

UNEVEN PERIPHERAL DEVELOPMENTS IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE: A CASE STUDY OF THE TIRANA CITY REGION, ALBANIA

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ABSTRACT: This paper traces residential and spatial urban transformations in Albania, one of the last post-socialist countries embracing neoliberalism. To do this, we employed a discourse analysis based on analogies of uneven urban peripheral developments in the regions of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), evaluating the impact of uneven (sub) urban development of settlements, with a particular emphasis on socio-economic aspects that need to be addressed in the process of extensive urban growth of the Tirana city region. Our empirical analysis reveals the inherent diversity of urban experiences across post-socialist countries in CEE with a particular reference to how the new post-socialist urban landscape in the Tirana city region produces geographically uneven socio-spatial development. Additionally, we highlight the dichotomy between the urban conditions of a ‘fortress landscape’ in the southern part of the capital of Tirana and its northern part of a new emerging small municipality lagging behind (in)formally with a new fringes identity. Our findings theoretically contribute to a post-socialist critique of urban studies due to urban theory’s neglect of post-socialist cities like Tirana.

KEYWORDS: post-socialist city, Albania, emerging (sub)urban fringes, gated community, (sub)urban politics, Tirana city region

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Introduction

Between 1945 and 1989, the population of Albania experienced an exponential growth in Europe, increasing from 1.1 million to 3.2 million inhabitants with growth distributed evenly throughout the country. Since the transition to a market economy, rapid urbanisation has occurred in the capital cities of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). The capital of Albania, Tirana, was no different in this respect. The 1990s witnessed

an uncontrolled and chaotic movement of the rural population to urban centres. Throughout the transition period, disruptive economic, political and demographic changes took place during which control of land became unclear, and many citizens subdivided and built on land without legal authorisation. These tensions include an explosion in the growth of (in)formal private housing, problems around the provision of infrastructure, and the issue of the funding of local government, especially in the burgeoning

suburban areas of the Tirana city region¹. Based on an in-depth analysis of similar CEE cities, this paper unravels the beginning of the construction of uneven spatial peripheral cities and buildings in Albania.

CEE's urban policies passed through several phases in the socialist era. In the early 1950s, there was no explicit urban policy. The planning system in socialist countries was more a political category than an economic one. The early 1960s witnessed the introduction of the first regional and urban strategies designed to limit the expansion of large towns and encourage the development of small and medium-sized towns. By the 1970s, the state still played a dominant role in urban planning regarding building plan approvals (Drummond, Young 2020). Local urban authorities had the task of coordinating development but had little or no decision-making powers. However, in the early 1990s, most CEE cities introduced market economies, which ushered in dynamic changes in urban development (Hess, Tammaru 2019). Although Albanian cities did not follow similar trajectories, some theoretical concepts are still helpful in contextualising the urban situation in Albania, especially those of peri-urban development. However, the premise of this paper is that western urban theory does not 'fit' well within the context of understanding processes of (in)formal peri-urban development in the Tirana city region and the role of property relations in shaping the form of suburban development (Mele, Jonas 2020). The post-socialist transition is a broad, complex and lengthy process of societal change, and this paper aims to highlight how urban studies have neglected the unique experience of urban development in Albania.

The diversification of the neoliberal economy has changed the spatial characteristics of post-socialist cities (Kovács et al. 2019; Drummond, Young 2020). A growing number of scholars have tackled the urban implications of post-communist transitions to capture the urban structures and models emerging from such processes (Gentile et al. 2012). Studies have provided explanations for

uneven spatial urban patterns mainly in capital cities (Kovács, Hegedüs 2014; Hess, Tammaru 2019) and new construction of suburban residential districts fragmented into numerous locations in metropolitan areas (Sýkora 2006).

The compact character of the former socialist city is being changed through rapid residential and commercial suburbanisation that initially takes the form of (un)regulated sprawl. The 'fuzzy' boundaries of edge cities are mainly related to the political, economic and social institutional causes of transformation from centrally planned into free-market economies (Pickles, Smith 1998; Carnobell, Gërkhani 2004). However, unlike in North America (Jonas 1991; Cox, Jonas 1993; Blakely, Snyder 1997; Low 2001; Landman 2003; Le Goix, Vesselinov 2012; Drummond, Young 2019), 'edge cities' in CEE countries are not the result of large-scale private development (Sýkora 1999, 2007; Hirt 2007, 2012; Gentile et al. 2012; Kovács, Hegedüs 2014; Sýkora, Stanilov 2014; Mele, Jonas 2020). Indeed, throughout the region, there are mounting pressures to regulate suburban land use.

Carter (1997) argues that the problems of urban periphery in the western context apparently arose from two sources: (1) isolation by cost, time and distance from the city centre and (2) the tension created by the impact of city extension upon the open countryside. There are three widely known aspects of the periphery: the municipal housing estate, the defended private suburban estate and rural-urban fringe itself.

In CEE, suburbanisation is rapidly taking place around large urban areas such as Prague (Sýkora, Ouředníček 2007; Sýkora, Stanilov 2014), Sofia (Hirt 2006, 2007, 2012), Tallinn, (Borén, Gentile 2007; Leetman, Tammaru 2007; Hess, Tammaru 2019) and Budapest (Kok, Kovács 1999). However, suburbanisation in Albania remains, somehow, outside the purview of researchers. The studies by Kok and Kovács (1999), which focused on Hungary, are among the first to emphasise the different aspirations of newcomers with a low and high social status, as well as the subsequent important role of education in shaping migration patterns and the suburbanisation process in CEE countries.

In the Albanian context, the examples of Farka AU and Kamza are analysed, both located in the Tirana city region. Kamza is a municipality

¹ We imply the 'Tirana city region' equal with 'Tirana Qark/Prefecture' used in Albania Administrative Division of 2014. The Tirana city region is composed of five municipalities: Tirana, Kamza, Vora, Kavaja and Rrogozhina.

located immediately to the northwest of the capital city, Tirana. Farka is an administrative unit (AU) within the Tirana municipality. Analysis of secondary sources complemented field research involving participant observation and personal interviews (both authors are native Albanians with the extensive familiarity with the study locations going back to the 1990s). In this paper, we examine what new patterns and forms of (sub) urban spaces and land use have emerged in the Tirana city region. Many post-socialist scholars attempt to refine the concepts related to the 'peri-urban' spatial category to analyse the evolution of the contemporary metropolis, drawing in particular on the North American case (Low 2001; Landman 2003; Kovács, Hegedüs 2014). There is evidence that cities in CEE exhibit similar patterns of segregation, exclusion and partitioning of (sub)urban space as found in North America and Western Europe (Pardo, Prato 2011; Hirt 2012; Low 2014). Moreover, Pickles and Smith (2006) suggested that the neo-liberal discourse and practice have dominated urban policy in the CEE region.

The emergence of enclaves of residential settlements in CEE

Many new residential developments or 'gated communities'² surrounding major city regions have privatised civic responsibilities, such as police protection and communal services, including education, recreation, and, in some cases, entertainment (Blakely, Snyder 1997; Le Goix 2006). Globally, there has been a significant increase in the number of so-called 'gated communities' (GCs). In the 1970s in the U.S, there were approximately 2,000 GCs. In the early 2000s, this number had increased to >50,000 developments, with more being built every year (Le Goix 2006). Gated residential development has been commonly conceptualised as an extreme manifestation and result of gradual societal trends towards social polarisation, urban fragmentation and economic segregation (Kovács, Hegedüs 2014). This affluent section of society has developed a new and unexpected urban peripheral landscape

successfully segregating themselves from the rest of the people, privatising public spaces and creating safe and privately controlled spaces behind the fences. In contrast to this fear- and security-based explanation for GCs, some scholars seek to tease out whether the underlying reasons for gatedness are based more on a desire for prestige and assertion for prestige rather than security (Kovács, Hegedüs 2014). The differentiation between the housing areas feeds into the social and political differentiation of urban and suburban spaces more generally. In a sense, it can be said that the traditional borders and walls that separated the city from suburbs have been replaced by new borders and walls that capture and contain suburban lifestyles.

Gated-community settlements were built in most developed countries to protect housing estates and high-profile clients. GCs in particular have been in the research spotlight and various definitions have been made³ (Lentz 2004 for Moscow suburbs; Hirt 2007 and 2012 for Sofia; Kovács, Hegedüs 2014; Polanska 2013 for Warsaw; Smigiel 2013 for other post-socialist countries). GCs have been growing quickly in the main CEE capital cities since the 1990s, bringing challenges to society through their privatisation of public space, conflict with planning norms, and interference with the integrated planning of the cities in which they are built. National and local governments have contributed, deliberately or unwittingly, to the development of such enclosed complexes, which have social and spatial impacts and guarantee that the upper class will remain wealthy (Davis 1992). The new ideas that are coming from the western part of Europe or the USA are kindly welcomed in CEE countries. With these new ideas, in the CEE countries a new phenomenon has appeared—GCs as new-style residential settlements. Owing to the highly liberalised housing market and the infiltration of global capital, the proliferation of gated neighbourhoods became possible. The existing articles and texts on Albania offer a limited starting point

² Gated Communities—in the Western context the acronym GCs is commonly used instead.

³ Definitions such as 'Defences space' (Newman 1972), 'outskirts of the city' (Garreau), 'new walled cities' (Judd 1995; Calderia 1996); closed districts: (Landman), 'fortified enclaves' (Marcuse 1997; Blakely, Snyder 1999; Grant 2003, 2005; Hart 2018), 'urban oasis' (Kazmaoglu); and gated islands: (Isik, Pinaoiglu) are made for gated communities in different sources.

from which one can analyse uneven spatial development. The legacies of socialist urban development are present in post-socialist city development and governmental techniques of socialist urban planning in Albania like the 'yellow line' and 'voluntary construction work' are re-emerging and entering in (sub)urban politics.

(Sub)urban land patterns in the Tirana city region

The post-socialist transition period in the main Albanian cities, especially in the capital Tirana (from 1990 until now), has marked a tremendous land-use change in the rural, peri-urban and urban lands. After 1990, the agricultural lands surrounding the Tirana municipality were gradually occupied by informal settlements; growth occurred especially in the northwestern area of Kamza and Bathore. The reasons behind the creation of these peri-urban settlements were: the rapid urban growth, the lack of land use planning and land administration, the marginalisation of certain social groups, bureaucracy, weak legislation and the lack of political will. To find out the driving forces behind 'the periphery phenomenon' we focus on Bathore and the newly developed neighbourhood in East Gate Tirana (TEG), highlighting the role of housing real estate agents⁴, developers and commercial media in Lundër, Farka AU⁵.

The share of the urban population in Albania has increased dramatically from 35.8% in 1990 to 44.5% in 2004 (Doka 2005; INSTAT 2011; Mele 2016). From 1990 to 2005, nearly one-third of Albanians – many from the northeast part of the country – left their homes and land for a better life in the western part of Albania and Tirana city. Unbalanced regional development was obviously expressed in the massive and chaotic

displacement of the population of the mountainous areas towards the Western Region. It resulted in the abandonment of the agricultural activities in hilly and mountainous regions and the ruin of the industry in general, especially the heavy one (Carnobell, Gërxfhani 2004; Pojani 2013; Mele, Jonas 2020).

At the beginning of 1997, the population in coastal areas was 2.4 times larger than in 1960 (INSTAT 2011). About 54% of Albania's population (1997) lives in the coastal districts, including Tirana with 828,403 inhabitants (28.1% of the total population), Durrës, Fier and Elbasan, while the population of all other districts declined (INSTAT 2014). Situated in the middle of Albania, Tirana is characterised by high mobility accessibility: the intersection of the most important Primary Route Networks and somehow between 'glittery' shapes in the centre and sprawl in the periphery, i.e. Kamza in the first two decades and the emergence of residential settlements in enclaves towards southern part.

The collapse of communism in 1990–1991 witnessed a rapid acceleration of rural-to-urban migration within Albania and the explosive development of Tirana's rural periphery (Aliaj et al. 2003; Abitz 2006). During the communist era (1945–1991), Tirana's urban limits were defined by a 'yellow line' marking the official boundary between the city and outlying collective farms and agricultural zones. With the lifting of the urban growth restrictions in 1991, areas beyond the 'yellow line' began to attract rapid new development.

Recently, Albanian urban scholars have noted the emergence of GCs on the edge of major cities, especially of Tirana (Doka, Karaguni 2010; Tafa, Manahasa 2021). The appearance of such territorial structures in the cities and their regions is considered controversial. On the one hand, it is pointed out that these settlements create a positive atmosphere, economic value and social infrastructure for both settlement residents and also for the neighbourhoods where they are located. In the contemporary context, some architectural practices continue to produce designs, which offer alternative forms of community spaces, often working closely with their particular client groups in developing the design to meet their needs (Carter 1997). On the other, the replacement of the surrounding rural landscape

⁴ Rolling Hills Luxury Residences is a luxurious gated community, the best in terms of construction standards and the first of its kind in Albania. It is situated in the beautiful nature of Petrela, Tirana. The complex has 122 top luxury villas, a club house, park and other communal recreation areas. This community has a total construction area of 212,000 m² and a total investment value of €65 million, as well as a Recreational Park.

⁵ Gated Housing in Lundër, Farka.

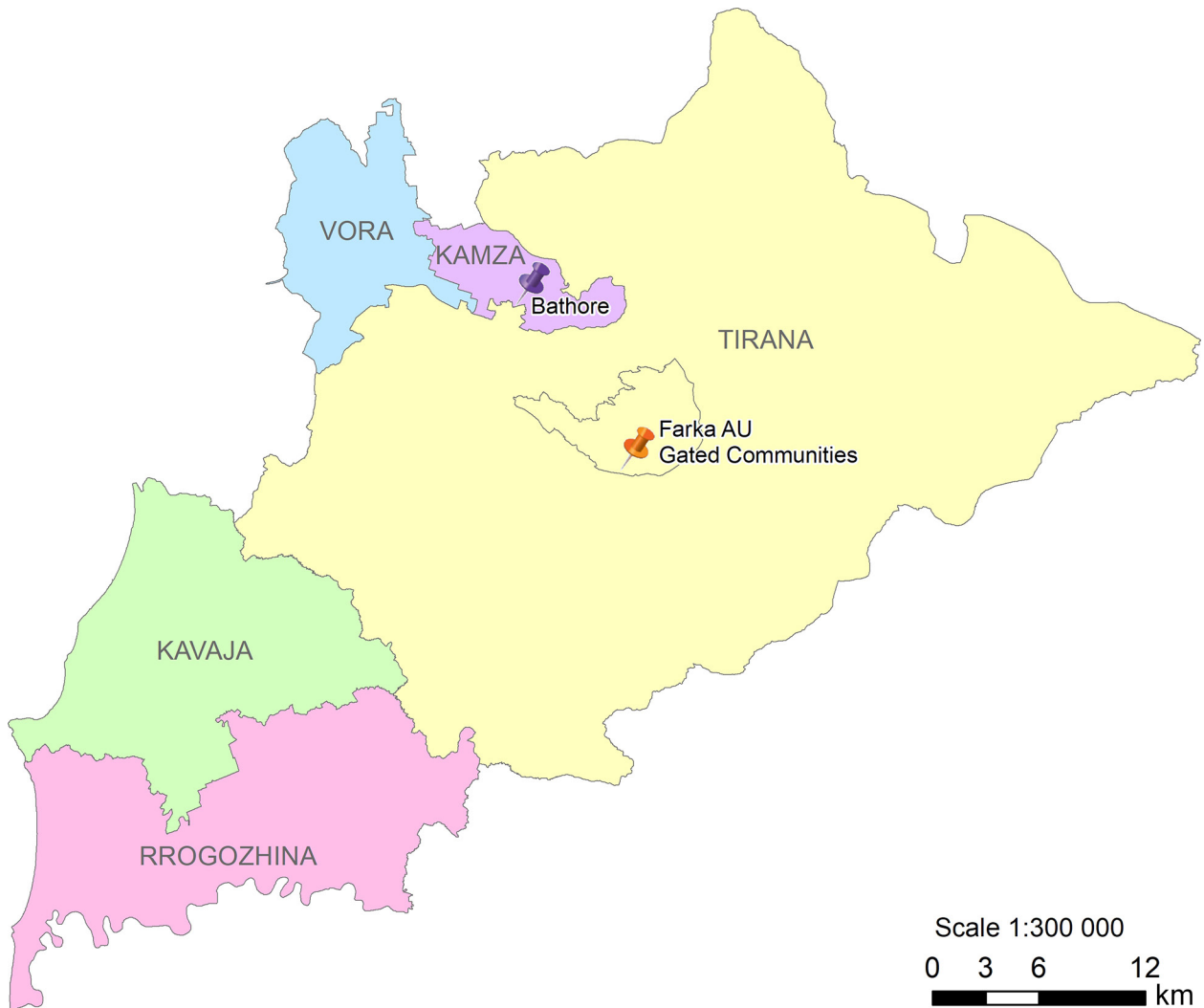


Fig. 1. Kamza and Farka AU in the Tirana city region.
Source: ArcGIS, partly altered by the authors, 2021.

of Tirana with the construction of enclosed residential developments and shopping malls has attracted critical comments (Tafa, Manahasa 2021).

The urban transformation of Albanian cities, especially Tirana, confronts suburbanisation and presents a challenging endeavour to be explained through philosophies that can be applied in many other cities in Europe or other countries. Owing to the free movement of the population in Albania from rural areas towards urban ones, and unregulated land development, the periphery areas of Tirana have taken on a totally new character since 1991 and could be considered an open and complex framework to urban land governance (Aliaj et al. 2003; Bardhoshi 2016; Prato 2017; Muka, Licaj 2019; Mele, Jonas 2020; Halilaj 2021).

Methodology

The empirical analysis of local transition stories in the Tirana city region, examined from the perspective of push-pull factors and livelihood strategies, combined in two study cases around Tirana. An explanatory analysis is based on secondary and primary data about the regulation of new suburban areas of Tirana and how they practice, intersect and interact with the new socio-political context. In this paper, a qualitative approach through participant observation, and study research desk will give a better picture of how some rationalities of peripheries in the capital of Tirana become more legitimate than others.

Contestations in post-socialist city development are studied through a theoretical framework formed by a discursive neoliberalism theory (free

market) in urban policy developed by Pickles and Smith (1998). There are two aspects of travelling theory (i) Transfer of models of good urban governance and (ii) Transfer of theories of western critical urban scholars. Nevertheless, we examine the second aspect of how theory in transition countries, especially in the Tirana city region, travels and in what ways 'travelling theory' can be grounded in the evolving complexities of (sub)urban landscape in the Tirana city region. From a comparative perspective, political context and urban practices in Albania provide a good example of whether western theories of urban transition 'fit'.

It is controversial that for the other parts of new housing development areas in the southern part of Tirana there has been hardly any public record of Albania Census so far, i.e. of approximately how many households can be found in the newly gated housing, their percentage in total residential areas, dispersion of gated and non-gated housing, numbers of gated housing by years in the Tirana city region, except for Long Hills Bulletin and Albania Real Estate general data of Luxury Villas for sale and rent.

The observational data were supplemented with archival records, reports and policy reviews to situate the case study in a wider context. In Kamza, the livelihood strategies and attention paid to contextual conditions have been regarded as highly relevant to the phenomenon being investigated. The approach involved 'inquiry from the inside' and researchers' personal involvement in the research process. What sets participant observation apart from all other ways of doing research then is an embodied and extended presence in the social world of those being studied. Social life as it is being lived, rather than only as it is reported by informants (Iacono et al. 2009; Baccagni, Schrooten 2018).

Conversely, the new Territorial Reform of 2014 influenced a new urban expansion and development in the southern part followed by considerable changes in the landscape of Farka AU and recent challenges in the controlling enclosed residential neighbourhood⁶. The Kamza case is a

residential and commercial area with a diverse/mixed background in education, demographic, socio-economic and security issues. On the other hand, in Farka AU (TEG) all residents living in the community, including the people living and shopping and working around, benefit from the creation of areas on Farka Valley. As a result, the dwellings built for the claim owners in Kamza still have a lower quality when compared with the luxurious dwellings, such as villas, terrace houses, studio houses, park houses in TEG, Sauk AU, Tirana.

New identities of urban fringes in the Kamza municipality

Kamza located on the right side of the Tirana River, an area of nearly 31.18 km² on the west-north of the Tirana city region, was specified as an agriculture and collective farm until the 1990s, however, lost that feature later on due to squatting (Bardhoshi 2016; Prato 2017; Mele, Jonas 2020; Halilaj 2021). Kamza retained its rural administrative status until 1996, at which point it was officially incorporated as a municipality and in 2014 under the new Administrative Territory law is one of the fifth parts of the Tirana city region. One of its unit 'Bathore' – moved from an informal housing to formal settlement. Bathore is one of Kamza's units. The area was densely informally urbanised after the '90s. People migrating from different parts of the country built their own houses from scratch, transforming agricultural land into urbanised land. There are pressures because of the explosion in the growth of (in)formal housing, problems around the provision of infrastructure and the issues of the funding of local government, especially in the burgeoning urban peripheries of the northern parts of the Tirana city region (Tafa, Manahasa 2019).

Privatised residential spaces in the Tirana city region

In the main eastern capital cities there has been recently a significant increase in the number

⁶ Before the Territorial Reform of 2014, the Tirana Municipality was bordered by the villages of Lundër, Farka e Vogël and Sauk. The developers found more investment opportunities in Lundër, Mjull Bathore

and Farka e Vogël under Farka administration in Tirana city's fringe.

of GCs. Many wealthy neighbourhoods have privatised civic responsibilities, such as police protection and communal services, including education, recreation, and, in some cases, entertainment (Blakely, Snyder 1997; Le Goix 2006), changing the profile of rural boroughs towards inner peripheries. As it was pointed out earlier, the importance of private investors for new developments in the housing market has been great in the Tirana city region in the last decade. Among the new housing investments in the city between 2007 and 2009 in the south Tirana Lake and Farka Lake were gated developments. The emergence of GCs in Tirana shows that wealthy enclaves are increasing in the city. When rural boroughs turn into inner peripheries, a link between their socio-economic characteristics and their distance to the Tirana city region, the increased number of GCs in the city and their growing popularity could also be interpreted as an answer to the demand for better living standards. While old residential areas in the city are waiting for modernisation, people choose to move to newly built housing developments, of which the majority are gated fortifications.

Farka, located 7 km in the south-eastern part of Tirana, along the national motorway Tirana-Elbasan, is limited in the east with Dajt Mountain (1,100 m), in the south with Petrela AU and in the west with Vaqarr AU. Nowadays, after the Territorial and Administrative Reform, Farka AU belongs to the Tirana municipality, making up around 2.5% of the total Tirana municipality's surface. Farka AU⁷ is a relatively new urban residential with the surface of 27.5 km² and between the years 2001 and 2011 with a growing population of 218%. In the last decade, Farka AU has changed as well as many other peripheral areas of the city of Tirana (i.e. in Dajti AU, Sauk AU). According to INSTAT (2014), in Farka, >40% of the green lands are changing their character of the enclosed residential development showing the contrasted peripheral developments on the two sides of the new 'Ring Road', the Tirana city region on the one side, the (in)formal low individual housing and businesses in the Kamza

municipality⁸ across the Tirana river on the other (Mele 2010; Bardhoshi 2016; Halilaj 2021).

Many private residential complexes generally have high prices, which makes this unaffordable for most citizens. Even though, the movement of people from central neighbourhoods to the peripheral estates existed even before and was labelled as a form of 'socialist' suburbanisation (Kok, Kovács 1999), after 1990 the process took on a new dimension, especially in other CEE countries. For instance, the suburban zone of Prague attracted masses of better-educated population with high income, which produced a dual social composition: rich newcomers and lower income, less educated indigenous inhabitants (Sýkora 1999). In the Tirana city region, similar processes of social upgrading and rejuvenation were observed, particularly in the 2000s. At the same time suburbanisation affected mainly the already better off and more attractive municipalities (Kovács 2012) and, as a consequence, intensified socio-spatial differences in the metropolitan region. Private companies including foreign developers, rather than the state, became the leading producers of new housing developments.

The Tirana city region during the transition has taken on an extraordinary development in terms of overcrowding without having a well-defined urban study. Some new housing developments in Farka and in the southern part of Tirana, i.e. 'Kodra e Diellit' are among the youngest neighbourhoods, which started being developed after 2005. According to the open data of Tirana Council⁹ in 2021, out of 13 Administrative Units, since 2019 Farka AU has been standing on the top among favourable living (sub)urban areas (besides Kashar AU) with an urban growth of 11.3% as compared to two years ago. Generally, the enclosed residential typology dominates in the area. Among them, there are common spaces. The population density in Farka UA is up to 40 persons per ha. TEG case represents a new peripheral estate with its outermost fences that stood like a wall marking a clearly defined urban boundary. Even with these new estates, the

⁷ Farka AU is composed of six villages: Farkë e Madhe, Farkë e Vogël, Lundër, Mjull Bathore, Sauk, Selitë.

⁸ The Kamza municipality is composed of the Kamza centre and Administrative Unit Bathore with its five villages: Valias, Laknas, Frutikulturë, Zall-Mner dhe Bulçesh.

⁹ Source: Bashkia Tiranë (Tirana Council), OPEN DATA and Scan Intelligence Unit.



Fig. 2: Rolling Hills Luxury Residences, Farka AU.
Source: photo taken by Marcela Mele, 2022.

Tirana city region seems grounded in the evolving complexities and contradictions of urban life.

The urban peripheries do not constitute a simple framework of analysis, but a specific space in which settlement patterns, mixed spaces, apportioned between populations with contrasting lifestyles and varied land use, peri-urban spaces are also disputed spaces, bringing into play divergent and even conflicting interests (Jonas 1991). Fig. 2 shows the new residential enclaves – imagined as gated housing – growing in their particular settlements with low-rise formal patterns and their environmentally-friendly fences around.

While in the Tirana city region, GCs in Rolling Hills Luxury Residences, as shown in Fig. 2, concentrated in the south-western part of the city, with >8,000 m², fulfil the demand of upper and middle-class citizens mostly from the metropolitan area for more space for luxury villas, in the Kamza municipality, ‘the messy gated community’ for the poor is widespread in the urban fabric with ‘do it yourself tactics’. These

are mostly non-metropolitan people coming from north-eastern and south-eastern regions of Albania with the known slogan of the first 20 years of the transition: ‘there is no state–there is no law’. The oft-repeated cry: ‘There is no state, there is no law’ – ‘s’ka shtet, s’ka ligj’ – encapsulates the view from the ground (de Waal 2004).

The uneven spatial development visible around the Tirana city region contrasts with, on the one hand, the southern part of Tirana developed in former agricultural land around some pre-existing villages, i.e. Lundër, Farkë e Vogël, Mullet and, on the other hand, the adjacent Kamza municipality, which has witnessed the development of ‘gated communities’ as a process of social upgrading. Kamza is quite unusual in this regard. It appears that travelling theory has to adapt and modify to the local historical-cultural context. The urban processes that are taking place in Farka AU do not fully reflect the process of uneven spatial development that is taking place in the city.

Conclusion and discussion

Travelling theory: Kamza 'social disadvantage' vs. TEG 'successful coping'?

There have been significant changes in the geographies of uneven development and considerable literature documenting these, at varying spatial scales. A unique part of East European post-socialism, Albania with its complex and complicated history is only one remarkable story, showing how the suburban living space is involved in this 'transition' or post-socialist neo-liberalism process. The two cases in the Tirana city region reveal the inherent diversity of urban experiences across the post-socialist countries in CEE. The (in)formal nature of suburban development in Albania is a way of securing property and access to livelihood (Bertaud 2006), which imposed the creation of two types of suburbs taking into account the socio-economic differences, especially in the northern and southern parts of the Tirana city region. The legacy of the communist past is crucial for these spatial land practices.

The politics of (sub)urban living space in the Tirana city region is deeply contested. It has been suggested that, in the transition period (urban neoliberal transformation), all the selected categories, especially the migrants and residents in Bathore have borne the often heavy costs of neo-liberalisation. On the contrary, according to the latest data, the case of TEG as a recent 'fine-grained' land-use mix indicates a trend towards retail consolidation. Both cases presented here show that the post-socialist Tirana city region resembles western and CEE cities far more than it did before 1989. In the approach of Western theories in a non-western context, Albania is a good example for comparative studies on post-socialism and international urban policy. We assume applying wider 'Eastern European' models of post-socialist transition to Albania uncritically; the uniqueness of the Albanian case demands recognition.

In this paper, we have examined new forms of suburban developments in the Tirana city region: a qualitatively new phase of the suburb, in which 'edge cities' are created combining residential, business, social, and cultural areas that are removed from older central cities and overlaid on

earlier patterns of suburbanisation, representing an expanded form of the 'fortress enclave'; and the transformation of the earlier informally socially excluded suburban area, each separated from the other parts of the Tirana city-region by social, economic, and often physical barriers. The two forms of development are hardly connected with each other, and they may be mutually reinforcing. Following Sykora and Stanilov's (2014) idea of post-socialism as a 'double transition', the two Albanian cases examined here illustrate (1) global or capitalist processes of TEG 'successful coping', a GCs for the middle-class enclaves for the privileged, part of an imported western urban form, and (2) Kamza 'social disadvantage' local processes, 'Made in Albania' with no clear parallels elsewhere.

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