to Sassen, one very important feature of the urban globalization is the

[42]**Glocalization** was first used as a concept in the late 1980s, in a publication of the Harvard Business Review, where sociologist Roland Robertson coined as such, the phenomenon of the "simultaneity co-presence of both universalizing and particularizing tendencies".

[43] "The mechanism of globalization in the postfordist economic restructuring had important echoing in the in-between spaces as well, where new geographies of power emerged between the national and the global, and the national and local scales. It is during this period of time that the rise of supra-national or supra-state regionalisms took place (e.g. formation of the EU) as emerging forms of territorial identity, political authority, and market organization above the level of the nation-state. 'Balkanization' is yet another way of describing the resurgence of subnational regionalisms in the contemporary era of globalization, although today it also represents a term which is used to refer to the political fragmentation of the postmetropolis" (Soja, 2000: 206-7).

'peripheralization' of core cities', putting attention on the role of 'informal economies' and their impact in restructuring the urban labor markets, especially on the conditions of capital mobility and mass labor migrations. Another city-concept that tried to chart these dynamics, was 'the informational city', or 'the dual city' of Castells. His analysis was based on the fact that with the transition from industrial to informational production processes, together with the rise of flexible production, and the de-institutionalization of capital-labor relationships, new spatial dynamics are produced, linked with the information-based formal and informal economies. Therefore, although both economy and society have become functionally very articulated, they still remain organizationally and socially segmented, due to a process of spatial restructuring through which distinct segments of labor are included in and excluded from the making of new history (Castells, 1989). So, all these dynamics combined have made the '70s metropolis transform, from a dominant core city surrounded by several economically and socially integrated satellite towns and villages, to an unbounded metropolis, which over time has been coined differently. "Seen either as a polycentric urban region, or a multinucleated metropolitan region, a new techno-city, or as the post-suburbia, the galactic metropolis, the postmodern urban form, or even as the city-state, this new urban form has been marked by hitherto unimagined fragmentation, by immense distances between its citizens, literal, economic, cultural, social and political, and by novel planning problems" (Bloch, 1994: 225; Soja, 2000: 231). Bloch introduced yet another name for the unbounded metropolis, coining it 'the cosmopolis', a metaphor which according to him marked both the global character of the 'unbounded metropolis', and the very local loci of 'polis', which despite the very fragmented character, sprawling and the global features, was still there.

'Megacity' was another concept, which tried to represent the new spatial form of the city, emerging due to all these dynamics, putting emphases on its increasingly discontinuous, fragmented, polycentric and kaleidoscopic socio-spatial structure. Global economy and information-based society, were seen as main drivers of this new spatial form, which characterized by increasing population and sprawling phenomena, developed in various social and geographical contexts, expanding particularly over the periphery and suburban rings. The emergence of such suburban regions (also coined as 'the outer cities') around a dominating central city, gave rise to a spatially multi-centered urban region (other ways

coined as ‘peripheral urbanization’, or the ‘metroplex’, ‘the metropolis inverted’, ‘the city turned inside-out’) for which was very difficult to define any boundaries.

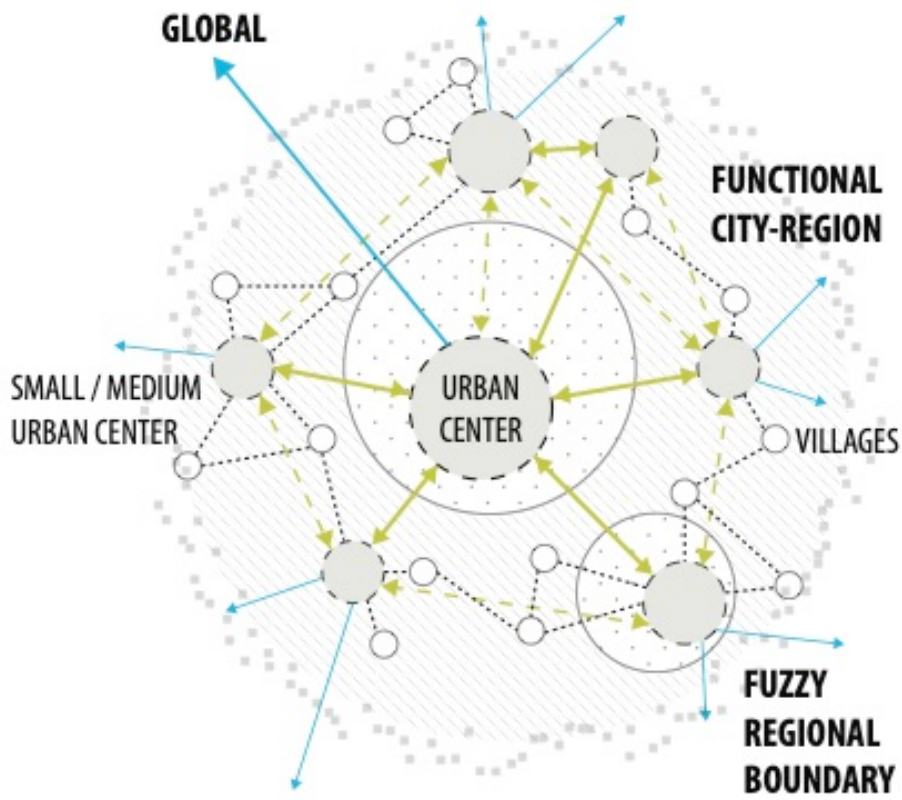


Figure 29: *Fuzzy Boundaries and The Polycentric Network Model, which incorporates both Urban and Rural Realms /* ***Source:*** *Author*

Soja introduced two more concepts, the ‘exopolis’ and the ‘fractal city’, in order to chart and describe the restructured social mosaic and the spatiality of the contemporary urban landscape or ‘post-metropolis’. ‘Exopolis’ was a direct reference to the growth of the ‘outer city’, suggesting the increasing importance of exogeneous forces into shaping city-space in the age of globalization. The term also intended to denote the duality of the current development of the urban form, urbanization of the periphery and the city turned inside out (the exo, or outer city), and the departure from any traditional concepts of the urban (the ex-city), characterized by globalization of the inner city, which brings all the world’s peripheries into the center. So, “the concept itself redefined both, the outer and the inner city simultaneously, while making the delineation of the terms and the accurate mapping of the two, difficult and uncertain” (Soja, 2000: 250). ‘Fractal city’ on the other hand aimed at denoting the polymorphous and fractured character of the urban form, and its restructured social mosaic, complex patterns and multiple axes of differential power and status, which produced and maintained socio-economic inequality, which reflected on very

fragmented spatial configurations as well. With the removal of distance, industrialization of periphery, and sprawling, the de-industrialized inner city according to Soja became unable to participate in the sudden shift to information-based and service-based industry jobs, producing disparities between the outer, and the inner city.

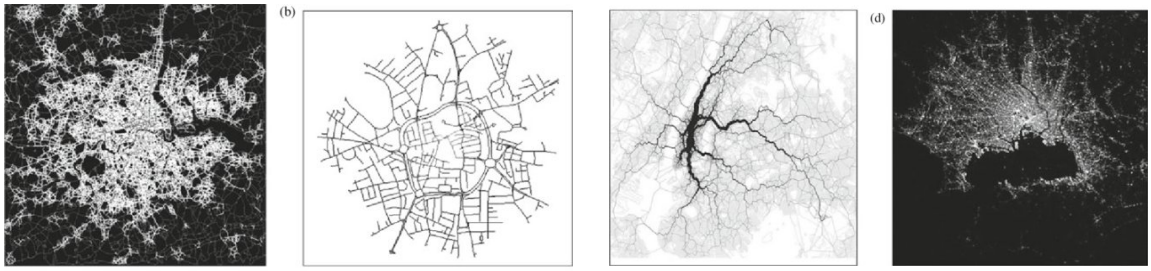


Figure 30: *Fractal city forms of various scales (a) London, (b) Wolverhampton, (c) New York, (d) Tokyo /* ***Source:*** *Michael Batty, "Cities in Disequilibrium", 2017*

So, in the overall, being aware of key liminal periods of times (of major social and economic fluctuations) provided us with an understanding on the perceptional evolution of both, 'urban space', and 'rural space'. Albeit the chapter focused more on the evolution of the urban form per se (considering that an excessive research work has been done especially regarding urban, rather than rural), it was still, politically, economically, functionally and spatially mindful for the consequences that the evolution of urban form has had on its surroundings. This made possible the translation of liminality, from a time-perspective to a spatial-perspective, followed by the production of liminal spaces (those threshold and uncertain spaces) which have led to the blurring of clear cut urban-rural boundaries, and the evolution of the conventional urban form, to a more open, complex, and dynamic organism, which has been able to expand over natural and rural realms, giving rise to a hybrid spatiality, an 'urban-rural continuum', which manifests a series of interconnections and interdependencies between the two.

Marking three main phases that define the major changes between the urban-rural relationships, from (1) two profoundly independent realms that provided excessive services for each other, to (2) a higher dependency on the urban traits, and to (3) two-sided exchanges with much more complex and dynamic and interconnections and interdependencies between urban and rural, a series of liminal periods have conditioned this evolution.

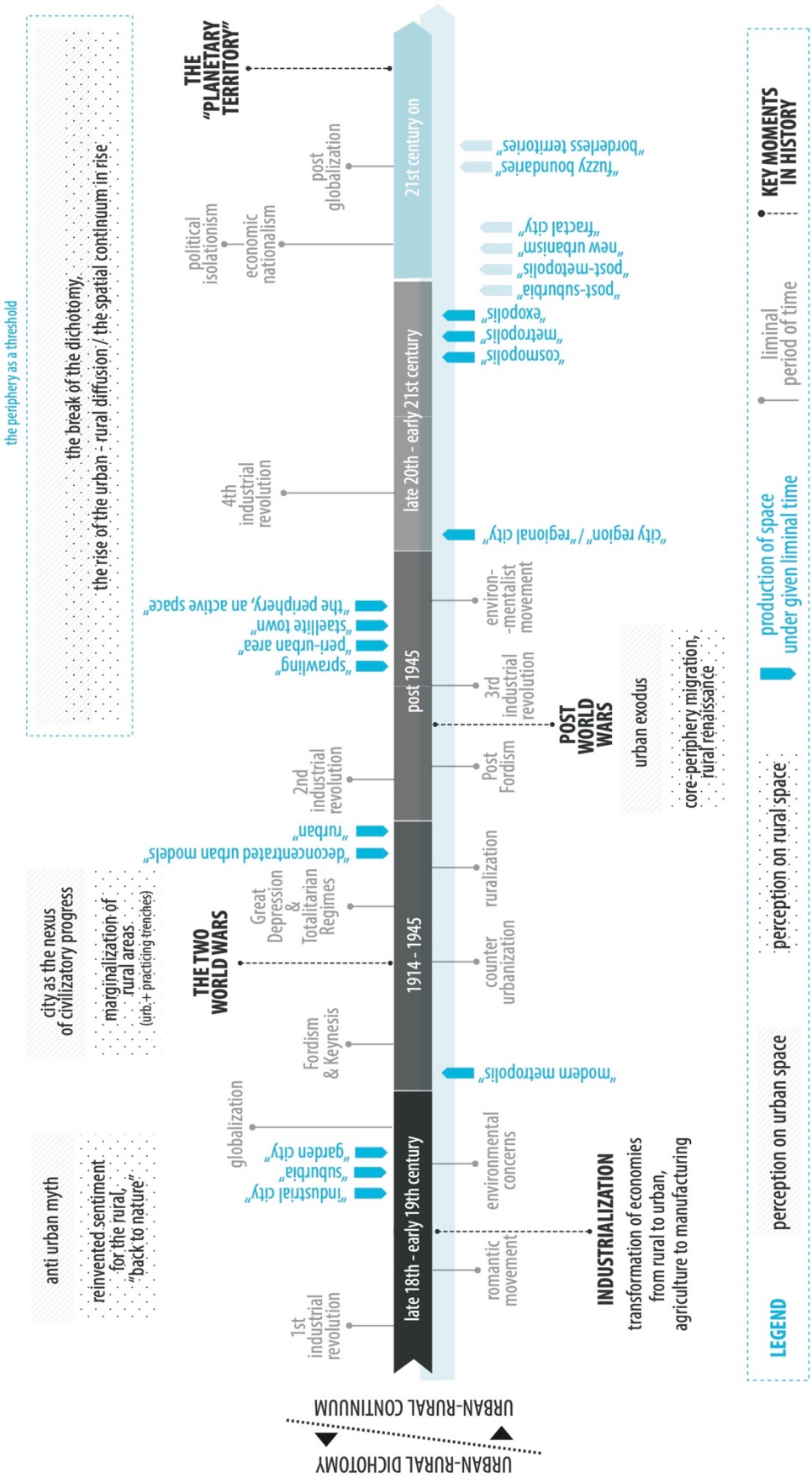


Figure 31: *The impact of liminal periods in time on the production of space and change of perception over urban and rural realms. The rise of the urban-rural continuum, as social and spatial change under the conditions of liminality. /* ***Source:*** *Author*

The period starting from the 18th century and extending to today, represents that very specific timescape, where 'flows of commodities' and 'flows of information' have had a major impact, symbolizing the most dynamic changes in the political and socio-economic geography, and as a consequence producing some of the most significantly elaborate and complex spatialities of urban life. While the 'early 18th century' marks the transition to industrialization, establishing the very first models of the compact industrial capitalist city, the 'early 19th century' marks the area when mobility and the expansion of infrastructural networks led the rise of major cities with surrounding streetcar suburbs and spawning satellite industrial centers. It is during this period of time, when the periphery began to be perceived as an active space, becoming a very important threshold, that very significant liminal space, which marked the break from the urban-rural dichotomy, establishing a series of direct and indirect interconnections and interdependences between the two realms.

So, while the perception over urban and rural was shifting from the *anti-urban myth and the reinvented sentiment for the rural (the 'back to nature movement')*, to *considering the city as the nexus of civilizatory progress, and the marginalization of rural areas*, to *the urban exodus and the core-periphery migration, and the so called 'rural renaissance'*, slowly, the break from the urban-rural dichotomy rose, during which the periphery was seen as a threshold, marking the beginning of the diffusion between urban and rural, and the rise of the urban-rural continuum, both as a process and as a spatiality.

On spatial terms, the industrial city marked the very first alteration of the conventional pre-18th century urban form, being followed by two very important processes, sub-urbanization and the garden city movement, as answers to the 'loathsome industrial city'. Later on, with the rise of the modern metropolis, deconcentrated urban models and rurbanity as a phenomenon, began a process of blurring the clear-cut urban-rural boundaries. Then, sprawling, peri-urbanization, and the rise of satellite towns and the city-region, made periphery act as a threshold, being followed by a series of spatial dynamics and typologies (among which: cosmopolis, exopolis, fractal city, fuzzy boundaries, borderless territories, etc.), which marked the urban-rural continuum as an actively changing space and a particular spatiality to be further studied and explored.

PART 2: UNHITCHING THE COMPLEXITY OF THE URBAN-RURAL CONTINUUM

(Case Studies / Practical Perspective)

5 CHAPTER 5: A Guideline to Practical Work and Field Research

5.1 Delineating Case Studies: Why Portugal and Albania?

While 'urban' and 'rural' have been extensively explored as areas of interest by both academia and practitioners, 'urban-rural relationships' have been poorly addressed, and often research and practical work has continued to see both these realms as separate, albeit the series of interconnections and interdependencies that they share among each other.

Being both, an academic and a practitioner, the topic of the urban-rural territorial dynamics and the continuum between the two, was one coming out of necessity, and also due to professional 'frustrations', when neither of the planning tools could acknowledge and make use of the potentiality of considering both urban and rural as two tightly connected realms.

Therefore, PART 1 of this research work tried to delve into theoretical grounds, exploring what has been already produced, and identifying gaps, where additional work can be contributed in order to enhance the methods of approaching urban-rural territorial dynamics in a more integrated and comprehensive way, acknowledging their spatial aspects in particular as well. In order to do so, 'liminality' and 'continuum' were considered as two main conceptual tools for unhitching the complexity of urban-rural relationships (more on the use of these conceptual tools on the following sub-chapter).

PART 2 is dedicated to practical work and field research, which stretches back up to 7 years, starting with, and developing on *Albania 2030 Manifesto*[44] (Janku, 2014) which introduced for the very first time a methodology for national spatial planning, tailored for the context

[44] https://issuu.com/eranda_janku/docs/albania_2030_nsdv

and challenges of the Albanian territory. The work on this second part also builds and delves further onto a series of research topics developed within POLIS University and Co-Plan, with the aim to identify and expand discussions further, occasionally intentionally speculating in order to provoke new lines of thoughts, and create opportunity for contributing to improvement of both, legislation and practical work on the field of spatial and territorial planning in Albania, with special focus on urban-rural relationships.

Considering also the magnitude of political, social, economic and territorial changes, which Albania has been experiencing on a relatively short period of time, and part of which are still very active (changes which I have been able to witness and experience, and changes which many European countries have long ago solved), I consider **Albania** being a 'live laboratory' of constant research work, therefore, it represents one of the main case studies of my dissertation.

A main concern is also the contradiction between the shift that the 2015 Territorial Reform imposes (the change from 371 LGU of either urban or rural character, towards 61 bigger LGU with mixed urban- rural features; supposedly implying a more integrated approach on urban-rural relationships, nurturing development between the two), and the changes made on the DCM No.686, date 22.11.2017 "On the Approval of the National Planning Regulation" (in Albanian, VKM Nr. 686, datë 22.11.2017 "Për Miratimin e Rregullores së Planifikimit të Territorit"), which no longer allow territorial structural units to have different categories of land uses. This practice makes territorial development extremely rigid, imposing transformations to one dimension only (for instance, either only urban, or only agricultural), prohibiting the coexistence of both within one single structural unit. This became a major issue especially while working for the development of the General Local Plan of the Municipality of Dropull, an area which is profoundly characterized by the co-existence of the agglomerations of rural settlements (which fall under 'urban' as a main land use category, and its specific sub-categories), dispersed in natural and agricultural areas (which fall under 'natural, or 'agricultural' land use categories, and their sub-categories). Applying the new directives, territorial development in Dropull was constrained to no longer allow for this co-existence, but push areas to either being of profoundly urban character, or only natural, or agricultural.

However, over the past year, defining urban and rural, and in particular urban-rural relationships, have been of special interest for planning authorities, therefore this research work can be a good reflecting material, as well as a good starting point for delving further into the topic, a debate and work already initiated by POLIS University, Co-Plan, and the National Territorial Planning Agency[45].

In order to contextualize different stages of the urban-rural continuum, from the series of spatial analysis at national scale, a delineation process resulted in 3 main representative samples at regional/ cross-municipal scale: Durana, Riviera and Dropull (further explanations on the delineation process and outcomes, to follow up on chapters 7 and 8).

The work on all the three samples follows and develops on previous research and practical work done together with POLIS University and Co-Plan:

(1) The case of Durana

- Durana was first explored during 2013-2014, on a series of 4 workshops held between MSc and the 30th cycle doctoral students, on the framework of the IDAUP program between POLIS and Ferrara. The research aimed at exploring opportunities for planning the sustainable development of the corridor between Tirana and Durrës, transforming it in the new symbol of Albania of the 21st century. Therefore, the work consisted on producing spatial planning scenarios to boost (a) economic development, including image branding, marketing, tourism and promotion of services along this corridor; (b) sustainable development, including landscape planning, and promotion of green and smart development at both, territorial and architectural scale; (c) and also addressing strategic architectural and urban design issues along the corridor.
- During 2019-2020 the studio of Spatial and Regional Planning (which I co-lead with Artan Kacani, a PhD colleague at POLIS University (working together with 5th year Urban Planning and Management students, and 1st year Environmental

[45] On December 18th 2019, myself, POLIS University, Co-Plan and the NTPA were part of a first meeting to share common interests on the research topic (urban/rural classifications and urban-rural relationships), identify possible methodologies of approaching it, and create opportunities for future collaborations.

Management Master students) was also focused on the case of Durana, exploring the metabolism and structure of the regional anatomy of Durana, including the flows of people (employment and mobility), capital investment (economic profile, number of companies operating in the area and their impact), territorial resources (tackling especially the overexploitation of irreplaceable natural resources, and waste management).

(2) The case of Riviera

- Riviera was object of research during the 2014-2015 workshop between MSc and the 29th cycle doctoral students, on the framework of the IDAUP program between POLIS and Ferrara., organized by the OMB Observatory of the Mediterranean Basin[46]. In tandem with the workshop, both Sealine[47] and MetroPOLIS[48] took part in an international design competition[49] organized by the Albanian government, located on the same area. Combining the objectives of both events being held, 'Reactive Riviera'[50] was the common output of the collaboration and the proposal submitted for the competition. The project proposal emphasized that the role of planning is not only on guiding and controlling development, but also on mitigating the negative impact inherited over the years. Therefore, the project did not only introduce a series of design proposals for the public spaces along the Riviera, but it also introduced a process-based proposal, which incorporated all actors and resources in the area, in order to unlock various development potentials throughout Riviera and the series of villages along the southern coast.
- Building on this work, later on in September 2016 on the framework of TAW Tirana Architecture Weeks[51], myself and Enciro Porfido, a PhD colleague at POLIS

[46] Research Unit under the Department of Applied Research at POLIS University.

[47] **Sealine** was founded in 2009 thanks to an agreement with the Municipality of Riccione in Italy, one of the Italian iconic touristic destinations. The agreement was later extended to 13 more municipalities, part of which along the coastline, and some others inland, around the Conca river valley. The work of Sealine focuses on coastal systems and the sustainable development of tourism, and its work experience has broadened on a series of Regions in Italy, as well as in other countries of the Adriatic-Ionian basin.

[48] **MetroPOLIS** is an Urban Planning and Architectures studio operating within POLIS University. http://metropolis.al

[49] The international design competition was launched by Atelier Albania, mandated by the Ministry of Urban Development and Tourism and the Office of Prime Minister in 2014.

[50] https://issuu.com/polisuniversity/docs/omb2_albanian_riviera

[51] https://www.tiranaarchitectureweek.com

University, organized “Riviera Lab[52]”, a summer studio held in Qeparo with the common participation of students and staff from both, POLIS University and nITroSaggio[53]. Developing on the outcomes of the previous project (Albanian Riviera/ Reactive Riviera), the scope of “Riviera Lab” was to generate alternative scenarios on the enhancement of Riviera though art, architecture and landscape.

- On the same year Riviera was also subject of research on the Urban Planning and Design studio, which I assist (held with 3rd year Urban Planning and Management, and Architecture students), and the aim was to develop various spatial planning scenarios at regional scale, addressing the touristic potentials of Riviera.

(3) The case of Dropull

- Over the course of almost three years, from the beginning of 2017, towards the end of 2019, I have been doing research and practical work over the area of Dropull, on the framework of the development of the General Local Plan, a process, managed by myself on behalf of POLIS University, together with the local and cross-border authorities, community, and businesses operating in the area. A questionnaire, and a dedicated Census of Population and Housing was conducted on the territory of the Municipality of Dropull for the purpose of collecting data, and a series of meetings with all local stakeholders and cross-border Greek municipalities, including authorities of the Region of Ioannina, were organized as well. *(Questionnaire sample on Appendix 4)*
- The 2019 workshop for the 34th cycle of the PhD students of the IDAUP program between POLIS and Ferrara, was also held in Dropull, and was co-organized by myself, Loris Rossi and Laura Pedata, both PhD colleagues from POLIS University, on behalf of the OMB Observatory of the Mediterranean Basin. The research topic on the framework of this workshop delved into Dropull’s ‘rurban sequences’, and its states of liminality, addressing especially the development over the 5 new centralities of the municipality.

[52] **Riviera Lab** is the result of 5 years of experience and collaboration between POLIS University and nITroSaggio group, following the model and methodology of SicilyLab, a summer studio organized by Antonino Saggio (La Sapienza, Rome) every September in Gioiosa Marea, Sicily.

[53] http://nitrosaggio.altervista.org

- During 2019-2020 the southern region of Albania, which includes the Municipality of Dropull, was subject of research on the Urban Planning and Design studio, which I assist (held with 3rd year Urban Planning and Management, Architecture and Environmental Management students), and the aim was to develop various spatial planning scenarios at regional scale, tackling the topic of 'regional disparities' and addressing the development and integration of peripheral regions and abandoned areas.

This complete set of research projects and practical work in all these areas, throughout the years, served as a perfect starting point for pushing this research work further, tackling urban-rural territorial dynamics, by considering an 'urban-rural continuum'. As Chapters 7 and 8 will develop further, the three samples are characterized by liminal features (which are consequences of liminal conditions and periods of time on which these areas are, or have been through), and represent different stages of the continuum (considering it as both, a process and a spatial typology), from the most (Durana), to the least (Dropull) developed.

Portugal represents the second case study of this research work. Albeit, not the main focus, Portugal served as a good exercise to delve into a different, European context, where urban-rural territorial dynamics had quite distinct spatial features, which in some regard were quite similar to those in Albania (especially on the sample of Durana), even though for totally different reasons (in Albania mainly due to the lack of planning policies and control over territorial development, and in Portugal due to cultural factors (mainly related to the importance and impact of 'pluriactivity') and the planning legislation (which from municipal level visioning, to small scale implementation leaves lots of space for interpretations, hence giving people freedom of action – which sends us back to the impact of cultural factors).

From January to July 2018 I visited MINHO University, in Guimarães, Portugal, where I had the opportunity to do research work on my topic of interest. Working closely with Marta Labastida Juan, António Cesário Conceição Moreira and Cidália Ferreira Silva, I was introduced to the so called 'territorial diffusion' of the Northern Portugal. Throughout my 6 months of research work I followed three studios, *Projeto de Investigação, Instrumentos*

de Ordenamento do Território, and *Da Cidade ao Difuso* (in English: *Research Project, Spatial Planning Instruments and From City to Diffused*), which were led by Marta, António and Cidália, collecting data and producing a series of analysis, which were then focused and materialized on the segment of territory following the national road N206, from Guimarães to Vila Nova de Famalicão, located in the Comunidade Intermunicipal do Ave (in English: the Intermunicipal Community of Ave – also refered to as Médio Ave), which takes the name from Ave River and is an administrative division in Portugal, created in 2009.

Given the amount of time spent in Portugal, and the amount and depth of work done while being there, the case of Portugal is considered to be 'a research exercise' and 'a satellite case study', to the case of Albania, which is the main focus of this dissertation (partly because of the amount of time and work I've dedicated to it, but also due to the urgent need for alternative approaches and planning tools, which I, as a planning professional need, to operate in the Albanian context). Nevertheless, from the comparison of the two case studies, few preliminary remarks follow as below:

- There are similarities between Albania and Portugal in terms of land fragmentation (especially of agricultural land, mainly inherited from the period of centralized governments in the form of dictatorships), which have conditioned the way both countries have addressed territorial development;
- Both Albania and Portugal have experienced sprawling as a phenomenon, although in the case of Albania in the form of 'scattered informal development' on the western plain, in the vicinity of the metropolitan area, and in Portugal as 'territorial diffusion' among the main urban centers and their rural surroundings in the Center and North Regions;
- As a consequence of the first two arguments, both urban and rural realms have been spatially extending towards each other, producing liminal spaces and hybrid spatialities, which manifest characteristics of both;
- The 'territorial diffusion' of Medio Ave is in particular of interest in comparison with the sample of 'Durrana' within the case of Albania, due to the similarities the two areas share in terms of territorial dynamics, and the continuity and repetition of the mix between agglomerations of settlements – agricultural based activities –and industrial areas, which represents a distinct feature of the spatiality of the 'urban-rural continuum' on the two cases.

The following Chapters from 6 to 8 explore in depth the two case studies and samples delineated within each of them.

5.2 Transforming Conceptual Tools into 'Practical Tools'

Following Chapter 3, 'liminality' and 'continuum' are the two main conceptual tools used to explore on the urban-rural relationships and territorial dynamics.

Through the use of 'liminality' we can identify liminal periods of time, which condition specific liminal situations, that result in producing liminal spaces, typically thresholds and transitory spaces, which are characterized by uncertainty, a mix of various features and that experience constant changes.

Adding the second conceptual tool, the 'continuum', looking it as both 'a process' and 'a spatial typology', we can identify and place along a spatial continuity, sequences of fixed constants and distinct spaces (what we commonly accept as profoundly urban and/or profoundly rural), and the series of liminal spaces (thresholds and transitory spaces), which are produced by the clash and/or overlay of those fixed constants.

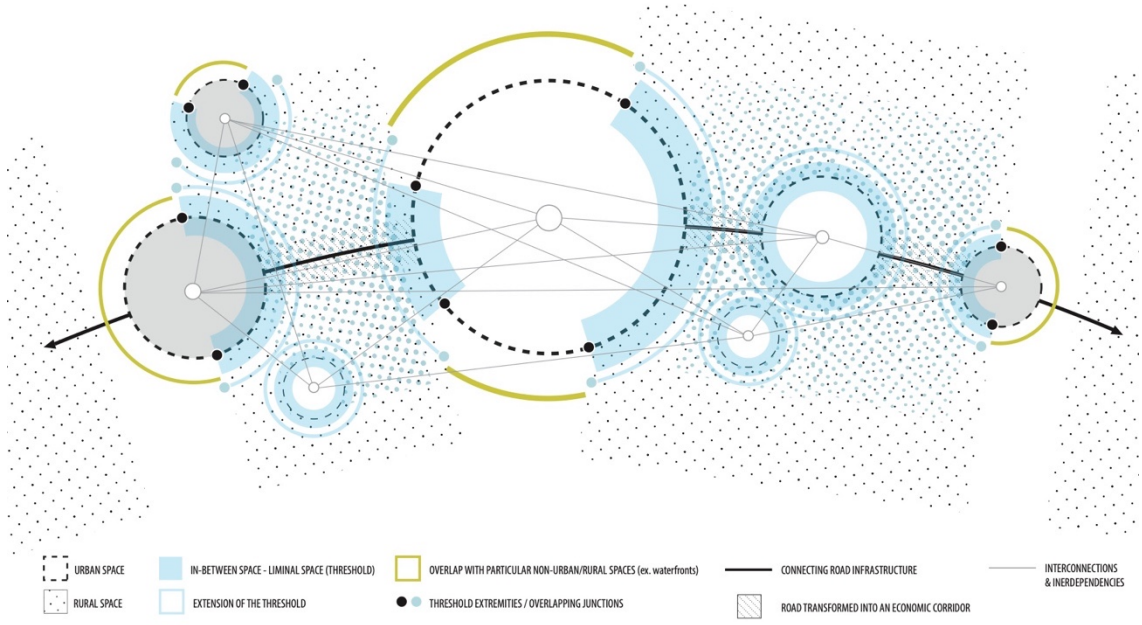


Figure 32: *Diagram of the Spatiality of the Urban-Rural Continuum, the 'Urban', the 'Rural' and the thresholds in between /* ***Source:*** *Author*

In order to make this task operational, albeit the very different methodologies applied for categorizing 'urban' and 'rural' areas throughout different countries (as introduced on Chapter 2), and admitting that due to time and place specificities it is almost impossible to agree upon one single universal method of categorization, for the purpose of this research work, 'urban' and 'rural' areas have been differentiated as below:

- **'Urban'**: A densely built environment, where population, services and infrastructure agglomerate. An area where land uses are dominated by residential, industry, services, and commercial uses; where the development of economy is based on services and industry; and an area, which is capable of servicing a wide regional territory.
- **'Rural'**: An area dominated by natural and agricultural potentials, which represent the main land uses also. A territory sparsely populated, where the development of economy is based on agriculture, farming and forestry.

Therefore, while considering the 'urban-rural continuum' as a spatial construct of a series of urban, rural and in-between areas, 'urban' and 'rural' represent those sequences of fixed constants and distinct spaces, meanwhile 'the in-between areas' are those liminal spaces (thresholds and transitory spaces) produced by the clash and/or overlay of urban and rural, which manifest features of both, and are constantly changing and evolving.

6 CHAPTER 6: Portugal, 'Territorial Diffusion' as a Spatial Expression of the Urban-Rural Continuum

6.1 Territorial Development in Portugal

6.1.1 Urbanization and Sprawling Dynamics

Portugal has a total of 10,292,807[54] inhabitants, among which 67%[54] living in urban areas. A total of 40% of this population is concentrated in 2 metropolitan areas, nearly 2.8 million

[54] As of June 2018; Source: www.worldometers.info (Worldometers shows estimated current numbers based on statistics and projections from the most reputable official organizations. Their sources include the United Nations Population

inhabitants in Lisbon and another 1.7 million in Porto (URBACT, 2018). A series of medium sized cities like Braga, Guimarães, Aveiro, Viseu, Coimbra and Leiria, of about 50,000 inhabitants each, constitute a stripe of almost 400 km long along the west coast's mainland, populating the area between the two metropolitan areas of Lisbon and Porto.

Over the past years Portugal has experienced fast growth of developed land, which referring to OECD data, has been at an annual rate of more than 0.9%, listing Portugal fourth within the OECD. Although at European level Portugal has a relatively low urbanization rate (of nearly 55%), an average density of 111 people per km^2, and low rate of natural population growth, migration and the dynamics of population distribution throughout the country, have been rather active.

This also explains the rate of fast growth of developed land. The concentration of urbanization rate has been majorly higher along and near the coast, especially around the metropolitan areas of Lisbon and Porto, and Algarve in south, compared to the other inland parts of the country. And while experiencing this growth and the pressure that comes with it, these areas have been long facing several natural and anthropogenic challenges, including lack of effective planning and management, pollution, and coastal erosion (Silva et al., 2007).

Until the middle of the 20^{th} century Portugal was a country of mainly rural features, but soon population trends in re-allocating, promoted throughout the country changes in land use, leading to urbanization and sprawling (Rodriguez, 2009). The process of urbanization started during the 1950's and was particularly intense during the 1960's when the rural exodus began, and during the 1970's as well (Litwinska, 2011). From 1950-1970 many municipalities experienced shrinkage, losing more than 50% of their population, while urban concentration and sprawling around two metropolitan areas of Lisbon and Porto was happening (Gaspar, 2009). Especially during the 1980's and 1990's this sprawling was mainly concentrated along the main roads, contributing to fragmentation of developed land, discontinued urban fabrics, and the creation of a network of small and medium-sized dispersed towns (PNPOT, 2007).

Division, World Health Organization (WHO), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Monetary Fund (IMF), and World Bank).

Influenced by a series of factors related to economic development, transportation, the settlement system and population trends, sprawling patterns in particular had a great impact in many parts of the inland, from which mostly in North and Central regions. Multiple dynamics like urban growth in disproportion with population growth, decrease in housing densities, dispersion of development, fragmentation of urban growth, oversizing of urban fringe, land structure, and commuting patterns, over the years have contributed to what in Portugal is commonly known as the 'territorial diffusion'.

Given that over time, the role of agriculture and the manufacturing industry has been diminishing, and the significance of the tertiary sector based on services and information-based economy has been growing, a new locational pattern forces activity to seek sites in the fringe of suburban areas, where the land price is usually lower (Litwinska, 2011). One would normally argue that higher transportation costs would balance the profit from a relatively cheaper land price, but a combination of rising car ownership and highway building has caused the reduction of transportation costs, and has boosted sprawling at greater distances.

6.1.2 Territorial Governance and Planning Legislation

- **Territorial Governance and Responsibilities**

At national level authorities have four main responsibilities related to land-use policies: (1) they provide the legal framework, which regulates planning at national, regional and local levels; (2) they define national and sectoral strategic policies aimed at integrated, cohesive and sustainable territorial development of the country; (3) they allocate national and EU funds to specific territories and projects; and (4) they provide technical assistance for regional and municipal planning. They also develop the National Program of Spatial Planning (PNPOT), which is the most important document at national scale, and also Special Sectoral Programs (PE), which usually deal with the protection and enhancement of archeological parks and natural assets and resources of national importance (OECD, 2017).

At regional level authorities are responsible for the Regional Program for Spatial Planning (PROT), which is the most important document providing regional strategies for economic, social and territorial development. It integrates the national policies and establishes guidelines for plans at municipal level (OECD, 2017).

Finally, at municipal level authorities exercise their responsibility for land-use planning primarily through the preparation of the so called PDM (Municipal Director Plan), which is the main instrument for guiding development at this level. Local authorities are encouraged by law to form inter-municipal associations to plan jointly, but this rarely happens. Urban Development Plans, which provide comprehensive zoning regulations mainly for strategic urban areas with development potential, and Local Detailed Plans, which define the layout and urban design of small parts of the city, are both two detailed documents that derive from the PDM (OECD, 2017). Nevertheless, often these lower level plans are non-existent, which makes the PDM to be the only document to guide territorial development at municipal level.

- **Planning Legislation and Instruments**

Until the '70's planning in Portugal was mainly focused on economic development at national level and occasionally on urban planning at a more local level. It's after 1974 that the planning legislation began to extend its reach beyond urban areas, in order to include the entire territory, and to address regional and local planning levels (Botequilha-Leitão, A., 2009). The first regional plans (PROT) started being developed at the end of the '80's, while local land use plans, also known as 'municipal director plans' (PDM) and strategic sectoral plans, namely 'special sectoral programmes' (PE) only on 1990 and 1994.

The period between 1950 and 1973 was considered to be the golden time for economic growth in Portugal, and during this period four 5-years national plans (Planos de Fomento) were implemented. The plans were considered to have a profound socio-economic character, rather than being physical and territorially bounded (Mateus, 1998). On the first plan, there were some first attempts to shift the planning focus from only cities to the entire surrounding landscape, but that wouldn't come to realization only later on. The second plan aimed mainly economic growth and focused on the role that industries could

play. On the third plan the need for a general scheme for land use planning was mentioned, which was followed by the proposal of a national strategy for land use planning in Portugal (Amaro Alves, 1999). Nevertheless, the proposal was resumed only during the fourth plan, but still interrupted due to the Camation Revolution in 1974, which implemented a democratic regime after almost 40 years of dictatorship in Portugal (Botequilha-Leitão, A., 2009).

Only after the revolution and the creation of the first State Secretary for the Environment (SEA), the planning legislation began to extend its reach beyond just urban areas, to the entire territory. Soil of high agricultural production was put to protection and in 1982 it was translated into the National Agricultural Reserve (RAN). Further on, the first set of rules establishing the National Ecological Reserve were introduced in 1980, being followed by the creation of the General Law for the Environment in 1987. This law was particularly important because it introduced for the first time in the planning legislation important concepts such as 'land use planning' as an integrated planning process, covering both urban and non-urban areas, considering the natural capacity of the landscape as the basis for the spatial organization of human uses and activities (Botequilha-Leitão, A., 2009). The concept of the 'natural continuum' was also introduced during this period.

The present *Portuguese Land Use Planning System* (LUPS) was first established in 1998, with the Parliament's approval of the Law 48/98 and D.R.380/99. Although many territorial dynamics were already established and had taken place before this law was approved, it still held fundamental importance because it defined for the very first time the spatial and urban planning policy framework for Portugal, as due to the European requirements as well. It also introduced 3 main planning levels (national, regional and local), and a series of regulations for the accordance between different levels.

In 2014/15, a major reform of the spatial planning system, with fundamental impact on territorial development, took place in Portugal. The reform aimed at strengthening the strategic dimension of the planning process, and creating a clearer division between programs on the national and regional levels that had primarily a strategic component, and plans at local level that served primarily for regulating specific land uses (OECD, 2017). Municipalities also got the possibility to form inter-municipal entities for joint planning and

for changing land-use categories in an attempt to contain urbanization and urban expansion.

Therefore, in terms of planning instruments, at local municipal level the only instruments that the authorities had practiced until 1982, were the Urbanization Plans, which were mainly limited to potential urban areas, not being able to manage the territorial space outside the urban. But from 1982 the PDM was introduced, and although it had a very strong socio-economic character, it was still able to integrate urban and non-urban territories. Nevertheless, slowly the changes made later in the legal framework reduced the dominance of the socio-economic character of the PDM, enhancing mainly and only its territorial and physical planning components.

At regional level, it wasn't until 1988 that the first attempts to develop regional plans (PROT) took place. Nevertheless, only few PROTs were developed until 1991, so most of the PDMs of the time did not have any regional reference.

In 1994 Strategic Plans (SP) were introduced, which were targeted for the medium-sized towns, and were basically designed to support the application of the municipalities to the EU structural funds. They were aimed at a profound socio-economic character and were seen as instruments to help municipalities frame and manage their investment decisions, which today balances the limited socio-economic character of the municipal PDMs.

6.2 The 'Urban-Rural Continuum' expressed as 'Territorial Diffusion'

6.2.1 The Mechanism Behind the Diffusion – the case of Medio Ave (regional level)

Located in the Northern Region of Portugal, Medio Ave encompasses the area along the River Ave and constitutes of the municipalities of Guimarães, Famalicão, Santo Tirso, Trofa and Vizela. With a population of nearly 113,960 inhabitants living in these cities, and almost 234,198 inhabitants living in 'between these cities', the sub – region is characterized by a diffused territorial model, which incorporates both the urban and rural realms into a very

particular spatial model. The mechanism behind this model is based primarily and exclusively on: (i) the role of the household unit, which in Portugal is expressed as 'pluriactivity', and the employment patterns; (ii) land fragmentation and ownership system; (iii) the impact of road infrastructure in clustering development alongside; and (iv) geographical and natural components, which have driven and promoted dispersion in terms of territorial development as well.

- **The Role of the Household Unit and Employment Patterns**

Pluriactivity as a phenomenon is one of the main drives of the mechanism behind the territorial diffusion in Portugal. It represents a particular way of life with historical and cultural roots, reflecting on household economies, which manifest a simultaneous presence and co-existence between three different types of economies: industry and services, agriculture and forestry, and other additional deriving activities (usually developed within the household unit). It is marked by a profound connection to land, and can be observed in the behavior of factory workers, as well as migrants' longing for their rural homeland. Agriculture – centered pluriactivity carries an enormous cultural weight, in the sense that it extends and allows for the extension of models and attitudes that are usually associated with traditional rurality, namely the central role of the family home as a source of reference models and behavioral patterns (Ferreira, 1986). The extended family survives, both culturally and financially, within an area comprised of the family home, its extensions and the farmland.

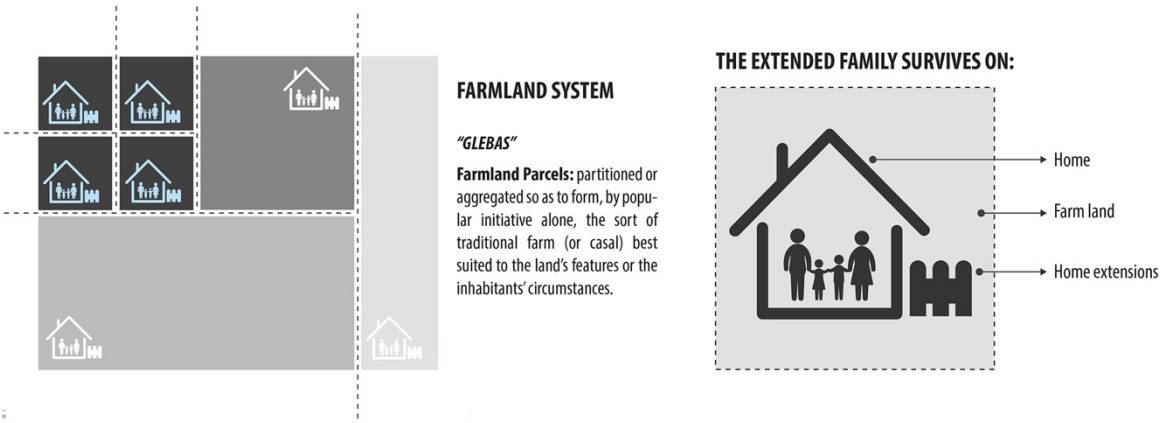


*Figure 33: The farmland system in Portugal and the Household Unit / **Source:** Author*

As a consequence of this culture, employment patterns also constitute a major part of the mechanism behind the territorial diffusion. Similar to trends during the first part of the industrialization, where industries would incorporate part of the production work at the household unit, in the area of the Medio Ave as well, the population is employed in 2-3 sectors in the same time. These employment patterns not only provide enough income for each household, but also explain the mixed uses on a territorial level, and the diffusion of the 'urban' and 'rural'.

With agriculture being the main feature of the area, each household carries out farming activities on their properties, producing food for their own, as well as some surplus for sale. This part-time, albeit labor-intensive, farming system is based on overlapping crops, which succeed one another throughout the year, and combine in order to maximize resources. For instance, cows not only produce milk, but they also influence the increase in the yield of crops such as corn and hay, which in return provide their food. This is a wide-spread practice throughout the territory of Medio Ave. The income coming from this sector of employment generally go for building or remodeling the farmhouse, where typically a small shop, warehouse, or workshop is located on the ground floor, or in an annex, and which is used by the household members to generate additional revenues (Ferreira, 1986).

Along their agricultural activity, family members also maintain jobs working on other sectors, usually in industry and in factories, where in addition to their wages, they benefit from social security, access to medicines and medical care, social aid and retirement pensions, providing some stability for the household. The family residence (the previously mentioned household unit) is often the place, where piece-work, mainly manufacturing specific product parts, finishing pieces etc., for the textiles and clothing industries, is carried out by family members and neighbors. Within this process the commissioning company provides the raw material, assembles, and markets the final product. The way this system works improves competition and allows for greater flexibility, since market downturns do not have a direct impact on the hiring company's financial stability. Competition also is further enhanced by both, the informal nature of the work relationships, and irregular set up of these companies, which allows for evasion of taxes and social charges (Fernandes de Sa, 2017).

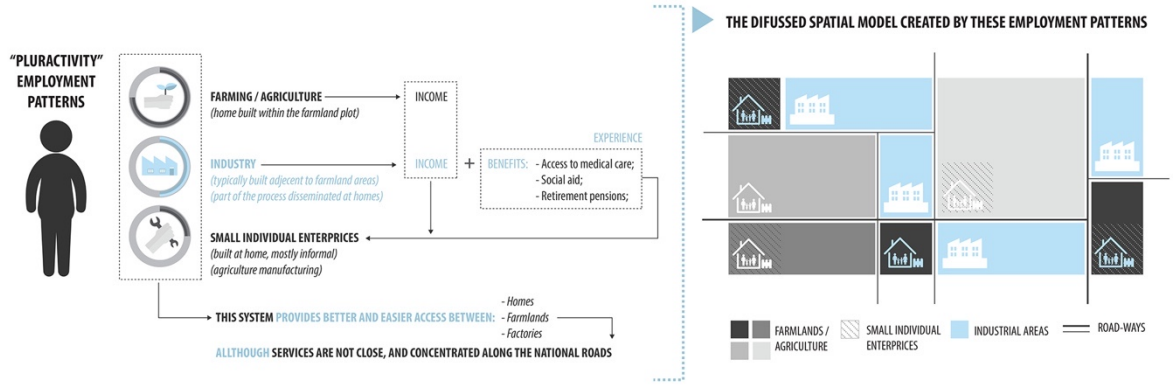


Figure 34: *Employment Patterns and the Spatial Model created by them /* ***Source:*** *Author*

The third kind of employment, which generally completes the cycle is based on the creation of small autonomous industrial units, which are sustained through the household savings, combined with experience gained from working in industry and in factories. The major part of these home-based enterprises is informal and quite vulnerable to changes in the economic climate, which gives rise to a certain level of insecurity. Further on, although the absence of legally binding labor relationships helps in keeping these small companies economically viable, it is detrimental to their employees' income stability (Fernandes de Sa, 2017).

In the overall, these employment patterns combined do not necessarily translate into financial prosperity in abundance, rather than enable the inhabitants to survive and cope with the current crisis, by making the most with the resources that the region offers. The social-economic layers are quite crucial when it comes to the spatial form and characteristic of the territorial diffusion of Medio Ave, which results in a mixed distribution of agriculture, industry and services (especially construction), and additional related activities.

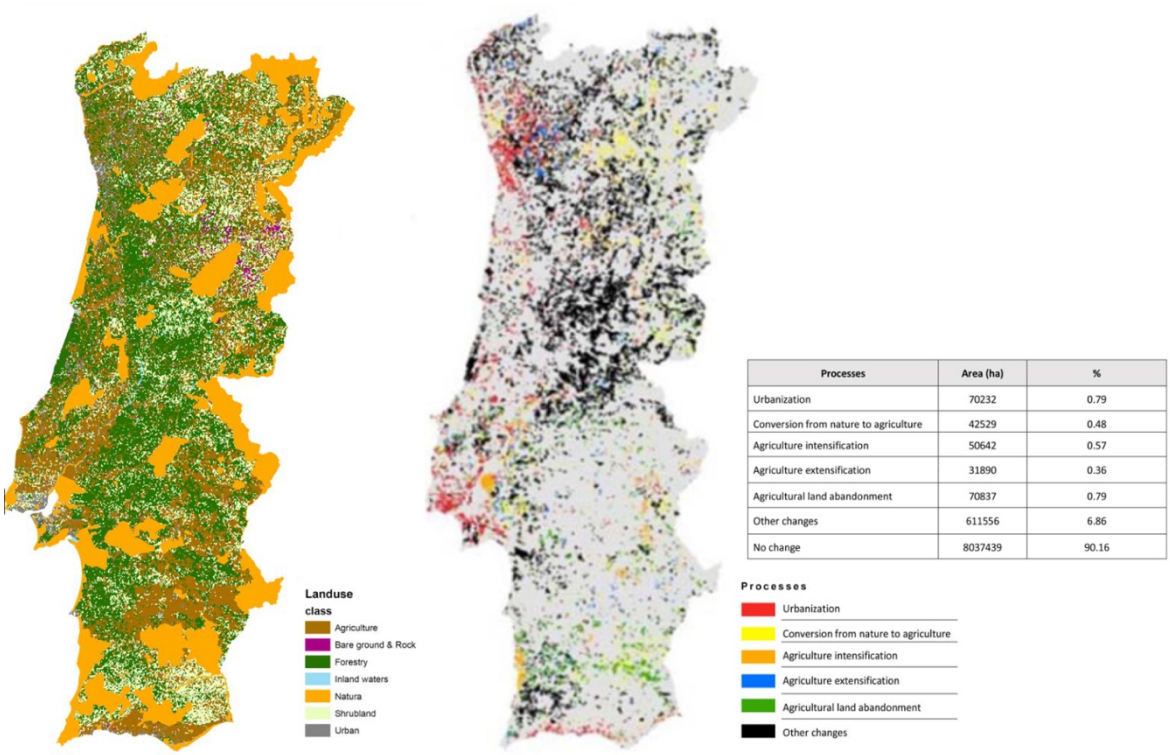
- **Land Fragmentation and the Ownership System**

The national economic structure changed significantly, with the integration of Portugal in the European Economic Community (EEC) and in the global market during the '80s. From this period on there was a quick increase of the tertiary sector (industry and services), which caused changes in the social and land use matrix, given that it took over agriculture and forestry that had led national economy until then (MA, 2009).

Agriculture and forestry as viable economy sectors had already been challenged for years, due to the land ownership regime and high fragmentation of land, especially in Central and North Portugal. Farmlands to this day vary in size, from big plots to very small ones (most of the plots being less than 1 hectare), throughout the territory of Medio Ave. Nevertheless, although historical processes have always had their impact over these farmlands, the farm size has always been adapted (either partitioned or aggregated[55]) to suit to the land's features, or the inhabitant's circumstances (Sampaio, 1979), without changing much from the average historical subunit parcel size, which dates back in the Middle Ages.

On these terms, two main processes explain these dynamics: intensification and extensification of agricultural land, which represent intra-regime changes within the agricultural system, which was experiencing fluctuations due to intra-regime changes as well, consisting on conversion of agricultural land to either forestry, or urbanized land (Gonçalves and Pereira, 2015). Increased labor costs for agricultural companies and opportune costs for smaller farmers, together with the system of subsidies and regulations enforced by the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), promoted intensification of the agricultural sector. This meant switching to mechanized processes, instead of being supported by human labor force only, and converting large amounts of productive land from arable land, to permanent crops (Diogo and Koomen, 2012), among which grassland, which became very popular throughout the country (EUROSTAT, 2009). In the over all, these processes led to a decrease of rural population and abandonment of farmlands throughout Portugal, and an increase of migration flows towards the urban areas. Extensification on the other hand, consisted on various land uses over the same plot (e.g. co-occurring of farming, grazing and forestry). This made possible, that even on those cases where the agricultural plot was bigger, with unmanageable costs for one farm-owner only, through the extensive land use practice, land was sub-divided to smaller plots, therefore leading to lower intensities of both, inputs and yields. This feature characterizes most of the Portuguese agricultural tradition to this day, as a way to survive the process of intensification (e.g. the Montado system in the region of Alentejo in Portugal, where cork industry, livestock and cereal production co-occur) (Gonçalves and Pereira, 2015).

[55] Original farmland parcels are known as 'glebas', while the sort of traditional farm resized by popular initiative alone (partitioned, or aggregated) is known as 'casal'.



Processes	Area (ha)	%
Urbanization	70232	0.79
Conversion from nature to agriculture	42529	0.48
Agriculture intensification	50642	0.57
Agriculture extensification	31890	0.36
Agricultural land abandonment	70837	0.79
Other changes	611556	6.86
No change	8037439	90.16

***Figure 35**: Land Use in Portugal / **Source:** Gonçalves and Pereira, 2015, pp.9-12*

***Figure 36:** Portugal Land Use Change Process between 1990-2000 / **Source:** Gonçalves and Pereira, 2015, pp.9-12*

On the other side of the medal, these processes have challenged viability of agricultural land also in terms of making agricultural policies consisting on land assembly and collective farming, fail, especially due to the difficulty of overcoming the slow-changing cultural traits, which have affected many aspects, among which achieving an integrated territorial development (Fernandes de Sa, 2017). *Firstly,* because the profound sense of ownership has always been a challenge, making land development very dependent on each and every owner, with little space for collaborative interventions, which at some extend could result being more profitable and sustainable. *Secondly,* the estate settlement complications and a general skepticism regarding associativism have posed many difficulties as well. *Thirdly,* matters of spatial territorial planning, which include the dispersed character of the settlements and the density of the road network, have made it difficult for local authorities to implement any specific land assembly policy, or collective farming initiatives. Lastly, economic factors mainly related with the balance of the pluriactivity system have also had a profound contribution to this crisis.

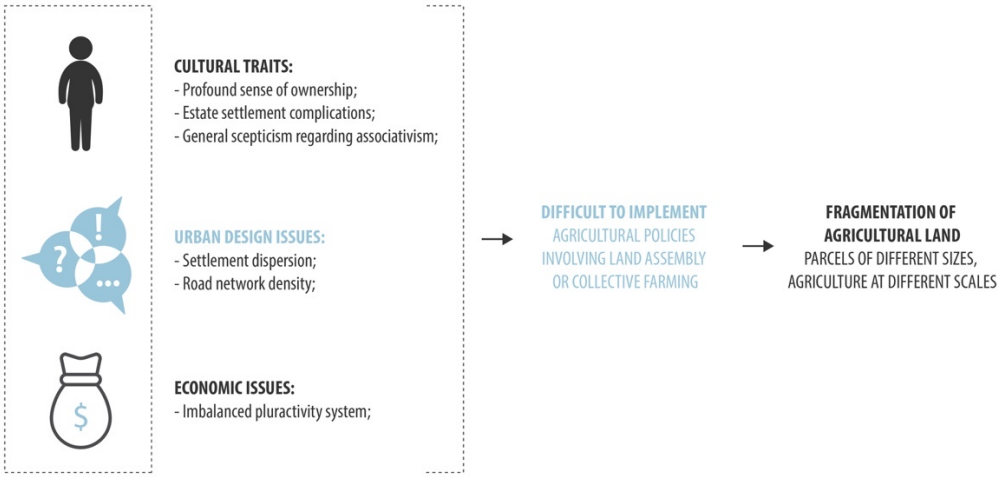


Figure 37: *Challenges that lead to a bigger fragmentation of agricultural land /* ***Source:*** *Author*

6.2.2 The Mechanism Behind the Diffusion – the case of Guimarães (municipal level)

Guimarães is located in the Northern coastal region of Portugal and is one of the main cities of the 'diffused territory' of Medio Ave. With a total of 69 villages it has a population of nearly 153,294[56] inhabitants and an area of 241.3 km^2. Through the current network of motorways, almost the entire northwest corner of the Iberian Peninsula is within a minimum of two hours radius from Guimarães, providing safe, rapid and comfortable access. Braga and Porto, two major cities of the Northern region, are in a distance of 15 and 35 minutes away, which is translated into daily commuting for work, studying or tourism.

Dating back since the 10th century, the city represents the establishment of the Portuguese Nation on 1,128. During the 950, the city (by then a small town) was built around two poles from which one was around the convent built by the Countess Mumadona, and the other around the castle built for its protection. Most of the intense urban development, which gave birth to the city of today, happened during the 15th – mid 18th centuries, which were also companied by Renaissance, Mannerism and Baroque legacies in architecture around the city. Expansion and renovation followed during the Industrial Revolution until nowadays, which is known to be a period of enlargement and renovation due to industrial expansion, part of which lies within the diffused territory of today. Major city roadways

[56] Census Estimations, 2017

were developed, residential areas, social, educational and sport facilities were built, as well as new city infrastructure.

Being today an integral part of the diffused territory of Medio Ave, Guimarães represents an interesting case for studying how these different patterns overlay and constitute a continuous sub-urbanized model, which takes life by the emergence of urban and rural into a continuum of settlements, economic activities and natural potentials.

- **The Impact of Geographical Features**

The municipality of Guimarães is delimited at north by the Senhora do Monte (Senhora hill), at northwest by the hills of Falperra, Sameiro, Outeiro and Penedice, and at the south by the Penha hill, which makes for the highest point of the municipality with 613 meters. Guimarães is also part of the drainage basin of Ave river, which divides the municipality in half. Together with its tributaries: Vizela river, Torto river, Febras river and inside the city, the Selho river, the Couros river and the Santa Lúzia stream, it plays a major role especially in the agricultural system of the sub-region.

The topographic and hydrographic features of the area have been crucial at how people adjusted in this territory at the very beginning, developing an in – situ system, which was very sustainable and boosted a healthy living between the natural features that characterized the area (which also determined where development happened – initiating a process of “leap-frogging development” based especially on the vicinity of water and farming land), and the different activities happening in and throughout the area (farming and agriculture at the beginning, and more elaborate activities later on).

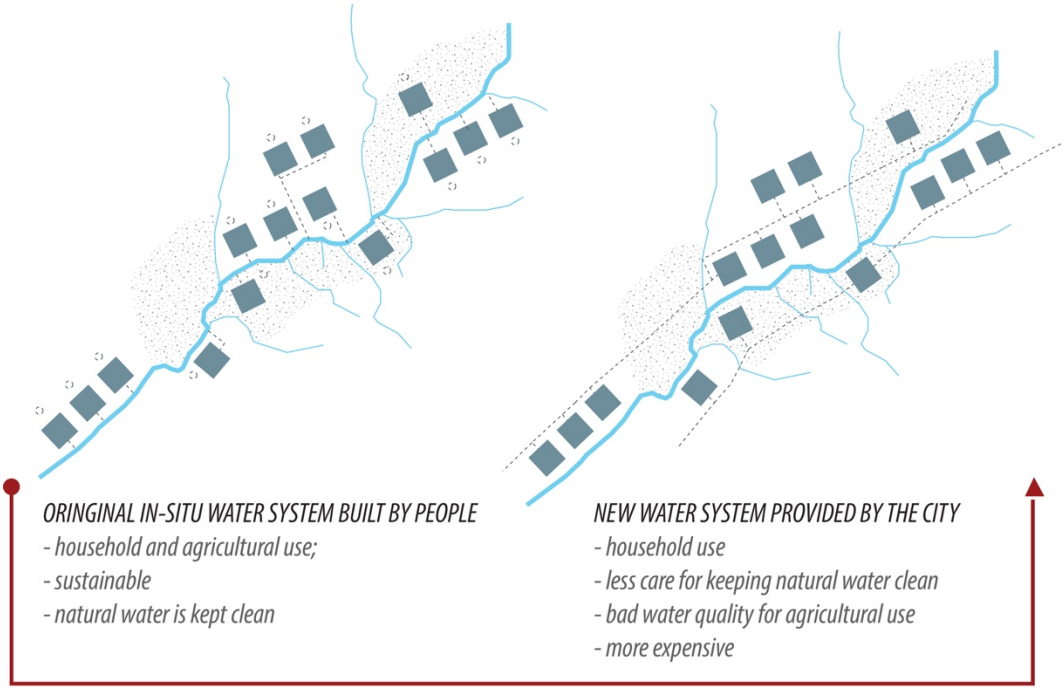


Figure 38: *Diagrammatic interpretation of insitu water system built by people, versus the new system introduced by the local authorities /* ***Source:*** *Author*

It is unfortunate to say that nowadays this system is not as relevant and in use, as new developments and technological advancements have promoted new systems implemented by the local authorities, which at some degree seem to be less sustainable and have boosted a negative attitude towards natural potentials (e.g. rivers, lakes and other water sources are not well-maintained and kept clean anymore, as they are no longer used for the household needs).

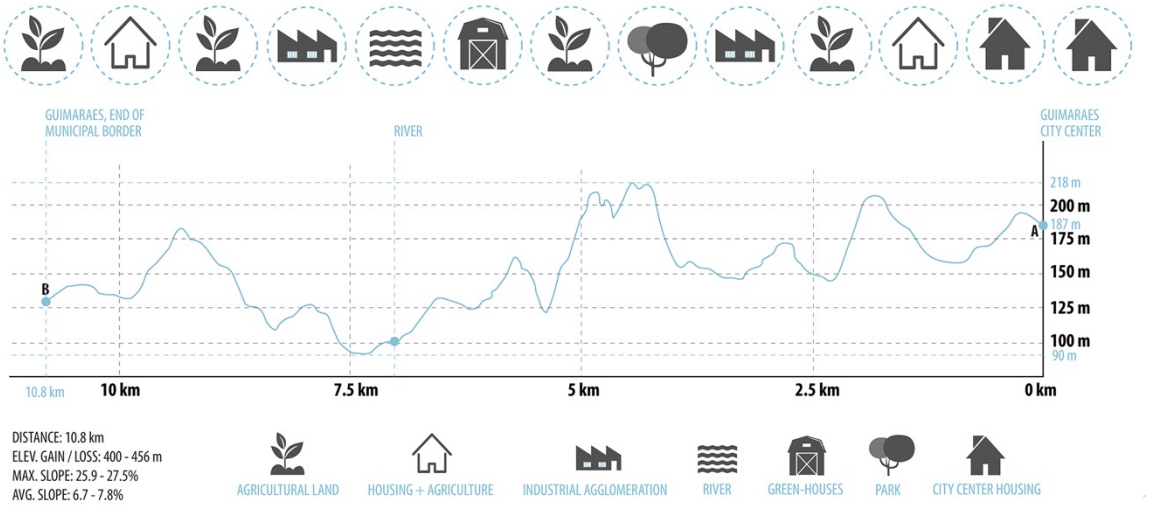


Figure 39: *Top: Hydrological System and the Built Environment; Bottom: Topographic Elevation and the Diffusion of Different Uses /* ***Source:*** *Author*

- **The Impact of the Infrastructural System**

National roads like N101, N105, N206 (also chosen as part of the case study project) and N207 contour and penetrate the territory of the municipality of Guimarães, serving also as attractors of development. A set of clusters have emerged slowly, linearly and disconnected, establishing a set of extensions of the urban core, prolonging the urban life outside the recognizable limit of the urban form, although their appearance does not present itself according to the mental image typically associated to a city (Fernandez et al., 2017).

Playing a major role as connective routes as well, and considering the short distances with the main surrounding cities these roads not only have increased mobility, but have also facilitated access that has boosted development all over the territory they encompass. The employment patterns that characterize the area as well have cooperated well with this configuration, allowing for better connections between homes, industry and agricultural activities. This model serves as the very backbone of the diffusion, boosting development in the dispersion of what is called ‘urban’, into the ‘rural’, producing a new spatial model which is neither of the two, but it’s a continuum of the two.

- **The Impact of Employment Patterns**

As part of Medio Ave River Valley, Guimarães is quite central in the most industrialized sub-region of Portugal, where industry employs approximately 70% of the active population. Employment is represented by industry, and commerce and services, as the two main pillars, and agriculture on the other. The traditional businesses in the field of textiles, footwear and cutlery have begun to modernize, already with some degree of success, and while the necessary industrial diversification is taking place with new investments in factories that incorporate more and more technology, deep changes in the employment structure and the economy are taking place as well, which has been translated into a high rate of unemployment recently (Plustex, Online[57]). These dynamics also reflect on the re-evaluation and higher rate of return into agricultural activities, throughout the territory. The agricultural sector on the meantime, is represented by small farms, which produce for their own needs, or for small – scale commerce alongside large properties dedicated to the production of the local 'vinho verde', a high-quality wine enjoyed and recognized internationally.

These patterns are reflected on the spatial typologies that constitute the territorial diffusion of the area. Upon the infrastructural network, lies the economic network which comes with both, industrial and agricultural activities. A series of industrial agglomerations lie along the main roads, from central Guimarães, towards the diffused territory of the municipality, located majorly near the big infrastructural nodes, or close to settlement agglomerations.

Agriculture represents also a major part of the economy of the area, with a network of cultivated land, which has different configurations based on the size of the plot and type of crops. Given that due to different historical factors land is very fragmented, this is also mirrored in the form and typology of agricultural activity.

Groups of settlements also populate the diffused territory, being represented mainly by individual houses, which are strongly connected with the industrial agglomerations, and

[57] http://www.plustex.eu/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Guimaraes-A-short-overview.pdf

the agricultural land. Small individual enterprises are typically developed within the household unit as well, adding yet another feature to the economic profile of the area.

6.3 Spatial Features of the Diffused Model of the 'Urban-Rural Continuum' in Guimarães

Considering the main indicators identified as the driving forces for the territorial diffusion in both, the Medio Ave and Guimarães, specific spatial features of this diffused model of the urban-rural continuum, were identified.

Given that for the Medio Ave region in particular, the roads play a major role in guiding development in spatial terms, the N206 road was taken as a reference, from the center of the city until the end of the municipal border. The study tried to investigate on the way this road has impacted (i) the sprawling of settlements (and their respective typologies); (ii) the agglomeration and clustering of industries; and (iii) the development of agriculture as a main economy as well, identifying 4 main typologies and scales of practicing.

The configuration of all these overlaid patterns of different uses is what portrays the spatial character of the territorial diffusion, as an expression of the urban-rural continuum, taking life by the proximity of the 3 different components.

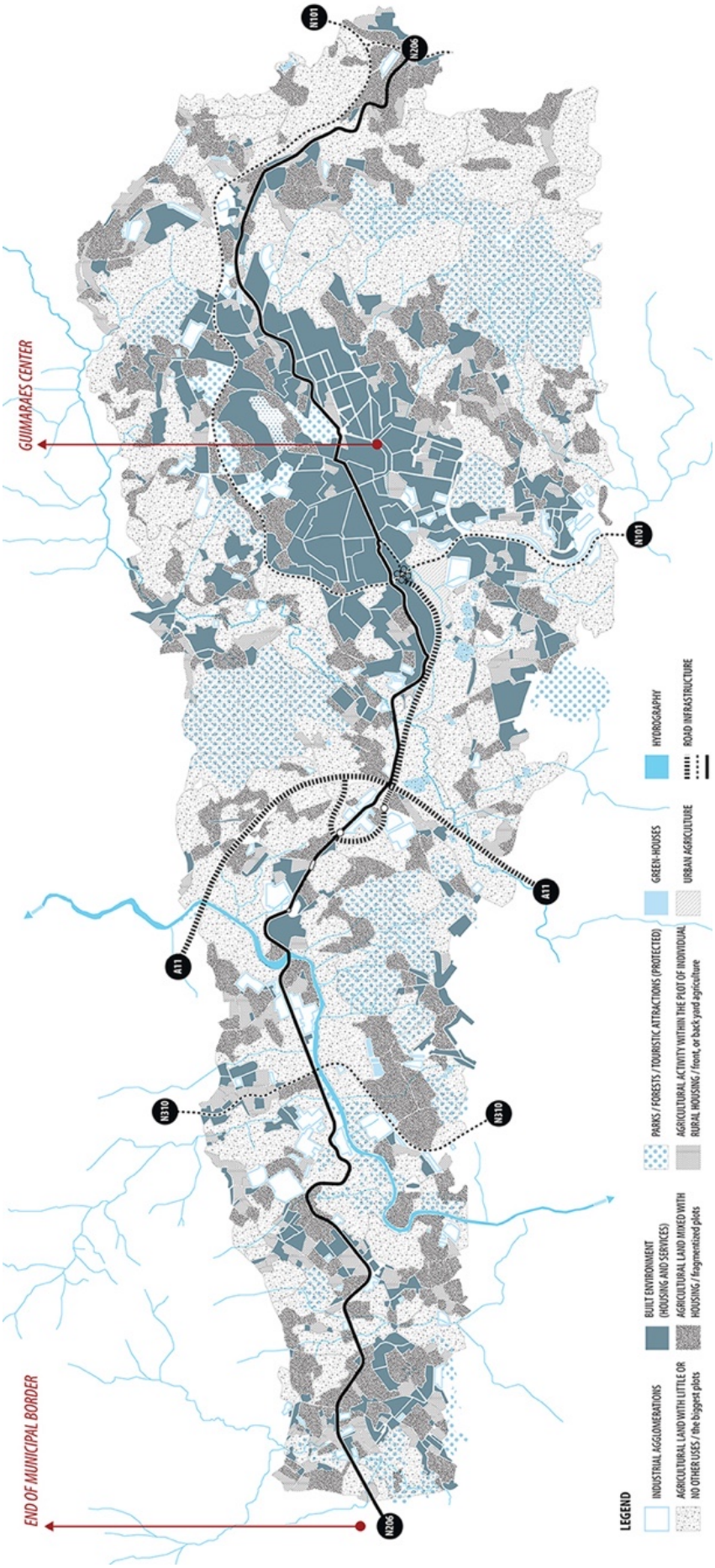


Figure 40: *Territorial Diffusion in Guimarães, the Spatial Features of the Urban-Rural Continuum /* ***Source:*** *Author*

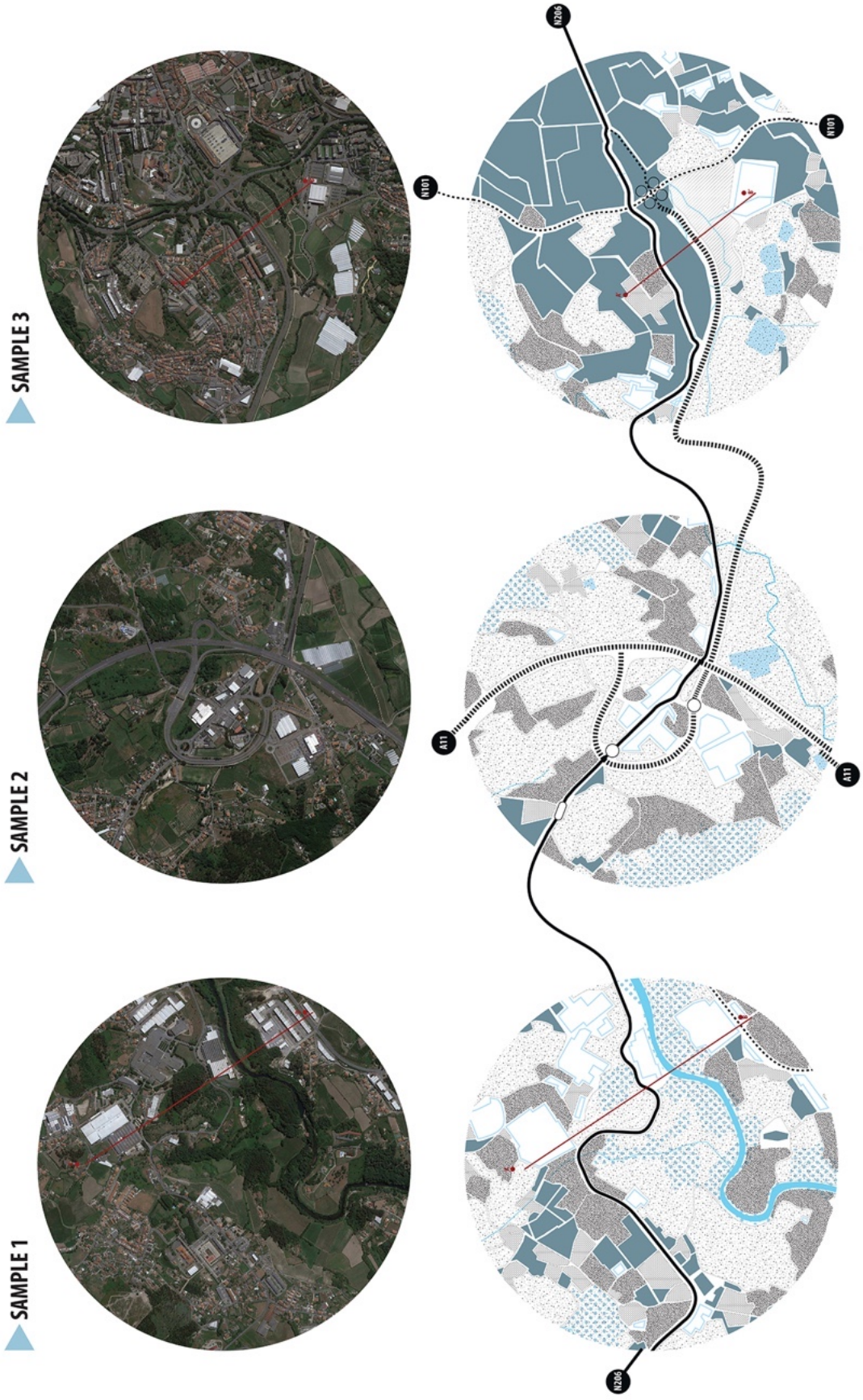


Figure 41: *Three zoom-in samples within the study area /* ***Source:*** *Author*

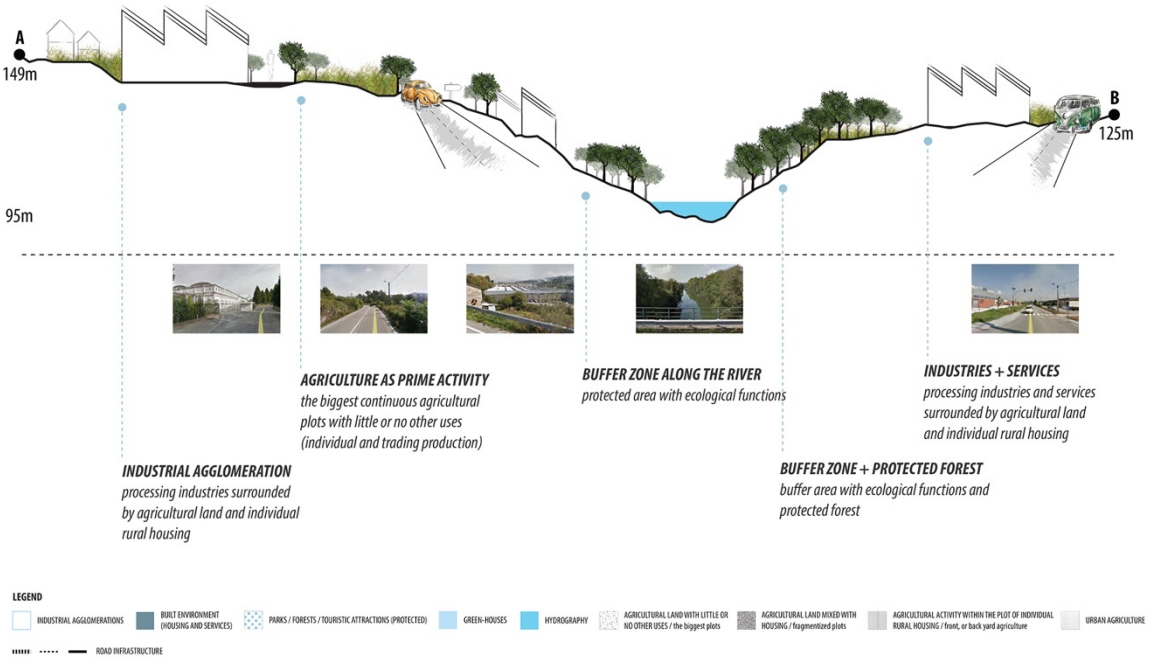


Figure 42: *Sample 1 Elevation, the urban-rural continuum illustrated /* ***Source:*** *Author*

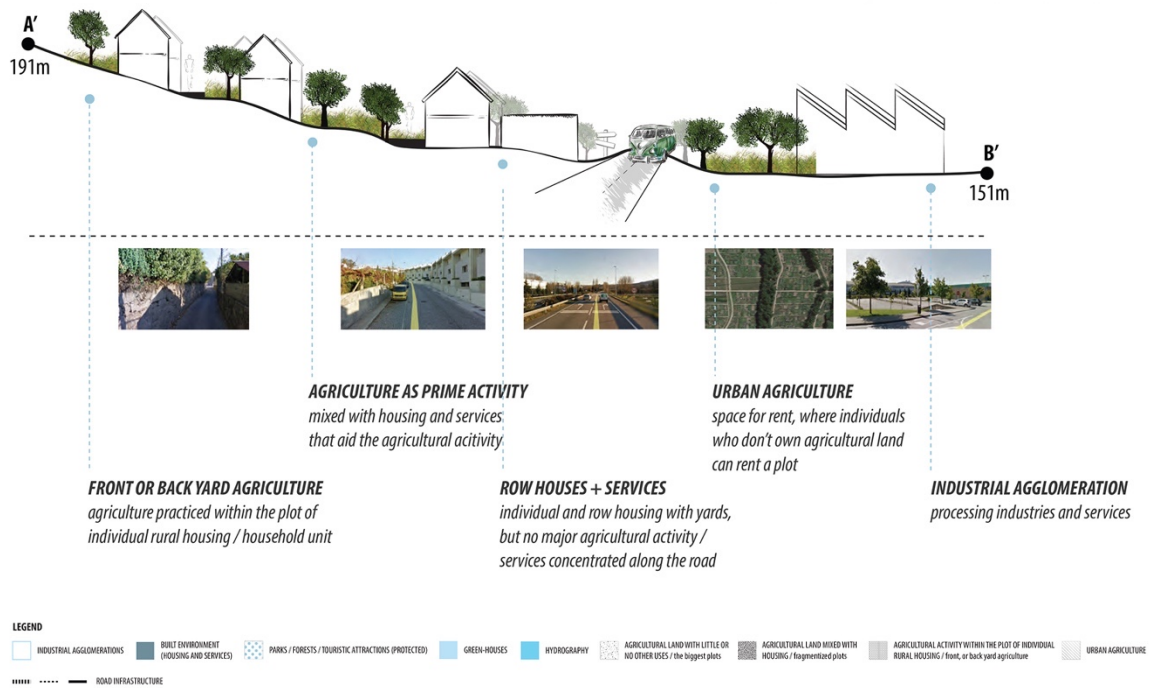


Figure 43: *Sample 3 Elevation, the urban-rural continuum illustrated* ***/ Source:*** *Author*

Throughout the area there are identified 5 housing typologies, which are also tightly connected with the land they lie upon, or the different activities that occur on their proximity:

- **Inner city collective housing;**

  (They own very little, or no land at all. Almost all their services are offered by the city in their proximity, and they work either in industries, or on services, close by, or in the diffused territory).
- **Inner city individual housing;**

  (They own the land upon which their house is located. Sometimes they have agriculture incorporated on their yards, but most of the times they have gardens in their front or back yards. Also, on this case they work either in industries, or on services, close by, or in the diffused territory).
- **Collective housing in the diffused territory;**

  (This typology is usually less high than those in the city center, usually the row – house typology. Also, the land they own is either limited, or very small, or they might own land somewhere in the diffused territory, nearby their house. They work either in agriculture, or in industries and services, close by in diffused territory, or in the city).
- **Individual housing with agricultural yard;**

  (The inhabitants of this typology own the land on which their house is located, and also the agricultural land on its vicinity. Typically, the agricultural land is incorporated with their household and they produce for themselves. They work either in agriculture, or in industries and services, close by in diffused territory, or in the city).
- **Individual housing in an agricultural farm (plot).**

  (Agriculture plays a major role for this typology. The house is located within the farmland and it plays crucial role in collecting and sometimes processing of the production. They produce for themselves but also for trading, which is a major source of income for the household).

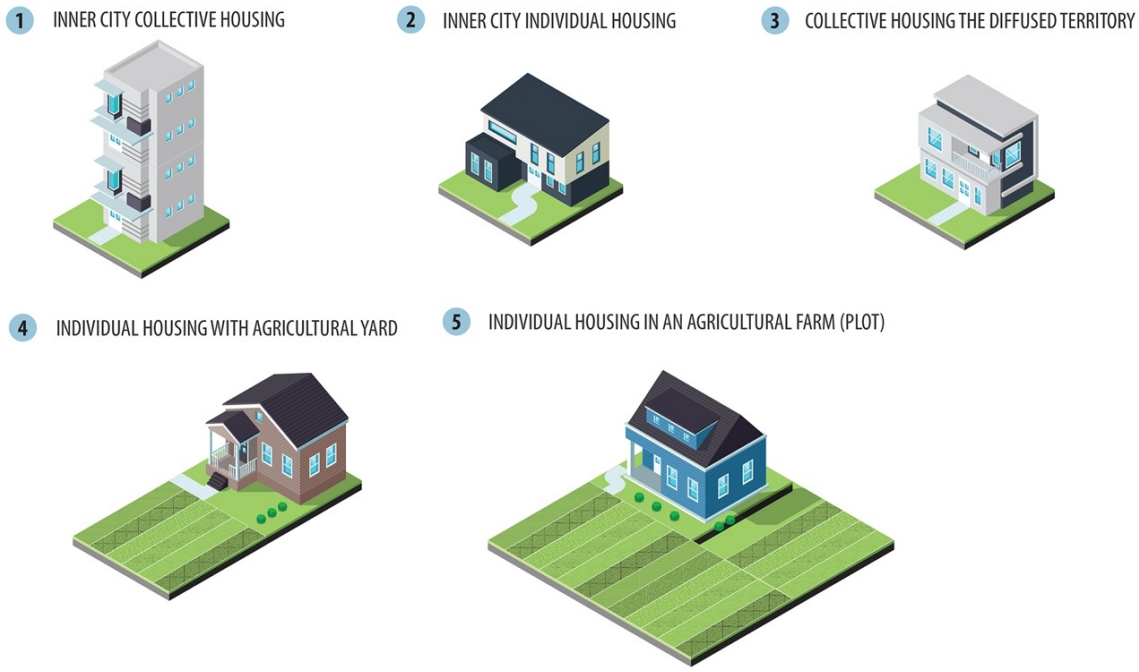


Figure 44: *Housing typologies identified within the study area /* ***Source****: Author*

There are also identified 4 main agricultural scales, which portray the typologies of agricultural activities and production patterns. These configurations come as a result of a very fragmented land system (Levels of Fragmentations of Agricultural Land and Reading of the Four Typologies and their respective size variations on Appendix 5), where the assembling of land in bigger and more productive farms is usually challenged by cultural traits, urban design maters and economic issues. The identified patterns of fragmentation for each category are done based on three main components: (1) road infrastructure system; (2) alteration in types of crops; and (3) water system (river, canals). The 4 main agricultural scales vary as below:

- **Agricultural land with little or no other uses;**
  (Typically, the biggest continuous agricultural plots. The total area of each identified plot varies from a maximum of 147.81 ha, to a minimum of 0.85 ha).
- **Agricultural land mixed with housing;**
  (Typically, fragmentized agricultural land, where industries and settlement concentrations come in frequent intersection. The total area of each identified plot varies from a maximum of 16.6 ha, to a minimum of 0.195 ha).
- **Agricultural activity within the plot of individual rural housing;**

(Typically, agriculture is practiced in a front, or back yard, usually in a very limited plot size. The total area of each identified plot varies from a maximum of 3.52 ha, to a minimum of 0.29 ha).

- **Urban Agriculture.**

  (This is a new practice, where people who don't own any agricultural land, can rent a limited space for their own personal produce. The area on which this project is being developed as a surface of 12.15 ha and is divided in smaller plots for rent).

*Figure 45: Four agricultural scales identified within the study area / **Source:** Author*

6.4 Remarks on the Diffused Model of the Urban-Rural Continuum

The nowadays discussion between the 'urban' and 'rural' is encompassed by the fact that the dichotomy is already outdated and that a new spatial typology is now present, which is neither urban, or rural, but it emerges from the diffusion of the two, into an urban – rural continuum, which has mixed characteristics from both, cited by Alvaro Domingues (2008) as 'transgenic' as a result of mutation processes between their qualities, and which apart from everything, is still very complex and in need for further and deeper understanding.

The evolution of 'urban' and 'rural' on both, perceptional and the spatial terms constructs the foundation for understanding better the continuum between the two, which is profoundly affected by the overlaying of a myriad of social, economic and environmental issues. And in order to harmoniously imagine this continuum is necessarily that we investigate them in an interconnected way, not separately.

The case of Guimarães aimed to read all these components in a comprehensive way, in order to understand the urban – rural continuum and its spatial character, in the diffused territory of Medio Ave, which morphologically has an urban territory consisting of two occupational models: the compact model (with nearly 113,960 inhabitants) and the diffused model (234,198 inhabitants) (Silva, 2005). Among these two models the territory works as a system, where pluriactivity is one of the main features, represented by the overlaying of different social, economic and environmental patterns.

Determined by the topographic and hydrographic components, the territory is prone to provide room for different uses. With Ave River crossing in the middle of the municipality, and with a very rich hydrographic network, the area provides good conditions for agriculture to take place, although recently with industry taking over, agriculture has become a second employment sector. Less environmental attention has also contributed to more water pollution, which has decreased the quality of soil and its productive traits. Land fragmentation has also made the development of economy based on agriculture less efficient.

On the other hand, the assembling of land on bigger and more productive farms has been challenged by cultural (profound sense of ownership, estate settlement complications, general skepticism regarding associativism), urban design (settlement dispersion, road network density) and economic issues (imbalanced pluriactivity system). Nevertheless, agriculture still represents a major part of the network, and there are identified 4 main scales on which agriculture is practiced: (1) agriculture land with little or no other uses – typically the biggest continuous agricultural plots; (2) agricultural land mixed with housing – typically fragmentized plots mixed with housing, industries and road infrastructure; (3) agricultural activity within the plot of individual rural housing – typically developed on a front or back yard; and (4) urban agriculture, which is a new practice that gives the

opportunity to own a small limited agricultural plot to anyone who doesn't own any. Road infrastructure system, water system and alteration in crops were identified as three main components that fragmentize further the plots within each category.

A series of agglomerations and clustering of different industrial activities, mainly on textile, footwear, cutlery and wine production, are located along the main infrastructural network. The industry sector acts as a prime employment source, where most of the local population earns for the household. The vicinity to the main road infrastructure is interpreted as strategic positioning for easier and better access, and the combination with agricultural land on their surrounding is connected to the pluriactivity system, where people work both in industry and in agriculture.

Given all these features it is more than clear that the territory of Medio Ave, with Guimarães as a case included, is indeed a system which can only work interconnectedly together, and only, when its mechanism is fully understood. The spatial form of this complex urban – rural continuum, is one that provides space for both living and working in a territory which is appreciated for its natural features, as well as well integrated in a system of infrastructure, services and economic activities.

7 CHAPTER 7: Albania, between the dynamics of 'urbanization' and 'peripherality'

7.1 Territorial Development Challenges in Albania

For a very long time Albania has been struggling to overcome all the difficulties and challenges inherited from the continuous political instability. Having experienced one of the longest dictatorships in Europe (starting from 1946, to December 1990), characterized by political repression and centrally planned economy, the transition towards decentralization and market economy caused long lasting turbulences, which are still very present. During the last 25 years all this was translated into chaotic territorial changes and economic recession, and at a time when spatial and urban planning could have been used as management tools to control development, they were rather ignored, misinterpreted,

or used as speculative arguments for further exploitation of land (Aliaj et al., 2010). All these dynamics, combined with very active migration flows have resulted in 58% of the population living in urban areas, majorly on the northwest, west and southwest of the country (where 80% of the agricultural land is located as well), and 42% in rural areas (INSTAT, 2016). While the main urban centers have been attracting, not only more and more population resulting in densified and over-populated areas, but also most of the investment capital and economic activities, creating a spill-over on the surrounding rural realms with no regard to their own unique potentials, the other parts of the country (mainly of rural character and on the eastern peripheral parts), although rich on touristic, farming and agricultural potentials, have been subject of continuous abandonment and seclusion (Janku et al., 2014). With these territorial disparities and economically unbalanced regions, planning practices in Albania, at least until the last decade, have been either boosting even further this phenomenon, or totally ignoring the problem, resulting in problematic models, which have either failed, or in the 'best scenario' have learned how to informally self-adapt to the given social, economic and spatial-territorial conditions.

Facing these challenges planning authorities as well have paid little attention to the contextualization of planning policies, being limited only to conventional practices, which in most of the cases have been driven by a myriad of other interests and haven't been enough effective. There have been a series of changes on the territorial planning laws, but little attention has been paid to the issue of territorial disparities. The new Territorial Reform approved on 2014, which reduced the number of Local Government Units, from 373 to 61, has also posed many questions and challenges to the issue of territorial cohesion and urban-rural linkages, especially if considering the size of the new units, the financial resources allocated to each of them, and the change in mentality, which needs to take place, shifting to a comprehensive territorial planning perspective, which gives a lot of weight especially to the social, economic and territorial disparities that exist within each of these units.

7.1.1 Industrial Towns and Agricultural Countryside (Territorial Development under a Centrally Planned Economy) _ 'the city' and 'the countryside', two separate realms

The very first attempts for 'urban modernization' in Albania, took place somewhen after the declaration of independence of 1912, during King Zog's Monarchy (1928-1939), a period, which is also known as the consolidation of the new Albanian state. During this period of time Albania was almost completely feudal, with an estimate of 80% of rural population, from which only a small percentage were land owners, whereas nearly 72% of the farmers did not own any land. With the new administration exercising its duties, in terms of planning instruments, 'urban design' was considered to be one of the most advanced tools, and it was used as a means of safeguarding public interests and securing public goods (Aliaj, et al., 2010). Nevertheless, although Albania was majorly a rural country based in agriculture, King Zog attempted to push forward the development of industry as well, although at small scale initially, due to the lack of funds and Albania being one of the poorest countries in the Balkans. However, he made use of funds coming from the Italian government, a big part of which was used to build new roads and bridges throughout the country, increasing the total sum of the debt at a level, which gained the Italian government access in taking over other types of industries (e.g. oil, brewery) (Bici, 2007; Keefe et al., 1994), slowly gaining control of the entire Albanian economy (Bici, 2007; Costa, 1995). Although the industrialization that Zog promoted and pushed forward was mainly based on expanding roads and access infrastructure throughout the country, he also put efforts in developing other types of industries as well, by evaluating natural resources and producing factory building policy in accordance to the natural resources, which existed nearby many Albanian cities. Some of the types of industries developed during Zog's administration included: hydropower plants (e.g, first one being the hydropower of Vithkuq nearby Korça, in 1936), electrical plants (e.g. electrical plant of Elbasan, fully electrified in 1934), agricultural production processing factories (e.g. brewery in Korça), etc. Given that all the attention was put in developing the industrial sector, agriculture, which prior to Zog administration was the most profitable branch of economy, providing 90% of the total national income, was denied of attention, remaining very primitive and in great decline in the following years (Bici, 2007). With the World War II occurring, and with the Italian government taking over the Albanian economy, most of the attention of the industrialization process was put to the energetic and petrol extracting sectors, which was translated into major interventions nearby natural resources. The end of the WWII found Albanian economy completely destroyed, with destroyed cities and villages, damaged agricultural potentials and industrial sites, which weren't functional anymore.

After the WWII, likewise many countries in the Balkans, in Albania as well, the establishment of a dictatorial regime with Enver Hoxha in the lead, took place. The new government in Albania had to eradicate the consequences of the war, and re-establish the economy of the country in a centralized way that would suit to the new ideology for changing the country and promoting life in the countryside. With an estimate of nearly 85% rural population in 1939, the goal of the post-war government was to transform Albania's economy from an agricultural country, to a developed industrial-agricultural one (Gjonca et al., 2008). Connecting industrialization with socialism, the development of industry became yet again a priority for the economy, and given that Albania was in very poor economic conditions, the government relied upon Soviet aids and borrowed Soviet economic policies, promoting socialist industrialization as a way to win against capitalism. By employing a straight forward Marxist-Leninist mentality, which gave priority to the increase and expansion of industry development, and its empowerment and modernization, the socialist property over production means got stronger, becoming a leading factor in the disappearance of the capitalist elements[58]. Collectivization and disappearance of private property, state property, state enterprises, the development of five-year plans, and the promotion of heavy industries, were some of the means that the Albanian government used, in order to reach full industrialization of the country.

'Collectivization of property' and 'state property', were two main linked approaches, which profoundly affected the development of economy and the way in which economic policies were reflected on a territorial scale. First, further industrialization of the country was aimed, boosting the development of heavy, light and alimentary industries. Mining industry, production of energy and construction of power plants became top priority for the Albanian economy as well, producing not only to fulfil national needs, but for exporting as well. The rapid industrialization policies made possible that by 1985, the multi-branched industrial sector was providing nearly 43.3% of the total national income (Golemi and Misja, 1987). All these efforts in developing the industry sector, were followed by the creation of a series of new industrial towns nearby potential resources. Therefore, the two approaches gave the government authorities the power to control and strategically plan

[58] Këshilli i Ministrave, (1975), "Industria" (Industry), in I106 in the Albanian Labor Party Archives. Retrieved by Bici, 2007.

and manage all these new territorial changes and economic activities (Bici, 2007). Secondly, 'expropriation of farmers', accompanied by 'collectivization of property' and 'state property', gave the authorities the chance to take control over agricultural development as well, shifting Albania's monocultural aspect in agriculture. After the total collectivization of productive land, land reclamation, creation of new larger productive units, implementation of larger irrigation systems for larger units of production, and regional specialization, took place (Hall, 1994).

Figure 46: *From Left to Right: Agricultural Cooperatives; Metallurgic Industrial Area in Elbasan; Berat Textile Mill /* ***Source:*** *Public Archive; Marjola Rukaj; James Rob.*

In order to keep control over the full industrialization of the country, the government implemented the Five-Year Plans, each of which composed one specific stage of industrialization. Based on these plans, industrial sites were set up nearby raw material and thermos-energy sources, as well as near consumption centers (e.g. nearby cities like Tirana, Durrës, Shkodër, Korçë, Elbasan, Vlorë, Fier, Berat, Sarandë, etc.). These actions translated into territorial distribution of the industrial production volume of both, productive fund and working force engaged in industrial activities, promoting the creation of new industrial towns, industrialization of rural areas, and better conditions among those industrial regions, which before were rather neglected and poor (e.g. Pukë, Mat, Peshkopi, etc.).

From 1971 to 1985, after breaking all alliances with other dictatorial countries, the government of Albania entered a period of total isolation, promoting self-reliance and further improvement of economic conditions through industrialization and agriculture. In the overall picture these policies served to the main goal to establish a modern country, where urban-rural differences were desaturated (Alija, 2003). During this period, further industrialization of the national economy had an important demographic consequence, causing changes in the urban-rural ratio, and although Albania was still mostly rural in character, its urban population shifted from 15% in 1938, to 36% in 1989 (INSTAT, 1992).

The goal of the agricultural policy on the other hand, was to boost prosperity in less-developed agricultural areas (before the 1970's), and promote further concentration of resources in high productivity regions (after the 1970's). Nevertheless, development of agriculture was also used as a trigger for both, reaching egalitarian goals and as a barrier for preventing urbanization, which during this period of time was characterized by the combination of two phenomena, concentration[59] and centrality[60]. Anti-urbanization policies aimed at concentrating capital in boosting the development of rural areas, while restricting urbanization, which lead to a concentration of 2/3 of the population in rural areas, and only 1/3 in urban areas. Urban growth belts (locally named 'yellow lines') were set in order to control urban growth, and to physically distinct and divide "urban" from 'rural', while the definition of 'urban' was only based on the 'urban administrative area'. Three main conditions defined an 'urban area': (1) administrative services and industrial labor market; (ii) number of inhabitants (2,000-5,000); and (iii) the impact on the surroundings (labor market) and the social dimensions and urban lifestyle. On the other hand, (i) dominance of agriculture production; (ii) the one-dimensional class society; and (iii) the lack of any administrative services, were the determinants of a 'rural area' (Alija, 2003).

According to Aliaj (2003), from 1920 to 1990, Albania has gone through six main periods of urbanization. *The first* one to start with, the Pre-war Period 1920-1938, during which the whole country was of rural character and was extremely poor. Only an estimate of 15.4% of the population lived in urban areas, which by the time were merely towns with administrative and commercial functions. *The second* period marks the World War II 1939-1945, a period during which towns got more populated due to security purposes, increasing urban population to 21.4%. Nevertheless, after the war these population fluxes returned

[59] **Concentration** "refers to the concentration of population, and is directly depended on processes of demographic and economic character. It includes centralization forces of economic, technologic and geopolitical character, which in certain moments and places generate certain levels of resources. Concentration also mobilizes: (i) political and ideological structures of society; (ii) the way governments control production and distribution of resources (iii) and specific ecological settings, where distribution takes place" (Berth, 1993; Aliaj 2003).

[60] **Centrality "**relates to: (i) the way control over resources is exercised, for example through material factors (distribution and production), or through symbolic factors (ideology); (ii) the way resources are distributed, which is crucial for the urbanization process; (iii) the identification of ruling elite; (iv) the identification of institutional framework, such as total control of state over distribution (socialist system), or market-oriented distribution, without any significant intervention of the state (capitalist system)" (Berth, 1993; Aliaj 2003).

to their original base in the countryside. *The third* period is the Post-war era 1946-1959, during which the communist party attempted its consolidation, promoting the creation of a 'working class'. Therefore, a significant permanent increase of urban population began, which together with a 1.4% annual population growth, marked the peak of urbanization. *The fourth* period, from 1960 to 1969, experienced a very slow process of urbanization, accompanied by a decrease of annual population growth, at 0.23%. This decrease continued further during *the fifth* (1970-1979) and *sixth (*1980-1990) periods as well, reaching at 0.18% and 0.10%.

Figure 47: *Thermal Power Plant in Fier (the vicinity of communist area industrial heritage, with today's city-outskirts' settlements and productive agricultural land) /* ***Source****: www.guyshachar.com*

These dynamics nevertheless, due to centrally planned economic and territorial development policies, were spatially balanced and used in a way, which aimed the reduction of welfare geographic disparities. This was done through the minimization of several existing gaps, among which those between different social classes, between urban and rural areas, and between different regions. It is during this period of time, that despite the type of governance and conditions in which it happened, for the first-time development policies addressed the whole territory of Albania, evaluating natural resources, local development potentials and national priorities. On this framework, reduction of geographical inequalities was instrumented through (i) implementation of road infrastructure and access; (ii) allocation of industrial investment; (iii) provision of electrical power and water supply not only in the main cities and towns, but also in the countryside; (iv) provision and improvement of health and education services; (v) establishment of agricultural cooperatives and state farms; (vi) distribution of highly educated students and professionals in the peripheral and rural areas (for at least 3-5 years); and (vii) implementation of 'volunteering work' in the educational and health care systems, in the most isolated and less developed areas (for at least 1-2 years) (Aliaj, 2003).

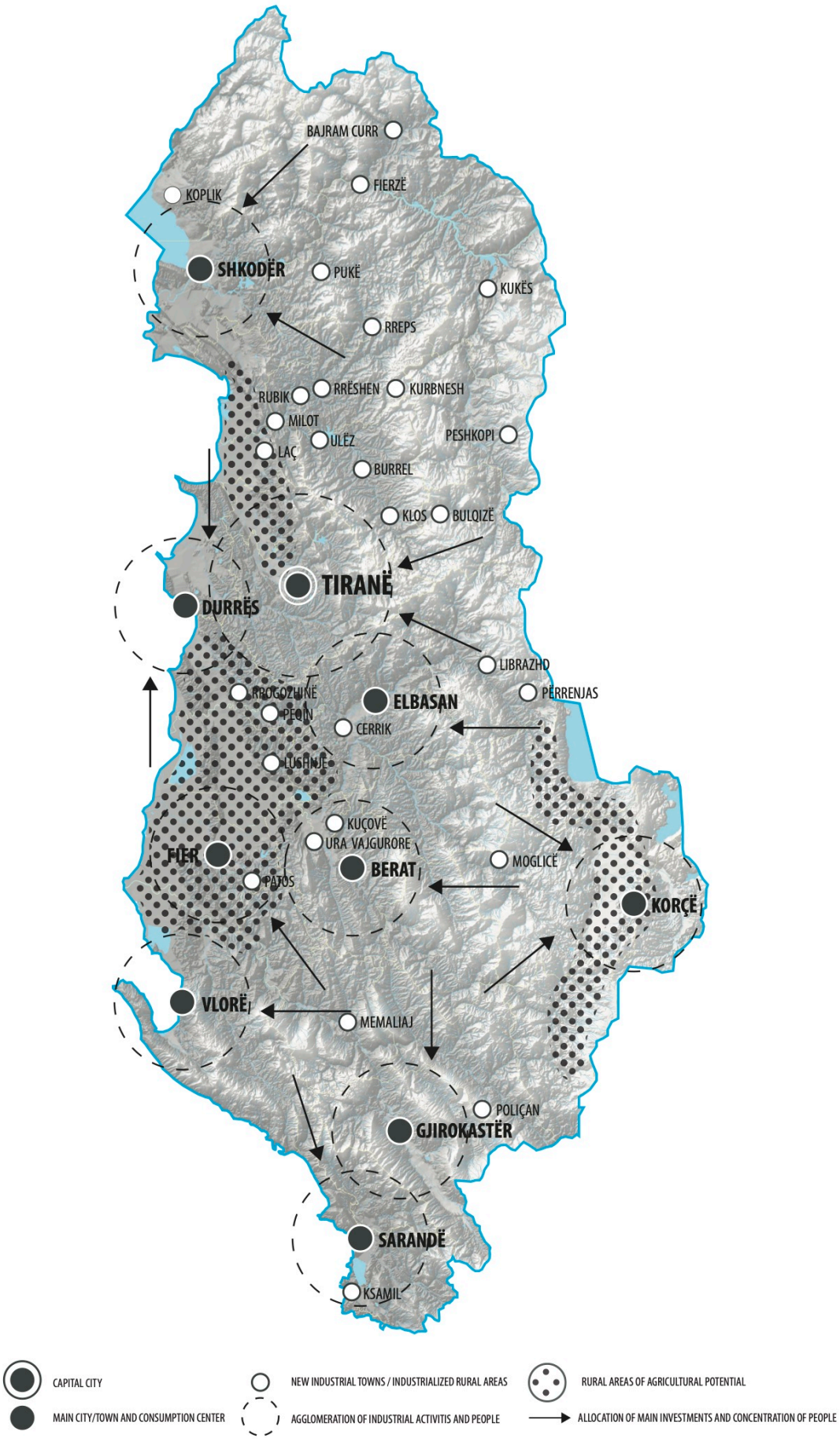


Figure 48: *Territorial Dynamics under a Centrally Planned Economy /* ***Source:*** *Author*

These, together with the goal of the agricultural policy to boost further agricultural production, made possible an overall development of the rural realm, which didn't only grow faster than the urban in terms of population, but it also experienced an incremental increase of income, which surpassed that of urban population. Nevertheless, it was almost impossible to fully address geographic disparities, especially when related to remoteness and lack of access. Several parts of the Albanian territory, majorly those on the mountainous North-East, which is less agricultural and with wilder landscapes, experienced a slower development, not only due to remoteness, but also because the population of these regions didn't quite embrace the new 'socialist' system. To this day, these parts of Albania still remain less developed, accessed and exploited, in comparison with the other densely populated regions of the country.

7.1.2 'Freedom of Movement' and the Rise of Informality and Sprawling (The Crisis of a Newly Democratic Country) _ 'the clash' between urban and rural realms

The late 1980's and early 1990's marked a revolutionary period in Europe, also known as the 'fall of nations'[61] (Nedelmann and Sztompka, 1993), which resulted in persistent movements of civil resistance, exhibiting massive opposition to the one-party-rule, in pursue of social and political changes, which peaked with the end of totalitarian regimes across many countries (Poland, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, East Germany and the fall of Berlin wall, etc.). Albania as well was affected by this wave of changes[62], undergoing a series of protests, and with the Democratic Party winning the elections in March 1992,

[61] Both terms 'fall of nations' and 'autumn of nations' were similar figurative names like the 'spring of nations', which described the 1848 Revolutions.

[62]Albania is one of the countries where the totalitarian regime of communism lasted the longest in Europe. After the death of the communist leader, Enver Hoxha, in April 1985, the former Prime Minister Ramiz Alia succeeded Hoxha, gradually introducing economic reforms and opening the diplomatic ties with the countries of Western Europe. A series of demonstrations against the regime began in 1989, culminating with a major students' demonstration in early December 1990 in the capital, Tirana. On the meantime, other protests were undergoing in other parts of the country. The toppling of Enver Hoxha's statue in the center of the capital symbolically marked the fall of communism, and it had for Albania the same symbolic meaning, as the fall of the Berlin wall. On the conditions of a new political pluralism, which began on December 1990, the Democratic Party emerged as the largest opposition party, to the Party of Labour. In March 1991 the Party of Labour remained in power, but demonstrations continued, therefore another round of elections was held on March 1992, out of which the Democratic Party won and came to power, establishing the very first democratic government after a period of almost 40 years of isolation and totalitarian ruling.

establishing the first democratic government in Albania, after almost 40 years of totalitarian ruling.

From the 1990 and on, having shifted towards market economy and a pluralistic political system, Albania underwent a tough period of socio-political stagnation, and economic decay, followed by a series events of public disorder, at first as a response to the 'shock therapy' of the early 1990, secondly as a reaction to the pyramidal scheme[63] of 1997, and thirdly impacted by the humanitarian crisis created by the conflicts in Kosovo, in 1999. Therefore, during its first post-communism-decade, Albania was characterized by a period of rapid and chaotic urbanization, prompted by the sudden privatization of the economy, decentralization of governance, and the explosion of the informal sector (Aliaj et al., 2010), making room for a series of phenomena, which would later actively change the configurations of both urban and rural realms, producing liminal spaces marked by events like sprawling and uncontrolled development.

One of the main events, and probably the single most important social, political and economic phenomenon, which led and dominated almost all the changes in the post-communism Albania, relates to 'migration', determining new dynamics for territorial development and urbanization. Migration became a very popular phenomena for several reasons, among which also deriving from the Albanian psyche and mentality, in which being an urban resident has almost always related to having a higher status (Pojani, 2009) (although it might not always resonate the actual qualities that define the higher status). Another reason, which might have driven the first one as well, relates to the isolation through which Albania went through during the totalitarian regime, so people were finally free to go wherever they wished. And lastly, the economic status was the most important drive, which fueled both, international and internal migration.

[63] "The pyramidal schemes had their origin in a weak formal credit system and a thriving informal market unregulated by the government and fueled in large part by remittances. At the highest point, over 2 million deposits were made in these schemes, representing over half of 1996 GDP, as people sold houses, livestock and other assets in order to invest on the promise of receiving a 40 percent monthly return on investment. The collapse began on November 19, 1996, and took four months to unwind, bringing down the government and triggering riots" (Jarvis, 1999; Carletto et al., 2004, p. 6).

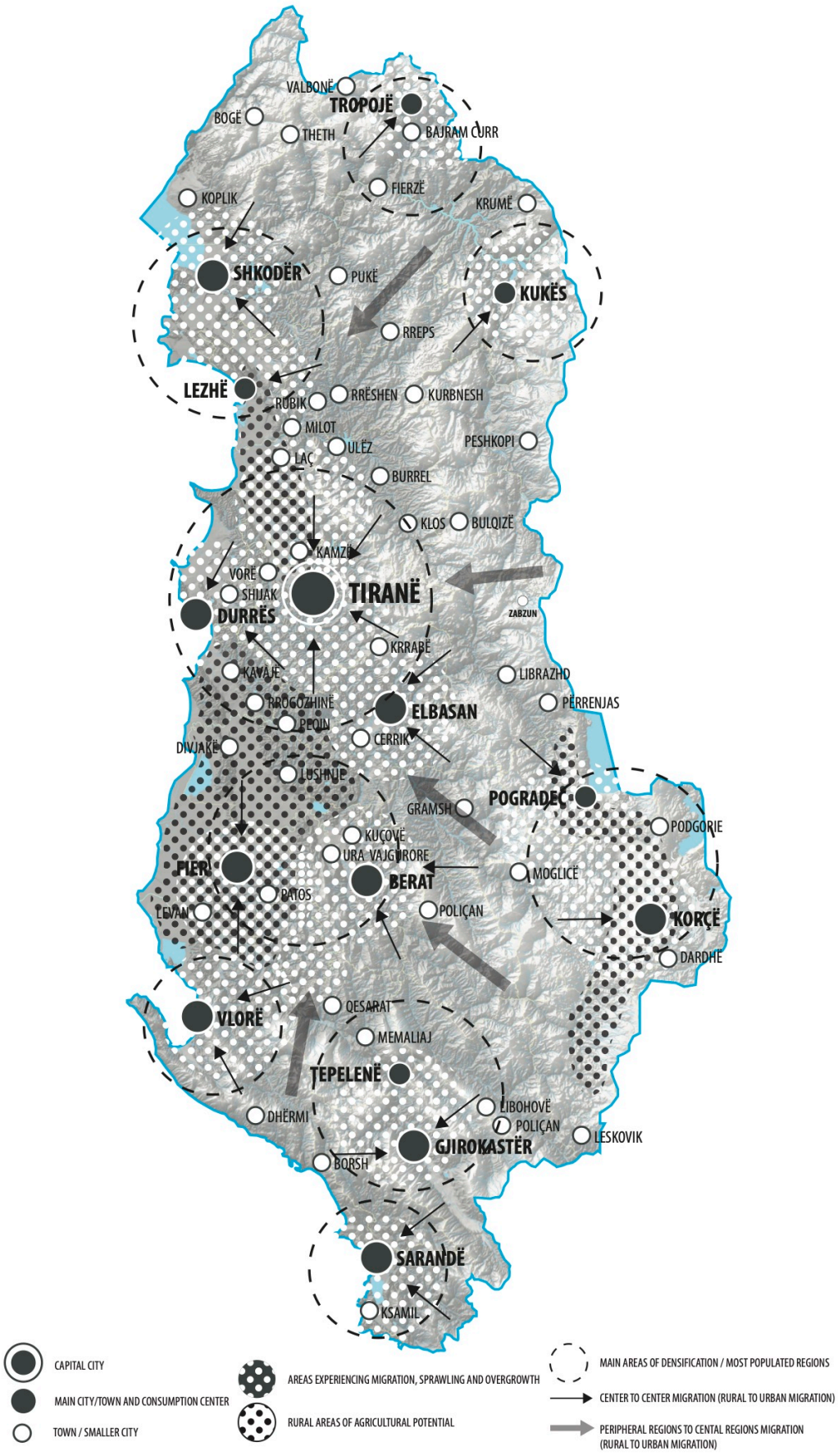
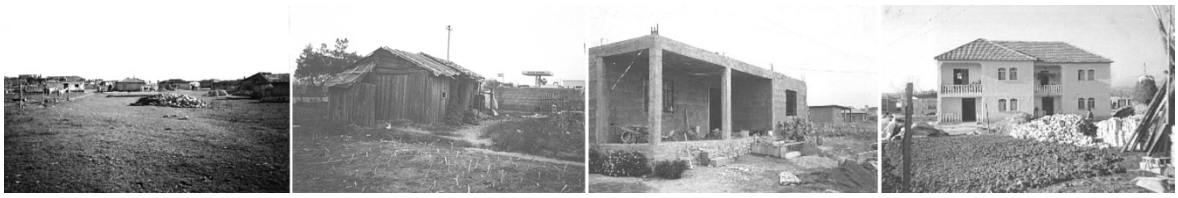


Figure 49: *Territorial Dynamics on the Conditions of Crisis in a Newly Democratic Country: Freedom of Movement' and the Rise of Informality and Sprawling /* ***Source:*** *Author*

Being granted 'freedom of movement', a considerable part of population (nearly 24%) flee the country in what has been considered one of the largest and fastest growing rates of international migration in the history of Europe (INSTAT, 2002). In a timespan of nearly 20 years, from 1989 to 2001, and from 2001 to 2011, Albania's population fell by 4% at first, and then 8%, reaching to 3,069,275 in 2001, and 2,821,977 in 2011 (INSTAT, 2011). Decrease of rural population also hit a rock-bottom of nearly 15%, ignited either by internal rural to urban migration, or by international migration, which displayed several features: (A) long term, towards (a) neighboring countries like Greece, or Italy, which represented the majority of migrating flows of this period of time; (b) in other European countries, for instance England, or Germany, etc.; and/or (c) in other continents like the USA, or Canada; and (B) short term, for mainly employment purposes only, which is what happened and still happens to present day, in the peripheral border regions, with neighboring countries like Greece, Montenegro, Macedonia, or Kosovo (Carletto et, al., 2004).



***Example of the four main stages of the process of informal construction on agricultural land. From Left to Right**:*

***Figure 50: Step** 1 – Arrival of the first load of stones, squatting a plot of land; **Step 2** – Building a shack, awaiting time in case ownership upon land is proclaimed by actual owner; **Step 3** – Building the first floor, awaiting time in case ownership upon land is proclaimed by actual owner, and in order to collect money (from employment in the migrating city, or from remittances) to build the rest of the house; **Step 4** – Completing the house for the whole nuclear family / **Source:** Aliaj, et al., 2003.*

Therefore the quest for employment and better living conditions manifested through migration, generated on the one hand, a vast abandonment and shrinkage of rural areas, which happened at two scales, (A) within one region itself (displacements from the rural periphery to the more urban central parts), and (B) among regions, from those more peripheral and remote rural regions towards more central and development regions (e.g. from Tropoja, Dibra, Kukësi, Mat, Mirdita, Puka, etc., towards Tirana, Durrësi, Shkodra, etc.), and on the other hand, as a consequence of the first, densification and sprawling of those more central regions of the country occurred, with particular emphasis on the capital

Tirana and its metropolitan area, which in 20 years almost doubled its population size, hosting almost 1/3 of the total national population (Janku et al., 2014). Tirana and its surrounding territory became the largest absorbing region, accounting for nearly 30% of the total in-flow of migrants, with almost no outgoing of internal migration.

Figure 51: (*on the left) Massive migration consequences on the rural agricultural surroundings of Tirana; (on the right) Informality and Sprawling in Bathore (on the Left 1994; on the Right 2007) /* ***Source****: John Driscoll, IIUD*

The Coast was yet another major absorbing area, due to its tourism-based economic potentials and ease of access, with 34% of the total in-flow of migrants, meanwhile the Mountainous and Central regions had respective migration in-flows of 5% and 31%, while being strong expellers at the same time, with a net balance of 18% and 24% of migrants outgoing.

So, in the over all, in the turmoil of all these changes and migratory fluxes, at the bigger regional scale, the single most significant flow of internal migration was that from Center to Center which indeed reflected rural to urban migration within the same region. At the District[64] level on the other hand, the most popular migratory flows were those from the Northern and Southern edges, towards the Coastal Districts and Tirana (Carletto et al., 2004).

[64] Former geographic subdivisions of Albania, which functioned during 1913-2000 (in Albanian 'Rrethe'). There were in total 36 main Districts, which were abolished as administrative units in 2000, being replaced by 12 Counties (in Albanian 'Qarks'), which served as second level of administrative division.

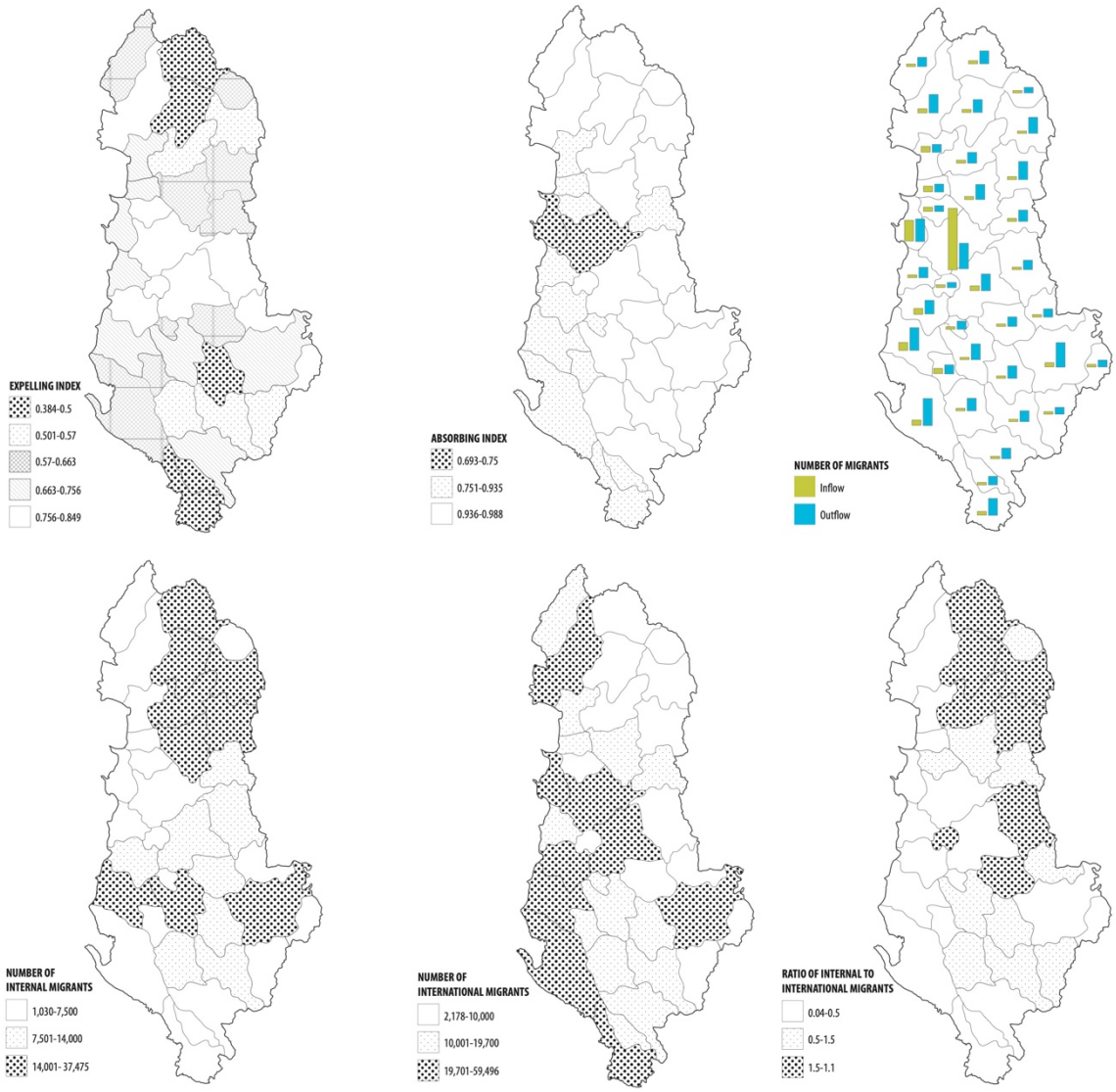


Figure 52: *Expelling index, internal and international migration, 1989-2001 (District Level) /* ***Source:*** *INSTAT, "Population of Albania in 2001: Main Results of the Population and Housing Census", 2002 /* ***Graphic Interpretation:*** *Author*

Figure 53: *Absorbing index, 1989-2001 (District Level) /* ***Source:*** *INSTAT, "Population of Albania in 2001: Main Results of the Population and Housing Census", 2002 /* ***Graphic Interpretation:*** *Author*

Figure 54: *Absolute number of inflows and outflows, 1989-2001 (District Level) /* ***Source:*** *INSTAT, "Population of Albania in 2001: Main Results of the Population and Housing Census", 2002 /* ***Graphic Interpretation:*** *Author*

Figure 55: *Expelling, absolute number of internal migrants, 1989-2001 (District Level) /* ***Source:*** *INSTAT, "Population of Albania in 2001: Main Results of the Population and Housing Census", 2002 /* ***Graphic Interpretation:*** *Author*

Figure 56: *Expelling, absolute number of international migrants, 1989-2001 (District Level) /* ***Source:*** *INSTAT, "Population of Albania in 2001: Main Results of the Population and Housing Census", 2002 /* ***Graphic Interpretation:*** *Author*

Figure 57: *Expelling, ratio of internal to international migration, 1989-2001 (District Level) /* ***Source:*** *INSTAT, "Population of Albania in 2001: Main Results of the Population and Housing Census", 2002 /* ***Graphic Interpretation:*** *Author*

(Map of Districts of Albania, on Appendix 6)

On an economic perspective, international migration produced remittances, which became a crucial component of the Albanian economy and constituted almost 14% of the GDP (as of 2001), representing the largest source of foreign exchange, which was higher than both values of exports and foreign direct investment combined (IMF, 2002), addressing two issues at the same time, improvement of rural poverty, and encouragement and financing of further rural to urban migration[65]. Remittances represented a total of 13% of the total Albanian household income, from which 16% for the urban dwellers, and 11% for the rural ones. Internal rural to urban migration as well, which was fueled mainly by rural poverty (lack of income, insufficient agricultural land, or lack of know-how) resulted in additional income provided by the migratory urban employment. Being able to put to use and take advantage of the rising economies of scale, use infrastructure more efficiently, and generate income for larger masses, cities began to host not only migratory flows of people, but also a growing private sector, which generated nearly 75% of the GDP by 2002, in comparison with the 5% that it did in 1990 (Pojani, 2009). Given the considerable number of people that had migrated towards the capital and its surrounding region, and opportunities that it represented as both, an administrative central region, and rich in various development potentials (e.g. access to services and infrastructure, closeness to productive agricultural areas, etc.), almost 60% of all enterprises in Albania, and 2/3 of foreign enterprises (World Bank, 2007), located in this region, between Tirana and Durrës.

Given all these migration dynamics, in most of its parts Albania was not ready to accommodate everyone, therefore a period of rapid and chaotic urbanization, characterized by the explosion of informal real estate market, appropriation of land and lack of land tenure, unregulated conversion of productive agricultural land into urban land, and sprawling, followed. There were two main reasons that led to this situation: (A) shifting and increase of population due to migration, which increased the demand for housing stock and better living conditions in some parts of the country; and (B) public authorities proving to be incapable of providing legal and affordable housing options (Aliaj et al., 2010).

[65] In a typical situation, the members of a rural household would be organized among them, so to handle both, international migration, which would provide financial capital through remittances, and rural to urban migration, through illegally squatting land nearby bigger urban areas (e.g. today's Kamza, nearby the capital Tirana, which is the biggest conurbation in the country). Remittances would finance the process of building of a new house in the squatted land, which would serve as a common space for the nuclear rural household) (Aliaj et al. 2003).

Therefore, three main periods of urbanization can be distinguished: (A) 1991-1997 the booming of informality and sprawling; (B) 1997-2006 consolidation of informal sector and the emergence of a formal sector; (C) from 2006 on, consolidation of the formal sector and regularization of informal sector (Bertaud, 2006). While the third phase integrated some deal of control and planning practices over urbanization and territorial development, the two first phases were majorly very spontaneous and uncontrolled, taking place with little to no government intervention at all.

Baring with the consequences of the totalitarian communist regime (where all private property got claimed as state property), the uncertainty of land tenure and the lack of a legal framework (as well as the lack of planning and building regulations), made room for massive practices of informal development, and claiming ownership of vacant land in the vicinity and peripheral parts of the main cities. While hosting cities were experiencing land-use changes, densification and informality happening within their inner cores, massive informality was flourishing in their peripheral areas, resulting in massive informal areas with no basic infrastructure, which hosted migrating rural population that brought with them their rural skills and ways of living. Considering that migrants invested all they had into these new developments, including remittances, 'sprawled informal settlements' in Albania, unlike the common understanding of the term, were of much better quality, providing spacious and proper housing for all the family members, despite being informal and with no basic infrastructure, services, or property rights. Therefore, this first phase of urbanization, marked the beginning of a process of subdivision and distribution of state land in smaller private lots, which gave rise to an informal real estate market and created a considerable housing stock.

Consolidation and regularization of the informal sector, together with the emergence of the formal sector, marked the beginning of the second phase of urbanization. Provision of basic infrastructure and services, and development of regulatory plans for some of the sprawled informal areas, together with planned densification projects for the inner-city parts, were some of the main actions taken during this second phase.

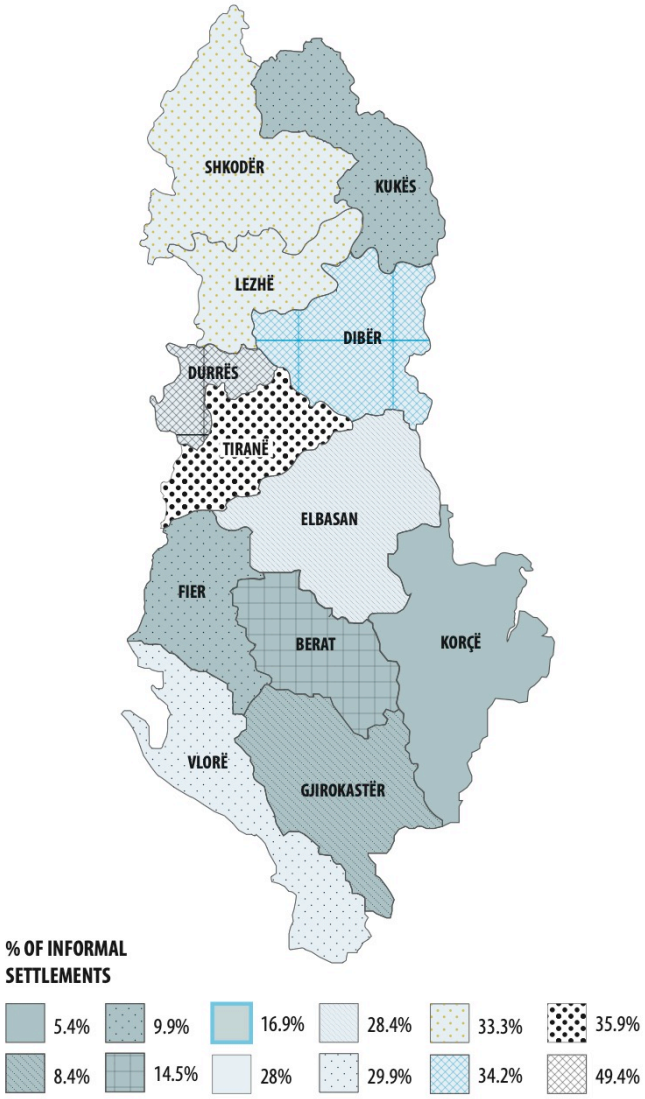
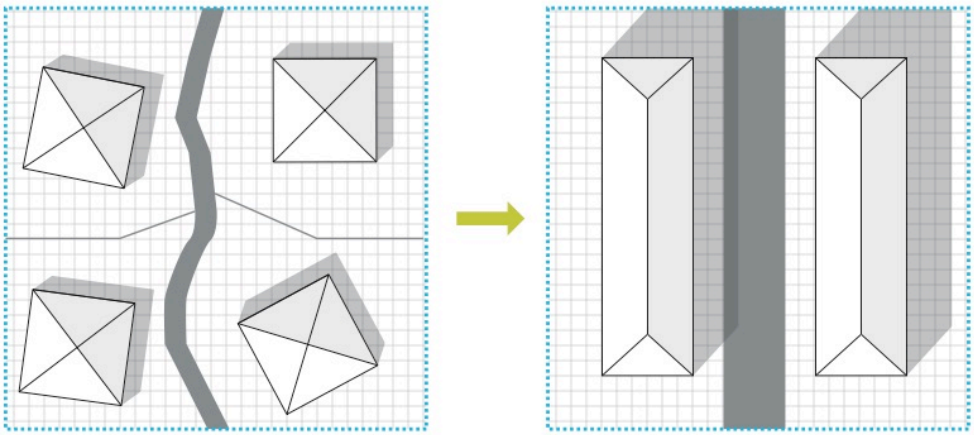


Figure 58: *Ratio of informal settlements to the total number of settlements (Qark Level) /* ***Source:*** *INSTAT, 2013-2014 /* ***Graphic Interpretation:*** *Author*

Nevertheless, sprawling and informality still remained active, within and in the peripheral parts of the main cities, which were still hosting rural to urban migration, especially those cities on the Western plain, along the Coast and in the metropolitan region of the capital Tirana. There were two main categories of informally developed areas: (A) within the urban area and in higher density – typically within the city, or located at the very edges of the city, on what was once considered as state farms, owned by state cooperatives (smaller to medium size farms); (B) outside the urban area, on the periphery and peri-urban areas, and in lower density – typically settled on bigger agricultural areas, which once were state farms (today known as Kamza, Selita and Shkoza in Tirana, etc.). However, most of these developments today have much higher densities, or have transformed into actual cities, or

towns (e.g. Kamza today is an administrative unit on itself, namely Municipality of Kamza). (Maps of approved informal areas at Qark Level on Appendix 7).

By 2006 the informal areas had already grown enough to represent a significant part of the built-up suburban areas of almost all the main cities, containing unusual densities as well. This phenomenon marked the beginning of the third urbanization phase, which was followed by the beginning of the formalization of real estate and the development of a series of regulations and planning laws. From this period on, due to all the informality happening, there was no such thing as certainty over the land tenure, therefore purchasing of any kind of vacant land (especially of productive agricultural character) nearby the peripheral edges of cities, was prohibited. Anyhow, the formal real estate market was still active and aiming to grow, which led the initiation of a 'land recycling' process throughout the country. Developers began to buy plots of single detached houses, either within the city core, or on its peripheral edges, which were majorly informally developed in the past. On these conditions, land tenure if not previously obtained, was then given to the new developers through a process of legalization before the transfer from the informal settlers, to the new developers (Bertaud, 2006).



The figure above shows a schematic representation of the transformation of a low-density informal development into a high-density formal development. The owners of the original houses in the informal development are resettled in the new apartments and are compensated in kind, in the form of free apartments for the house and the land that they contribute to the project. The developer introduces also a formal infrastructure and road right of way as negotiated by the municipality. The originality of the process in Albania is that it happens through negotiations between the informal owners and the formal developer without government involvement and without using eminent domain

Figure 59: *Schematic representation of the land recycling process /* ***Source:*** *Bertaud, 2006, pp.11 /* ***Graphic Interpretation:*** *Author*

Apart from promoting equity and land use efficiency, this process was particularly important for two main reasons: (A) it started a process of formalization of informality, giving authorities a means to control development and collect data, and also formally settle new comers in cities, because migration was still active at the time; (B) while informality which had taken place until that moment had created a new spatiality of both urban and rural characteristics (rural housing with farming activities and productive private gardens, in the premises of an urban environment), and had initiated the transformation of the urban periphery, blurring the very clear cuts between 'urban' and 'rural', the 'land recycling' process facilitated a full transformation and conversion of what was once rural land, into fully developed and serviced urban land (typically of high rise buildings), cutting any sort of connections with the previous rural features and ways of living.

7.1.3 Reforming Territorial Governance and Planning Practice (Territorial Rescaling Approaches) _ the rise of disparities and peripheriality

With sprawling and informality having reached a peak by 2006, in the following years, dealing with the aftermath became the main challenge for the Albanian authorities and professionals. While from 1990 to 2006, spatially speaking, territorial development had been taking place 'here and there', from periphery towards the center, with no control, or regulations, new more complex spatial typologies in the vicinity of bigger urban centers were emerging, while issues like the rise of 'inner peripheries' and a growing rate of 'shrinking peripheries' (typically referred to the remote mountainous and border areas in the North-East, East, and South-East of the country), were becoming relevant at the same time. Phenomena like 'decentralization' (of governance, and at territorial scale), followed by attempts to address matters of 'regional development' and 'regionalization', as well as opportunities for 'polycentrism' and 'polycentric developmen', together with the progress Albania had to make with regard to the European integration, slowly initiated a process of reformation of both, governance and planning. Within their specific operating frameworks, the series of these events have had a direct and indirect impact in the way territories of both characters, urban and rural, have been addressed, leading to spatial configurations, which either manifest stronger urban-rural connections and interconnections, or display disparities between the two.

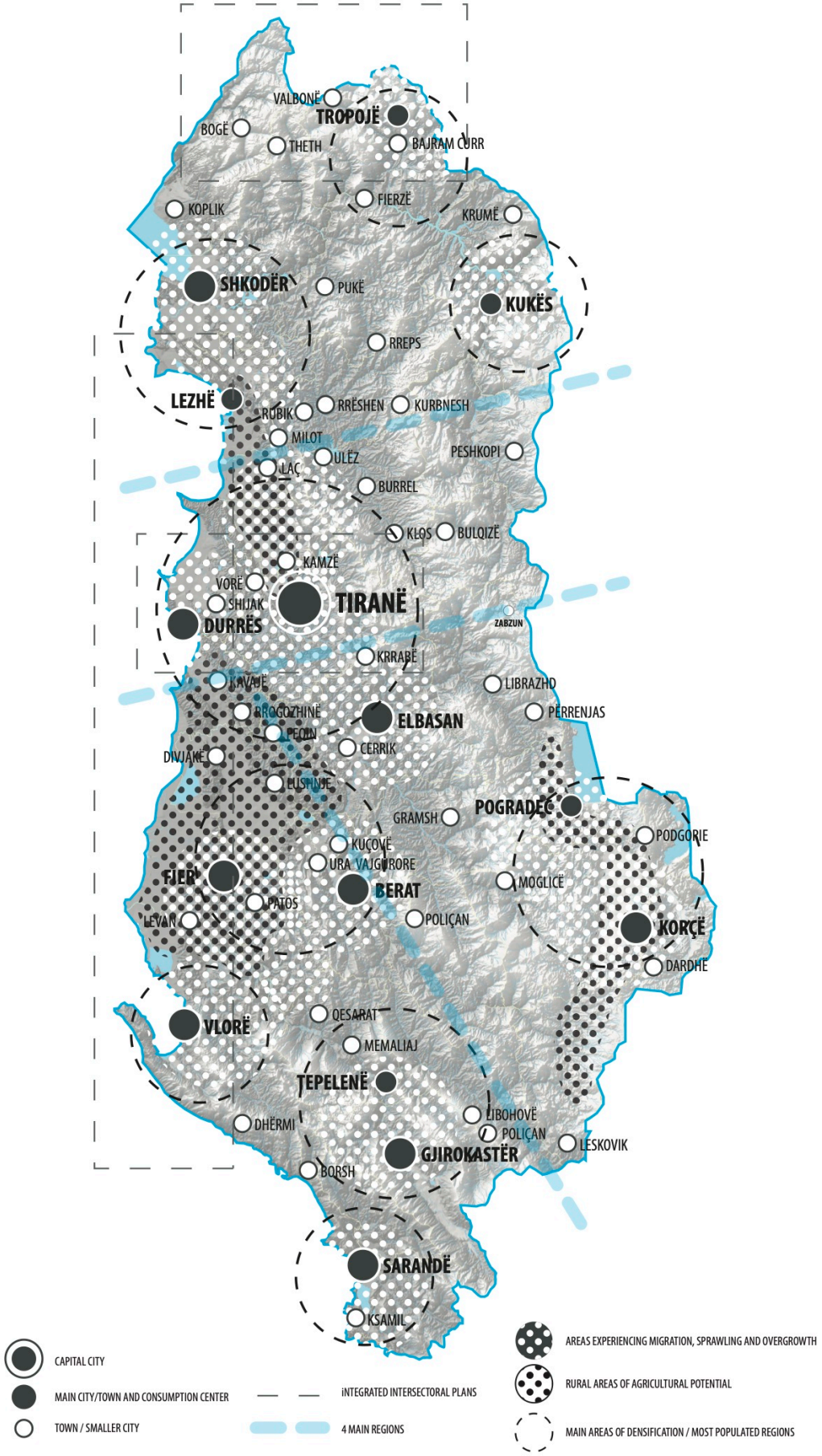


Figure 60: *Territorial Dynamics under the Reformation Processes of both, Territorial Governance and Planning Practice /*

Source: *Author*

- **Planning Legislation and Reforming of Territorial Governance**

In terms of planning legislation, the first two planning laws were introduced in 1993[66] and then 1998[67], both describing general regulations for development, location and architectural guidelines based on land use analysis. Nevertheless, they were still very limited and couldn't quite succeed in recognizing at a larger territorial scale, recent changes such as sprawling, informal development and the issues deriving from the ownership transference, from the state to the private sector. From this period on, until 2006 territorial planning in Albania was mainly based on the 'blueprint' authoritarian planning culture, based on the tradition of 'urbanism', which addressed mainly limited physical objectives only. In 2006 the government acted in reforming legislation, which was influenced by both, international politics, and the bottom up pressure coming from local initiatives. The Legalization Reform and the first national aerial survey (including the implementation of the Geographical Information System, and the national registry of planning initiatives and development permits), took place in 2007, providing an important input in the process of scanning development at a territorial scale, and opening the process of formalization and integration of informal settlements. The informal sprawled areas populating the edges and peripheral parts of cities, in most of the cases conquering rural lands, were finally legally acknowledged and considered into larger territorial development initiatives. Following, in 2009[68], the Albanian parliament approved a new territorial planning law, which marked for the first time a change in the planning paradigm, shifting towards being more comprehensive and strategic, and introducing new spatial concepts and planning instruments, although its implementation was highly dependent on bylaws and specific regulations, which weren't yet fully completed (Çobo and Toto, 2010; Janku et al., 2014). With the reformation of the administrative and territorial reorganization of the country, which took place in 2014[69], consisting in the reorganization of both, local government units and regions, a new planning and territorial development law was introduced. The new law addressed and reflected all these changes, and introduced new analytic tools and

[66] Law No.7693, 06.04.1993, "On Urbanism" (currently abolished).

[67] Law No.8405, 17.09.1998, "On Urbanism" (currently abolished).

[68] Law No.10119, 23.04.2009, "On Territorial Planning" (currently abolished).

[69] Law No. 107/2, 31.07.2014, "On Planning and Territorial Development" (currently on power), and updated as follows: Law No.73/2015 and then again Law No.28/2017.

instruments, which integrated strategic territorial planning in various territorial scales. A General National Territorial Plan was drafted for the very first time, as well as two other Sectoral Plans addressing development in strategic areas like the economic corridor between Tirana and Durrës, and the coastal strip from the Adriatic to the Ionian. These three documents are of great importance, given that for the first time they address matters of development, which go beyond sole administrative borders (the first at national level, and the other two at regional level, although only as functional regions, not administrative ones), including wider territories of complex relations and development dynamics (e.g. development of economy based on industrial activity, development of tourism, etc.).

Reformation of territorial governance, followed by the process of decentralization, has also had a direct impact on the spatial dynamics of territorial development, especially with regard to the changes that sprawling and informality had produced over time in the Albanian territory. While in terms of the spatial restructuring of local development units, over time there has been a shift from decentralization, to centralization (from 373 local units, to 61 – explained below), in terms of levels of territorial governance (from national, to regional, and then local), decentralization has been playing a major role in spatially organizing and distributing competences, for a more comprehensive development at each given territorial scale, and coordination among different scales.

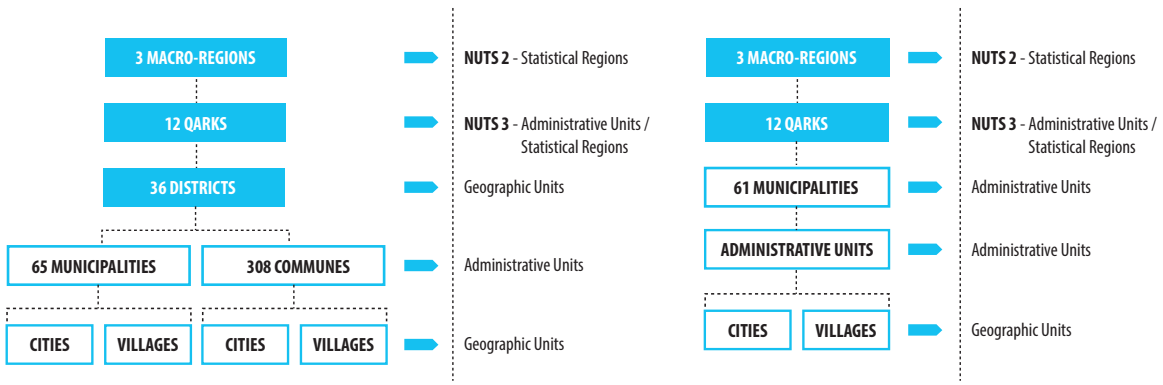


__Table 2:__ Territorial Governance in Albania, before 2015 and after the 2015 Territorial Reform / __Source:__ Author

On this framework, the impact of 'territorial rescaling' over time has been very relevant in terms of producing certain conditions for spatial territorial dynamics to take place, including the impact on urban-rural relationships and the shaping of the spatiality between the two, in what can be considered as the 'urban-rural continuum'. Therefore, the

decentralization of territorial governance, followed by a series of changes in terms of territorial reforms has played a major role in this process. As inherited from before the 1990, and operating in 3 levels of local governance: (i) urban areas like neighborhoods and cities; (ii) rural areas like villages and united villages; and (iii) districts, the Albanian territory was highly fragmented with nearly 2,848 villages, 539 united villages, 306 neighborhoods, 67 cities, and 25 districts (Toto, 2010; Shutina, 2018). This fragmentation, which had translated in two very distinct types of development of urban and rural character, was object of reevaluation in the 2000, as a way to address the territorial changes that had happened during the 10 years of sprawling and informality as well. The new law[70] reorganized the territory in two main levels, from which: (i) the first level, composed by 65 urban areas namely 'municipalities', and 309 rural areas, namely 'communes'; and (ii) the second level, which was represented by 12 qarks, each composed by a specific number of municipalities and communes. The law also recognized 36 districts, which together with the qarks didn't have any governing functions, but rather served for administrative data and statistical purposes, and for monitoring and coordinating development in the lower ties of local governance (Shutina, 2018). Low territorial, economic and institutional efficiency in providing services at the local tie, and territorial disparities reported at various territorial levels, especially among urban and rural areas, were some of the main issues made evident after the 2000 (Shutina, 2018; Shutina et al. 2016; Shutina, 2015; GoA, 2014/a; GoA, 2014/b), leading to two new reforms, the territorial-administrative, and the decentralization of government, both taking place from 2014 to 2016 and resulting in two new laws[71]. Following these changes, the 373 local government units were reorganized in 61 units, which were much larger and more complex than before, and comprised of a mix of both, urban and rural areas, including agricultural and various natural resources. Political representation, efficiency of delivering public services, economy of scale, local self-determination, and administrative historical ties and boundaries, were the main criteria for the spatial re-organization, which happened on the framework of the new territorial and administrative reform (Shutina, 2018). The new configuration imposed several challenges to the local authorities, who had to deal with major legal changes in order to manage the

[70] Law 'On local governments organization and functioning', 8652/2000 (currently abolished), legally set through the law no. 8653/2000 'On territorial administrative subdivision of Albania' (currently abolished as well).

[71] Law no. 115/2014 'On administrative and territorial division of local government units in Albania' and the law no. 139/2015 'On local self-governance'.

sustainable development of their respective territories of mixed typologies. In planning terms as well, they were constraint to plan and coordinate land uses of both urban and rural character, and harmoniously integrate the development of the two, which until then were addressed separately.

- **Regional Development and Regionalization**

A continuous debate on the topic of regional development and regionalization, considering regions as a second tie of territorial governance, has also been active for quite some time, bringing up several proposals[72], yet still lacking concrete actions in implementing the regionalization reform. On the meantime, "the need for an integrated approach in regional development has been widely shared among stakeholders, focusing on how to address spatial disparities and economic growth, and build institutions and institutional processes that are multi-layered and able to deal with the large array of issues in regional development and its governance" (Shutina, 2018: 116; André & Wallet, 2016). Therefore, the many attempts for regionalization and regional development, although never fully executed, represent very important processes, with respect to development dynamics, which at a territorial perspective go beyond just municipal borders, in much larger territories, with major impact on different systems and types of environments.

Regarding **regional development**, the first regional development reports/strategies were drafted during 2002-2005 with the support of the UNDP, based on the 12 qarks (Map of Qarks of Albania, on Appendix 6), considering each of them as a regional unit. In 2007, the Council of Ministers approved a national regional development strategy (addressing sustainable socio-economic development and regional disparities) (METE, 2007), followed by the drafting of a regional development law. Given that both these documents recognized qarks as the designated territories for the implementation of regional development, and considering that institutionally qarks were still very weak, with no actual decision-making power, none of these documents was pushed forward for endorsement, or implementation. Following, in 2009 the UNDP led the implementation of a new regional

[72] Regional Development Reforms have been undertaken several times, starting in 2007, 2009, 2011 and recently in 2016 (currently abolished). Since then, no new law has been made public yet, although the 4 functional regions introduced in 2016 still remain for planning purposes.

development program, namely *Integrated Support to Decentralization*, which aimed at capacity building and institutional strengthening at national level, as well as identify regional disparities at qark and local levels. On the framework of this program, it was highlighted that disparities were indeed a valid phenomenon, not only at regional level and between regions, but in particular within each region, among different local government units, especially between urban and rural areas (Shutina, 2018). In 2014, a Regional Management Mechanism was proposed by the government, as an answer to the needs for addressing regional development. Four regional development/ management areas were introduced, each composed of 3 qarks, and without any administrative competences. "These four regions were officially recognized in 2015 by the Council of Ministers, being followed by a decision to separate regional development as a policy, from regionalization, and instead pursue the regional development reform in tandem with EU regulations" (Shutina, 2018: 122; Imami et al., 2018: 12;).

In terms of further events on the framework of the **regionalization process**, in 2016 with the approval of the General National Territorial Plan, the government introduced four main functional regions, organized based on similar geographical features and proximity, interdependencies among ecosystems, economic relations and socio-historical ties. Nevertheless, these regions were not meant to be administrative, therefore other alternative proposals based on sectorial regionalization options have been introduced, among which, two main proposals based on tourism potentials and agricultural productive areas. Other proposals introduced by Co-PLAN[73], include the division of the Albanian territory in 4 and 6 regions, based not only on statistical regions, economic development and poverty indicators, but above all by considering also historical traits, socio-economic ties and requests made by various different local stakeholders. Nevertheless, despite all these attempts, both issues, "regional development and regionalization still remain out of any policy discourse, and without further due" (Shutina, 2018: 122).

[73] **Co-PLAN** is a local non-government organization, which has worked for years on issues territorial development in Albania, giving a major contribution especially regarding regionalization and regional development.

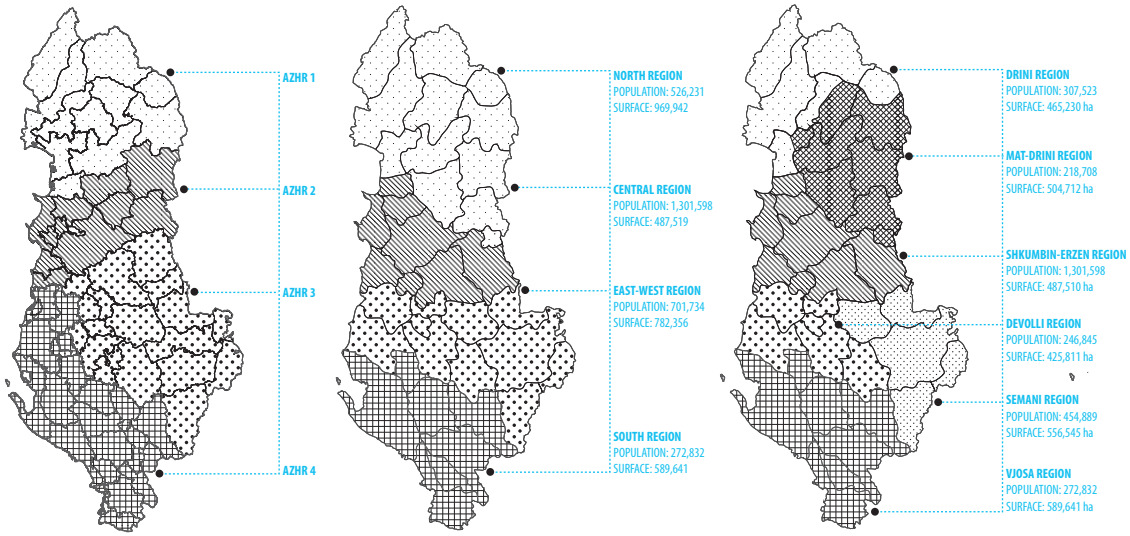


Figure 61: *Proposals for Regionalization: Government's proposal for 4 Regional Development/ Management Areas /* ***Source:*** *Government of Albania /* ***Graphic Interpretation****: Author*

Figure 62: *Proposals for Regionalization: Co-PLAN's proposal for the division of the Albanian territory in 4 regions /* ***Source:*** *Co-PLAN /* ***Graphic Interpretation:*** *Author*

Figure 63: *Proposals for Regionalization: Co-PLAN's proposal for the division of the Albanian territory in 6 regions /* ***Source:*** *Co-PLAN /* ***Graphic Interpretation:*** *Author*

On the other hand, while issues of territorial governance were being sorted out, the various spatial typologies taking place at territorial scale, had long started the departure from monocentric and spatially contained models only, towards dispersed territorial structures. Considering the impact of the main urban areas over their surrounding territories, in terms of being centers of agglomeration for both, economic activities and provision of services, administrative borders were no longer strict containers of development, especially in spatial terms. Such phenomena, partly already fueled by sprawling and 'leapfrogging' informal developments (considering both, settlements and economic activities), but also due to fragmented urbanization and the constant changes in terms of 'territorial rescaling', made a case of 'fuzzy boundaries', which not only broke away from the urban-rural dichotomy, leading to desaturated differences between the two, but also encouraged an overexploitation of the centrally located areas, majorly manifested on the western lowland, where most of the economic resources and potentials were to be found.

- **Territorial Polycentricity – An Academic and Research Based Approach to Territorial Rescaling**

These new spatial dynamics had also led to a new topic of discussion and research among professionals: territorial polycentricity[74], which among others was as well a main objective rooted in the EU key policy documents, for sustainable territorial development by addressing both, economic growth through competitiveness, and reduction of disparities through cohesion policies. According to the ESDP, "applying the objective of polycentricity, would address issues like achieving regionally balanced development, getting new perspectives regarding peripheral areas through a more integrated polycentric network, provision of efficient infrastructure and services, overcome disparities and disbalanced development in border areas, develop functional complementary relations between urban and rural areas despite their size, resolve similar and common problems between cities despite their distance, and promote further cooperation through strategic projects of infrastructure and environmental character" (Shutina, 2018: 122-123; CSD, 1999: 20-21). Through the polycentric index, and its sub-indices of morphological and functional polycentricity, there can be identified different levels of territorial polycentricity (ESPON, 2005; ESPON 2017).

By employing the methodology of ESPON (2005) project *Potential for a Polycentric Development in Europe*, in 2015 Co-PLAN introduced a study on the potentials for territorial polycentricity in Albania, which was as well used as a base for developing ideas and proposals on 'development regions' (also introduced above). "Based on this methodology[75] at first, a series of Functional Urban Areas FUA), the 45 minutes isochrones (from FUA centers), the Potential Urban Strategic Horizons (PUSH), and the Potential Integration Areas (PIA) as the overlay of the PUSH areas, were recognized. Secondly, morphological (whose index is composed of three sub-indices: size, location, and connectivity) and

[74] **Polycentrism** refers to a political or cultural system, which is made of various centers, especially centers of authority or control. "The concept was first introduced as an objective of the ESDP European Spatial Development Perspective in 1999, with the argument that polycentric urban systems are more efficient, more sustainable and more territorially balanced than both, monocentric territorial structures (all activities concentrated in one centre), and dispersed territorial structures (all activities equally distributed over space)" (Shutina, 2019: 122-123; ESPON, 2005).

[75] Calculations and mapping were made using INSTAT data from the 2011 Census, and its definitions of the Urban Core, Urban Agglomerations and commuters' catchment areas in Albania, including the 1km^2 grid (raster cells). Slight changes were made to the ESPON (2005) methodology, given the very different territorial structure of the Albanian territory and urban settlements, especially in terms of area and population size, in comparison with the other 27 EU member states, on which ESPON has applied the methodology on (Shutina, 2019, p.125-126).

functional polycentrism[76] was assessed, through seven indicators/indexes in each case, at national and FUA level" (Shutina, 2018: 125).

According to Shutina (2018), within the **morphological polycentrism**, the *size index* is composed by indicators like the GDP per capita and population. Therefore, as a result of this analysis, turned out that Albania is still a very monocentric country, where 26% of the national population, and 36% of the country's GDP is concentrated in the FUA of the capital Tirana, with respective primacy rates of 1.1, and 1.96. On the other hand, the *location index,* which is based around that argument that in a polycentric urban system, the main urban centers are equally spaced from each other, rather than being clustered on one specific part of the territory, indicated a moderate polycentrism, which means, Albania has a generally uniform spatial distribution of urban centers, therefore the FUAs' centers are uniformly distributed throughout the country (the reason for such distribution is rather rooted in historical political processes, which have impacted territorial development and its spatiality, rather being intentionally addressed for polycentrism purposes). According to Co-PLAN's study, considering the uniform distribution of urban centers within their FUAs' service areas, does not indicate good polycentric development, but rather good opportunities to develop a polycentric network in Albania. Lastly, the *connectivity index,* which suggests that there should be a functional division of labor among urban centers, with short and efficient interaction channels between them, is measured through the potential accessibility that each urban core in a FUA has with the rest of the FUAs in the country. Therefore, an urban core's accessibility is higher, the higher the population or GDP it manages to reach in other urban cores is, and the fastest the reaching channels are (which translates in travel time and costs). Based on this index, Albania has a connectivity of 72.2, which demonstrates weak policentricity patterns, and high polarization of national territorial structures. The study also proved that the FUAs of urban cores like Tirana, Laç, Durrës and Lezhë, have overlapping areas of influence, demonstrating their higher potential for polycentrism within their common territory, resulting in a polarized network, in comparison with the rest of the country (Shutina, 2018). As a conclusion, in terms of morphological polycentricity, according to Shutina, in the overall, Albania is a polarized

[76] "Morphological polycentrism has been analyzed through the construction of indexed and sub-indexes as defined in the ESPON methodology, while the functional polycentrism, due to low availability of data, has been conducted by taking in consideration 6 out 7 respective indicators, which ESPON addresses" (Shutina, 2019: 127).

country, being extremely polarized in terms of economic potentials (GDP and population). Given this argument, as long as key economic potentials remain located only within areas like Tirana, Durrës and Laç, there are slim chances for polycentrism, with regional disparities and lack of territorial cohesion being promoted instead.

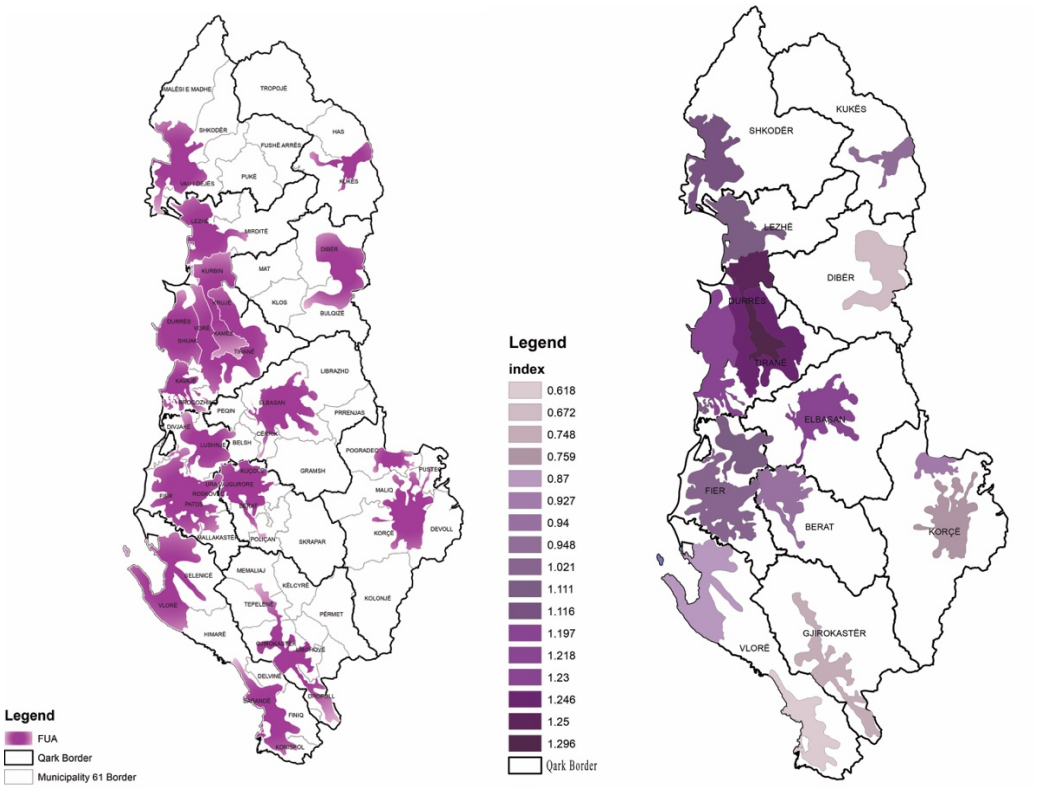


*Figure 64: Map of the functional areas in Albania (FUAs) / **Source:** Shutina, 2018: 126-134*

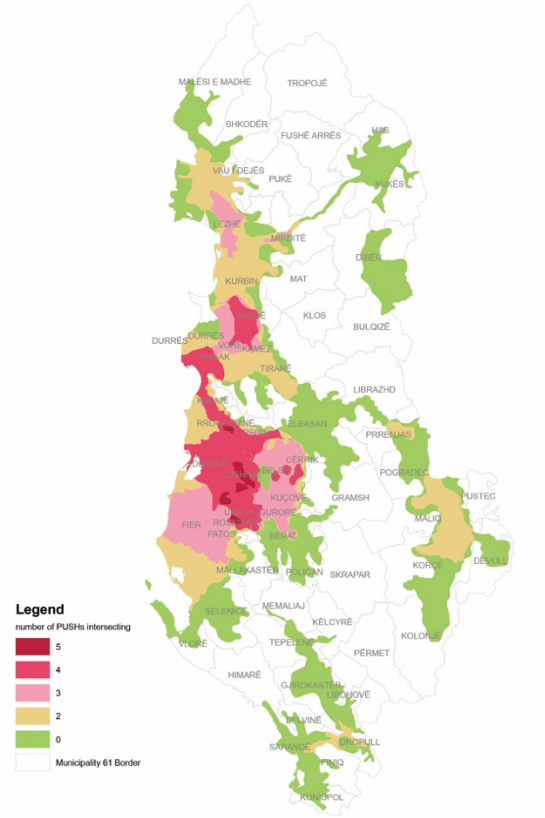
*Figure 65: Potential accessibility of FUAs (Index) / **Source:** Shutina, 2018: 126-134*

In terms of **functional polycentricity**, which includes identifying the functional specialization of each FUA, 6 main indicators have been taken in consideration: (i) decision-making in public sector (from which, with the exception of Tirana as a center of governmental duties for the whole country, none of the other FUAs has any particular differentiation in terms of specialization) ; (ii) decision-making in the private sector (this second indicator takes in consideration the ability of big companies to influence development in the urban system, and vice versa, the ability of developed urban systems to attract big companies to cluster around them; therefore, out of 50 most important and biggest companies in the whole country, 28 are located in Tirana, and 12 in Durrës, emphasizing once again, the high concentration of development activities, and consequently the highest decision-making level of the private sector, mainly in the

metropolitan area of Tirana and Durrës); (iii) population (population is directly related with the intensity and diversity of economic activities, and services and activities provided within a lived area, therefore considering that 1/3 of the total population of the country is located in the metropolitan area of Tirana and Durrës, their respective overlapping FUAs are dominant again); (iv*)* tourism (Albania has a range of touristic potentials throughout its territory, but it lacks behind in terms of touristic facilities and road infrastructure; in terms of private investment regarding touristic hosting facilities/ hotels, most of it it's concentrated along the coastal areas/ FUAs with nearly 70%, only 11% in the north of the country, and the rest concentrated in the metropolitan area); (v) industry (considering the GVA, Gross Value Added, the strongest FUAs in terms of industries are those of Elbasan, Fier, Shkodra and Durrës, which can lead to potentials for further urban transformations within these areas); and (vi) knowledge (the number of institutions of higher education, and students following higher education was calculated, resulting in the FUA of Tirana having the highest concentration, in comparison with the other FUAs; while in some other FUAs the distribution of institutions and students was more or less uniform, the quality of these institutions and their related services, didn't follow the same uniformity across the country) (Shutina, 2018: 139-144).

Polycentric morphological and functional analysis have proven that despite its dynamic changes in terms of spatial territorial development, Albania still remains a very polarized territorial structure, with Tirana and the metropolitan area of Tirana and Durrës as main leads. Nevertheless, Shutina (2018) argues that the results represent only a specific situation and time (within which the study has been carried out), and that the potentials that the stakeholders and the Albanian territory poses, might unlock many opportunities for a more balanced territorial polycentricism. The Potential Urban Strategic Horizons (PUSH areas) and the Potential Integration Areas (PIA) for each FUA, were identified for the purpose of the study as well, taking in consideration the respective 'work catchment areas', which can be reached within a 45 minutes road trip by public transportation (namely, the 45 minutes isochrones, also shown on the map below). "Outlining these isochrones, especially after the approximating to municipal borders, made possible the identification of those key potential areas (the PUSH areas) with more advantageous opportunities for functional integration and developing synergies, within the polycentric structures. PIAs then came as a result of the further integration of all the identified PUSH areas" (Shutina,

2018: 144-148). These analyses proved that nearly 23% of the whole country (mainly the secluded, less accessible mountainous regions and border areas of the country), which translates in 20% of the municipalities, do no result to be covered by any of the PUSH areas. On the other hand, centrally located municipalities like Tirana, Durrës, Fier and Lushnje yet again proved to be highly advantageous, which can be as a result of the overlap of several indicators like geographical centrality, presence of infrastructure, agglomeration of economic potentials, concentration of population, and provision of the majority of services within their respective areas. What Shutina highlights as a very interesting result of the study, is the identification of those 'inner peripheries' (municipalities like Kruja, Shijak, Peqin, Lushnja, Belsh, Cërrik, Roskovec and Ura Vajgurore), which despite being some of the smallest, less developed municipalities, located at the periphery of major urban centers, constituting only 11% of the total population of the country, represent territories of overlapping PUSH areas, hence resulting in being very strategically located (within the commuting area of 5 main neighboring FUAs / urban cores) and highly potentiated for being functionally integrated within their respective polycentric urban systems (either by providing additional functions and services, or by offering alternative and diverse functions and services, which due to density and congestion, the main neighboring urban cores can't offer).



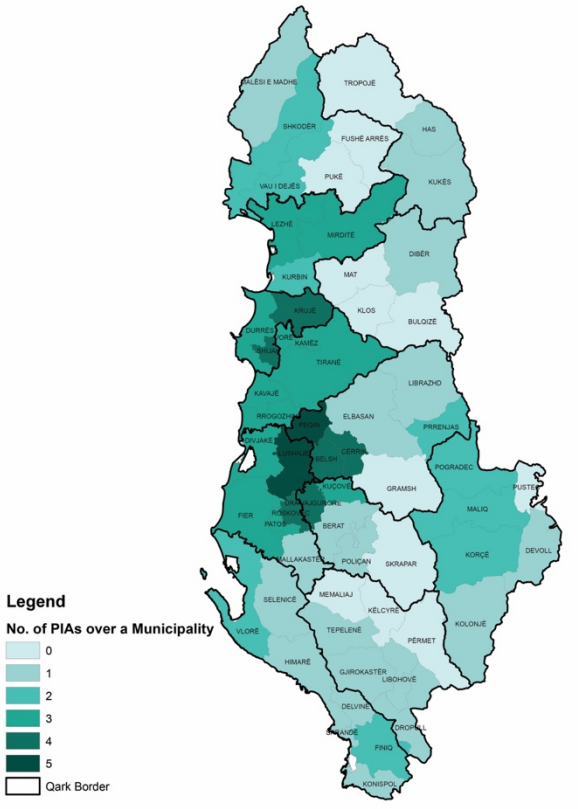


Figure 66: *Potential Urban Strategic Horizon areas (PUSH, intersection 45 minutes isochrones) /* ***Source:*** *Shutina, 2018: 146-147*

Figure 67: *Potential Integration Areas (PIA, at municipality 61 level) /* ***Source:*** *Shutina, 2018: 146-147*

In conclusion, it's important to point out that the mix of top-down and bottom-up pressure for reforming territorial governance and planning practice, has indeed facilitated a process of bringing issues of 'territorial planning and development' officially on the table, and has made possible the shift in the planning paradigm, departing from only small scale planning (either municipal, or neighborhood), to larger scales like regions, national and/or cross-sectoral, with the scope of capturing development potentials, which operate in various scales, and produce hybrid spatialities, which cannot be defined within sole categories only (strictly urban, or strictly rural). While sprawling and informality caused unprecedented overexploitation of land and major changes of land uses, they also promoted and made room for new spatial behaviors, which broke strict municipal borders, making a case of 'fuzzy borders' and 'fuzzy territories', within which urban-rural relationships have been manifested differently. The above studies of 'regionalization', 'regional development' and 'polycentrism' provide data and trends regarding the dynamics that guide these relationships, emphasizing the impact, interdependences and interconnections of main urban cores (as areas of concentration of human and financial capital) over their surrounding and/or neighboring urban and non-urban territories, outlining some first important spatial trends, in which the urban-rural continuum can be framed and studied further.

7.2 **Sorting 'Urban' and 'Rural' in Statistical Means** (on the Framework of the European Integration Process)

On the framework of the European integration process, and considering the impact that the adoption of European legislation, directives and policies will have, especially on a territorial perspective, taking measures in terms of spatial planning has been one of the main tasks for the Albanian authorities, albeit still not properly addressed. Although spatial planning per se is not an EU competence, hence it hasn't and won't be part of the negotiations, various EU sectorial policies have direct impact on both grounds, governance

and territory. Until now Albania has made some minor progress in terms of Europeanization of spatial planning structures (legislation and institutions) and instruments (territorial plans and their contents), nevertheless it has been rather lagging behind in terms of the planning practice, and contextualization of policies, directives, and legal reforms. Given that Europeanization as a process itself is more complex than just the formal adoption of EU planning legislation and policies, tackling cultural traits and the ways societies work above all, in order to make it happen properly, reforming planning practice for a more open, transparent and functional system should be at the forefront of this process (Allkja, 2018).

As part of this integration process, and in order to comply to European requirements for providing comparable data regarding the designation of urban-rural areas and urban-rural population, for the first time in 2014 Albania tried to adopt the 'new urban rural regional typology' introduced by the European Commission in 2011, which built on the Albanian law[77] of classifying urban and rural population based on their living environments, urban or rural areas. Using the methodology introduced by the EC and the 1 km^2 population density grid, based on population registers or other detailed data sources deriving from actual administrative criteria[78], and backed up by statistical data provided through the 2011 Population and Settlements Census, INSTAT made a first classification of urban-rural population in Albania, making possible a comparison between national and regional levels. A second study regarding the typology of communes and municipalities, followed on the same year, with the aim to offer a practical tool for better understanding the spatial dimension of the Census results, as well as for analyzing the spatiality of the urbanization process in Albania, through the use of concepts like agglomerations and metropolitan areas. The output of the study consisted on identifying typologies and sub-typologies of both realms, municipalities (urban) and communes (rural).

[77] Law no.8652, dated 31.07.2000, on "Organization and functioning of local governance", and Law no. 8653, dated 31.07.2000, on "Administrative territorial division of local government units" (both Laws are currently abolished).

[78] By the time, the Territorial Reform hadn't taken place yet, therefore local administrative units were still categorized as "urban" (municipalities), and "rural" (communes).

With the Territorial Reform and the change of Local Governance Law[79] taking place in 2015, both these classifications are no longer relevant at present time, and no further updates, or attempts to make new classifications, have been made. Nevertheless, taking in consideration that the new introduced LGUs are bigger and more complex (reorganized from municipalities 65 of urban character and 308 communes of rural character, to 61 larger municipalities of mixed characters), including a mix of territories, previously classified as urban and/or rural, both these studies can still give some hints (albeit no longer legally defined, but only for research purposes), regarding the spatial distribution of urban and rural areas within each of these LGUs and their sub-typologies, in order to identify cases where the urban-rural continuum is relevant, or where chances for it to take place, are higher.

7.2.1 An Urban-Rural Classification for Albania – 2014

Within the scope of the EC's methodology, of identifying regional units for statistical purposes, INSTAT disseminated census data by administrative division, hence forming NUTS2 and NUTS3 regions[80] by using districts and districts agglomerations, and made a new urban-rural population classification, based on Eurostat statistical concepts and definitions, employing the 'new urban-rural regional typology'. Classifications were based on the number of population and population density, and the main concepts used were those of: (i) 'rural cell network', defined as all the cells outside the urban clusters; (ii) 'urban agglomerations', defined as continuous cells (including the diagonals), with a density of at least 300 inhabitants per km^2, and a minimum of 5,000 inhabitants; and (iii) 'high density agglomerations', defined as continuous cells (without diagonals and with no intermediate spaces), with a density of at least 1,500 inhabitants per km^2 and a minimum of 50,000 inhabitants (INSTAT, 2014/a).

[79] Law no.139/2015, "On Local Governance" (currently in power).

[80] Albania is currently divided into 3 statistical regions corresponding to NUTS2 level, and 12 districts corresponding to NUTS3 level. All 12 districts of the NUTS3 level are administrative regions, whereas the 3 tier NUTS2 regions are: (a) The North Region, which includes the districts of Dibra, Durrësi, Kukësi, Lezha and Shkodra; (b) The Central Region, which includes the districts of Elbasan and Tirana; (c) the South Region, which includes the districts of Berat, FIer, Gjirokastra, Korça and Vlora. These statistical regions got approved by Eurostat in April 2011.

- **The Cell Network Based Approach for the Distribution of Census Data**

Cell network statistics are statistics that geographically refer to a grid system in a Cartesian coordinate network. The European Forum for Geography and Statistics (EFGS) and Eurostat proposed an adoption of the European cellular network system, for a multi-purpose, inter-European design standard. Therefore, the cell network is based on *ETRS89 Azimuthal Equal-Area,* a designed coordinative system, and is hierarchically defined in metric coordinates at power of 10.

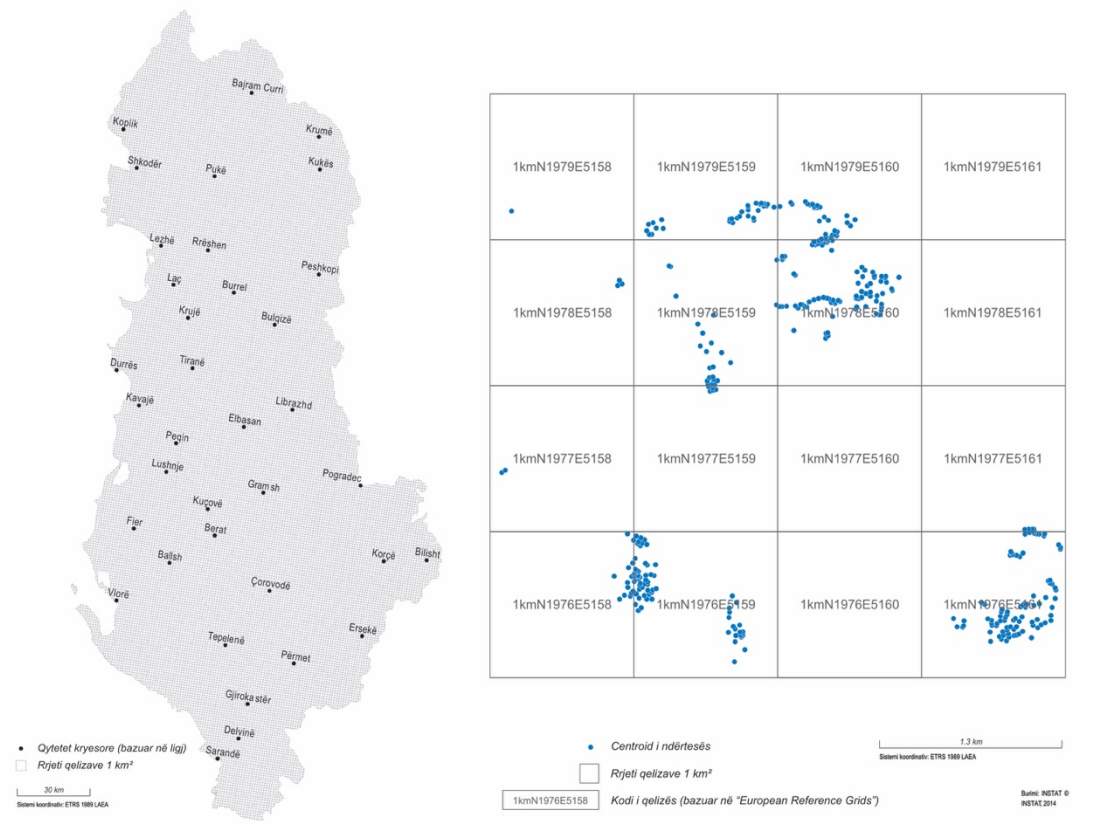


Figure 68: *1x1 km2 cell network for Albania /* ***Source:*** *INSTAT, 2014/a: 18-19*

Figure 69: *Building Centroids and the 1x1 km2 cell network /* ***Source:*** *INSTAT, 2014/a: 18-19*

The resolution of this cell grid starts with 1m, 10m, 100m, 1,000m, 10,000m, to end with 100,000m. A 1x1 km^2 cell network dataset, which is in accordance with the INSPIRE principles[81] and covers EU and EFTA countries, including EU candidate countries (with Albania being one of them), was developed as well (INSTAT, 2014/a). Adopting this methodology for Albania, as a first step the 1x1 km^2 cell network was developed for the

[81] INSPIRE (2007), EU "Directive 2007/2/EC establishing an Infrastructure for Spatial Information in the European Community", http://inspire.ec.europa.eu/.

whole Albanian territory, producing a table of attributes, which contained a unique ID for each cell. There were 29,197 cells in total. As a second step, it was aimed to aggregate the Census population data within each of these cells, organizing information according to the data on settlements. Additional Census data was distributed according to each of these cells, as well.

- **Defining and Classifying Urban/Rural areas at a Regional Level based on the Cell Network**

The Albanian law, which back then classified population into urban and rural, did not provide any details regarding the arguments used for making this particular classification. On the other hand, having classified LGUs into 'municipalities' (of urban character), and 'communes' (of rural character), and given that many municipalities were made of an urban center (named as the city) and its surrounding rural realm (made of several villages), the lack of clear boundaries between these different subdivisions within units, made classification of urban and rural areas, and consequently identification of urban and rural populations a bit more challenging (Urban areas defined by law in Albania on Appendix 8). Nevertheless, based on the 2011 Census data, in 2012 INSTAT made an estimation of an urban population (living in cities – urban areas) of nearly 1,347,280 (47,7%), and rural population (living in villages – rural areas) 1,474,697 (52,3%).

Further on, based on the EU's 'new urban-rural regional typology', two criteria were taken in consideration: (i) the cell network of 1km^2, with a density of at least 300 inhabitants; (ii) the grouping of previously identified cell networks in bigger units (using spatial continuity and proximity as arguments) with a density of at least 5,000 inhabitants. The second criteria, which grouped 1km^2 cell networks of higher densities together in larger units, was used to define the 'urban areas' (in line with this classification, the urban population was considered to be that population, which inhibited these urban areas). There were identified 1,574 1km2 cell networks of at least 300 inhabitants, which were after grouped into bigger units based on their spatial continuity and proximity, as shown in the figure below. Out of this total, 575 cells resulted to have spatial continuity and were proximate to other cells of at least 300 inhabitants, forming 37 larger units with at least 5,000 inhabitants, considered as 'urban agglomerations', which also represented the Albanian urban population. The rest

of the cells, which had a density of less than 300 inhabitants were considered as rural areas. As a result of this study, urban population equaled 1,642,359 inhabitants (58,2%), and the rural one 1,179,618 inhabitants (41,8%). These urban rural areas were after used to classify statistical regions according to the NUTS3. Each of the 37 urban agglomerations was combined with the existing geographical and administrative units (INSTAT, 2014/a).

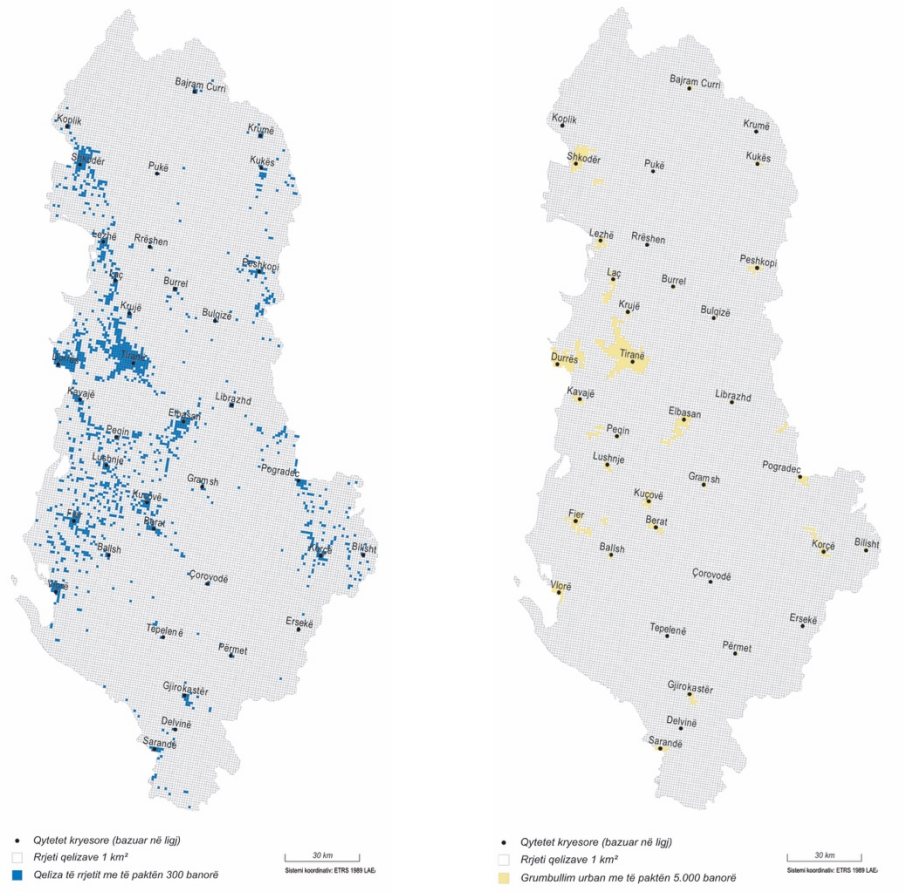


Figure 70: *Cell network with at least 300 inhabitants per km2 /* ***Source:*** *INSTAT, 2014/a: 27-28*

Figure 71: *Urban agglomerations in Albania /* ***Source:*** *INSTAT, 2014/a: 27-28*

According to this data, and based on the new EU typology for the NUTS3 statistical regions, for Albania, only the area of Tirana resulted being a predominantly urban area, where the rural population was less than 20% of the total population (INSTAT, 2014/a). Durrës and Vlora were classified as intermediate regions, with a rural population between 20- 50% of the total population, whereas the remaining nine regions resulted being rural or rural-dominated regions, with the rural population of 50% or more of the total population (INSTAT, 2014/a).

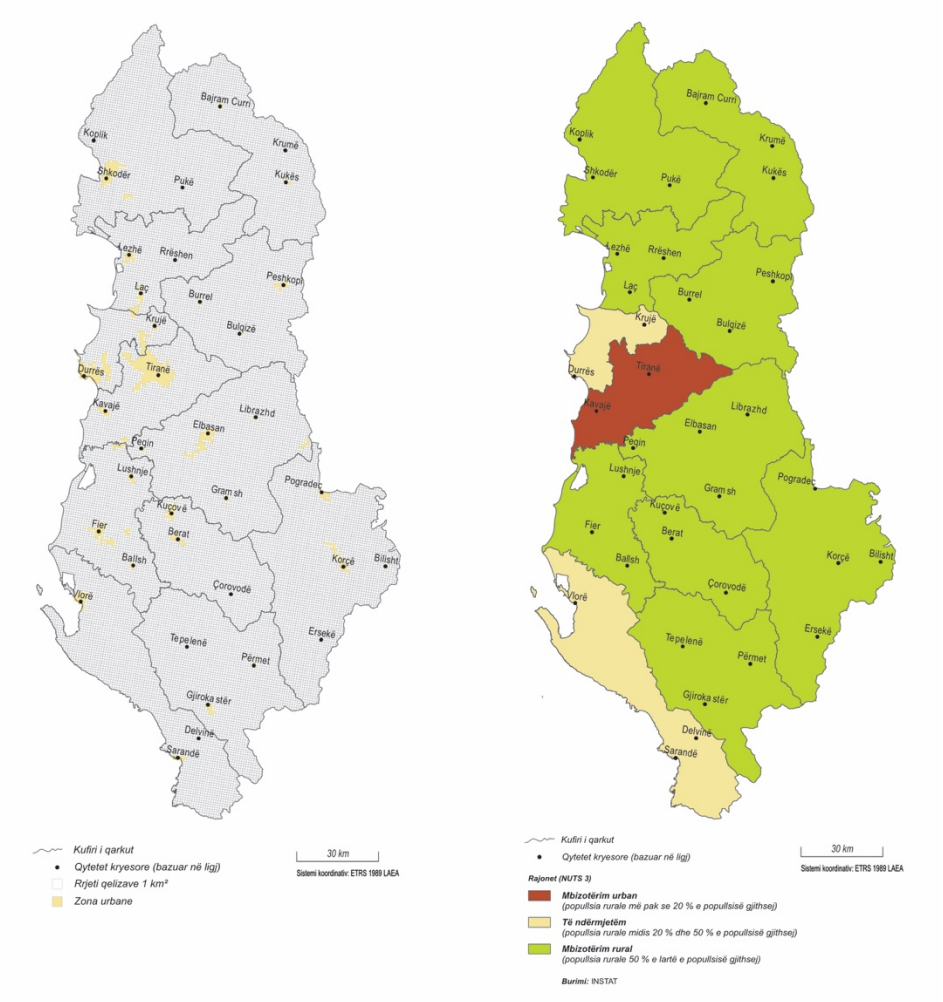


Figure 72: *Urban Areas in Albania by NUTS3 Regions* ***/ Source:*** *INSTAT, 2014/a: 30-32*

Figure 73: *NUTS3 regions in Albania by urban-rural typology* ***/ Source:*** *INSTAT, 2014/a: 30-32*

NO.	QARK	CATEGORY	% OF RURAL POPULATION
1.	BERAT	Rural majority	57.6
2.	DIBËR	Rural majority	72.9
3.	DURRËS	Intermediate	24.7
4.	ELBASAN	Rural majority	55.5
5.	FIER	Rural majority	58.4
6.	GJIROKASTËR	Rural majority	62.2
7.	KORÇË	Rural majority	51.6
8.	KUKËS	Rural majority	75.1
9.	LEZHË	Rural majority	62.4
10.	SHKODËR	Rural majority	51.1
11.	TIRANË	Rural majority	11.5
12.	VLORË	Intermediate	43.9

Table 3: *NUTS3 in Albania according to urban-rural typology* ***/ Source:*** *INSTAT, 2014/a: 33*

- **Defining and Classifying Urban/Rural areas at a City Level based on the Cell Network**

Based on the OECD's classification on the size of cities, a city is: (i) small if its population fluctuates between 50,000-100,000; (ii) medium, 100-250,000; (iii) large, 250,000-500,000; (iv) extra-large, 500,000-1,000,000; (v) extra-extra-large, 1,000,000-5,00,000; (vi) a global city, if it has more than 5,000,000 inhabitants (Dijkstra, 2012). The methodology for this classification followed several criteria, from which: (a) identifying 1km2 cell networks of at least 1,500 inhabitants (high density cells); (b) grouping continuous high density cells in larger units, from which those with at least 50,000 inhabitants were considered as "urban centers"; (c) LAU2 with at least half their population within the urban center, were considered to be part of the city too; (d) a city was then identified through the existence of other facilities like having the presence of administrative services, having at least 50% of its total population living in the urban center, and at least 75% of the urban center lives in the city (Dijkstra, 2012).

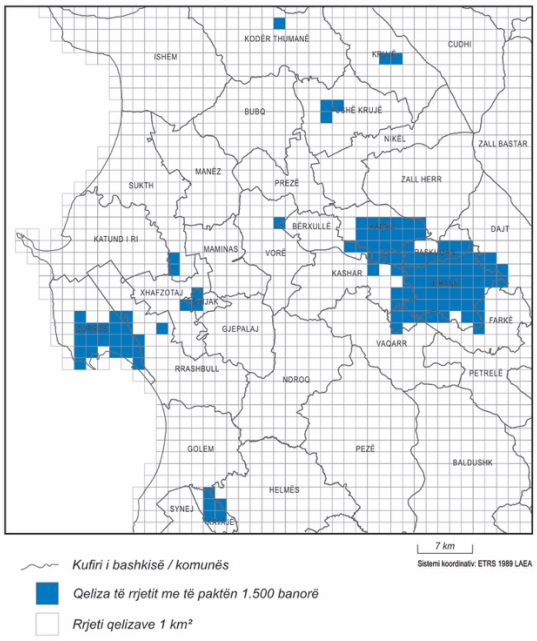


*Figure 74: High density networks in the areas of Tirana and Durrës / **Source:** INSTAT, 2014/a: 34*

Based on this methodology, for Albania: (a) out of the 1km2 cell networks, 266 out of 29,197 cells were identified, having a population of at least 1,500 inhabitants; (b) the grouping of continuous high density cells in larger units of at least 50,000 inhabitants resulted into the identification of 5 main urban centers, which had in total 907,846 inhabitants; (c) municipalities and communes with at least 50% of their population living

within the urban center resulted in 10 (hence, only these 10 municipalities or communes can be classified as 'cities' according to the OECD definition of a city); (d) the municipalities and communes of the 5 identified main urban centers, were then grouped into forming sole areas classified as cities, among which Tirana, Durrësi, Elbasani, Shkodra and Vlora, which were also considered to be 'urban audit cities' (cities of high densities) (INSTAT, 2014/a).

- **Defining and Classifying Urban/Rural areas at a Local Government Unit based on the Cell Network**

The new urban - rural classification of the territory of the EU countries, takes in consideration the local government units of the second level (LAU 2), such as municipalities, communes, or local authorities, although it is based on the 1km2 cell network for making calculations and further classifications. On these terms, LAU2 are classified in 3 main categories: (i) high density areas (cities, or large urban areas), where at least 50% of their population lives in high density agglomerations; (ii) Intermediate density areas (cities, suburbs or small urban areas), where less than 50% of the population lives in the rural cell network, 50% of which lives in high density clusters; (iii) low density areas (rural areas), where more than 50% of the population lives in the rural cell network (INSTAT, 2014/a).

Based on this methodology, for Albania there were identified (i) 5 main high density urban agglomerations, and a total of 10 municipalities and communes with at least 50% of their population living in these 5 main high density urban agglomerations [(a) Tirana, Dajti, Kamza, Paskuqani, Farka, which all together form the city of Tirana; (b) Durrësi, which forms the city of Durrës; (c) Elbasani, which forms the city of Elbasan; (d) Shkodra, which forms the city of Shkodra; and (e) Vlora, which forms the city of Vlora]. The total population of these areas resulted in 957,459 inhabitants, as of the October 2011 data; (b) 57 municipalities and communes, which were considered to be intermediate density areas, with a total population of 730,339 inhabitants; and (iii) the remaining 306 municipalities and communes were considered to be low density areas, given that more than 50% of their population lives in rural cells. The total population of these units was 1,124,179 inhabitants.

7.2.2 Communes and Municipalities Typology – 2014

In continuation to the new urban-rural classifications introduced by INSTAT in 2014, yet another document, in regard to the typology of communes and municipalities was introduced. By incorporating the 2011 Census data, it aimed to offer for the very first time a practical tool for better understanding the spatial dimension of the Census results and the territorial structure of the country, as well as for analyzing the fast and haphazard urbanization process in Albania, and its spatiality (INSTA, 2014/b). Using the scientific interpretation of the institutional distinction between municipalities and communes, and the socio-economic and morphological development of cities, and incorporating the municipal and communal typology developed in 2010, the new study proposed to define urban areas differently, through the use of concepts like agglomerations and metropolitan areas.

As a first step, the typology made a distinction between 'centers' and 'local units in the fringe area' (suburban local units), which were distinguished according to morphological and functional criteria. This made possible defining centers by size, function and/or institutional role; secondly, in order to define agglomerations, a minimum size of the unit was defined, as well as criteria that made possible the attribution of a neighboring local unit to an agglomeration (INSTA, 2014/b). Further on, for defining urban areas within the agglomerations, various morphological and social criteria like density, type of settlements and social groups, were applied.

The economic structure was of various types and it constituted 3 main sectors: (i) predominantly agriculture; (ii) industrial; and/or (iii) service-based, and it was used as an argument to define local units outside the agglomeration as well, which in some cases showed a combination of all the types of economic activities. The empirical analysis on the other hand proved that only some specific types of service sub-sectors were located outside agglomerations, among which: tourism, energy supply and other activities of public administration like health or defense. Within the secondary sector, mining was very often located in rural areas and defined specific economic patterns.

Considering the active and turbulent changes happening in Albania from 2001 to 2011, several phenomena of profound consequences followed, among which: (i) very active internal migration trends; (ii) big disparities in terms of population; (iii) disbalanced construction dynamics, which didn't always resonate to the population fluctuations (e.g. areas suffering major population loss, were also experiencing increase in housing construction); (iv) spatial changes in the industrial sector, which were characterized by the abandonment of the traditional industrial activities and sites, like the metallurgy and other sub-sectors, and the increase of metropolitan-based industrial activities. Reflecting these phenomena into the typologies identified within the 2010 study, the table below previews the results generated in 2014, which produced 14 total typologies:

2010 TYPOLOGY (based on 2001 Census)		2014 TYPOLOGY (based on 2011 Census)	
11	National Capital	11	National Capital
12	Centers of National Importance	12	Centers of National Importance
13	Centers of Service Economy	13	Centers of Service Economy
14	Centers of Industrial Economy	14	Centers of Industrial Economy
21	Lower Status Urban	21	Lower Status Urban Metropolitan Suburban
22	Higher Status Urban	22	Higher Status Urban Metropolitan Suburban
	-	23	Lower Status Suburban
	-	24	Higher Status Suburban
31	Non-Urban Industrial Communes		-
32	Non-Urban Mining/ Energy Oriented Communes	32	Non-Urban Mining/ Energy Oriented Local Units
33	Mixed Industrial and Services Sector Communes	33	Local Units with Mixed Industrial & Service Sector
34	Non-Urban Tourism Oriented Communes	34	Non-Urban Tourism Oriented Local Units
41	Agrarian in Plains	41	Mixed Agrarian in Plains
42	Mixed Agrarian in Mountains	42	Mixed Agrarian in Mountains
43	Agrarian in Plains	43	Agrarian in Plains
44	Agrarian in Mountains	44	Agrarian in Mountains

Table 4: *2010 and 2014 Typologies of Municipalities and Communes /* ***Source:*** *INSTAT, 2014/b: 35*

(Map of 2010 and 2014 Typologies of Municipalities and Communes on Appendix 9)

- **Defining Urban Centers and Urban Areas (Agglomerations) as Urban Typologies**

In order to define an 'urban center', the study referred to the administrative status of the centers of each of the Qarks and/ or Districts. On these terms the 36 Districs were categorized in 4 types: (i) first level, corresponding with Tirana as the National Capital; (ii)

second level, corresponding with seven Centers of National Importance; (iii) third level, corresponding to ten Regional Centers; and (iv) fourth level, corresponding to eighteen Local Centers, among which the smallest having less than 4,000 inhabitants and not always providing all functions linked to their status. The third and fourth levels related specifically to areas, which had been through the process of deindustrialization (Table of Centers, their Population, Institutional Status, Economic Activity and Type on Appendix 10).

'Urban areas' on the other hand were considered to be agglomerations formed around the main 'urban centers'. The process of urbanization, together with the urban growth had created conditions for such spatial dynamics, tightly connecting together, a series of local units with one or more urban centers. Various types of indicators were used to define agglomerations, given that it was a very complex phenomenon:

- **Morphological criteria:** considering (i) continuity of built up area, (ii) density, and (iii) differentiations regarding the building typology, either individual private dwellings, or collective high-rise dwellings.
- **Functional criteria:** considering the interaction between the center and the surrounding local units, through the study of (i) home to work commuting; and (ii) migrations flows and social interactions.
- **Structural criteria:** considering economic activities as distinctive features (e.g. agriculture being more of a rural economic activity, and less or not at all significant in urban areas).
- **Urban dynamics:** considering features like (i) population increase, and (ii) proportion of newly built dwellings. Therefore, relating to growth and change, and higher levels of interactions and overlapping of different activities, features like intensity, urban diversity, and spatial differentiation could also be identified.
- **Institutions:** attribution of central functions of political and administrative character.

According to these main indicators, the final results came up with 17 agglomerations with more than 20,000 inhabitants, grouping 74 local units with an estimate of 1.73 million inhabitants. All the main larger towns (Shkodër, Vlorë, Laç, Korçë, Pogradec, Kavajë, Peshkopi, Gjirokastër, Kukës, Sarandë) formed agglomerations consisting of at least 2 surrounding local units, 5 local units for cities like Lezha, Berat-Kuçova (considered as a bi-

polar agglomeration, because of the tight connections and comparability in size, between the two cities) and Elbasan, 6 for cities like Fier-Patos (a bi-polar agglomeration as well), 9 for Durrës and 16 for Tirana. The agglomerations of Tirana, Durrës, Kavaja, Laç and Lezha turned out to be spatially contiguous. Only Lushnja did not create any agglomeration, given that there were no neighboring local units to be relevant to any of the above criteria, but Lushnja was considered an urban center nevertheless, due to its population of more than 20,000 inhabitants, as of the 2011 Census data (INSTA, 2014/b).

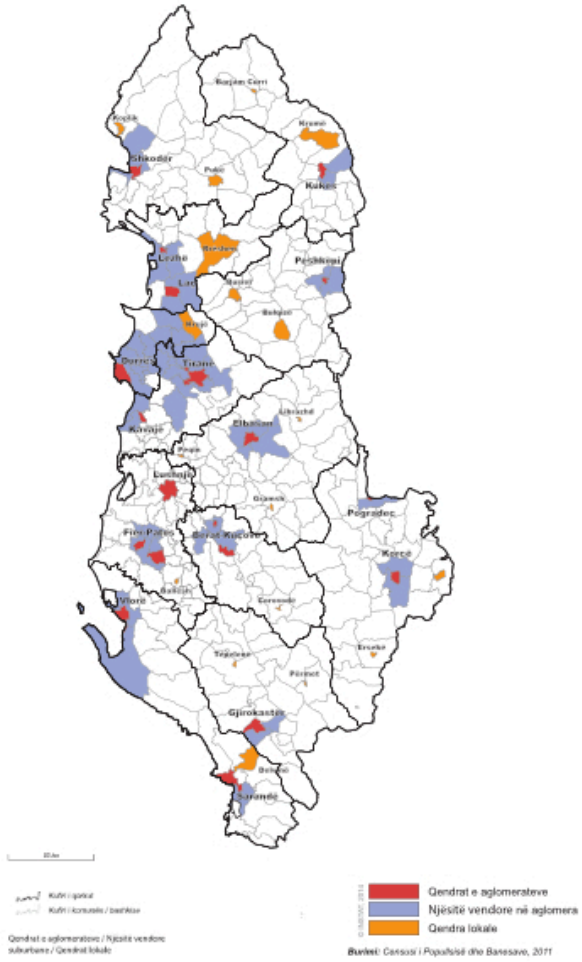


Figure 75: *Urban Agglomerations and Centers /* ***Source:*** *INSTAT, 2014/b: 25*

(Table of Urban Areas – Agglomerations and Population according to the new definition on Appendix 11)

- **Defining Metropolitan Areas as Urban Typologies**

"A metropolitan area is usually a model of the highest economic and social order" (Chambers, 1990: 55/112), a region consisting of a densely populated urban core and its less-populated surrounding territories, among which industry, infrastructure, and housing

are shared (Squires, 2002). Size, economic specialization, or concentration of activities with national and international significance typically define a metropolitan area and/or a metropolis. Based on these definitions and criteria, for the case of Albania, only the agglomerations of Tirana, Durrës and Kavaja together, were relevant for comprising a metropolitan area, and/or a metropolis, due to their spatial continuity, and the commuting flows among them (INSTA, 2014/b). Its total population resulted in 932,110 inhabitants, while the rest of the urban areas in Albania amounted a total of 796,449 inhabitants, and those rural, 1,071,579 inhabitants (all calculations based on the 2011 Census).

- **Defining Non-Urban Local Units as Rural Typologies**

Using the economic structure, non-urban (rural) local units were identified in those areas where the economic sector was heavily based on agriculture, mining, energy production, tourism, and in the mix of services and industry (INSTA, 2014/b).

- **Defining Urban and Rural Sub-Typologies**

As an aggregate of all the analysis and classifications, the study resulted in defining 4 main typologies, 2 for each of the two realms: (i) centers and (ii) local units in the fringe area of agglomerations (suburbia) as 'urban typologies'; and (iii) local units based on services and industries, and (iv) agricultural local units as 'rural typologies' (INSTA, 2014/b).

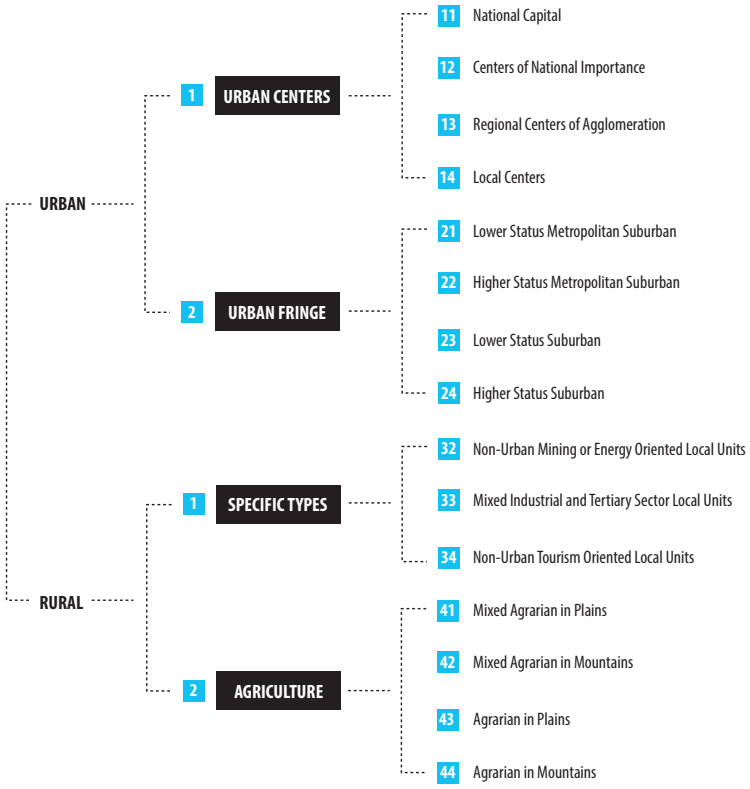


Table 5: *Urban and Rural Typologies /* ***Source:*** *INSTAT, 2014/b*

Referring to INSTAT (2014/b), 'centers' were defined in terms of the administrative functions, considering the centers of each qark and/or district. Four main sub-types of centers were identified, using size as a main criterion, and by considering as well their ability to agglomerate activities. The smallest of these centers, which couldn't generate any agglomeration, were filed under 'local-units'. After identifying urban areas (agglomerations), the local units located in the fringe area of these agglomerations were defined by their proximity and level of interconnections with a nearby urban center. Six main indicators were taken in consideration for defining local units in the fringe area of agglomerations: (i) continuity of built up area, with interruptions of less than 200m; (ii) population density, higher than 250 inhabitants per km2; (iii) percentage of employment based in agriculture, less than 70%; (iv) percentage of newly built dwellings, higher than 30% and considering the period post 2011; (v) population growth; and (vi) intensity of commuting flows, at least 30% of the work force to commute out of the local unit (INSTA, 2014/b). In order for a 'local unit' to be considered as part of the agglomeration fringe, it had to fulfill the first criterion of continuity of built up area, and fulfill at least two other criteria as well. As a result, four main sub-types were identified, considering their socio-

economic features and whether they were part of the metropolitan area or not. Those local units, which didn't belong in any of the urban and suburban types were analyzed taking in consideration their economic structure (dependence on mining and energy more than 5%, agriculture less than 65%, and tourism more than 6%). And lastly, those local units heavily based on agriculture were divided in four main sub-types, based on topography (plains or mountains) and the share that agriculture had in their economy (between 65-84% and more than 84%).

8 CHAPTER 8: Charting Spatial Features of the Urban-Rural Continuum (3 samples within Albania)

8.1 Tracing the Spatiality of the Urban-Rural Continuum in Albania

In order to delineate samples that portray the various features of the spatiality of the urban-rural continuum in Albania, a set of overlaying data and analysis was used. In doing so, was very crucial to consider the very dynamic changes that the Albanian territory has gone through, *from the early 1990's where the first industrial towns were created and agriculture was crucial for the countryside, hence emphasizing the dichotomy between 'urban/city' and 'rural/'countryside'; to the post-centralized economy area, which was very vivid, especially in terms of internal migration, sprawling and informality, leading to the spatial clash among the two realms; to the last decade that has marked a profound change in terms of acknowledging all these territorial changes, and attempting to justly address those through reformation processes, of both territorial governance, and planning legislation and practice,* in order to identify both, (1) change of attitude and perspective towards what has been/ and is considered as urban/rural, or a mix of both; and (2) the spatial production of the dynamic relationships between the two.

Unfolding the complexity of the 'urban-rural continuum' as a phenomenon, requires being aware of two very important components: the change of the soft aspects, which include cultural and behavioral patterns, and the production of space that follows, at a territorial scale. Both, work together and affect one another, but while the first one becomes object

of study in particular of fields like sociology and psychology, the second one concerns planning professionals in particular. Therefore, the following analysis will only consider the second component, restraining the first one at only admitting that some degree of cultural shift among urban and especially rural population has happened, as a consequence of both, local development dynamics and globalization.

On these terms, the 'urban-rural continuum' as production of space was traced through the overlay of four main data-sets: (1) population density; (2) urban/rural classifications; (3) FUAs; and (4) main infrastructure system:

1. **The population density** was extracted by GIS through the 1km^2 cell grid, which is made of 27 ranges, from 10-32 inhabitants per km^2, to 16,245-23,997 inhabitants per km^2.

2. **Urban/Rural classifications,** as introduced by INSTAT (2014/a-b), were used in order to identify continuous areas of moderate to high population density, in order to construct an urban-rural continuum. This was made using the population density grid as explained above, through the delineation of continuous cells (including the diagonals) with at least 308 inhabitants per km^2, forming series of urban agglomerations, and continuous cells (without diagonals and with no intermediate spaces) of at least 1,390 inhabitants per km^2, forming high density agglomerations. Given that the population density grid as introduced above, is not fully compliable to the Eurostat gridiron (which has cells with limits of 300 and 1,500 inhabitants per km^2), and which INSTAT refers to, densities of 308 and 1,390 inhabitants per km^2 were considered as thresholds for the delineation of urban agglomerations and high-density agglomerations.

3. **The FUAs** as compiled by Co-PLAN and introduced by Shutina (2018), were overlaid on the same map. The overlay emphasized how 13 out of 17 FUAs are concentrated on the North-West, West and South-West of the territory, in an almost continuous strip (hinting into interconnections and interdependences among FUAs too). 4 out 17 FUAs are located in a more isolated way, on the Eastern cross-border area of Albania with neighboring countries like Kosovo, Macedonia and Greece.

Historically, this part of the Albanian territory has always been somewhat more isolated, mainly due to its topography and geographical conditions. Nevertheless, these areas have also always had stronger ties with similar areas across the border, therefore, despite being isolated with the rest of the FUAs within the country, their degree of development is as well impacted from their cross-border cooperation.

4. **Overlaying the main road infrastructure** made possible pointing out how important access and road connectivity has been in terms of spatial organization and guiding of development, producing continuous built up area, which at some point have either brought main urban centers closer to each other (the case of Durana), or have created continuous patches with mixed urban and rural features, which represent liminal spaces (thresholds and transitory spaces).

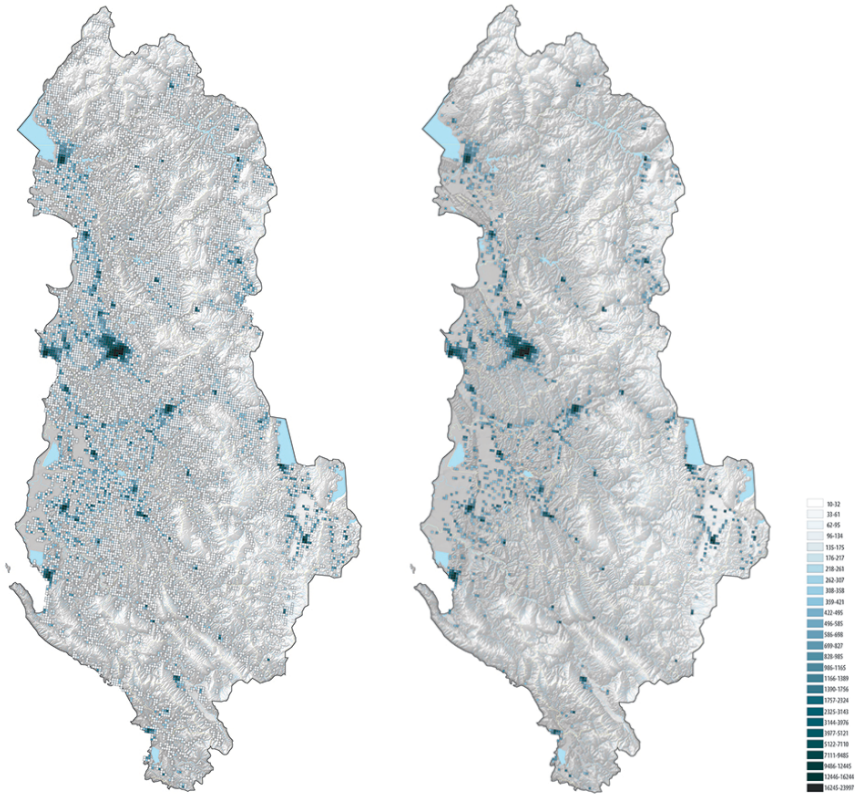


***Figure 76**: 1km2 population density cell grid km2 / **Source:** Author*

***Figure 77**: 1km2 population density cell grid, by excluding grids of less than 308 inhabitants per km2 / **Source:** Author*

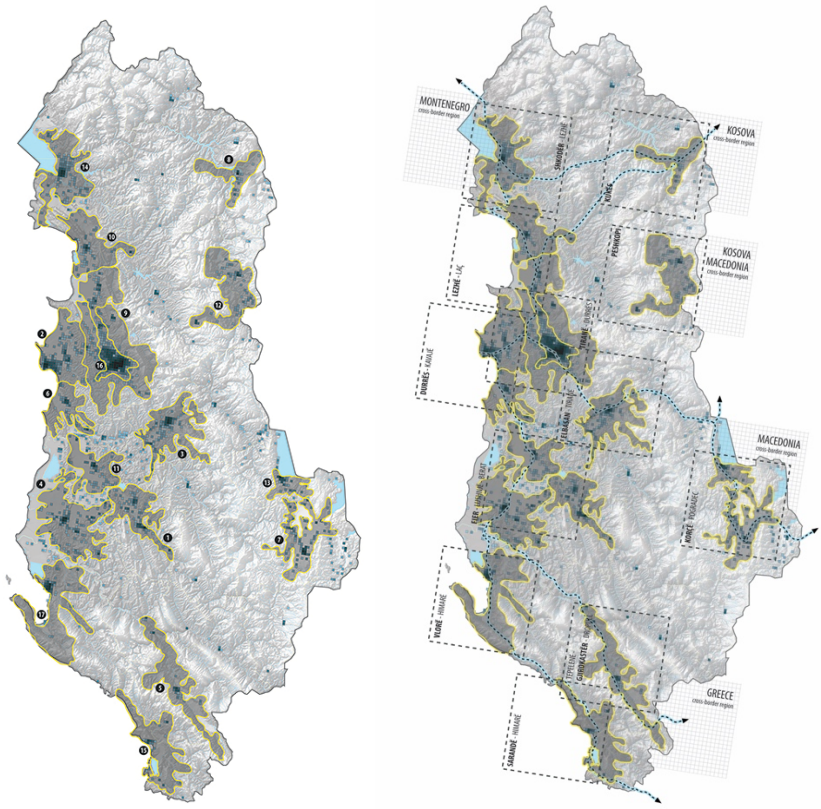


Figure 78: *Overlay of 1km2 population density cell grid with the FUAs /* ***Source:*** *Author*

Figure 79*: Overlay of the main road infrastructure, FUAs, and identification of strategic cross border areas, and stronger economic ties among FUAs /* ***Source:*** *Author*

Deriving from the analysis above, three main samples, in which the urban-rural continuum can be framed and studied further, have been delineated. Each of these samples represents different levels of continuity between the urban and rural realms, manifested in various spatial features. The three samples develop along a main road of national importance, are spatially organized around two FUAs, incorporating in-between territories as well, and are concentrated in key areas of the country, which have either hosted the migrating fluxes, (therefore have been overexploited over the past 15-20 years), or have experienced shrinkage and abandonment, due to this massive migration. The decision to consider three different samples where urban-rural interdependencies and interconnections have been translated differently, was intended so a parallel comparative study can be made, in order to point out that the 'urban-rural continuum' is not a final moment or a fixed spatiality that manifests the urban-rural relationships, but it is rather a process, which develops and changes over time, and which can be very context-particular as well. Therefore, albeit the fact that the 'urban-rural continuum' per-se can broadly manifest the break from the

dichotomy, the spatial features and typologies of the 'urban-rural continuum' have an ever-changing character, and are merely pictures of particular moments, in particular contexts.

The first sample develops around the so called 'metropolitan area' of Albania, comprising in particular from the agglomerations of Tirana and Durrës, areas of national importance in terms of economic potential, representing highest concentration and density of both, services and population. The area over time has been overexploited in terms of land consumption, and the use of various potentials, starting from the competitive locational factors that the area is characterized from, to the natural and agricultural potentials that the territory offers. The constant development of the periphery of both cities, has created a continuous spatial typology, which has been manifested as the joining of two cities in the so-called 'Durana'. This joining has merged urban and rural ways of living into a hybrid spatiality, which displays features of the two, and which can be considered as 'territorial diffusion' of both urban and rural realms, where patches of settlements, industrial agglomerations and agricultural land, clash and cohabitate.

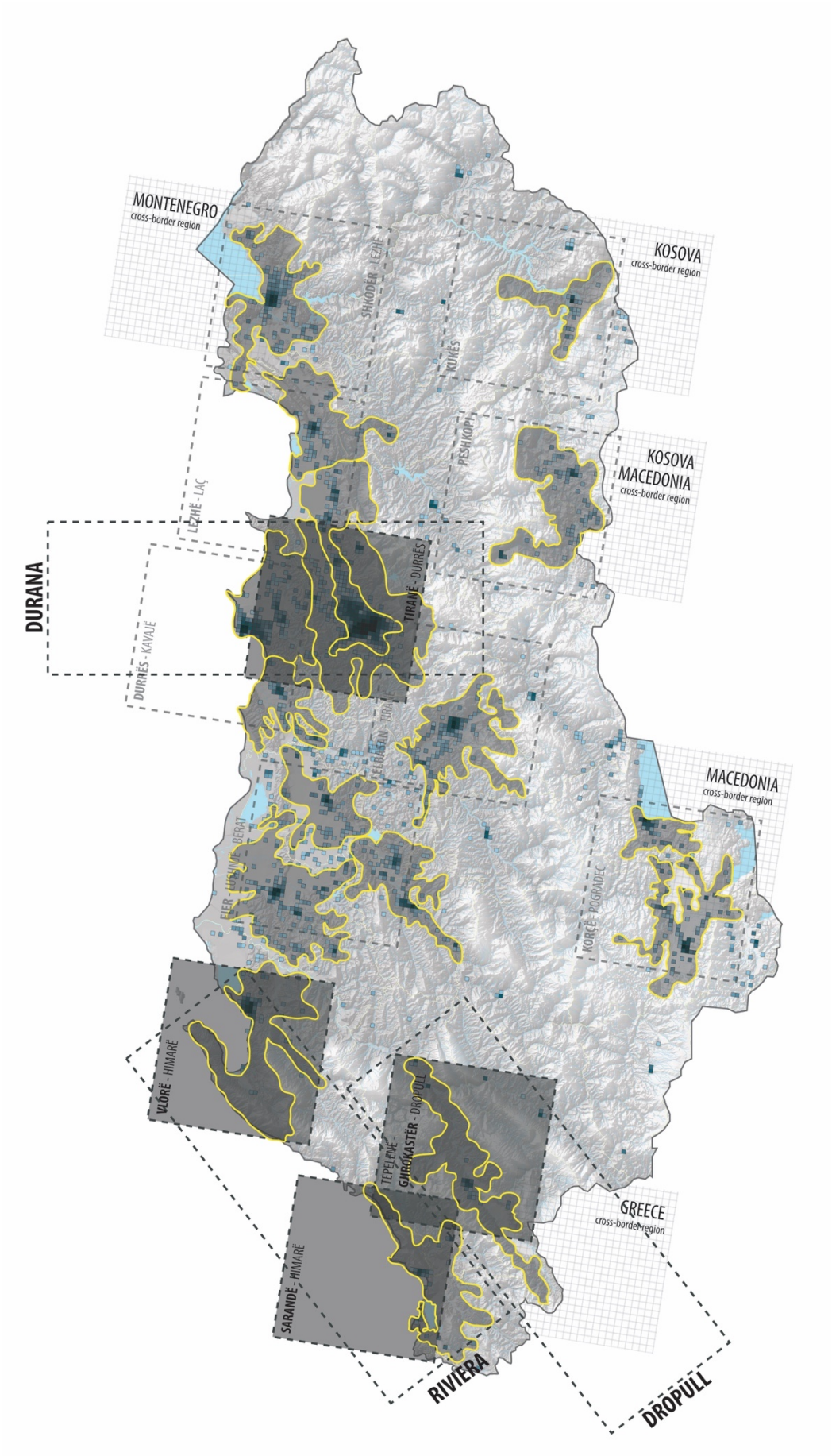


Figure 80: *Overlay of the 4 main data sets and the delineation of the 3 main samples: "Durana", "Riviera" and "Dropull"*

/ ***Source:*** *Author*

While the first sample is located mainly in the hinterland and portraying a 'fast development' model, *the second sample* develops along the South and South-Western coast of the country, promoted as a 'slow development' model based on its touristic potential, and broadly known as the 'Riviera' of Albania. Two main cities, Vlora and Saranda, confine Riviera on both its extremes, and a series of towns and villages populate the area in between. Various ways of reading, or interpretations can facilitate defining the spatial character of this sample, seeing it as both, a corridor development model from Vlora to Saranda, but also as a series of transversal connections between the new towns by the coast part, and the original traditional villages up in the mountains. These series of connections represent the character of Riviera, an archipelago of urban and rural areas, which are interdependent and interconnected with each other, via infrastructure, economic activities, and ways of living, therefore sharing mixed features of the two, albeit the strong presence of natural landscapes and potentials.

The third sample considers the area of Dropull, a profoundly rural area, located in the threshold between Drinos River valley and the mountain chains of Nëmërçka and Bureto, along a very important economic corridor that goes in parallel with the river, and in between Gjirokastra and Ioannina, two regional centers of a cross-border macro-region between Albania and Greece. Considered as part of one of the peripheral regions of the country, over years Dropull has suffered critical abandonment and shrinkage, due to very active out-migration flows. Represented by a total of 41 settlements of rural character (namely villages), and with no urban center, due to the Territorial Reform of 2015, Dropull changed status, from being a commune (of only rural character), to being a municipality (of mixed urban and rural areas), albeit the fact that with the new additions in its administrative area, Dropull still remains profoundly rural. Considering all these features, and for planning purposes, the PPV (General Local Plan) of the Municipality of Dropull envisions Dropull to develop as a 'linear city' with 5 main centers, each developed around a main bigger village, and considered as an energizer for the development of surrounding areas. By considering its rural and natural character, acknowledging the attempts for creating some urban features as well, and making use of the potential that the two main regional centers of Gjirokastra and Ioannina offer, the third case delves into Dropull's state of liminality and rurbanity, as yet another early stage of the 'urban-rural continuum' as a process.

The following sub-chapters introduce detailed analysis over the urban-rural continuum on all the three samples. A series of spatial analysis have been made on each of the situations, considering the set of criteria that leads and determines functional urban-rural relationships, introduced on Chapter 5: (i) *criteria leading and affecting the change of 'soft aspects'* such as change of cultural traits and social patterns; and (ii) *criteria leading and affecting the change of 'hard aspects' such as space and territorial features*, which include (a) geographic terrain; (b) road infrastructure; (c) fragmentation of agricultural land; (d) vicinity to economic areas; (e) provision of day to day services; and (f) commuting patterns. Although throughout the following sub-chapters the impact of criteria affecting 'soft aspects' has been emphasized, admitting that over time some degree of cultural shift among urban and especially rural population has happened, given the field of expertise that this research work covers, only the set of criteria affecting 'hard aspects' like space and territorial features, have been applied on the series of analysis.

8.2 DURANA, a Diffused Corridor-Development Model

Being the capital of Albania, Tirana has always been the main institutional, administrative, financial and educational center for the whole country. Durrës on the other hand represents one of the main port cities, with great importance in terms of both, touristic and industrial flows. Therefore, the vicinity of the two has boosted throughout their surrounding territories and along the road that connects them, concentration of population, and agglomeration of businesses and services, transforming the whole area in an economic hub of national importance.

From an economic perspective, during the last two decades Albania has undergone significant changes, transitioning from an economic sector based on raw materials, industry and agriculture, to a highly diversified economy, where services play a major role. With the aspiration for European integration as well, the country should prepare to be able to compete as equal with other regions in Europe, and on this perspective, the metropolitan area of Tirana and Durrës plays a major role.

From a planning perspective, the almost 20 years long period of active migrating flows, informality and sprawling, have been occurring especially and majorly in this part of the Albanian territory, which in addition to the administrative and economic roles of the area, slowly gave rise to the so called 'metropolitan region'. The lack of up to date planning documents, and lack of control over territory, boosted even further the expansion of both cities beyond any city-growth boundary, over the agricultural and natural areas that divided the two, emphasizing even more the regional character of the area comprising both Tirana and Durrës.

Acknowledging this very strong presence, given the complex features of the urban economy and the morphology of the territory, and considering the many challenges and actions that need to be harmonized in order to ensure the sustainable territorial and urban development of the area, in 2016 the Ministry of Urban Development, in cooperation with AKPT, initiated the development of an Integrated Cross-Sectoral Plan for the Tirana-Durrës area, coining it as 'Durana' a joining of the two cities into a network of settlements, economic areas, agricultural land and natural sites. The term 'Durana' was first introduced in 2004 by Berlage Institute, on their 'Tirana Metropolis', which envisioned both cities growing towards each other.

8.2.1 The Economic Profile of the Area and its Spatial Configuration

Comprising 37% of the total population, and covering a surface of nearly 8.4% of the whole Albanian territory, the metropolitan area of Tirana and Durrës generates 48% of national GDP and represents the area with the highest income per capita, at 1.32 times the national average. In terms of GVA, the area produces 71.8% in transportation, 66% in tourism, 64.9% in communication, and 62.5% in construction. Over 75% of higher education institutions, scientific research centers, and non-profit organizations are as well concentrated in the same region, making it a hub of research and development (AKPT, 2016).

QARK	POPULATION				
	2011	2016	2021	2026	2031
Tirana-Durrrës	1,033,344	1,108,105	1,167,091	1,212,303	1,244,904
Durrrës	269,784	275,017	278,305	279,954	279,796
Tirana	763,560	833,088	888,876	932,349	965,108
Albania	2,907,362	2,888,996	2,863,311	2,827,569	2,782,309

QARK	Public Sector	Non-Agricultural Sector	Private-Agricultural Sector	Unemployed
Tirana-Durrrës	71,144	211,360	56,860	18,626
Durrrës	11,700	38,000	32,820	3,872
Tirana	59,444	173,360	24,040	14,754
Albania	163,885	318,571	442,883	82,133
% of T-D	43	66	13	23

Table 6: *Population projection (2011/2031) /* ***Source:*** *AKPT, 2016; INSTAT, 2015*

Table 7: Employment by sector in the region as of 2014 data / Source: AKPT, 2016; INSTAT, 2015

Given its geographical positioning the area is very strategic in terms of having easier and faster access towards the Western European Countries, the Balkans, and the East, which has boosted a concentration of over 80% of the foreign-owned enterprises in the country. Considering the vast and diverse economic offer of the area, national and local authorities have been promoting the development of an integrated economic model for the whole metropolitan region, which supports and builds on innovation and information technology, therefore soon the area is expected to host even more activities of such.

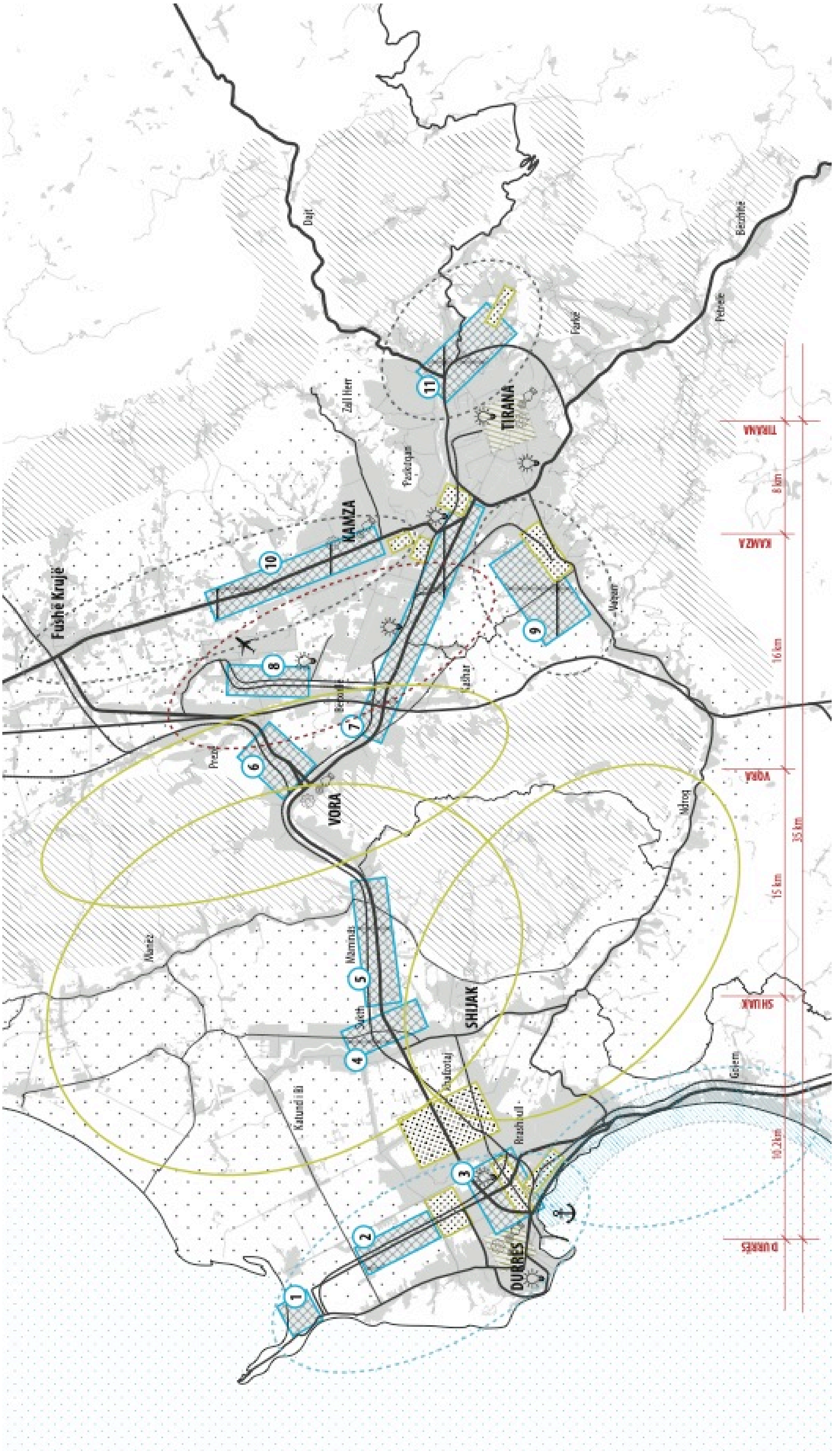
	Agriculture & Fishing	Industry	Construction	Transportation	Trade & Services
Tirana-Durrrës	20.7%	9.7%	14.3%	8.9%	46.4%

QARK	Agriculture & Fishing	Industry	Extractive Industry	Manufacturing Industry	Construction	Services	Trade, Hotels & Restaurants	Transportation	Postal Service & Telecommunication	Other Services
Tirana-Durrrës	15.8%	37.9%	13.0%	53.8%	62.5%	61.2%	66.4%	71.8%	64.9%	56.8%
Durrrës	7.6%	10.6%	2.3%	16.0%	6.4%	11.5%	11.4%	38.6%	5.7%	8.7%
Tirana	8.2%	27.3%	10.7%	37.9%	56.1%	49.7%	55.0%	33.1%	59.2%	48.2%
Albania	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 8: Contribution to the National GDP (in%) / Source: AKPT, 2016; INSTAT, 2015

Table 9: Regional GVA structure by economic sector as of 2012 data (in%) / Source: AKPT, 2016; INSTAT, 2015

Considering the fact, that the whole metropolitan region, comprising both Tirana and Durrës develops along the main national road that connects the two, various patches of economic agglomerations can be identified, from which 11 oriented towards services and industries, and 9 only industrial areas. While the industrial areas tend to agglomerate together, mainly in the vicinity of the denser urban agglomerations of both Tirana and Durrës, the 11 mixed 'service and industry oriented' areas tend to develop along main road infrastructure segments, for clustering purposes and easier access. This emphasizes the role of road infrastructure in guiding development, not only on terms of housing, but in agglomerating economic units as well. Specialization of economic activities is typically made on the base of local potentials and territorial features.



TIRANA
KAMZA
VORA
SHIJAK
DURRES
Fushë Krujë
Dajt
Zall Herr
Paskuqan
Preza
Manez
Sukth
Katundi Ri
Rrashbull
Golem
Ndroq
Farkë
Petrelë
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
8 km
16 km
15 km
35 km
10,2 km

Figure 81: *Spatial analysis of the corridor development model of Durana, and the continuum of various typologies of economic activities and economic areas, from agriculture to industry and services. /* ***Source:*** *Author*

For instance, areas closer to agricultural land tend to attract more agro-industrial and trading activities; areas nearby the port of Durrës agglomerate port and logistics services, storage, and trading; along the Adriatic coast tourism is the main economic theme, therefore all services are based on logistics, food, recreation and trading; nearby the airport of Tirana a series of businesses based on R&D and universities are located; long the main national road from Kamza to Vora numerous services, showroom areas, fasonery, and manufacturing industries agglomerate; meanwhile the main road passing through Kamza is characterized by the construction sector and extractive industries.

The spatial distribution of all these economic units configures a 'corridor development model', developing along the main national road from Tirana, to Durrës, producing spatial continuity of various typologies of economic activities and economic areas, from agriculture to industries and services, which over time have had a clustering effect. This clustering of economic activities was also followed by an agglomeration of settlements, which considering the boost that migration and informality posed, especially from the early '90s to the early 2000s, have triggered massive sprawling and expansive conversion of agricultural and natural land into urban land, consequently causing the diffusion of continuous patterns of settlements and economic areas, throughout the natural amphitheater that characterizes the territory, from mount Dajti towards the Adriatic coast. The map above shows the spatial configuration of the overlap of these continuities.

8.2.2 A diffusion of dispersed settlements and urban agglomerations

In terms of urbanization and settlements the metropolitan area of Tirana and Durrës is the densest and most populated area in Albania. Being one of the main destinations, hosting the inner migration flows of the post '90s, both Tirana and Durrës and the plain between them experienced overexploitation of agricultural and natural land, due to very active informality and sprawling. Migrating flows not only densified inner-city parts, but the quest towards the hinterland was one of a kind as well. This was boosted especially from the uncertainty over property rights, due to the change of regimes in Albania, from the Zog government (private property system), to communism (collectivization of land; government claiming property rights over all land; and on the base of that, the re-distribution of agricultural land to small farmers for using purposes only), towards democracy and market economy (getting back to the private property system; and squatting land through informal processes for developing it).

These three stages of governance, produced a reality where three different potential owners could claim property rights over any particular plot of land, especially of agricultural character. Given that the metropolitan area of Tirana and Durrës offered a series of opportunities, not only because both cities represented two of the most important administrative centers in Albania, but also because they were strategically located at the heart of the western plain of the country, which was highly productive and rich in agricultural land and natural resources, over a matter of 30 years, the region has transformed completely, becoming the heart of the economy of the whole country, and home to almost 1/3 of the total population.

Figure 82: *Change over time of the metropolitan region of Tirana and Durrës 1990-2016 /* ***Source:*** *Google Earth*

With Tirana and Durrës being the two profoundly urban extremes of highest densities of the 'corridor model' that Durana represents, a series of urban agglomerations populate the territory in between, and the dispersed territorial diffusion of rural settlements takes place among them. Apart from the fact that all these areas are located at the heart of the agricultural and natural amphitheater of the metropolitan region, several other factors determine the spatial typologies of these dense agglomerations.

The geographical terrain is one of the main determinants of how sprawling of development has taken place in the metropolitan region. From Dajti mountain in Tirana, to the Adriatic coast, there lies the so called 'natural amphitheater' of the region, which comprises both these formations, the hills from Vora to Ndroq in the middle, and the low lands in between, which have been the areas where massive concentration of population and economic activities has taken place.

Road infrastructure system plays a major role in forming linear typologies, which agglomerate along the roads and nearby economic areas, which are located along main roads too. Depending on the character of the road infrastructure system, settlement patterns as well, follow the same configuration, being either regular, based on a cardo decumanus system, or organically following the terrain.

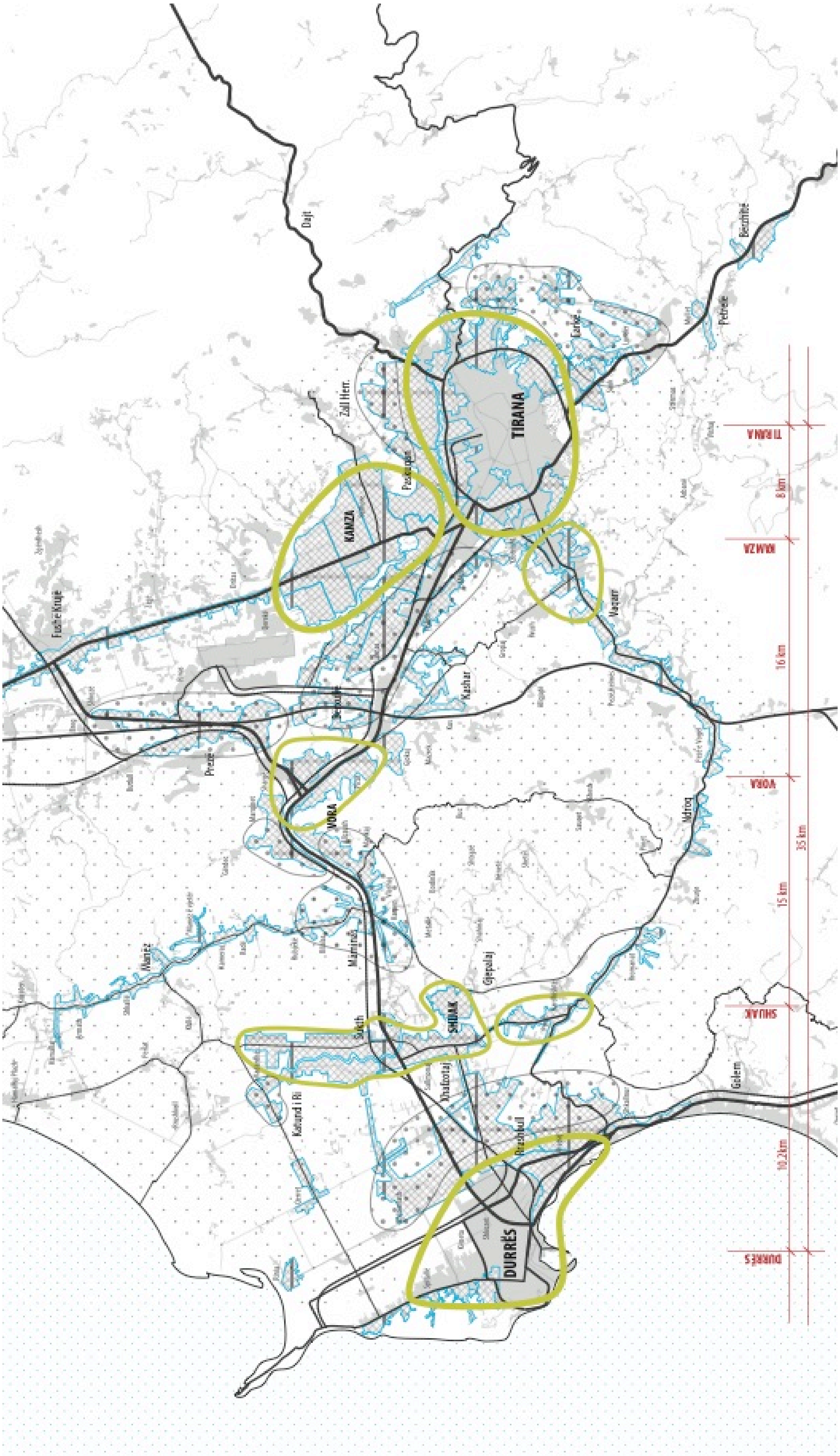

TIRANA
KAMZA
VORA
SHIJAK
DURRËS
8 km
16 km
15 km
35 km
10.2 km
Dajt
Paskuqan
Kashar
Vaqarr
Maminas
Sukth
Xhafzotaj
Rrashbull
Golem
Katund i Ri
Preza
Fushë Krujë
Gjepalaj
Ndroq
Petrelë

Figure 83: *Spatial analysis of the corridor development model of Durana, and the continuum of various typologies of settlements, from profoundly urban, to suburban, and rural, and the sprawling of informal areas. /* ***Source****: Author*

Vicinity to economic areas, is yet another locational factor, which conditions the agglomeration and sprawling of settlements too. Most families run economic activities like services, construction, small scale manufacturing industries (e.g. wood-based construction and furniture industry in the area from Kamza to Fushë Kruja, etc.), small scale food processing industries, etc., therefore their households and economic areas should be linked and possibly nearby, which explains why main roads attract economic activities, and economic activities guide where homes are built too. Settlements located on agricultural areas usually produce, process at small scale, and then trade either within their household plot (typically by building a small shop facing the main road, or very informally, within their premises to individual costumers), or travel to the nearest small market to deliver their products (this in case they can afford travelling costs to the market areas), or as it generally happens, they individually occupy specific spots along a main road, where they sell their daily produce.

Given the density of population, and the very dynamic economic-driven profile of Durana, **commuting patterns** follow these dynamics as well, being dependent by altogether location of settlements and economic activities, and provision of **day to day services.** Being the two biggest urban extremities of Durana, Tirana and Durrës provide a series of main services regarding health care, education, administrative services, recreation (theatres, cinema, galleries etc.), and intermodality (main airport, port, and train stations). Vora and Kamza represent two of the main towns along Durana, and offer several similar services, albeit in smaller scale. The rest of settlements along the corridor offer only a limited number of services, and are conditioned to travel to the nearest town or city to obtain the rest of them. On the other hand, with the main and biggest industrial and economic areas being located along the main road connecting the two cities, and in the thresholds between city-and-town, town-and-village, and/or city-and-village, a series of patches of industrial character agglomerate, being dispersed along agricultural and natural sites, but still along

the main national road. Therefore, while during the day commuting patterns move from the two main urban extremities towards the hinterland, on the industrial and other economic areas (including universities), in the evening the opposite takes place, producing two main timeframes of congestion and heavy traffic to both, enter and go out of the main cities (especially from and to Tirana). As a result, over time, in order to avoid these long trips from home to work and vice versa (albeit in very short distances), a series of satellite residential areas of private houses, and/or apartment buildings have been developing throughout the territory between the two main cities and nearby various economic areas.

Lastly, **high fragmentation of agricultural land** has boosted the formation of a dispersed model, causing territorial diffusion of settlements throughout the metropolitan region. Converting agricultural land into urban land, has continuously taken place over time, transforming the area, from an agriculturally characterized plain, to a vast low land of dispersed settlements. Due to high fragmentation, land owners, or migrating squatters settled on agricultural land, have independently urbanized plots of productive land, slowly giving rise to a process of sprawling of informal developments, part of which became much denser informal areas (e.g. the area of Kamza, which today is a municipality on its own, or the area of Kënata in Durrës).

***Figure 84**: Kamza and Këneta / **Source**: Nikos Danilidis (image on the left) and Studio Domi (image on the right)*

Due to the irrigation system, agricultural plots were organized in very regular cardo decumanus patterns, therefore further fragmentation of land, due to formal and/or informal sprawling of development, followed the irrigation channels, leading to very regular patterns of urbanized agricultural land. Household units built on these areas hosted nuclear family members, which saved part of the productive land as agricultural yards. Cultivating on these yards, or farming in the premises of their households, were some of the main economic activities of these new settlers. Most of them were migrants from other

rural and peripheral parts of the country, so they brought their rural ways of living (e.g. farming, or agricultural activities) with them, in their new squatted land in the metropolitan region.

Figure 85: *Urbanized agricultural land in the area of Yzberisht: the mix between settlements of agricultural character and rural practices (agricultural activity – first image on the top left; third landscape on a piece of land that once used to be of agricultural use, as a public space – second image on the top right; grazing and uncultivated agricultural land – third image on the bottom), and urban ways of life (economic areas, apartment buildings) /* ***Source:*** *Eranda Janku, 2020*

When squatting land took place in the vicinity of cities, on their peripheral edges, the outgrowth of cities happening at a second stage, produced mixed areas, where urban features like dense serviced urbanized areas of high-rise buildings, met sparse one family houses with agricultural yards, which kept their rural features and ways of living very active, although physically located within an urban area. Realities like this are still very present in many parts of both Tirana, and Durrës, although often through land recycling, and redevelopment, some of these areas have been replaced with new urban projects.

8.3 RIVIERA, an Archipelago of Towns and Villages

Historically, Albania has been considered a gateway between Western and Eastern Europe, given its very strategic positioning on the very South-West of the Balkans. With a coastline