Heritage from the Communist Period in Albania

– An Unwanted Heritage Today?

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Degree project for Master of Science (Two Years) in Conservation
30 hec

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ABSTRACT

This master thesis is based on interviews with heritage professionals carried out during two months in Tirana, Albania in the autumn of 2010. The research questions concern who works with communist heritage in Albania, what constitutes the heritage from the communist period (1945-1991) and how this heritage is discussed, valued and handled in Albania today. A general question is whether heritage from the communist period is an unwanted heritage or not today. The aim is to study what is happening with this heritage in one of the countries in Europe where this heritage have been discussed and emphasized the least and also to contribute to the discussion about heritage from difficult periods and events and show what different meanings it may have instead of labelling it "unwanted heritage". The communist regime in Albania used urban planning and architecture to demonstrate and strengthen their power. Every aspect of the Albanian landscape and cities were affected by the ideology. New towns and huge industries were built, city centres were re-constructed, statues and monuments were raised and a nation wide defence system of hundreds of thousands of bunkers were built and is still seen everywhere in the landscape. When the dictator Enver Hoxha died in 1985, a pyramid shaped building was raised as a museum for him in the centre of Tirana. In the autumn of 2010, the Albanian government decided to demolish the Pyramid to get rid of memories from Hoxha and to build a new parliament building in its place to demonstrate the power of the present regime. This decision intensified a recent debate in Albania concerning communist heritage. The government argues that the Pyramid is an unwanted heritage, while the informants in this study want to preserve the Pyramid and other buildings from the communist period as reminders of an important era in the Albanian history, for future generations' knowledge and understanding of Albania's past, and because of architectural, aesthetic and social values which the informants connect to the buildings. The work with heritage from the communist period is going on within state institutions, universities, NGOs and different protest groups concerning the Pyramid issue. However, the Albanian society does not have experience, routines and regulations for the management of this heritage and therefore the protection of the communist heritage rely on dedicated individuals. The management of this heritage is further obstructed by weak state institutions, corruption, a lack of interest for public space among citizens and the political climate in Albania today.

Preface

For my master thesis I got the opportunity to do a field study for two months in Tirana, Albania. The study was financed by a Minor Field Study scholarship from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), granted through the Department of Conservation at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden.

My trip to Tirana, Albania started in my mind in November 2009. After reading about the hundreds of thousands of concrete bunkers from the communist period, I decided to go to Albania to study the heritage from the communist years. Is this an unwanted heritage? was my first question.

Ten months after my first thought about going to Albania I arrived to Tirana and was chocked and confused for about two days. Then I fell in love with the city and its people. I would like to thank Sonila Papathimiu and the Faculty of Geography, History and Philology at the University of Tirana, Besnik Aliaj, staff and students at Polis University in Tirana, all my informants and everyone else who has helped me to get in contact with people, helped me gain knowledge about Albania and been part of making my stay in Albania two wonderful and inspiring months. Thanks to Bo Magnusson for helping me get in contact with University of Tirana in the first place. A special thank you to Zhujeta and Rozana for being the best hosts I could have found in Tirana.

List of Acronyms

AHF – Albanian Heritage Foundation

CEE – Central and Eastern Europe

GDCO – Gjirokastra Development and Conservation Organisation

IMC – Institute of Monuments of Culture, Albania

PLA - Party of Labour of Albania (English)

PPSh - Partia e Punës e Shqipërisë, Party of Labour of Albania (Albanian)

PSRA – People's Socialist Republic of Albania

List of Persons

Alia, Ramiz – leader of PLA 1985 – 1991 and the first president elected after the fall of communism, 1991-1992

Berisha, Sali – Prime Minister (1992-97, 2005-) and leader of the Democratic Party of Albania (Partia Demokratike e Shqipërisë, DP)

Hoxha, Enver – former dictator of Albania and leader of the Communist Party of Albania and PLA between 1944 – 1985

Rama, Edi – mayor of Tirana (2000 -) and leader of the Socialist Party of Albania (Partia Socialiste e Shqipërisë, SP) since 2005

Xhaferaj, Ferdinand - Minister of Culture (2008-) (DP)

Outline of Thesis

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The Albanian Communist Party and their leader Enver Hoxha gained power in Albania in 1944. During the following years the Soviet economic, political and ideological model was introduced in Albania which became one of the strongest communist states, totally isolated from the rest of the world after 1978 when all connections to other countries had been broken. Hoxha ruled Albania as a dictator until his death in 1985. Albania was then the poorest country in Europe and is still today one of the poorest countries in Europe.[1]

The communist ideology was reflected in the physical environment, which was changed in a harsh way during this period. New towns were built as well as many huge industries, city centres of existing cities were re-constructed, statues and monuments were raised and street names were changed. Historical buildings that did not suit the dictatorship were torn down. Religious buildings were demolished or turned into profane buildings since Albania in theory was an atheistic state. Collective memories and traditions were erased and new collective memories were shaped.[2] One of the most obvious examples of the built communist heritage is between 300 000 and 800 000 concrete bunkers which Enver Hoxha let build all over the country. The official purpose was to be able to protect the country from external attacks, but an attack never came and the bunkers were never used for this purpose. Bunkers are today the most visible reminders in the Albanian landscape of the communist years and Hoxha's paranoia. Some people would like to have them removed as they remind about the communist period and sometimes are located in people's gardens or other unsuitable places, but since they were built to endure artillery fire they are difficult and expensive to destroy. Some bunkers are re-used as shops or bars, shelters for homeless people and places for parties.[3] Bunkers are almost always mentioned in travelogs from Albania, while it is harder to find domestic information about them.[4]

Heritage used to be the great and beautiful parts of our past, but the concept has been broadened. Today places of pain and trauma as well as architecture from dictatorship can be labelled as heritage. However, heritage is connected to identity and people may not want their contemporary identities to be connected with a difficult past. How to treat difficult pasts and their physical remains, to include it in the heritage of a place or a group or not are difficult and interesting questions. After a period of war or dictatorship countries have to re-create their national identities and emphasize heritage that fits the new narratives of the nation. In post-socialist societies in Europe the new identities have marked the end of socialism and the return to Europe. The socialist period has often been left out from these narratives, but can later on be included.[5] This kind of past, which is not convenient for a nation, can be called undesirable or unwanted heritage. Macdonald writes that "undesirable heritage [...] is a heritage that the majority of the population would prefer not to have".[6] Obvious symbols of a former regime, for example statues, are often and easily destroyed and erased from the landscape, while buildings and urban layouts cannot be erased as

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1 Nationalencyklopedin and Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs (2009) *Landpromemoria : Albanien*
2 Zhelyazkova (2000)
3 Stefa & Mydyti (2009)
4 Example of travelogs: "Bunkers in Albania" (2009), Persson (2005) and Grattis Världen (2005)
5 Young & Light (2006)
6 Macdonald (2006) "Undesirable Heritage : Fascist Material Culture and Historical Consciousness in Nuremberg" p. 9

easily and therefore remain as reminders of the past.[7]

The question about communist heritage was brought up to date in Albania during the fall of 2010 when this study was done, when the government decided to demolish the Pyramid, one of the most characteristic buildings from the communist period in Tirana, built to honour Hoxha after his death. The opinions about this building are many and diverse and the debate about how to handle communist heritage and what it symbolizes intensified. Twenty years after the fall of communism, Albania is still struggling to find their way as a democratic country and to handle their recent difficult past and its heritage.

1.2 Objective of the Study

The physical remains from the communist era are to be found everywhere in the Albanian urban and rural landscape. The landscape was transformed by and for the regime with purpose to express their power and to organize society due to the ruling ideology. The communist regime fell almost twenty years ago, but urban structures and buildings remain unchanged to a large extend. An important assumption in this study is that heritage is crucial for the identity of individuals, groups and nations and that memory is shaped and re-shaped, as well as history is re-written when needed. Focus on heritage as a part of identity and the assumption that heritage is chosen based on current needs make it more interesting to study people than physical heritage itself. Heritage institutions, the state, organizations and universities are main actors in the process of public memory, why it is interesting to study how their representatives regard the communist past and how they handle or would like to handle the communist heritage.

The objective of the study is to research how built heritage from the communist period is handled and regarded by heritage professionals in Albania today and why it is or is not, as well as should or should not be preserved. This is a qualitative study and the aim is not to present a complete study of the current situation and opinions about built communist heritage in Albania, rather the objective is to capture a part of the current debate concerning communist heritage and various opinions about this difficult heritage.

The aim of this study is to research what is happening with the physical heritage from the communist period in one of the countries in Europe where this heritage have been discussed and emphasized the least and also to contribute to the discussion about heritage from difficult periods and events and show what different meanings it have instead of labelling it as "unwanted heritage".

1.3 Research Questions

The research questions are split into two parts; one more factual where I aim to find out who the main actors in the heritage sector in Albania are and how the physical landscape that communism left behind looks like today and a second part where I aim to grasp a current discussion and opinions about communist heritage.

- – Does heritage professionals and urban planners work with communist heritage in Albania? Who? How?
- – What constitutes the heritage from the communist period in Albania?
- – How is tangible heritage of communism regarded and valued by heritage professionals in

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7   Light (2000) *Gazing on communism* p. 159

Albania today? Which are the reasons to preserve or not preserve communist heritage, according to heritage professionals?

–   Is the communist heritage an unwanted heritage in Albania today?

1.4 Delimitations

The field work is limited to Albania, and focuses on the cities of Tirana and Gjirokastra. Tirana is the capital of Albania and the centre for development and also where state institutions and organizations who work with heritage are located. In Gjirokastra there is an ongoing project to transform a bunker from the communist period into a museum, which is one of few initiatives in Albania to highlight the communist heritage and the reason why I chose to interview informants about that case.

The study focuses on buildings. The communist heritage in the cityscape and landscape could also be statues and monuments, street names or city plans; all of which are not part of this study. The study is limited to heritage from the communist period, 1945 – 1991, but buildings built earlier which played an important role during communism are also discussed.

A short description of the communist period and life during communism in Albania is given, but with no ambitions to study or explain communism on a deeper level. Neither will   differences of communism in Albania, the rest of the Balkans and Central and Eastern Europe be described.

When it comes to literature and following the debate in Albania there has been a natural limit because of the language barrier. Because of time limitations and the risk of losing information during translation, I have not translated any literature or articles from Albanian to English. There is an ongoing debate in Albania about the urban development of Tirana and the handling of buildings from the communist period. This debate has not been possible for me to follow directly, since it exclusively is in Albanian, except for a few short articles in English. I followed the debate and the decisions about the Pyramid in Tirana during my stay there, which was between September and November 2010 and the sources are limited to this period. The discussion are thus based on interviews and articles from this time period.

All of my informants work with heritage, architecture or urban planning. People within other professional groups may work with communist heritage as well, for example professionals within tourism, journalists or entrepreneurs who use bunkers or other buildings for their businesses. It has not been possible to look into all projects in Albania which involves communist heritage. Instead, I have chosen to focus on one relatively homogeneous group of informants; people with education and occupations within heritage, architecture and urban planning.

The thesis is focused on Albania and difficult heritage from an oppressive regime. A few examples, taken from literature, from other European countries which have communist and nazi heritage, are given. My study could have been connected to or compared to another country with a similar difficult heritage. This has not however been done, because of time limitations and the aim to focus on communist heritage and the discussion in Albania, which has not been studied much before.

1.5 Previous Research

The previous research which relates to this study and will be presented below can be split into three areas: difficult heritage in general, communist heritage and more specifically studies about

communist heritage in Albania.

Difficult Heritage

Gregory Ashworth has been interested in conflicts regarding heritage. Together with Tunbridge he has written *Dissonant heritage - the management of the past as a resource in conflict* (1996) where difficult heritage from trauma is a subcategory. The authors argue that a dissonance inevitably occurs as we use the past as heritage for contemporary political, social, economic and cultural purposes and because of the constant question "Whose heritage?". If heritage belongs to someone it automatically does not belong to others. The authors discuss how heritage from concentration camps, atrocities and oppression etcetera could be handled in practise and use examples from post-socialist countries in Central and Eastern Europe and their heritage from the former oppressive socialist regimes.[8]

In the book *Places of pain and shame - Dealing with "difficult heritage"* scholars from several disciplines study difficult pasts in different parts of the world and how these pasts have either been considered as heritage worth preserving in different ways or intentionally have been forgotten. Further, they discuss the role of heritage planning and management in the interpretation of these cases. This book was written because of the shift within the field of heritage, where today almost everything and every site could be regarded as heritage, including places of trauma and shame and the authors deal with practical as well as theoretical challenges which this shift brings.[9]

In *Difficult heritage – Negotiating the Nazi Past in Nuremberg and Beyond* (2009) social anthropologist Sharon Macdonald studies how Nazi party rally grounds in Nuremberg in Germany have been handled by the city since 1945 and the cultural assumptions and motivations behind the actions. She finds a number of different strategies which have been used during the years to handle this difficult heritage. She also connects and discusses this difficult heritage in relation to contemporary identities and compares the case of Nuremberg and the Nazi past with other cases of difficult pasts in other places.[10]

Communist Heritage

There are a number of researchers within human geography dealing with the handling and meanings of buildings and places from socialism in a post-socialist context. Duncan Light labels the heritage of communism in Romania as "an unwanted past" and deals with questions regarding how this type of heritage is defined and constructed outside the specific country and the differences between foreign and local interpretations of the heritage.[11] How physical remains from socialism was handled – destroyed, ignored or preserved – after the fall of socialism and how some of these remains today can be included into the local historical narratives and become part of the identity of a place is discussed by for example Nikolai Vukov, historian and anthropologist, in his doctoral dissertation *Monuments between Life and Death* about monuments in post-socialist Bulgaria.[12]

Communist Heritage in Albania

The hundreds of thousands of concrete bunkers which can be seen everywhere in the Albanian landscape have been the subject of two master thesis. In the *Concrete Mushrooms project* (2009) Elian Stefa and Gyler Mydyti, graduate students in landscape architecture at Politecnico di Milano, studied bunkers and what these most obvious physical remains from communism mean to people in Albania today, how they are used and could be used as a resource in the future, for example within

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8 Ashworth & Tunbridge (1996)
9 Logan & Reeves (2008)
10 Macdonald (2009) *Difficult heritage : Negotiating the Nazi Past in Nuremberg and Beyond*
11 Light (2000) *An Unwanted Past*
12 Vukov (2005)

tourism. They wish to contribute to "giving bunkers value instead of having them as burden".[13]

Emily Jane Glass also studied bunkers in her master thesis *A Very Concrete Legacy: An Investigation into the Materiality and Mentality of Communist Bunkers in Albania* (2008). She studies the functional and symbolic roles of the bunkers today and discusses the complex layers of meaning and identity connected to the bunkers and the relation between people and bunkers.[14] She argues that bunkers can be seen as a metaphor for Albania as a country, which has developed from its own communist bunker of isolation into a new European life. Through her study she found that it is more socially accepted today to discuss and deal with bunkers and other communist heritage than it used to be, as a result of progress and more stability within the country. She could also see that the progress in Albania could affect communist heritage in a negative way, for example through increased and rapid building constructions, with little respect and sensibility towards bunkers.[15]

This Study in Context of Previous Research
Heritage from the communist period in Albania has not been studied much. The only previous studies that I have found are the two master thesis mentioned above. However, the first one of them is a design project without a clear theoretical framework and the second study is more focused on the physical bunkers, which are documented through sketches and photographs, and interviews with a mix of people with different relationships to bunkers. Thus, I have not found any study which focuses on other kind of communist heritage or the debate about this heritage, why my study fills a gap in the previous research.

1.6 Disposition of Thesis

The *first chapter* is the introduction to the thesis and consists of background, objective of the study, research questions, delimitations and a short overview of previous research within the topic.

Chapter 2 is the theoretical framework of the study. The main concepts which are discussed here are heritage, difficult heritage and those in relation to identity and memory. Examples from other countries with difficult heritage and how it has been handled are given.

The methodology used in the field study is presented in *Chapter 3*. In this chapter the methodology of interviews is presented as well as my informants. I discuss issues of doing field work in an unfamiliar context, in this case a country and a culture earlier unknown to me. The main literature which I have used for this thesis is presented.

Chapter 4 gives a short historical overview of Albania as a background to understand the different layers of cultural heritage in the country and why society works the way it does today. The communist years are described more detailed than the other periods. Informative text based on literature is mixed with citations about the period from informants. The purpose is to get closer to how life was during this period, to further be able to understand why heritage from this period might be a difficult heritage. Further in chapter 4 is the urban planning and architectural development of Tirana described as well as a short review of how urban planning in Tirana works today. This part is not supposed to cover the whole situation and all actors involved, but to give an idea of how urban planning and the Albanian society works in 2010.

In *Chapter 5* I present institutions and organizations in Albania which work with heritage and

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13 Stefa & Mydyti (2009)
14 Glass (2008) p. 7 f
15 Ibid. p. 64 ff

especially communist heritage.

In *Chapter 6* are the debate about communist heritage in Albania in general, bunkers and the case of the Pyramid in Tirana described and discussed through the answers from informants and the earlier theoretical discussion.

In *Chapter 7* I present the conclusions of the study and *Chapter 8* consists of a summary of this thesis.

2. Methodology

2.1 Interviews with Representatives from the Heritage Sector

The interviews with professionals had two purposes. The main purpose was to explore who works with communist heritage, *which* communist heritage, how and why and also to capture the current debate and the informant's role and her or his opinions. But to answer the research questions I also had to get a grip of the contemporary situation of urban planning and the heritage sector in Albania and more specific Tirana. As a foreigner in Albania it is hard to get an overview of how the urban planning and the heritage sector work and who is responsible for what. Most written information is not available in English. To understand how things work in practice in Albania, these conversations were necessary. It is for example difficult to understand the widespread corruption in society and how it affects urban planning and the heritage sector only by reading articles and literature which are available in English.

The interviews were organized as conversations, without fixed questions (see Interview guide in Appendix 1). The questions were often answered during the conversation without me being forced to ask them. A low rate of standardisation and structure made it possible for me to modify the questions depending on the situation during the interview. It also gave the informant space to answer, reflect and argue.[16] All conversations except one were recorded and transcribed, and I also made notes during and after the interviews. The interviews took between 45 minutes and one and a half hour.

Most of the informants have education from abroad. The fact that these persons have spent time outside Albania and were educated in other countries most probably affect their view of the Albanian society, their profession and the communist heritage. The interviews were carried out in English, which is neither mine nor the informants' first language, which affects the possibilities to express yourself and to use or understand nuances in the language.

Some of the informants knew much about my topic and my questions before we met and the interview was carried out. Others did not know anything about my topic before our meeting. Some of the interviews were carried out in the workplace of the informant and other interviews took place in cafés. Where the interview is done may affect to what degree the informant is representing her or himself as a private person or as a professional and her or his organization. The extent of formal and personal responses has varied. The informants were contacted because of their professions, but some of them gave very personal answers to my questions, while others gave official answers. In this way, some of the informants cannot be said to represent the opinions of the organization where they work, while others only represent their organization but not themselves as private persons.

2.2 Selection and Presentation of Informants

The aim was to get a broad picture of who works with the built communist heritage in Albania and the current debate about this heritage. The informants were contacted through contacts I had before arriving to Albania and through the network I got during my stay. Many informants mentioned the same persons, which confirms that I have been in contact with some of the main persons in the field, and also that there are only a few people in Albania working with and discussing the built communist heritage.

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16 Sørensen (2009) p. 174

The informants are:

Informant 1. The first informant works for the NGO GDCO in the city of Gjirokastra in the south of Albania. The informant has education from Albania and the US and is specialized in heritage management.

Informant 2. The second interview was done with a representative from the Institute of Monuments of Culture (IMC) at the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports. The informant has education as an archaeologist from Albania and the US.

Informant 3. The third interview was done with one of the former directors of the IMC. The informant now works at one of the public universities in Tirana and is one of the persons behind a new master and PhD program in heritage management. The informant has education from Albania, UK and the US.

Informant 4. The fourth informant is an archaeologist who has worked at the NGO GDCO in Gjirokastra. The project in Gjirokastra is the only time the informant has worked with modern heritage.

Informant 5. The fifth interview was done with a person who works for the NGO Albanian Heritage Foundation (AHF). The informant is an archaeologist but works for the moment with a project about the industrial heritage of Albania.

Informant 6. The sixth interview was done with an architect who works at the Urban Planning Directorate in the Municipality of Tirana. The informant has education within architecture and urban planning from Turkey.

Informant 7. The conversation with the seventh informant was not recorded. The informant works for a private university in Tirana and an NGO works with urban planning and architecture.

Anonymization

The names of the informants are not used in the thesis. The informants are anonymous for readers outside of Albania, while they for readers living in Tirana with interest and contacts within the heritage sector and urban planning might be easy to de-anonymize.

2.3 The Pyramid

A building which is almost always presented in guidebooks and travelogs from Tirana is the Pyramid, which is located along the main boulevard in the capital. The Pyramid was erected to commemorate the former dictator Enver Hoxha, as a museum over his life, after his death in 1985. The building is also one of few buildings from the communist period which has a unique architectural style and differs from other architecture from the period. Therefore, this building was well-known for me before my arrival in Tirana and I wanted to use it as an example to discuss in interviews. I did not know about the recent debate about the future of the building. This was introduced to me during the first interview I did. The proposal to demolish the building, and later on a governmental decision to do so, made the Pyramid a given topic to discuss with the informants.

2.4 Understanding Tirana and Albania

I spent two months in Albania which has been necessary for this study, not only to be able to do

interviews, but to understand a city and a society which is completely different from cities and societies in northern Europe, which I am used to. It has also been necessary to stay in Tirana to get access to information which cannot be found on the internet. A lot of time has been spent getting to know Tirana and the Albanian society, through walks around the city, talking to people, visiting museums, cafés, bars, parks, universities, Albanian homes and travelling around the country. This is not described in the thesis, but has been necessary to see Tirana and Albania more from the inside than as a foreigner, even if two months of course are not enough to fully grasp the whole society.

2.5 Private – Professional, Subjectivity and Power

As a foreigner and student in a completely new context, the private life and research sometimes mix together. My interviews were supplemented with many informal conversations. These conversations, in which I first was a private person, have helped me gain understanding of the Albanian society – the way it was during communism, during the 1990s and today. During informal conversations between friends, people talk about things which they would not mention during recorded interviews. When mixing your personal life with your research there is a moral aspect. In the thesis I have not used stories and memories that people have told me as a private person. Mulinari writes that she felt excited and satisfied when serious conflicts arose within the organization which she studied.[17] In the same way I sometimes felt satisfied on behalf of my research when people told me about their memories and lives during communism and when the conflict regarding the Pyramid intensified during my last weeks in Tirana.

Who I am as a person, my background, culture, education and so on will influence what I chose to study, how I study and interpret it and what answers I will get from informants. This could be used actively if it could result in a more honest and complete communication between me and the informants.[18] I cannot regard the buildings from communism in the same way as Albanians do, because I have no experience of living under dictatorship or any personal connections to the place. I am too young to remember when CEE was ruled by communist regimes. This might have been a benefit for me during this study, since I did not have many preconceptions about Albania, as I during this period have experienced that many people in my parents' generation in Sweden have.

When interviews are done in English, language can become a factor of power. The informant may have less knowledge in English than the interviewer and therefore feels insecure. I also noticed during one interview that the informant felt that I had more knowledge than him in the topic we were discussing, and therefore felt insecure. However, neither to talk about the communist past and its heritage, nor the relationship between me and the informants have been difficult and I do not consider answers and opinions from informants to be distorted. On the contrary, I felt that the informants were honest and in most cases outspoken.

2.6 Literature Studies

The literature has been partly theoretical about heritage and more specific difficult heritage and partly descriptive literature about the history and the urban planning in Albania.

Albania and Tirana
The main literature which have been used to understand the history of Albania has been *The*

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17 Mulinari (1999) p. 54
18 McDavid (2009) discusses how she used her personal background in interviews in her chapter in Heritage studies: methods and approaches

Albanians by Miranda Vickers, where the nation's history from the Ottoman empire until the 1990s is presented.[19] To understand the development of Tirana I have used *Tirana - the Challenge of Urban Development* in which Aliaj and Lulo describe the history of architecture and urban development in Tirana from the foundation of the capital in 1920 until 2003. In the publication *Between Energy and the Vacuum - Co-PLAN and Urban Planning in Albania* Aliaj, Dhamo and Shutina write about the NGO Co-Plan's first fifteen years as a pioneering Albanian civil society organization working with urban planning. This book has been useful to understand the urban development of Tirana and the political context of urban planning in Albania.[20]

For updated information about the political, social and economic situation in Albania today I have used information from the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, together with the above mentioned literature about Tirana. The official Swedish sources have been more accessible for me than Albanian sources, because of language and knowledge of where to find information.

Another category of literature which have been used to gain information about Tirana and specific buildings is travel guides. I have used Bradt's guidebook *Albania*, *Tirana in your pocket* and *Tirana* by Thomas Cook Publishing. These are easy accessible sources in English which often offer short and simple descriptions of the city and its history.[21]

The photo book *Tirana* published by the Party of Labour (PLA) in 1990 and *The Museum-House of the Party* from 1981 about the house where the Albanian Communist Party (later PLA) was founded have been used as historical sources to see how the city and buildings looked like during this period and to get knowledge of how PLA presented Tirana and their ideology in the end of the communist regime.[22]

Heritage
Macdonald's book *Difficult Heritage – Negotiating the Nazi Past in Nuremberg and Beyond* and two of her articles have been of great importance for this thesis as she studies the handling of a difficult heritage site, a Nazi heritage in Nuremberg. This literature has given my study a theoretical framework and offered another case which I have been able to compare to the communist heritage in Albania.[23]

The collection of articles in *Places of Pain – Dealing with "difficult" heritage* written by scholars from different academic fields contains of various examples of difficult heritage and how governments, heritage professionals and communities have preserved and remembered or ignored or forgot them. The book contains examples of sites for massacres and genocides, places connected to war, mental hospitals etcetera.[24]

Ashworth and Tunbridge's book *Dissonant Heritage - the management of the past as a resource in conflict* has been presented above (see 1.5) and consists of a range of situations of difficult heritage, for example heritage from trauma and atrocities.[25]

Duncan Light's articles about socialist heritage in Romania have been an inspiration from the beginning of this study. His articles are from the year 2000 which have been interesting and offered

19 Vickers (1999)
20 Aliaj, Dhamo & Shutina (2010)
21 Gloyer (2008), *Tirana In Your Pocket* (2010) and Clancy (2008)
22 Tirana (1990) and Institute of the Monuments of Culture and the Directory of Museums, Tirana (1981)
23 Macdonald (2009) *Difficult heritage : Negotiating the Nazi Past in Nuremberg and Beyond*
24 Logan & Reeves (2008)
25 Ashworth & Tunbridge (1996)

the possibility to compare the situation ten years ago with newer literature about socialist heritage in CEE.[26]

Methodology

For increased knowledge in methodologies and interviews I have used the books *Heritage studies - methods and approaches* and *Mer än kalla fakta - Kvalitativ forskning i praktiken [More than facts – Qualitative research in practice].*[27] Field studies and different problems you may come across as well as field work in other countries and cultures are discussed in these books. The former of these books is written within the subject field of this thesis while the latter is directed to a broader group of students within the fields of social sciences and the humanities, why they together offered a good base for my field work.

2.7 Other Material

Newspaper Articles

A few articles from the English language newspaper *Tirana Times* concerning the Pyramid have been used as material. The articles were all published in October and November 2010.

Seminar and Study Visit

I had the opportunity to attend two presentations in different stages of the Surrel project (further described in 5.4) by students at the Polis University in Tirana. During the first presentation I got the possibility to listen to the students' reflections about the communist period and the project. The Albanian Minister of Culture, Ferdinand Xhaferaj, attended the second presentation and held a speech about the project, which is used as a source in the thesis.

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26 Light (2000) *An unwanted past* and *Gazing on Communism* and Young & Light (2006)
27 Sørensen & Carman (2009) and Sjöberg (1999)

3. Theoretical Framework

In this chapter the concept of heritage and different strategies to handle difficult heritage will be presented. Since my understanding of the concept heritage primarily comes from my education in Sweden and situations and ideas in my home country, examples and definitions from Swedish authorities will be used in the beginning of this chapter.

3.1 Definition of Heritage

Graham, Ashworth and Tunbridge define heritage as "that part of the past which we select in the present of contemporary purposes, be they economic, cultural, political or social".[28] These parts of the past can be material such as buildings, objects and archaeological objects as well as immaterial such as traditions and stories. In this thesis I study built heritage, why *heritage* refers to physical immovable heritage and more specific buildings. However, the physical objects are not separated from their history, concepts and stories behind them, why this is also included in the concept *heritage*.

3.2 Heritage and Difficult Heritage

Heritage is selections of things and thoughts that we inherit and which connect us to times and lives before us. Heritage used to be the grand and unique pieces of our past, but the concept of heritage has broadened and even places of pain and trauma can be included in the concept.[29] Lowenthal writes about the increased interest in heritage and says that "Every legacy is cherished. From […] Hollywood to the Holocaust".[30] Even if heritage today could be almost anything left from the past, heritage is often described as something positive, as a resource and something which belongs to everyone. The Swedish National Heritage Board works to achieve respect for the heritage of different groups and "appreciation of, commitment to, and the assumption of responsibility for one's own heritage".[31] In the mission of the Swedish National Heritage Board it is said that the heritage belongs to everyone and is seen as a common resource. Everyone is also responsible to protect the heritage and it should be a positive force in a democratic and sustainable society.[32] When a dictatorship leaves physical remains behind, is it even possible for the population to feel that this heritage belongs to them, that it is part of their identity, something they should be responsible to preserve and use as a resource?

UNESCO has described *cultural heritage* in *Draft Medium Term Plan 1990-1995: "*the cultural heritage gives each particular place its recognizable features and is the storehouse of human experience".[33] To define heritage as a storehouse of our experiences is not to say that it has to be something positive or something that a majority wants to preserve. This is a definition of heritage which is easier to apply on difficult heritage. In the government bill *Tid för kultur* (*Time for Culture*) by the Swedish government in 2009 it is also noted that "[heritage] carries the memories of society and concerns progress and success as well as failures and suffering."[34]

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28 Graham, Ashworth & Tunbridge (2005)
29 Lowenthal (1996) p. 14 and Logan & Reeves (2008) p. 1 among others
30 Lowenthal (1996) p. ix
31 Swedish National Heritage Board (2010). The Swedish National Heritage Board is the agency of the Swedish government responsible for heritage issues in Sweden.
32 Ibid.
33 Jokilehto (2005) p. 5
34 Swedish Government (2009) p. 30 f. My translation. Original: "Det bär samhällets minnen och handlar om såväl

I have through this thesis chosen to use the notion *communist heritage* for buildings from the period 1945-1990 in Albania. Everything that was built during this period was controlled by the communist regime and was a way to organize society due to the ideology and to express the power of the regime, why every building from this period somehow is connected to communism. Heritage is something that we chose, but as written in the definitions by UNESCO and the Swedish government above, heritage is a storehouse of human experiences, including suffering and failures, and what gives a place its character. With that definition in mind, *communist heritage* is used.

Macdonald defines undesirable heritage as "a heritage that the majority of the population would prefer not to have"[35] and Light labels the heritage from the socialist period in Romania as unwanted by Romanians.[36] In this thesis I use the notion *difficult heritage* instead of undesirable or unwanted. A difficult heritage is not per se an unwanted heritage. Nor is heritage from an oppressive communist regime per se a difficult heritage. However, the assumption in this thesis is that heritage from the communist period in Albania is a contested and difficult heritage, because of the harsh control of both people and environment that the communist regime practiced and the closeness in time. The assumption that it is a difficult heritage is also supported by the fact that there are almost no exhibitions or projects where the communist past is emphasized and the current decision and arguments to demolish the Pyramid, which will be discussed in chapter 6.

3.3 Heritage, Memory and Identity

Memory and heritage are closely connected. Without memory there would be no heritage, culture or identities. There are several kinds of memory: public, private, local, national, official, unofficial, historical and so on, and they are all connected to places. Not only official or national groups are involved in the process of shaping public memory, but also heritage institutions, local organizations, media and academics are important actors. National memory on the other hand is mainly shaped by the state and state institutions and should represent the opinions and values of the general public. The state is a central actor in the construction of heritage and public memory as the state usually have the highest and official responsibility for the national heritage and which ideas of history and heritage that will be negotiated in education and other institutions in society.[37] How and what we remember is selected just as heritage is, due to present interests. Lowenthal writes that heritage, unlike history, is "sanctioned not by proof of origins but by present exploits" and that heritage is "created to generate and protect group interests".[38] Further, he also writes that collective memories, just like individual memories, are understood and carried by individuals who prevent the memories to be corrected or changed by others. Thus, collective memories consists of a combination of facts and fiction.[39]

There are several definitions of identity and several fields of research concerning identity. The concept of identity will not be discussed in depth here. However, heritage, language, ethnicity, nationalism and shared interpretations of the past are here believed to be important concepts in the construction of narratives of inclusion and exclusion which are used to define groups and societies. Sameness and belonging are important for the construction of identities, and consequently also

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framsteg och framgångar som misslyckanden och lidanden."

35 Macdonald (2006) "Undesirable Heritage : Fascist Material Culture and Historical Consciousness in Nuremberg" p. 9

36 Light (2000) *An Unwanted Past*

37 McDowell (2008) p. 40 ff

38 Lowenthal (1996) p. 127 and 128

39 Ibid p. 146

otherness and the others' different beliefs and values.[40]

It is a common idea in our part of the world that material heritage carries the notions of continuity of people and connects the present to the past. But material heritage is not only seen as a carrier or a representation of identities, but as materialising or objectifying identity. Physical heritage is a proof that the past did exist and still exists today. Since heritage is the identity materialized it is also proof that the identity which was materialized existed. When the inherited materialized identity is an identity that people today do not want to have this may become problematic. Macdonald asks in her study of a nazi heritage if it is possible for identities to change when the physical manifestation of the identity still remains unchanged.[41] Public space is often used by regimes to demonstrate and strengthened power and ideas of an ideology as well as national identity. Heritage is also used with the purpose to re-shape the identity of a nation, which is especially done by nations that have been in war or under dictatorship. For post-socialist countries in Europe the process has often been about finding a "European" or local heritage. Events and heritage that do not fit into the new narratives could be written out from the official history.[42] The period of socialist rule has in most countries in Central and Eastern Europe been seen as an aberration in history and the wish to erase it from collective and historical memory has been widely spread. According to Light, the process of nation-building is often as much about forgetting the past as remembering it.[43] To be able to shape a new identity one has to reject the identities created during communism, by for example denying or erasing memories from this past. This has to do with both the way life was during the decades of communism where basic human rights were denied and the impossibility to combine the communist identities with the post-communist democratic, capitalist and west-oriented identities.[44] In other societies, for example former Yugoslavia, traumatic pasts and victimhood are actively used in the present to shape identities, in politics and to justify actions.[45]

Architecture, for example, which later on could be considered heritage, is thus both used as a way to materialize identity and to re-shape identities. Albert Speer has written that the word architecture was magic to Hitler because architecture could both shape the present population and make it possible to leave a lasting legacy to the future.[46] However, there are different opinions of how connected architecture can be to ideology and if architecture can be regarded as material ideology. The National Socialists in Germany for example did not have a unified architectural style or theory but adopted parts from different architectural styles. Further, some scholars are critical of regarding architecture simply as an expression of an ideology and argue that a construction process is a broad and more complicated process than to only involve the political elite and the architect. Policies, economy, negotiations, compromises and practical needs affect buildings, which therefore are not just expressions of an ideology.[47] However, regardless to what degree buildings from a regime are material ideology, they are connected to that ideology to some extent and therefore in the case of nazism and communism also to some extent a difficult heritage.

Living memory may have to disappear before traumatic events or periods can be discussed in a more objective way and be regarded as history and heritage. Ashworth and Tunbridge write that "the cultural memory of some victims may perpetuate a quasi-personal involvement for generations

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40 Graham & Howard (2008) p. 5
41 Macdonald (2009) *Difficult heritage : Negotiating the Nazi Past in Nuremberg and Beyond* p. 10 f
42 Young & Light (2006)
43 Light (2000) *An unwanted past* p. 146 ff
44 Light (2000) *Gazing on communism* p. 157 f
45 Graham & Howard (2008) p. 6
46 Macdonald (2009) *Difficult heritage : Negotiating the Nazi Past in Nuremberg and Beyond* p. 27
47 Ibid. p. 30 ff

while others may distance themselves rapidly from past events".[48] A trauma cannot be erased from individual memories, but to handle a difficult past individuals may create emotional protective barriers against the understanding of the event. By blocking the reception of realities individuals escape from memories and interpretations that otherwise would be too horrific.[49] Aronsson writes about different combinations of remembrance and oblivion. Experiences of difficult events are often followed by repression. In the next generation it is common that an interest for the event grows. In the third generation memories and buildings from the recent past can become heritage.[50] Lowenthal on the other hand writes that a transformation from a horrific event to heritage could take a century before, but today can happen in twenty years, as in post-socialist countries in Central and Eastern Europe where a majority of today's populations did experience the period themselves.[51] Light wrote ten years ago that "few people in CEE would regard the legacy of four decades of state socialism as of value".[52] However, as time passes by, the recent socialist past and its heritage in CEE have more and more anew been included in the national narratives, presented in museums and buildings with strong connections to former socialist regimes have been protected as monuments of culture.[53] As time passes by, the shamefulness over the past is naturally forgotten or reduced. Even though the concept of heritage is nowadays broader and events more rapidly become heritage, Lowenthal argues that this oblivion is normal and necessary and that the concept of heritage demands that we forget horrible events. It is sometimes better to forget than to remember, he argues, and gives examples of racist songs and movies.[54]

3.4 Strategies for Difficult Heritage: Remember or forget? Preserve or demolish?

The need or wish to forget exists among both victims and perpetrators, as well as among people who did not clearly belong to any of these groups. Traumatic memories can be obstacles both on an individual and a group level when trying to shape a future distinguished from the recent past. A society can agree on collective amnesia, as was the case in many former socialist countries in CEE described above (3.3). However, it is a short term strategy as future generations often are more interested to remember, and buildings still remain as reminders of the past. There can also be a wish to remember a difficult past among both victims and perpetrators. It is common that victimized groups use a difficult past in the creation of a new group identity and as a mean to legitimate actions in the present. It is also a common belief that remembering violence in the past will teach us to not make the same mistake again. Perpetrators with a regretting approach can use heritage from the difficult past for this purpose.[55] Below several strategies to handle difficult heritage will be presented. These are partly from Macdonald's *Difficult heritage: Negotiating the Nazi Past in Nuremberg and Beyond* and partly compiled from other literature and cases.

Trauma cannot be entirely erased from individual memories or the cultural landscape. The physical legacy of a former dictatorship could be an obstacle when a nation is trying to forget its recent past, as mentioned above.[56] But the physical remains from the communist past are not easy to remove, since it includes monuments, housing estates, industrial complexes and a nationwide defence system of bunkers from four decades of communist rule. After the collapse of the Berlin Wall this

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48 Ashworth & Tunbridge (1996) p. 115
49 Ibid. p. 112
50 Aronsson (2004) p. 73
51 Lowenthal (1996) p. 17
52 Light (2000) *Gazing on communism* p. 160
53 Murzyn (2008) p. 335 ff
54 Lowenthal (1996) p. 161
55 Ashworth (2008) p. 239 ff
56 Light (2000) *An Unwanted Past* p. 148

memorial landscape begun to be decomposed in CEE. Great efforts were made to remove the physical remains of the former regimes. The most obvious material traces, as statues of socialist leaders, were toppled and streets were renamed in many countries.[57] In Bulgaria central squares and streets were destroyed and others were reshaped. Almost every statue of Lenin and Dimitrov disappeared in the beginning of the 1990s and empty pedestals were left.[58] When it comes to heritage from a traumatic past the question of preserving or demolishing it always rises at some point. After the immediate reaction to demolish statues and monuments it is common that buildings and other physical traces which are harder to remove still remain without strategies of how to handle them.

Remembrance or Commemoration

A common argument to preserve heritage from difficult periods and events is the wish to safeguard memories from an important period in history and thereby limit the risk that history will be repeated.[59] Macdonald writes about "memorial entrepreneurs", people who try to promote public remembrance. They might do this because they were victims or because they feel a moral obligation to emphasize the memories of the recent difficult past, maybe with the purpose to prevent history from being repeated.[60] As opposed to this is the argument that preservation of a difficult heritage site could be understood as a celebration and commemoration of the past regime, since sites or objects which are labelled as heritage traditionally are seen as parts of the past worthy of commemoration and admiration. Further there is a risk that the heritage site will be a place for pilgrimage for people honouring the past regime, which has been a strong argument in the debate regarding the presentation of Nazi heritage in Germany.[61]

Obstacle or Resource

It is argued that preservation of heritage from a former regime could be an obstacle in developing the country and constructing a new national identity, both because of the need to forget and move on but also because every political system should have their own landscape symbolizing their values.[62] Others, in opposition to the argument that each political system should have their own cultural landscape, argue that we should not repeat the behaviour of oppressive regimes and demolish all traces from the past.[63] In Macdonald's article about the Nazi heritage of Nuremberg she writes about how the architecture was constructed to become heritage and last into a distant future and allude to the past. The Nazi architect Albert Speer described his buildings as "words in stone" which would speak to the viewer. Macdonald wonder, if the building remain the same, does it still speak the same words to the viewer and then communicate an unwanted identity?[64] When the purpose with the architecture was that it would turn into a great heritage that would remain long in the future it may be hard today to follow that wish of a former oppressive regime. Another strategy is to transform the area back to how it used to be and function before the difficult period or event, into its "innocent" shape and function.[65]

A traumatic past and difficult heritage can be blurred, forgotten or demolished and later be included in the historical narratives or the cultural landscape again. In the case of the Party rally grounds

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57 Light (2000) *An Unwanted Past* p. 154
58 Vukov & Toncheva (2006) p. 121 ff Georgi Dimitrov (1882-1949) was the leader of the Bulgarian Communist Party
59 Light (2000) *Gazing on communism* p. 157 among others. Ashworth points out that this argument does not make sense since violence and repression are repeated even though we have increased knowledge about violence in the past. Ashworth (2008) p. 241
60 Macdonald (2009) *Difficult heritage : Negotiating the Nazi Past in Nuremberg and Beyond* p. 5
61 Ibid. (2009) p. 3
62 Light (2000) *Gazing on communism* p. 159
63 Long & Reeves (2008) p. 78
64 Macdonald (2009) *Difficult heritage : Negotiating the Nazi Past in Nuremberg and Beyond*
65 Ibid. p. 67

which Macdonald studied, a few buildings were torn down in the 1960s. When traces from these buildings were found in the 1990s, an information board was erected on the site by the city's building department to explain the history of the traces.[66] Macdonald writes that there has been increasing attempts since the 1990s to emphasize difficult heritage all over the world. To acknowledge one's difficult past is a way for a country, city or government to show openness and a "willingness to be self-critical".[67] In the end of the 1980s the city of Nuremberg started to regard their difficult heritage as something which could be positive for the city and saw a possibility to be better than cities like Berlin where much of the Nazi heritage had been given new functions. To not handle the Nazi heritage adequately was going to be a historical mistake, it was said. At the same time it was in reality hard to integrate the Nazi heritage as a part of the image of the city.[68]

Defacement, Profanation and Re-appropriation
To demolish buildings is physically harder than to topple statues and remove monuments. Often buildings do not carry the same strong symbolism as statues and monuments do. But the alternatives are not only demolition or preservation. There are many ways to present and interpret a heritage site. One alternative to demolition is to deface buildings by making the origin of them unreadable and thereby removing their capability to communicate what they were built to communicate. This can be done by removing the most obvious reminders of the buildings origin, as swastikas or red stars. To remove these symbols, in Germany part of a broader denazification process, is also an important social procedure to mark the end of a former oppressive regime. A similar strategy is profanation. This can be done by treating a difficult heritage site as nothing special and perform every day activities there, in contrast to giving recognition to the site as a difficult heritage. When a place as a former important Nazi building becomes a part of people's everyday life it have lost some of its former identity and been profaned. Buildings can also be re-appropriated and given new meanings. For instance, some Nazi buildings which were occupied by American soldiers became symbols for victory over the National Socialists instead of symbols of the National Socialists themselves.[69]

Museums
There are cases when buildings erected and used by former oppressive regimes have been transformed into museums of the same regimes. The House of Terror Museum in Budapest is a museum and memorial to the victims of the Nazi and the socialist regimes in Hungary and is located in the building which used to be the headquarter of both regimes. The museum "is a monument to the memory of those held captive, tortured and killed in this building" and its aim is "to make people understand that the sacrifice for freedom was not in vain. Ultimately, the fight against the two cruellest systems of the 20th century ended with the victory of the forces of freedom and independence".[70] An entirely different approach has been used for the House of People in Bucharest. The building, one of the largest in the world, was the headquarter for the socialist regime and tens of thousands of other buildings were torn down to clear the way for it. The Romanian people lived in poverty while Ceausescu took on enormous foreign debts to realize his project. After the fall of the socialist regime has the building been one of the most popular tourist attraction in Romania and one of the most used images in promotional material addressed to western tourists. However, in the guided tours of the building is the building's connection to Ceausescu and his regime ignored and instead is the Romanian origin of the building emphasized, as Romanian craftsmanship and Romanian building materials, and the architecture is connected to traditional Romanian styles. The building is also presented as a contemporary political institution with no

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66 Macdonald (2009) *Difficult heritage : Negotiating the Nazi Past in Nuremberg and Beyond* p. 74 f
67 Ibid. p. 5 and 188
68 Ibid. p. 97 ff
69 Ibid. p. 52 ff
70 House of Terror

connections to its socialist past.[71] These are two completely different strategies to handle a difficult heritage, but in both cases it is done as museums and promoted to visitors.

Ignorance

An alternative, or a non-way of handling difficult heritage, is simply to ignore it, both physically and socially, and let it decline. In maps and tourist information this heritage is simply ignored and other heritage is emphasized. Tourists cannot find the site or building as easily and as it declines it loses some of its former power and beauty.[72] But in the case with Nazi heritage it was also problematic to let buildings fall into ruins, because Hitler and Speer had expressed a wish for their architecture to be romanticist ruins in the future.[73] In that case both to ignore and to restore and maintain buildings could result in maintaining the original power which the building was meant to communicate.

Preservation because of practical needs

In some cases buildings from a recent difficult past remain because of practical and economic reasons, for example after the Second World War when there was a need for buildings and in post-communist countries where a majority of the population lives in apartment blocks built by the former regimes.[74] Buildings like these, which remain of practical and economic reasons, may not be considered heritage.

Another reason to preserve difficult heritage is when it can become a source of revenue, as a tourist attraction.

3.5 Whose Heritage?

Heritage from a former oppressive regime or other types of difficult heritage often include various types of buildings and sites. Which of all buildings should be chosen to be preserved - or be demolished as symbolic acts? Above difficult heritage in general has been discussed, but heritage always belong to someone. From an oppressive regime or other traumatic periods or events there are heritage belonging to different groups; simplified perpetrators and victims. Long and Reeves write that "if the purpose of heritage preservation in the case of places of pain and shame is to commemorate the victims, then there is little role for the preservation of perpetrators sites".[75] Many heritage sites from atrocities belong to both parts, for example concentration camps. Heritage sites of perpetrators might be the former Gestapo headquarters or the villa of Enver Hoxha and the Pyramid in Tirana which was built to commemorate him. The villa of Hoxha and the Pyramid are though not directly connected to suffering and Macdonald labels such heritage as sites of "perpetration at a distance".[76] As in the cases with Nazi or Communist regimes, a large part of today's cultural landscape was produced or transformed by them and it is impossible to divide it into sites belonging to perpetrators and victims.

3.6 Communism Heritage Tourism

To deny a period and its heritage or to simply ignore it becomes more difficult when tourists are

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71 Light (2000) *An unwanted past* p. 145 ff, Parliament of Romania (2010) and conversations with tourists who visited House of People in 2010
72 Ibid. p. 52 f
73 Macdonald (2009) *Difficult heritage : Negotiating the Nazi Past in Nuremberg and Beyond* p. 90
74 Ibid. p. 59 f
75 Long & Reeves (2008) p. 78
76 Macdonald (2009) *Difficult heritage : Negotiating the Nazi Past in Nuremberg and Beyond* p. 3

interested in that period and its heritage. After the fall of the Berlin Wall a "communist heritage tourism" developed, which now is growing also in Albania. Light defines this tourism as the consumption of key sights and sites associated with a communist regime and its fall.[77] This is one category of tourism where tourists visit places of trauma and tragedy. Ashworth and Tunbridge write about "horror tourism".[78] "Dark tourism" is another term. One form of dark tourism is to visit sites of individual or mass deaths.[79] A concentration camp can become a place for a recreational trip and be promoted as a tourist attraction. Former penal colonies from the 19th century have become tourist attractions after their abandonment. Ashworth and Tunbridge ask when it becomes acceptable to consume heritage of atrocity as entertainment and by which groups.[80] International tourists may be prepared to consume other people's unwanted heritage immediately, long before the people of a nation are ready to regard their traumatic past as history and heritage. Tourism is often an important income for many countries which have periods of trauma behind, but a conflict could arise when tourism is about a period that a nation would like to leave behind. According to Light, this type of heritage which tourists are consuming is defined and constructed outside the country. Light argues there is almost no interest to remember this period in Romania and to interpret the heritage of socialism for tourists. The Berlin Wall itself, House of the People in Bucharest, the statue park in Budapest are examples of buildings and sites connected to the former regimes which are popular tourist attractions. Light writes that these kind of attractions and interpretations of communist heritage often are introduced and promoted by foreign actors for foreign consumers, while the former communist countries themselves have little influence on how this heritage is interpreted.[81]

This kind of tourism does not yet exist in a structured, large-scaled way in Albania, even if the project of turning a bunker into a museum in the city of Gjirokastra is a result of tourists' interest in communism and bunkers.[82] However, no site or building in Albania can today be compared to the organised promotion of and number of tourists visiting House of the People in Bucharest, the statue park in Budapest, the number of "communist heritage sites" in Berlin and organised communist city tours in a number of Central and Eastern European cities.

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77 Light (2000) *Gazing on communism* p. 157
78 Ashworth & Tunbridge p. 112
79 Light (2000) *Gazing on communism* p. 149
80 Ashworth & Tunbridge p. 114 f
81 Light (2000) *Gazing on communism* p. 159
82 Informant 1

4. Albania

In this chapter I will describe the history of Albania and Tirana. The parts about the Albanian history are mainly based on one source, *The Albanians* by Vickers. The parts about Tirana's urban development are mainly based on Aliaj and Lulo's *The City of Tirana – History of Architecture and Urban Development*.

4.1 Introduction

Albania is located in the Balkan peninsula with a 400 kilometre long coast towards the Mediterranean. The country is a bit smaller than the Swedish province of Småland and slightly smaller than the American state of Maryland. Albania borders on Montenegro, Kosovo, Macedonia and Greece. The number of inhabitants is between three and almost four millions and slightly more than half of the population lives in cities.[83] The capital is Tirana, located almost in the centre of the country, with approximately 600 000 inhabitants according to official statistics. Other sources estimate the population of the capital to one million.[84] A majority of the population is muslim (70%), while about 20% are greek-orthodox and 10% catholics.[85]

Fig 1. Map of Albania and bordering countries.

Albania was the strongest communist regime in Europe, isolated from the rest of the world between 1944 and 1990. Today, Albania is one of the poorest countries in Europe with a big informal economy. Aid from other countries has been of great importance for the economy since the early 1990s, as well as transferred money from emigrated Albanians.[86] About every fifth person in Albania lives under the official poverty level. About a third of the households lacks running water,

83 Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs *Landpromemoria: Albanien* (2009) p. 1 and Landguiden (2010) p. 1 f
84 Pojani (2009) p. 86
85 Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs *Landpromemoria: Albanien* (2009) p. 1
86 Landguiden (2010) p. 15

drainage and central heating.[87] The electric power supply is inadequate and power failures are common. Organised crime is widespread in the Albanian society, as well as corruption. The customs, the Internal Revenue Service, the health sector and the legal system are according to Transparency International (TI) the most corrupt authorities.[88]

4.2 History

The Ottoman Empire

The Ottoman Empire ruled the Balkan peninsula for about five hundred years. Albania belonged to the Empire from the middle of the 15th century until 1912. Within the Empire Muslims had higher status and advantages in society compared with Christians, who were encouraged to convert to Islam. Some muslim Albanians had high positions within the Ottoman Empire, but the Albanian areas remained the less developed areas in Europe. During the 18th century the Ottoman Empire lost power in international politics and in the beginning of the 19th century nationalism grew among different groups within the Empire. In Albania, which consisted of various religious groups, this national movement arose a bit later than in the rest of the empire. The Albanians did not have a standard alphabet and the Albanian language was not taught anywhere, which was a way for the Ottoman Empire to lower the Albanian national consciousness. It was also hard to organise the Albanians which lived divided in different religious groups and were separated by bad infrastructure. In the late 19th century language, instead of religion, was used as the criterion to define nationality by the nationalist movement and borders of Albania were sketched according to language barriers. These borders were not applied and the Ottoman Empire did not recognize Albanians as an own kind of people with their own identity. In early 1900s a committee for the Liberation of Albania and an Albanian guerilla movement were formed. In the end of September in 1912 all of Kosovo, central and southern Albania was in the hand of the rebels.[89]

Independence 1912

Albania was the last nation in the Balkans to become independent from the Ottoman Empire when independence was proclaimed hastily in 1912. The situation within the country was still unstable and both the Serbian army and the Greek navy attacked Albania the same year. In December 1912 the Conference of Ambassadors was held in London and the borders of Albania were decided. More than half of the Albanian population ended up outside the borders of the new Albania, as large parts of the land went to Serbia, Montenegro and Greece. In the period between 1910 and 1920 Albania was constantly in war and the country was very poor and ravaged.[90]

King Zog I

During the Congress of Lushnja in 1920, Tirana, a small city with approximately 17000 inhabitants, was chosen to be the capital of Albania. The city was regarded as a neutral city between the two clans of Albania and had a location close to the port of Durres. One of the men who had power during the Congress of Lushnja was Ahmed Zogu who became minister in the new government.[91] During the next years Zogu strengthened his power in the government and after internal fights he was elected president of Albania in 1925. In 1928 Zogu proclaimed Albania as a monarchy and became King Zog I of Albania, which he thought would safeguard his position as a leader. He ruled the country in a dictatorial way until the Italian occupation during the Second World War.[92]

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87 Landguiden (2010) p. 19
88 Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs (2009) *Samarbetsstrategi för utvecklingssamarbetet med Albanien* p. 9 f
89 Vickers (1999) p. 11 ff
90 Ibid. p. 82 ff
91 Ibid. p. 94
92 Landguiden (2010) p. 7 f

The Italian Occupation and the Second World War 1939 - 1944

The Italians were interested in Albania and one idea was to split Albania between themselves and Yugoslavia. Mussolini invaded Albania in 1939 and the Albanians were not prepared for resistance. Albania was turned into "a miniature version of the Italian Fascist state".[93] In 1943 Italian troops were replaced by German ones.[94]

Foundation and Victory of the Albanian Communist Party

The Albanian Communist Party was founded in 1941. Intellectuals, students, young people and poor peasants joined the party which grew fast from a few hundred members to an army of 70 000 partisans, ready to fight against other Albanian nationalist organisations and the occupation power. The Germans retreated from Albania after a civil war and the Albanian Communist Party gained power of Albania and founded a provisional government in 1944 with Enver Hoxha as prime minister and minister of defence.[95]

Communism 1945 – 1990

The Communist Party started to introduce the Soviet economic, political and ideological model and in the end of 1944 industry, banking and transportation were controlled by the state. The relations to Yugoslavia were close. After the end of the Second World War elections were held in Albania, but all candidates belonged to the Communist Party. In 1945 a land reform was introduced and land was redistributed among peasants all over the country. Albania was at this time the most undeveloped country in Europe and after the Second World War one third of all buildings was demolished. Roads, ports, bridges and mines were mostly unusable. Although foreign aid from UN and help from Yugoslavia, Albania remained a poor country where large parts of the fast growing population lacked food.[96]

The People's Socialist Republic of Albania (PSRA) was founded in 1946 and Hoxha added foreign minister and commander-in-chief of the armed forces to his titles.[97] Albania's relations to the West became weaker as well as the relation to Yugoslavia, whose interest in a unified Yugoslavia-Albania most Albanians did not agree on. After 1948 the relations with Yugoslavia broke off and Albania turned to the Soviet Union instead. This year the name of the Albanian Communist Party was changed to the Party of Labour of Albania (PLA). The communists tried to deal with the poverty and the underdevelopment by a strongly centralized economy and focusing on making Albania a self-sufficient country in heavy industry. Big industries such as the Lenin hydro power plant and the Stalin textile mills were constructed. Huge programs to electrify and industrialize Albania were conducted through the 1950s while the agricultural sector was still primitive with almost no mechanization. In late 1950s Albania received economic support from states in Eastern Europe as well as Soviet and China and these years became the Golden Years of Albania with economic growth, increased living conditions, better education and higher level of literacy. University of Tirana was established in 1957 as the first university in Albania.[98]

When Stalin died in 1953, Khrushchev, the new Soviet Party Secretary, improved the relations with Yugoslavia, which by PLA was seen as a threat to the Albanian independence. The relationship to Soviet declined while the relations to China were strengthened. Soviet did not like the Albanian focus on industry instead of agricultural development and the relations between the countries were

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93 Vickers (1999) p. 136 ff
94 Landguiden (2010) p. 8
95 Vickers (1999) p. 145 f
96 Ibid. p. 163 ff
97 Landguiden (2010) p. 8
98 Vickers (1999) p. 170 ff

broken in 1961. Albania got financial aid from China and could build several industrial complexes in the first half of the 1960s. However, the financial help from China was not as much as the previous Soviet credits and the country once again faced economical problems.[99]

The Albanian communists thought that Soviet and other socialist states were to tolerant towards religion and wanted to decline the impact of religion in the Albanian society. In the 1960s religion was prohibited in Albania which in theory became the world's first atheist state. More than 2000 religious buildings were either transformed into profane buildings or demolished. A few religious buildings were preserved as cultural monuments.[100] Instead of religion, the socialist citizen was supposed to be interested in culture and many cultural institutions were founded in the 1960s and 1970s.[101] However, culture and entertainment were strictly controlled by the Party. Literature and art were in reality communist propaganda. Albania had to produce their own literature and movies, since the culture from Soviet and Central and Eastern Europe were considered to be "decadent and bourgeois, and therefore unsuitable".[102] One informant talks about one of the new cultural institutions in Tirana in the 1960s:

> "The Palace of culture is a type of building that is very typical for communist countries, because culture was controlled and created by the government, so you needed only one place where you could go and get brainwashed."[103]

In 1962 the Central Committee consisted of 61 members, among which there were five married couples and 20 members who were related to each other. To make it impossible to organize any resistance movement PLA built up a system to monitor the population, with informants everywhere. Children were taught to spy on their parents. Opponents to the government were eliminated. Whole families could be sent to labour camps because one family member had listened to a foreign broadcast.[104] One informant describes the supervision of the Albanians:

> "In order to understand it, you have to remove any sense of … you have to live in your brain, you have to believe that you're living in a place that is like a big Big Brother. Everything was watched. Everything was controlled. Everybody knew everything about everybody. There was no secrecy. Almost. Just deep in your thoughts. And there was only two places in which you felt out of this Big Brother. You just felt, it was not true, even those were controlled. One of them was Hotel Dajti, which was traditionally the most posh place, it was like the Plaza of Tirana. […] Dajti had the glamour, and […] the right luxury, it had all the aura that you want of a place to escape. […] First foremost the coffee was very expensive so if you wanted to treat yourself at the Dajti you had to really make a good calculation, how much money you had. Secondly, most Albanians knew that Dajti was supervised. Not supervised actually, it was … controlled. The Albanian Secret Services had spies everywhere. Looking who was in and out. […] But if you were working as a waiter at the Dajti, you were checked twice, that you were coming from a good family. That you didn't have anyone in the West, any uncle or grandmother or whatever and that you would be a good follower of the Party. And if you were not, that would make your life hell."[105]

In the 1970s, after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, PLA started to build a military defence system of hundreds of thousands of concrete bunkers all over the country (see photos of bunkers in

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99 Vickers (1999) p. 184 ff
100 Ibid. p. 178 ff
101 Nikolla (2009) p. 102
102 Vickers (1999) p. 200
103 Informant 4
104 Vickers (1999) p. 189 f
105 Informant 1

Fig. 9, 17 & 18).[106] One informant reflects over the bunkers:

> "So how do you... what happens next in your psychology? You think that everybody wants to attack you. Then you create this massive strategy of militarisation of Albania. It wasn't just a defence system, it was a whole mental, brain wash attempt, and what, to me - it's still a dilemma, did Enver Hoxha really believe that they were going to attack us? And by 'they' he meant simultaneously NATO and the Warsaw Pact, could you, could he ever believe, seriously, that NATO and the Warsaw pact, in the middle of the Cold war, would agree to invading Albania simultaneously? Sounds like a fairytale. […] The relationship with Yugoslavia was frozen. Italy was a capitalist, dirty, rotten country. So you come up with 800 000 bunkers!"[107]

In the second half of the 1960s the collectivization of agriculture was fully realized. Traditional group belonging and loyalties in families, tribes and regions were disrupted by policies.[108] One of the informants talks about the new settlements:

> "It's very interesting, the way the economic policies of the communist period was translated into new settlements, you know, a mill suddenly would emerge out of nowhere, you know, somewhere with no history because there was a mining industry there. So there was a re-distribution of the density of people […] following this economic development, this economic thinking. […] There are places of no memory, places of no spiritual … of community. Because people were forced to live together, they did not have a previous history or shared past. They came from different areas. […] Many people move away from these places because their real identities are not connected to these places but to other places where they came from, or they move for other economic opportunities."[109]

Travels within the country could only be done with permission and the Party decided where people should move and work after they finished their education. To travel outside the country was not allowed until the mid-1970s.[110] One informant talks about how life was during this period:

> "Moving from one city to another was very difficult, there were no reason to visit another city, other than playing basketball for me. And communicating was not as easy, there were no cars. Life had different reasons, you know, people were applied, there was no competition and there was... you know, nothing big to achieve in life. Life was really settled, you knew already what was going to happen with you and your family."[111]

The relations to China declined in the 1970s when China established and strengthened their connections with the US and Yugoslavia. In 1978 Albania broke the contacts with China and became completely isolated from the rest of the world.[112] PLA described the People's Socialist Republic of Albania as the only real socialist state in the world.[113] No other country in Central and Eastern Europe used the methods of Stalin as strict as Albania did. Thousands of "class enemies" were executed, imprisoned or sent to labour camps.[114] In the 1980s the PLA described the foundation of the Communist Party as "the first flower heralding the beautiful spring in which our country is living today […]. It was the starting-point of the broader, brilliant roads which were

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106 Vickers (1999) p. 193
107 Informant 1. The figure of how many bunkers that was built in Albania differs, from 300 000 up to 800 000.
108 Vickers (1999) p. 187
109 Informant 3
110 Vickers (1999) p. 200 f
111 Informant 3
112 Landguiden (2010) p. 8 f
113 Vickers (1999) p. 203
114 Landguiden (2010) p. 9

opened to our people."[115]

Enver Hoxha died in 1985 after over 40 years as the dictator of Albania. By then, Albania was the poorest country in Europe. The new prime minister Ramiz Alia, a convinced communist, introduced some reforms of decentralization and liberalization, re-established relations to other countries, reduced control of for example the cultural sector and released some political prisoners.[116] However, Alia underestimated the opposition and their protests. People expressed their rage towards the state by destroying state property such as government buildings.[117] In 1990 anti-government demonstrations were held in Tirana and thousands of people sought asylum in various foreign countries and overcrowded boats left to Italy. 5000 Albanians, which by prime minister Alia were described as "disorientated persons", were allowed to leave Albania in the summer of 1990 when freedom of movement were given.[118] However, there were no plans for the rapid urbanization within Albania and the huge demand for housing and employment when people from poor regions moved to Tirana in search for a better life.[119]

Transition Period and Development Until Today

The regime fell in December 1990 and in February 1991 thousands of people watched the huge statue of Enver Hoxha in the Skanderbeg Square being toppled.[120] Different political parties were allowed in the election in 1991. The Democratic Party of Albania (DP), with Sali Berisha as their leader, was founded in 1990 and based their politics on democracy, market economy and national reconciliation. However, Albania lacked experience of pluralist elections and DP lacked economic resources to spread their politics.[121] PLA got two thirds of the votes in the   elections, but the new parliament gave permission to private ownership, emigration and freedom of speech and religion.[122] PLA changed their name to the Socialist Party (SP) and oriented their politics towards West European social democracy. However, the situation in the country was unstable with violence and lack of basic services. Between 1991 and 1993, 90% of Albania's basic food supplies came from an international operation led by Italian troops.[123]

The elections in 1992 were won by DP and Berisha became the first post-communist leader in Albania and held the position until 1997. Despite some positive development and reforms, Albania's problems remained. Organized criminality grew. Berisha continued the tradition of authoritarian leadership. The elections in 1996 were "heavily manipulated".[124] DP had 87% of the seats in the parliament and controlled the police, the courts and the media.[125]

In the mid-1990s many Albanians invested all their assets in the so called pyramid schemes. These collapsed in 1997 and people lost all their savings. The financial system and the state collapsed. People addressed their rage towards the state and revolts against the government spread all over the country. A large part of the population was armed. About 2000 people were killed and 15 000 Albanians fled to Italy during a period of three months. In March 1997, an Italian-led international mission of 7000 soldiers arrived to Albania to help restore order.[126]

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115 Institute of the Monuments of Culture and the Directory of Museums (1981)
116 Vickers (1999) p. 210 ff
117 Fischer (2010) p. 424
118 Vickers (1999) p. 210 ff
119 Aliaj, Dhamo & Shutina (2010) p. 83
120 Vickers (1999) p. 219 f
121 Fischer (2010) p. 424
122 Landguiden (2010)
123 Fischer (2010) p. 424
124 Ibid. p. 429
125 Ibid.
126 Landguiden (2010) p. 10 and Fischer (2010) p. 429 ff

Due to the situation in the country, new elections were held in 1997. SP won and Fatos Nano, considered to still be a dedicated communist, ruled the country with the same authoritarian leadership as the previous leaders.[127] In 2005, DP and Berisha returned to power. The elections in 2009 were seen as an improvement, but violence occurred and DP has been accused of electoral fraud, which resulted in violent protests in Tirana in January 2011.[128]

Poverty, corruption and weak state institutions are still serious problems in Albania. In 2006 it is possible that 60% of GDP came from criminal activities. About 30% of the population emigrated between 1989 and 2001.[129] The tensions between the government and the opposition are deep and it is common that the two parties accuse each other of corruption and organised crime. There are no real party programmes.[130]

The political parties and shifts in power have had a great influence on the field of history which has been a political battle ground. Textbooks have been replaced by DP as well as SP after every shift in power.[131]

Albania became a member of NATO in 2009 and applied for EU membership the same year.[132]
As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, Albania is still one of the poorest countries in Europe with about one fifth of the population living under the poverty level.

4.3 Tirana – Urban Development and Architecture

"Dear Tirana, what happened to you? What will grow out of you?" - Architect Winy Maas[133]

Tirana has been the capital of Albania since 1920, located almost in the centre of the country. It has at least 600 000 inhabitants within the city, and up to one million inhabitants in Greater Tirana.[134] Aliaj and Lulo describe Tirana as an interesting city not only because it is a capital city, but because of the mixture of Illyrian, Roman and Byzantine heritage, the location between sea and mountains and as a city developed through the most authoritarian urban planning in history and "the most anarchist chaos of modern times".[135] Below is Tirana's development from foundation until today briefly described.

From Foundation to 1920
During the 16th and 18th centuries when Albania was part of the Ottoman Empire, mosques were the most important buildings in Tirana. The city developed around the largest mosques and grew without any organization which resulted in an irregular layout. The majority of the buildings from this time has been demolished, mostly during or after the Second World War. The only old mosque which survived the wars and the communist period is the Et'hem Bey mosque, built in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, in today's Skanderbeg Square (see Fig. 14). The typical dwelling houses in Tirana were one or two stories and made of mud-bricks and with gardens surrounded by low walls. The main commercial and economic area in Tirana was the bazaar in the centre of the city, today

127 Fischer (2010) p. 429 f
128 Ibid. p. 434 and Balkan Insight (2011)
129 Fischer (2010) p. 433
130 Landpromemoria: Albanien (2009) p. 5 f
131 Fischer (2010) p. 434
132 Landguiden (2010) p. 12 ff
133 Municipality of Tirana, p. 135 Citation by Architect Wily Maas, MVRDV.
134 Aliaj & Lulo (2003) p. 11 ff and Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs *Landpromemoria: Albanien* (2009) p. 1
135 Aliaj & Lulo (2003) p. 12

known as the Old Bazaar, which was destroyed in the 1960s. After the Albanian independence in 1912 there was a resistance towards the earlier oriental Ottoman influence in architecture and urban planning and houses were built with local construction materials, local handicraft works and new solutions for plan arrangements.[136]

1920 – 1938
In 1920 Tirana, with approximately 17 000 inhabitants, became the capital of Albania and had to go through transformations to be able to be the political and administrative centre of the country. The city went from a disorganized spontaneous structure to a city development based on regulatory plans. The first regulatory town plan for Tirana was made by Austrian architects in the 1920s and a new rectangular street network was connected with the older irregular parts of the city. The bazaar remained the centre of the capital.[137]

From an earlier Ottoman influence Tirana turned towards Italy in the 1920s and the Italian architect Brasini did the new master plan for the centre of Tirana. He constructed a Roman island in the centre, which connected the old city and the future modern one. Brasini's idea of six buildings for ministries and a main boulevard, *Bulevardi Deshmoret e kombit,* through the city was realized in the 1930s. The ministries were built in a neo-classical style. King Zog had ambitions to make Tirana a modern European city and the constructions of important places such as Skanderbeg square and today's Rinia Park started.[138]

The Italian Occupation and the Second World War (1939 – 1944)
Albania was officially occupied by Italy in 1939 and a new regulatory plan was made for Tirana. Tirana had 40 000 inhabitants in 1940 and the population was increasing. The typical character of the fascist architecture and urban planning was rationalism. During this period Tirana became a modern city with economic and urban development. The main boulevard was made longer and along it new office, banks and commercial buildings were built. Buildings as House of Fascism, (today's Polytechnic University main building, Fig. 2), the Qemal Stafa stadium and Hotel Dajti were built in a typical rational fascist architecture style by the Italian architect Bosio. Broad avenues and squares where parades and other political manifestations could be held were constructed.[139] During the fights against the occupation power many older buildings in Tirana were damaged.[140]

1945 – 1990
When the communists came into power they had a big challenge in front of them, trying to re-build Tirana and the rest of the country after the war. The new reforms introduced by them had a great impact on the architecture and urban planning. Private ownership was prohibited and all private properties were expropriated. To eliminate private ownership in Tirana whole neighbourhoods with traditional houses were demolished and replace by new apartment blocks. Old buildings and structures were also demolished in attempts to remove the history of the city and traces from former regimes.[141] Some old buildings were adapted by placing a red star at them. The myth of the national hero Skanderbeg, who lived during the 15th century, was emphasized during the communist period and his statue was raised in the Skanderberg Square.[142] The old bazaar, the former central point of the city, was torn down and replaced by the Palace of Culture in the 1960s. Buildings which still stand around the Skanderbeg square were raised, as Hotel Tirana and the National History Museum

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136 Aliaj, Dhamo & Shutina (2010) p. 14 ff
137 Ibid. p. 27 ff
138 Ibid. p. 29 ff
139 Ibid. p. 42 ff
140 Ibid. p. 51
141 Ibid. p. 52 ff
142 Nikolla (2009) p. 101 f

(Fig. 3). The centre of Tirana which once was a meeting point for the citizens was transformed into an area of official character for the regime to organize political rallies and ideological events.[143]

Outside the city satellite towns were built to house workers for new industries which were constructed in the outskirts of Tirana. The most notable industry was the Stalin textile plant with about 4000 families living in the satellite city.[144]

Fig. 2. Polytechnic University in Mother Teresa Square, built as House of Fascism in the 1940s by architect Bosio during the Italian occupation of Albania. During a period the building housed the Enver Hoxha University of Tirana.

Fig. 3. The National History Museum in the Skanderbeg Square. The big mosaic above the entrance was covered, but can be seen in Fig. 15.

During the communist period architecture was needed to construct housing and public facilities, but also to construct and maintain the image of a strong communist regime. The socialist architecture

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143 Aliaj, Dhamo & Shutina (2010) p. 56 ff
144 Ibid. p. 52 ff

was supposed to be as simple and cheap as possible. The quality of the apartment blocks was low and they were often built with prefabricated panels imported from the Soviet Union.[145] The architects in Albania were isolated from the contemporary architecture, techniques and development in the rest of the world. All signs of modernism were cursed and architects and their working process were strictly controlled. To return to traditional architecture was also prohibited.[146] Socialist realism was the dominant artistic style in Albania during these years. Buildings were sometimes decorated with mosaics or reliefs with socialist realist motives. The style was developed in the Soviet Union in the 1930s and its purpose was to furtherance the goals of communism. The artworks were realistic, optimistic and heroic and depicted and glorified the lives of peasants and workers and their struggle towards socialist progress (see Fig. 5).

Fig. 3. To the left. Apartment building from the communist years in the city of Lushnja, Albania.
Fig. 4. To the right. Apartment building in Tirana by architect Maks Velo who was jailed in 1978 for eight years because of "modernist tendencies" in his artwork.[147]

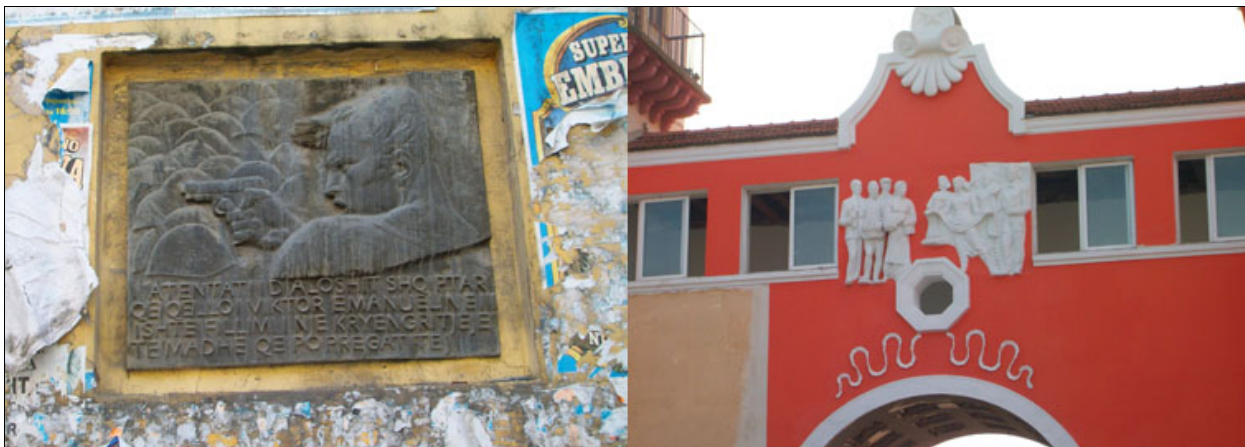Fig 5. Examples of socialist realist art decorating facades in Tirana. To the left: Detail from building on Rruga e Durresit. To the right: Entrance to the former Stalin Textile Plant.

Post-Communism: 1991 - 2000
On February 20 1991 the statue of former dictator Enver Hoxha was torn down by people in Tirana.

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145 Zanfi (2009) p. 88
146 Aliaj & Lulo (2003) p. 56 f & 85 f
147 Max Velo's homepage (2010)

100 000 people were gathered in Skanderbeg Square and watched the statue of Hoxha fall.[148]

The transition from centralized economy to a free market society in the early 1990s and the collapse of the pyramid schemes in 1997 resulted in periods of public disorder and a rapid urbanization. The urban development was characterized by chaos and irregularity with no development plans or policies during the first years after the fall of communism. At least 70 percent of all new buildings in Tirana after 1990 were built without building permissions. Whole neighbourhoods of illegal buildings were constructed in the outskirts of Tirana, where mostly people who came from the northern regions of Albania lived. These illegal areas developed because of the need for housing and a lack of legal and affordable alternatives. Between 1991 and 1994 the population of Tirana grew with 30 000 to 35 000 persons every year.[149] The city was lacking asphalted streets and urban transportation means.[150]

For a long time the profession and science of urban planning did not exist in Albania.[151] The state was extremely weak and urban planning and land use were not priorities during the first years of transition. Instead people built their own houses with no respect to regulations or public space.[152] Not only were buildings erected without permission. In Tirana a great number of buildings were built legally but with no respect to the most elementary rules of urban planning. For example, buildings have been built in green spaces, built without emergency exists and without parking areas and enough infrastructure.[153] There are still problems with ownership because of the expropriations where no compensations were given during the communist period.[154]

Demolition of Illegal Constructions and Painting the Facades: 2000 -
After the problems in 1997 the authorities started to discuss the illegal buildings in Tirana and came up with a demolishing policy. Most of the illegal buildings in the centre of Tirana had been torn down in the beginning of the 2000s. Along a four kilometre distance along the Lana river, which flows through Tirana, about 550 buildings were demolished in a short period of time.[155] Today there are greens and plantations along the Lana river.

Around the same time as the demolitions of illegal buildings were realized, the mayor of Tirana, Edi Rama – a former artist, took the initiative to invite local and foreign artists to paint the grey and declined facades of several communist apartment blocks in Tirana (see Fig. 6). The municipality did not have financial resources for any interior improvements in the apartments. After the fall of communism the interest and responsibility for public space have been very low in Tirana. To make these most declined houses colourful was a way to give the city a facelift, to show that change is possible and to make people proud of their houses and their city. The colourful facades have been known outside Albania which has been important for the city and the nation which do not want to be connected with their communist past, poverty and other problems.[156]

The response to the painted facades has not only been positive. Inhabitants in Tirana have been critical because they feel that the colourful facades do not belong in Tirana. At the same time as the facades were painted the city was lacking a lot of essential public services, which could have been

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148 Aliaj & Lulo (2003) p. 66
149 Aliaj, Dhamo & Shutina (2010) p. 18 ff
150 Nikolla (2009) p. 107
151 Aliaj, Dhamo & Shutina (2010) p. 10
152 Nikolla (2009) p. 106
153 Aliaj & Lulo (2003) p. 78
154 Aliaj, Dhamo & Shutina (2010) p. 67
155 Ibid. (2010) p. 70 f
156 Department of the Economic Development of the City, Municipality of Tirana (2010) and Informant 6

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prioritized.[157] Some architects have also been critical to the extreme transformations of buildings which this initiative has brought.[158]

Fig. 6. Painted facades in Tirana. The initiative to paint facades of apartment buildings from the communist period came from the mayor Edi Rama in early 2000s, as a way to give Tirana a well needed facelift and make the inhabitants proud of their city and the buildings.

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157 Nikolla (2009) p. 109
158 Informant 7

5. Urban Planning and Heritage Sector in Albania today

In this chapter I will briefly describe the urban planning situation in Tirana today, take the reader on an architectural walk through the centre of Tirana, and finally present the main actors in the heritage sector in Albania.

5.1 Urban Planning in Tirana 2010 – Short on Actors and Attitudes

Tirana is still often described as chaotic and unplanned.[159] Below I will briefly describe the situation of urban planning today.

The Urban Planning Directorate of the municipality is responsible for the urban planning in Tirana. The mayor Rama has supported the idea to hire Albanian architects and urban designers with education from abroad, which is part of the *Brain Gain programme* to attract Albanians who have studied abroad to return to Albania.[160] All city centres should have a master plan which should be selected through international competition with an international jury. The competition for Tirana was held in 2003. In the master plan of Tirana it is stated that every new important building in the city centre should be the result of an international competition as well. These competitions should be public and transparent processes. New projects and changes in the city have to be approved by the city council.[161] The processes with international competitions have worked according to the rules and policies, according to the informant who works with urban planning at the municipality (Informant 6). However, the decision to demolish the Pyramid was not preceded with a public process or with the Urban Planning Directorate involved. Architects and planners within the municipality were not asked about their professional opinions and to publicly express their opinions would be seen as taking a political stand. Informant 6 says that Albania do not have experience of handling situations like the Pyramid issue and therefore there are no standards or routines:

> "[When we] look at other countries, we see that it makes sense to ask publicly or the professionals... to ask for their opinions. But, no."[162]

The possibility for citizens to express their opinions about urban planning is not yet institutionalized. However, some attempts have been done by the municipality of Tirana to collect public opinions. Proposals for the new regulatory plan have been presented publicly in neighbourhoods where also opinions were collected.[163]

The NGO Co-Plan and the Polis University of Architecture and Urban Development Policies are important actors for urban planning in Albania. Co-Plan, which stands for "co-operative planning", was founded in 1995 by a group of young Albanian architects and planners. In 2006 the Polis University in Tirana was founded with support from Co-Plan, as a way to establish the profession of urban planning in Albania.[164] Co-Plan is critical to the situation in Albania and says that urban planning today, as the least reformed sector in Albania with a big informal economy, is a threat to a sustainable development and that changes are needed within politics, state institutions, among

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159 For example Nientied & Toto (2009) and Aliaj & Lulo (2003)
160 Interview AG. The Brain Gain Programme is an initiative of the Albanian Government supported by the United Nations Development Programme in Albania. The aim is to engage the Albanian diaspora in the development of Albania and thereby counter the economic and social 'brain drain' effects. Brain Gain Albania (2010)
161 Informant 6
162 Ibid.
163 Ibid.
164 Aliaj, Dhamo & Shutina (2010) p. 39 ff

planners and in the academic world to change this.[165]

During the communist rule public space was unfamiliar and unpleasant to Albanians and when communism fell people directed their anger towards public spaces and facilities created by the state. During the first years of transition, respect for public space was lacking and the newly acquired freedom was misused. Garbage were thrown everywhere and people were not interested in the environment outside their own house or apartment.[166] In an article from 2009 it is written that people's priorities still are at the basic level, as taking care of their private space, housing, job and education and that awareness of public space still is missing both from citizens and architects and planners.[167] The state and state institutions are still sometimes seen as enemies by people, which will be discussed further in Chapter 6. This following short story, quite harmless compared to other existing situations but still crucial to everyday life, illustrates why people may not have confidence in the state and urban planning: While I was walking around in a town with an Albanian man, we passed new, nice bus shelters along the streets. He called them "visual bus stops" because there was no bus line for the route. According to him, the politicians changed in the middle of the project and a bus line was never drawn along the bus stops with the new shelters.

5.2 An Architecture History Walk Through the Centre of Tirana, September 2010

This section takes the reader on a walk through the centre of Tirana. The numbers in brackets mark the number of the building or place on the map (Fig. 7).

Physical reminders of communism are everywhere in the capital. Through the centre of Tirana runs *Bulevardi Deshmoret e kombit* (1) which changes name into *Bulevardi Zogu I* north of Skanderbeg Square. Along this boulevard are most buildings from either the fascist or the communist period. The boulevard starts in the south by the *Mother Teresa Square* (Fig. 2, 2 on map) where the Italians built a centre for sports and politics in the 1930s and 1940s. One of the buildings from this period is the main building of the Polytechnic University of Tirana, which was erected as the House of Fascism (Fig. 2, 3 on map).[168] During a period was the university named Enver Hoxha University of Tirana and had a big sign with the Albanian acronym for PLA (PPSH).[169] The facade of the building remains the same today, but the red letters are since many years gone as well as the name of the dictator. In the east side of the square is a building which was erected for the Albanian Lictor Youth, the youth wing of the Albanian Fascist Party, located (Fig. 8, 4 on map). Close to the Mother Teresa square and along the boulevard is the *Palace of Congresses* located (Fig. 9, 5 on map). It was originally built for party congresses but nowadays hosts fairs and concerts. The building stands out among the buildings along the boulevard with its blue coloured mirrored glass and concave entrance section. Across the Palace of Congresses is the *President's Palace* located (6). During the communist period the building housed the Soviet embassy until the relation with Soviet were broken in 1961 and the seat of the popular assembly.[170]

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165 Aliaj, Dhamo & Shutina (2010) p. 20 f
166 Zanfi (2009) p. 89 and Informant 7
167 Nientied & Toto (2009) p. 116
168 Aliaj & Lulo (2003) p. 50
169 Tirana (1990) no page numbers
170 *Tirana in your pocket* (2010) p. 36 and Bleta (2010) p. 113
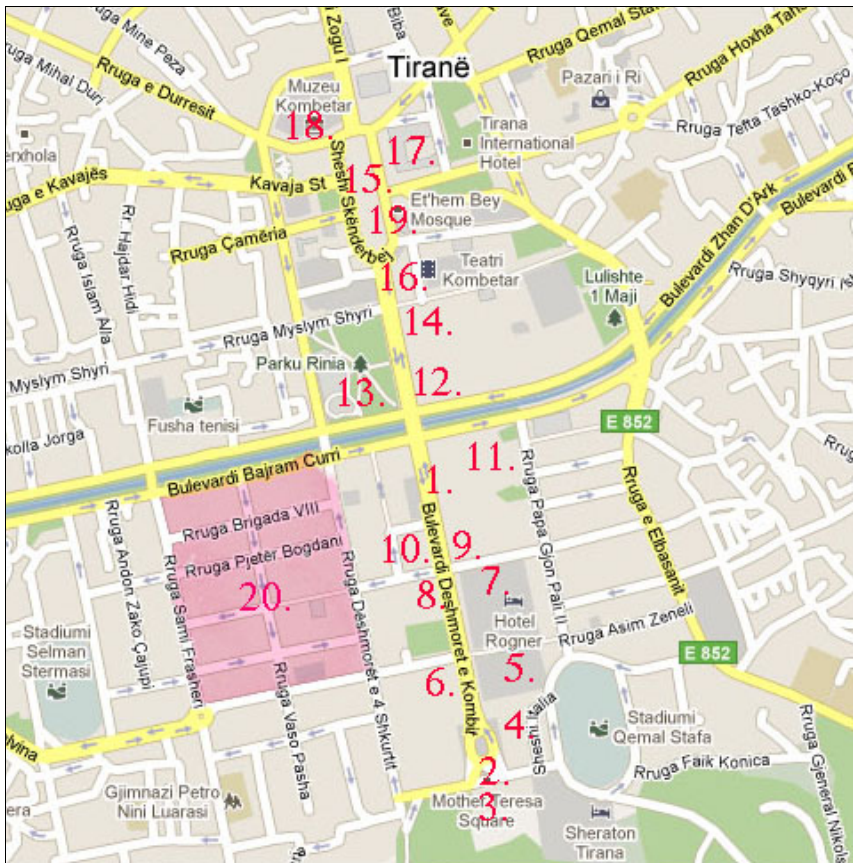
Fig. 7. Map of central Tirana.

1. Bulevardi Deshmoret e kombit (1930s)
2. Mother Teresa Square (1930-40s)
3. Polytechnic University building (1930-40s)
4. Former building for Albanian Lictor Youth (1930-40s)
5. Palace of Congresses (1960s)
6. President's Palace
7. Rogner Hotel (1990s)
8. A small bunker (1970s-80s)
9. Council of Ministers
10. Parliament Offices
11.The Pyramid (1980s)

12. Dajti Hotel (1940s)
13. Rinia Park and Taiwan Complex (1930s-)
14. National Art Gallery (1976)
15. Skanderbeg Square (1930s)
16. Ministry buildings and Municipality
    of Tirana (1930s)
17. Palace of Culture (1950-60s)
18. National History Museum (1980s)
19. Et'hem Bey Mosque (18th and 19th centuries)
20. Blloku area

Fig. 8. Mother Teresa Square with the building erected for the Albanian Lictor Youth in the 1930s.

Fig 9. Palace of Congresses

Fig. 10. A small bunker in the main boulevard in Tirana.

The military communist heritage is still present in the centre of Tirana. Next to the Palace of Congresses was the five star *Rogner Hotel* (7) built in the 1990s, above a big underground bunker.[171] Across the street, among the official and well-preserved buildings in this part of the boulevard, is a small mushroom shaped bunker still located behind a newspaper and book kiosk. It is partly covered with grass and some kind of construction of concrete and tiles (Fig. 10, 8 on map).

Further down the boulevard is the building of *Council of Ministers* located (Fig. 11, 9 on map). A socialist realist relief of Albanian workers still decorates the facade, while many other buildings from the communist period today have empty areas where socialist realist reliefs or mosaics used to be. Across the street is the building which used to be the main building of the *Central Committee of PLA* and today functions as Parliament offices (10).

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171 Informant 4

Fig. 11. Council of Ministers

Fig. 12. Statues behind the National Art Gallery

The Pyramid (Fig 13 & 14, 11 on map) which used to be covered with white marble slabs but today is declined, was built as a museum for the former dictator Enver Hoxha after his death in 1985. It opened in 1988 as a museum over Hoxha's life.[172] The building has since the fall of communism functioned as a conference centre, a night club, offices for a TV company and a cultural centre. In October 2010 the government decided that the Pyramid, which is protected as a monument of culture, will be torn down and replaced by a new parliament building which should be finished by 2012 when Albania celebrates 100 years of independence.[173] The Pyramid looks abandoned and declined. People cross through the park which surrounds the Pyramid and children and youths are running up and down the sloping walls. Parts of the star-shaped stairs are destroyed to make it possible for cars to drive to a provisional parking lot outside the building. In front of the Pyramid the Peace Bell installation was raised in 1999. The bell is made of metal from bullet cartridges from the turbulent 1990s in Albania.[174]
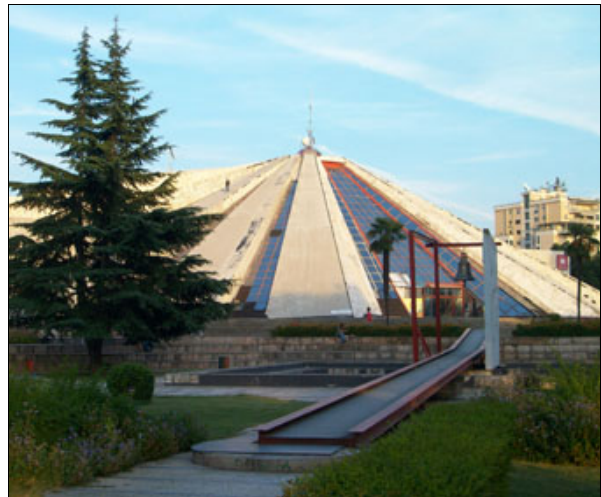

Fig 13. To the left. The Pyramid as the Museum of Enver Hoxha, late 1980s
Fig. 14. To the right. The Pyramid, 2010. The Peace Bell installation in the front.

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172 Gloyer (2008) p. 71
173 Informant 1 and "Pyramid To Turn Into Parliament" (2010)
174 *Tirana in your Pocket* (2010) p. 35

Dajti Hotel (12) is another fascist heritage along the Bulevardi Deshmoret e kombit. Dajti played an important role during the communist years, as one of the two hotels where foreign visitors could stay in Tirana. It was also one of the two places where Albanians, after a period of saving to afford the expensive coffee, could go and feel out of communist Albania for a while as it was a place full of luxury and where you could meet foreigners. Dajti functioned as a hotel until 2005 when it was closed. The building has recently been sold to the National bank of Albania. However, the former hotel, hidden behind tall trees, is still empty and is becoming derelict with broken windows and most of the original interior gone, which hurts many citizens of Tirana as Dajti Hotel has been a landmark in the city for a long period.[175]

Across the boulevard are the Rinia Park and the Taiwan complex located (13). The Taiwan complex building is located next to a fountain, which makes it look as an island. The Chinese used to stay in the Dajti hotel on the other side of the boulevard and the complex therefore got the name Taiwan.[176] The park used to be full of small illegal kiosks and shelters during the 1990s and early 2000s, until the government decided to demolish all illegal constructions in the city. Today this is one of the places in Tirana where the contrasts and social differences in the Albanian society are highly visible. In the complex there are a number of restaurants and cafés where people bring their laptops, a casino and a bowling hall. In the park people are selling books and other articles from the pavements, some people are begging and it is not uncommon to see lonely children sleep on the pavements.

Next to the Dajti Hotel is the *National Art Gallery* (14), built in the 1970s, located.[177] A statue of Lenin used to stand outside the museum and across the boulevard a bust of Stalin.[178] Behind the museum a few communist statues can be found, as they are standing there waiting for the destiny of the communist heritage to be decided (Fig. 12).

We now enter the most central point in Tirana, *Skanderbeg Square* (Fig. 15, 15 on map) from the south where the Italian ministry buildings, today offices for Municipality of Tirana and ministries (16), are located. These ministry buildings are the most well-preserved buildings along the boulevard and the red and yellow facades lighten up the square. The square was being re-designed by the time of my visit and will be a green pedestrian area where you in the centre of the capital can escape the city for a while. The squares in Tirana, and especially this one, have been places for the regimes. The vision is to transform Skanderbeg Square into a square for the people.[179] Until 1991 a statue of Enver Hoxha was situated at the square. On a pile of soil, in the same place where Hoxha's statue stood, there is now instead a sign with the numbers of people who were killed, jailed and deported during communism. The architecture office responsible for the re-construction of Skanderbeg Square uses the past of Tirana in their design:

> "From the empty centre, the full range of buildings defining Albania's past can be seen, representing a common past that can be built upon. The oppressing monumentality of the communist constructions is countered by the shape of the square: a large, low pyramid. Standing on top of this pyramid, one is no longer overpowered by the architecture of the past. This subtle intervention acknowledges Albania's past, and gives it a new perspective as well."[180]

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175 Informant 1. Another version is that the construction of the complex was finished when Albania broke the relation with China and recognised Taiwan as a sovereign nation, and the complex was called Taiwan to show the Albanian support to the nation. www.ourmanintirana.blogspot.com/2005/12/in-rinia-park.html
176 Informant 4
177 Hudhri (2003) p. 205
178 *Tirana in your pocket* (2010) p. 37
179 Informant 4 and 51N4E (2010)
180 51N4E (2010)

Fig. 15. Part of Skanderbeg Square. From the left: Et'hem Bey mosque, one of the Italian built ministry buildings with the clock tower behind it, and the first of ten new towers which will be built around the square.

The construction of t*he Palace of Culture* (17) started in 1958 by Soviet architects but had to be completed by Chinese architects when Albanian broke the contacts with Soviet.[181] The big building was erected in the place where the old bazaar was located. The bazaar was removed because it did not fit in the new design of central Tirana and was regarded as a threat to the communist regime since it was a historic place where people met and interacted.[182] All "culture" inside the Palace of Culture was strictly controlled during communism. Today the building contains the National Library and the Opera, but also a private international bookstore, a bank, cafés and a bar among other functions. The official buildings along the *Bulevardi Deshmoret e kombit* are today used to announce and demonstrate what is happening in Tirana and Albania. In November 2010 when the Albanians received visa liberalization the Palace of Culture was covered in banderoles picturing a map of Europe and distances in time to several European cities. When the American president George W. Bush visited Tirana in 2007, several of the buildings which were built to maintain a strong communist regime, were covered with American flags and welcome signs.[183]

The National History Museum (Fig. 3 & 16, 18 on map) in the north part of the square was built in 1981. It has a big, colourful mosaic above its entrance, representing different periods of the Albanian history with the communist in the middle.[184] In the centre of the mosaic there used to be a red star, which was taken away after the fall of communism, as well as a book by Enver Hoxha. In 2010 a restoration of the mosaic started.[185]

The Et'hem Bey mosque (Fig. 15, 19 on map) from late 18th and early 19th centuries was one of few religious buildings which survived communism because it was regarded as a monument of culture. Other mosques and churches were either torn down or turned into profane buildings, since Albania in theory was an atheist state.[186] The mosque and the clock tower close to it, are also the only Ottoman building left around the Skanderbeg Square. The clock tower used to be the highest

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181 *Tirana in your pocket* (2010) p. 35
182 Nikolla (2009) p. 100 f
183 For example photos from Flickr and The Swamp
184 Clancy (2008) p. 69
185 Informant 4
186 *Tirana in your pocket* (2010) p. 37

building in Tirana when it was built in the 19th century. There is an ongoing project   to build ten towers, 85 metres high, in the area around the Skanderbeg Square (Fig. 15). [187]

Fig. 16. National History Museum in Tirana. How to handle the socialist realist mosaic has been discussed by for example the former director of the museum. A red star and a book by Hoxha have been removed. In 2010 a restoration of the mosaic started.

Blloku (20), "the Block" in English, was an area only for the ruling elite during communism. The leaders lived in villas here while ordinary Albanians could not enter the area until 1991. *The house of Enver Hoxha* is situated in Blloku (Fig. 17). The well-preserved villa is sometimes used by the government, but looks empty with closed gates into the garden. Today Blloku is an area full of cafés, bars, clubs and shops. A part of Hoxha's villa hosts an American education organization and a café.

When leaving *Bulevardi Deshmoret e kombit*, apartment buildings painted in bright colours will catch the eye of the visitor. This is the result of the initiative by the mayor Rama in early 2000s. In one neighbourhood the facades are painted with trees, growing along the facades. A facade painted with arrows shows one way out of Tirana. Some facades are painted with dots, others with cubes or other abstract patterns (Fig. 6).

Fig. 17. The former house of Enver Hoxha, located in Blloku area in Tirana.

187 Department of the Economic Development of the City, Tirana Municipality (2010) p. 5

5.3 Heritage Legislation and Institute of Monuments of Culture

The Institute of Monuments of Culture (IMC), under the responsibility of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports, is responsible for the protection of architectural monuments of culture in Albania. All monuments of culture are protected on a state level, and not as in for example Sweden where buildings can be protected as monuments on a state level or a regional level as well as be protected in local plans.[188]

Buildings can be protected as monuments of culture in first and second category. In the second category the exterior of the building is protected. The first category monuments are those of "distinguished values and of special importance to the cultural heritage". Their exterior, interior, plan and functional solutions are not allowed to change. New constructions cannot be raised within a protected area surrounding a monument.[189] Municipalities as well as private persons and organizations can suggest buildings or other objects which should be protected as monuments of culture.[190] Objects can also be protected under the categories "watching" and "preliminary protection".[191] The objects under watch includes "all the objects in wrecking condition, castles, cult (worship) objects, engineering constructions, public or luxurious constructions, built prior the year 1900 and those being under usage, built before the year 1944. Such a status is declared by the Institute of the Cultural Monuments and it is permanent".[192] Objects under preliminary protection can be "any object of rare values", which then is under protection for six months during which the status of the object is supposed to be evaluated by IMC.[193] Areas with cultural values can be protected and all buildings within the area are then protected as monuments of second category if they do not have the status of first category monuments.[194] Buildings protected as monuments of first or second category can have their function changed if it does not affect their cultural values.[195]

The owner of a protected object is obligated to keep the object in good condition.[196] All restoration works on protected monuments have to be approved by the National Council of Restoration.[197] If an owner of a protected monument does not have the economic resources to cover restoration works she or he can get a bank loan with good terms. If the owner refuses the loan and there is a risk that the monument is damaged, the restoration works can carry on by IMC without the owner's approval and the owner is obliged to pay her or his part of the expenses.[198]

Civil society is represented through various organizations in the discussions concerning which objects that should be protected. Citizens are welcome with their opinions, according to IMC. As a result of a recent decision, an NGO which works with heritage issues will be represented in the National Council of Restoration.[199]

Buildings along *Bulevardi Deshmoret e kombit* in the centre of Tirana are protected as a group of objects with cultural values, called the Monumental Ensemble. Included in the ensemble are the

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188 Informant 2
189 *For the Cultural Heritage Law*, Article 28
190 Informant 2
191 *For the Cultural Heritage Law*, Article 24
192 Ibid. Article 25
193 Ibid. Article 26
194 Ibid. Article 27
195 Ibid. Article 29
196 Ibid. Article 13
197 Ibid. Article 17 § 6
198 Ibid. Article 37
199 Informant 2

Palace of Culture, the Pyramid, the National Museum with its large mosaic among other buildings.[200] According to the municipality of Tirana this ensemble, including Skanderbeg square, has historic value as it "unified harmonically the existing values of Tirana as a capital".[201] Behind the protection of these buildings from the communist period are initiatives from individuals within IMC. Informant 3, who used to work in IMC, says that an architect interested in architecture from the 20th century who worked in IMC in the first years of the 2000s brought a sensitivity for this architecture to the institute. Willingness to protect communist heritage exists within IMC, but is fragile and connected to individuals.[202] The Pyramid and the Dajti Hotel are both protected as monuments of the second category and they both look run-down and the main parts of the buildings are not used. The explanations given by IMC are that the Dajti hotel recently has been sold to a new owner and a restoration of a building cannot start during a process of selling the building. The Pyramid was undergoing a restoration before the decision of demolition was taken by the government.[203] The decision to demolish the Pyramid (see *6.6 The Pyramid – Background*) even though the building is protected as a monument of culture shows that respect for the heritage law and IMC is missing and that protection of monuments of culture does not fully work in reality.

5.4 Cultural Heritage Sector in Albania – Actors

Municipality of Tirana

At the Urban Planning Directorate in the municipality there is no one who works especially with heritage issues. The municipality can suggest buildings with high cultural values to be protected as monuments to IMC, but they cannot protect buildings on their own on a regional or local level. There are no policies regarding buildings from 1945 to 1990, but they are preserved in the master plan for Tirana because of economic and practical reasons. The municipality was involved in the project of painting the facades, which was initiated by mayor Edi Rama in 2000.[204]

National History Museum in Tirana

The National History Museum is one of the major interpretors of the history of Albania and plays an important role in the production and maintaining of national identity and collective memory. In February 2009 the museum opened an exhibition about the communist period in Albania. At the moment of writing, the exhibition, as well as the rest of the museum, is being redesigned as a part of the UN Joint Programme *Culture and Heritage for Social and Economic Development*.[205] The exhibition of the communist period has been accused for being too subjective, politicized and not based on research.[206] The exhibition was called *Genocide*, which also was the only aspect of the communist period which was presented, according to one informant.[207] In the moment of writing, no information is presented in the museums in Tirana about the communist period.[208]

Gjirokastra Conservation and Development Organization (GCDO)

GCDO is an Albanian NGO founded in 2001. Their mission is to conserve historic buildings in the city of Gjirokastra and be part of the protection of the UNESCO World Heritage site in Gjirokastra.

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200 Informant 2
201 Department of the Economic Development of the City, Tirana Municipality (2010)
202 Informant 3
203 Informant 2
204 Informant 6
205 Nikolaidou (2010) p. 7 ff
206 Likmeta (2010)
207 Informant 1
208 "Should the Communist Period Have a Place in Albania's Museums?" (2010) In 2010 the National Art Gallery in Tirana had an exhibition with Albanian art from the last 120 years, in which art from the communist period were included. However, a minimum of written information and reflection over these years were presented in the exhibition.

Their aim is also to help foster the economic regeneration in the historic city of Gjirokastra, promote sustainable development and support and develop the cultural life of Gjirokastra.[209] After getting questions about bunkers and life during communism from tourists, GCDO started to do research about a "bunkerized shelter" in Gjirokastra and got the idea to turn it into a museum. This is one of the first initiatives in Albania to make a museum about communism and communist heritage. The underground shelter or tunnel has about 50 rooms, which were supposed to function as refuge and offices for the administration of the town in case of an attack. A representative from GCDO says that the construction itself is not that amazing, but the way it was done and the story behind it are more interesting. To make the tunnel system into a museum is a slow process because of bureaucracy, lack of economical resources and lack of people with adequate education who could work in the museum.[210]

Albanian Heritage Foundation (AHF)

AHF is a non governmental organization which mostly works with archaeology. In 2010, inspired by an international conference with the South East European (SEE) Heritage Network on the topic Industrial heritage, AHF started a project about industrial heritage in Albania. During the communist period, Albania was focused on the industrialization of the country and a huge part of the industrial heritage is therefore also a communist heritage. AHF is now carrying out an inventory of the industrial heritage in the country and working on ideas how to preserve industrial heritage by turning it into something positive for the communities where they are located.[211] Many former industrial sites are in bad conditions and some are occupied by poor people who do not have any other place to live.[212]

University of Tirana – Heritage Management Master and PhD Program

In the fall of 2010, a new master and PhD program in Heritage management started in the public University of Tirana.[213] The program is part of the UN Joint Programme *Culture and Heritage for Social and Economic Development* and is a collaboration between University of Tirana and UNESCO. The program is the first in the Balkans on heritage management and for the first time heritage management becomes an academic discipline in Albania.[214]

Polis University and the Surrel project

Polis University of Architecture and Urban Development Policies in Tirana was established in 2006. In 2010 the Ministry of Culture asked students at Polis University to design a combined archive, library and museum over the communist period which will be located in a military area from the communist period outside Tirana, the so called Surrel project. The students are young and born just before the fall of communism. During their work the motto was that what happened during the totalitarianism has to be available for everyone to know about, but also that everyone themselves should have the possibility to decide who was victim and perpetrator.[215]

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209 Gjirokastra Conservation and Development Organization (2010)
210 Informant 1
211 Albanian Heritage Foundation (2010) and Informant 5
212 Informant 5
213 Informant 3
214 "MA on cultural resource management launched" (2010)
215 Open Forum Polis University 2010-10-05

6. Debate and Handling of Communist Heritage in Albania

That buildings from the communist period is a heritage and should be preserved is not given in Albania.[216] The communist period is a recent, and for many Albanians a difficult, past which has not yet been analysed enough. The concept of heritage and the heritage profession as we know it today did not exist during the communist period. However, a discussion about communist heritage is starting to rise in Albania and the period and its heritage are taking place within university educations. Nientied and Toto ask in an article about creative city planning if that kind of planning is a "luxury" for the Balkan region.[217] In the same way one could reflect whether preservation of communist heritage is a luxury or not in one of Europe's most poor countries where for example a significant part of the population lacks running water and there are two world heritage sites in need of more resources.[218] In this chapter I will present and discuss the case of the Pyramid in Tirana, bunkers and the debate about communist heritage in general. It will be discussed through the answers from informants, a few newspaper articles about the Pyramid and the earlier theoretical discussion.

6.1 Heritage

In a new context and in a language which is not the informants' first language it is important to first grasp how heritage is defined by the informants. Informant 2 from the IMC has a background as an archaeologist and his definition of heritage is broad. He considers everything produced by humans as worthy of protection, but calls for criteria how to know what to protect for future generations.[219] Informant 3 says that heritage today is not related to any particular age of the object but to its ability to represent a period in the past or represent a particular stage of development in society.[220] A third informant talks about heritage as an ongoing process where we produce heritage every day. She also points out that heritage does not have to do with any certain point in history or age. Further, she talks about the Albanian word for heritage which also means *inheritance.* Therefore Albanians may use the word easily because the built environment is something that they did inherit.[221] On the other hand, a forth informant (Informant 5) says that it may be hard for Albanians to understand what heritage is, when the word also means inheritance and has not been used that much.[222]

When I have introduced my topic and questions about *communist heritage* to the informants they have mentioned various types of buildings and other physical structures: bunkers, unique buildings in Tirana such as the Pyramid and the Palace of Culture, apartment blocks, train and bus stations, industrial heritage, mosaics, urban design of cities and concepts of architecture and planning. *Communist heritage* is thus not delimited to one specific type of building or buildings belonging to any certain group.

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216 In 2009 the architect Artan Raça wrote an article asking whether this architecture should be regarded as part of Albania's heritage and be professionally restored and preserved. Raça (2009)

217 Nientied & Toto (2009) p. 118

218 Albania has two properties on the UNESCO World Heritage List, Butrint and the historic centres of Berat and Gjirokastra which are located slightly more than 100 kilometres away from each other but listed as one world heritage. Unesco (2010)

219 Informant 2

220 Informant 3

221 Informant 1

222 Informant 5

6.2 Current Debate and Reflections about Albania's Communist Heritage

The communist heritage in Albania is everywhere and includes buildings of all categories, from a nationwide defence system of bunkers to apartment blocks, from huge industrial plants to official buildings decorated with socialist realist mosaics and reliefs. This heritage is being destroyed rapidly and Informant 3 believes that a big part of it will be lost in ten years. Therefore the rising discussion is not too early, according to him, but necessary. However, there has not yet been any official discussion in Albania which has resulted in any policies or regulations that would lead to better protection of buildings from the communist period. Informant 3 describes the current discussion as "embryonic".[223] There is a clear wish among the informants to be able to protect more of the built communist heritage in a near future. Informant 2 from the IMC mentions a wish for protection of industrial heritage from the 1950s and 1960s as well as other categories of buildings from the communist period. He does not believe that it would be problematic to protect communist heritage. His guess is rather that people in general would like to see objects which signify something from their history or livelihood as protected. However, he says that criteria are needed to chose what to protect and not and that Albania is in the same process as other countries in Europe, trying to find standards of how to protect modern heritage.[224] Informant 6 who works with urban planning at the municipality of Tirana says that buildings from the communist period not yet are considered as heritage according to the law, but she believes that they soon will. She would like to protect unique architectural expressions from the period, and mentions apartment buildings which have special architectural qualities (see Fig. 4 for one example of such building).[225]

The recent debate in Albania has concerned what heritage from the communist period is, how it is part of shaping the contemporary society and if and how it should be protected for the future. Informant 3 was asked by a daily newspaper to write about communist heritage, which is a sign that the debate is spreading from a narrow group of heritage professionals and architects to a public forum. The informant's opinion is that Albanians now can regard the communist heritage as part of themselves and not as something horrible, as they used to. He argues that it is important to preserve this heritage for the younger and future generations to give them the possibility to understand the older generations, themselves and their society better. He has reflected why the communist heritage is a controversial issue and says that Albanians today disagree on the communist period and what it represented for them. The memories are recent and the attitudes towards the recent past are very personal. He says that people suffered and people who did not directly suffer did not approve with the kind of society they had to live in where basic human rights were denied.[226] Informant 4 also explains the low public and academic interest for communist heritage with the radical type of communism and the difficulties it meant for Albanians in combination with the short distance in time.[227] Informant 3 believes that it in the first ten years after the fall of communism existed an embarrassment among Albanians about the recent past and he says that still today some people want to forget and leave it behind. But at the same time he believes that Albanians could appreciate communist heritage, except for people who really suffered during that period and therefore wish to forget. The discussions about the communist past and its heritage nowadays come more easily and the topic can be discussed in a more relaxed way than it used to. For example, bunkers are being discussed in a "more sympathetic way", according to Informant 3, and he sees it as a positive and solid sign that Albanians themselves, and not foreigners, are discussing their recent past and their heritage.[228] However, there is still a widespread oblivion in the Albanian society, according to

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223 Informant 3
224 Informant 2
225 Informant 6
226 Informant 3
227 Informant 4
228 Informant 3

Informant 1. She believes that the memory gap between generations is especially big in Albania compared to other countries and that young people today lack knowledge about how their parents lived during communism. The informant was a teenager when the communist regime fell and says that she therefore is torn between the generations that experienced communism and the ones who did not.[229] She says:

> "They don't have a clue the young people. How amazing it is, how quickly generations forget. […] We showed some photos of military training of their parents generation. They were utterly shocked! They had no idea. You know how, how their parents lived. [...] But you know, to *not know* this impossible life your parents had. To not know that your parents woke up at three am to queue to get a bottle of milk for you. I don't know... something has to be done about this."[230]

The informant says that there has almost been no self-analyzation or self-criticism in the Albanian society over the communist period. Because of this she argues that Albanians have a very limited knowledge about themselves. Neither does she believe that individuals in general have reflected much over this period:

> "You have to reflect inside the brain, to reflect about.. What on earth happened? During those years. Why? Why [did] these things happened? [...] Some of them might laugh 'oh my god, why are you interested over this period – it's gone! It's stupid – it is gone!' [...] They would not be hurt if you ask them. […] But they will not be giving you that insightful information that you want in order to grasp the essence of it."[231]

The informant believes that individuals and the society actively have to work with their memories from the recent past to be able to interpret and understand what happened during communism. The memory loss, so soon after the period, is a reason for her to start working with communist heritage through the NGO where she works.[232] The rising debate and interest for heritage from the communist past which is described above by Informants 2 and 3 may change the situation which Informant 1 is describing. The interest for a difficult period often differs between generations - the ones who did experience it themselves and the younger who did not. However, all of the informants were born before the fall of communism and a few of them were adults when the communist regime fell. The theory that living memory has to disappear before the remains of a difficult period can become heritage does not apply here. Informant 3 especially talks about his interest in communist heritage *because of* his experiences of living during both the communist period and the transition period.[233]

6.3 Ideology and Concepts behind Architecture and Urban Planning

Macdonald asks in her study of the Nazi heritage in Nuremberg if the identity of an ideology which is materialized can change if the physical heritage remains the same. Are the identity and the concept behind it necessarily preserved if the physical heritage is preserved? In the case with the mosaic in the National History Museum (Fig. 3) the most obvious ideological symbols, a red star and a book by Hoxha, have been removed. The former director of the museum wanted the whole mosaic to be removed because of its communist way of describing history. Informant 4 separates the communist ideas behind the mosaic and the physical mosaic and says that you can see it as a

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229 Informant 1
230 Ibid.
231 Ibid.
232 Ibid.
233 Informant 3

facade and preserve it just as a facade. He believes it should be preserved since it is an important artistic and architectonic part of the building's exterior. He believes that it is possible to regard something that was created with political purposes in the past as something mainly aesthetic and artistic today. Further, he gives more reasons to preserve the mosaic. Through the mosaic it is possible to gain knowledge of how the communists described and manipulated history, he says. The communist regime lasted for almost five decades and is an important part of the Albanian history, which the informant considers as another reason to preserve the mosaic, as he believes that the past should be visible in the landscape. For this informant it is possible for the mosaic to communicate and symbolize something else than it was created to communicate. He also mentions that communist meanings and ideas still exist in many places in Tirana. For example, the name *Taiwan complex* is a remain from the communist period and to understand it you have to know the Albanian history.[234] The communist past is present in places and names, but they might be present without people putting any value to them or even knowing about their origin. Former names and concepts may have been given new meanings. The informant believes that most of the transformations concerning built communist heritage have been done due to practical needs of people and not ideological as in the case with the Pyramid (see 6.6) or the mosaic of the National History Museum. One example of a common practical transformation in Tirana is the transformations of apartments in the street level to shops, which did not exist in a large amount during the communist years.[235]

The practical needs might be the most important reason to transform or preserve communist heritage to ordinary Albanians, but it is not only the physical buildings which are destroyed and lost when this is done. Knowledge of concepts and the expression of the communist ideology are also lost. Concepts behind architecture and urban planning which were particular for that time and ideology are emphasized by informants. Informant 3 argues that this is the first part of the communist heritage which Albanians are forgetting and losing. Since the concepts themselves no longer exist they are the easiest part to lose and therefore the first part of the heritage which should be protected, according to him. There are examples of sites and concepts which are harder to preserve than other, because they were produced in a completely different society than today's and the way of life does no longer include the same practices and sites. Informant 3 would like to preserve settlements which were created close to industries in the middle of nowhere. These sites can show how policies of the time affected the lives of people and the landscape, he says. However, these places are being abandoned today because of the limited economic possibilities to live there and the wish to return to the places which people where forced to leave during communism. This problem is however not unique for difficult heritage sites; buildings need functions to survive. Knowledge about concepts and the ideology behind urban planning and architecture has made Informant 3 reevaluate and appreciate apartment blocks from the communist period, even though he says that their architectural qualities are low and the monotonous design of the buildings makes all Albanian cities look similar and ugly. He sees a harmony in the volumes and heights of the buildings and how they were adapted to the surrounding environment. This was the first architecture to bring people together in Albania, he says. There was a serious planning behind houses and neighbourhoods while nowadays urban planning in Albania is a business which do not consider the needs of people, according to Informant 3. He finds that the respect for public space is lost and that something could be learned by studying urban planning of the communist period.[236]

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234 Informant 4. Taiwan is complex with restaurants, cafés, casino etcetera in Rinia Park in the centre of Tirana. See explanation of the name in 5.1.
235 Informant 4
236 Informant 3

6.4 Education and State Institutions

There is a lack of heritage professionals in Albania and few possibilities to offer decent salaries to professionals. As written in 5.4, the first academic education in heritage management in Albania started in 2010. The need of heritage professionals is especially important for the preservation and protection of heritage from the communist period, since the work with communist heritage is new and fragile.[237] A majority of the informants have their background in archaeology. Informant 5, himself an archaeologist, explains that architects in Albania take the opportunity to work within the construction sector where more economic resources exist, and therefore are not interested in the heritage sector.[238] The lack of professionalism within state institutions was one force behind the new education in heritage management in University of Tirana, according to Informant 3 who works with the program.[239]

Murzyn writes that in post-socialist countries the devaluation of the concept of public good, weak civil society and distrust in the structures of governance inherited from the socialist period are serious threats to the cultural landscape.[240] These characteristics are highly visible in the Albanian society. The relationship between the Albanian state and the public is not easy and neither is the relationship between the state and the heritage sector. Informant 3 says:

> "It's becoming problematic to the point that many of us think, even say publicly, that … the heritage was in much better hands when we were poor. Now, we're not as poor and it's a problem, because it's not treated with respect. The need to get rich is actually the pressure for development, if you wanna say in a different way: is the main problem. So... the Institute of Monuments is seen as a real enemy to development."[241]

As Glass concluded in her master thesis about bunkers, development could be a threat to the communist heritage and heritage are sometimes seen as an obstacle for urban development.[242] The weak state institutions and the problematic relationship between the state and the public, which have been discussed in 5.1, are problems for the heritage management. It seems to be a vicious circle where it is hard to know where to start with improvements. State institutions need professionals, but to educate professionals you need serious state institutions and universities. The widespread corruption also affects the heritage sector and urban planning. Informant 3 who used to work at the IMC says:

> "Corruption is always there, so if you don't have clear rules, you can just negotiate personally and then 'uh, uh, uh...' It's difficult for the state institutions to get credibility back. […] The state needs to be serious about it and I don't think we are serious about it. I felt it personally. Once you try to be serious, other people get angry at *you,* not to the things that are being done wrong. […] This is also very interesting from the anthropological view, because people felt that the state was everything in the past and now they tell that the state is the enemy and now, this is a process of building confidentiality to the state. The state is us! It's not just... The state is us! And if we start to be serious with ourselves."[243]

The problems described above and in 5.1 with weak state institutions, corruption and lack of

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237 Informant 1
238 Informant 5
239 Informant 3
240 Murzyn (2008) p. 340
241 Informant 3
242 Glass (2008), see 1.5
243 Ibid.

experience and limited interest in public good and public space affect the whole Albanian society. The work with communist heritage, which in itself is a difficult heritage and a new topic in Albania, becomes especially vulnerable.

6.5 Bunkers and the Work of GDCO

> "They are ever-present, from the shores, to the mountain peaks.
> They bring happiness, and tragedy.
> Some were destroyed, but most remain, from birth, until death."   - Stefa & Mydyti[244]

The massive defence system of bunkers all over the country has shortly been described in the Introduction and in 4.2. Enver Hoxha let build between 300 000 and 800 000 concrete bunkers during the years 1972 and 1983 to defend his country from attacks, to control and put fear into his people and to appear as a protective leader.[245] There were several models and sizes of bunkers, from personnel bunkers to huge shelters for whole administrations of cities. *Bunker* often refers to all types of defensive shelters.[246] The most visible bunker in the Albanian landscape today is the small mushroom shaped bunker built to host one or two persons.[247] Most bunkers are today abandoned and look like concrete mushrooms in the landscape, along roads, in people's gardens, in fields etcetera. Some of them have been reinterpreted and re-used as shops, warehouses, restaurants, places for occasional parties and so on. Some people try to get an income by recycle the materials in bunkers. There are ideas of using bunkers in the tourist sector, as attractions or hostels.[248] Beaches in Albania have in most cases been "de-bunkerized" by the government so people do not have to spend their holidays with bunkers on the beach.[249] In the rest of the landscape, bunkers are still everywhere.

The IMC does not work with bunkers or a future protection of bunkers for the moment. The informant from IMC explains why:

> "Nothing has been in discussion because no one is... Experts from all kinds of fields have actually not expressed any conclusive suggestion about how to protect bunkers. I mean, people might say, 'oh, we need to protect bunkers', but they can be 100 000 people saying that but no one has actually said what to protect of bunkers, because you can never protect all of them. […] But you can protect full areas and zones, there are full of them, just to give the idea and impression of what used to be there before. […] It's not a category which we discussed and since this is a very hot topic, of protecting what from 1945 to 1990, as you said, we would leave it to the public opinion to express their concerns first for us to be able to get them, because if we initiate the discussion, there may be wrong opinion from people, saying 'why did they initiate it?'. So sometimes it's better if the public express their will to protect something and then we can take it further, in a scientific approach and policy-wise, so why not?"[250]

The informant from IMC does not want to speculate about the public's opinions about communist heritage, but confirms in his personal answer the opinion of Informant 3 - that Albanians nowadays

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244 Stefa & Mydyti (2009) p. '4' no page numbers
245 Ibid. p. '31' There is no definite consensus on the actual number of bunkers, but between
 300 000 and 800 000 bunkers are the most common figures.
246 Glass (2008) p. 27
247 Stefa & Mydyti (2009) p. 90
248 Informant 4 and Stefa & Mydyti (2009) among others
249 Informant 4
250 Informant 2

are more relaxed about their recent past and regard bunkers in "a more sympathetic way":[251]

"I cannot judge what the Albanians think of the bunkers. I mean, I'm only one out of 3.5 millions citizens, so... […] I visit bunkers myself, so. When I'm out in the countryside for fun on a Saturday, I visit the bunkers, take photos of them. And it's fun!"[252]

Fig 18. A tourist photo of a bunker of the smallest model.

Fig 19. A bunker is painted and used for a party

The NGO GDCO in the city of Gjirokastra works with one of the larger bunkers, with the vision to turn it into a museum or a visitor centre where people can get a feeling of the past and get information about the history of the place. The bunker or shelter in Gjirokastra was built to house all the civilian administration of the town in case of war. It consists of offices and conference rooms, has its own water system and a big generator. Smoke from the kitchen area comes out from a chimney located far from the bunker to make it hard for enemies to locate the bunker.[253] As a physical bunker it is not one of the most impressive in Albania, according to the informant, but the story and concept behind it and the bunkers generally are interesting.[254]

The idea to start working with a bunker came from foreign tourists who were asking about life during communism and bunkers. Informant 4 from the NGO says that most Albanians either underestimate or undermine the question about bunkers. She describes the municipality of Gjirokastra as brave for supporting the idea of turning a bunker into a tourist attraction.[255] Informant 2 from the IMC hesitates that the municipality has a positive approach towards this project, based on his own experiences. He believes that GDCO is a step ahead compared to the municipality and the state when it comes to developing communist heritage and sees it as a problem when projects are done without enough collaboration with the local government. However, he believes that this initiative in Gjirokastra is good for the debate about communist heritage.[256] The GDCO has experienced that it is hard to get support for preservation of communist heritage, especially in a town like Gjirokastra, a UNESCO World Heritage site where old buildings are in need of restoration. There is a lack of professionals who could keep working with the bunker and a lack of economic resources. Further, the public opinion may be that buildings within the World Heritage

251 Informant 3, see 6.2
252 Informant 2
253 Informant 4
254 Informant 1
255 Informant 4
256 Informant 2

site should be preserved first, and modern heritage in a second stage.[257] As in the Pyramid case the bunker issue in Gjirokastra is politically debated, though not as much. Informant 4 describes the political climate and says that the Democratic Party in general does not really want to deal with the communist period, but rather wants to put it aside or forget about it. The prime minster and leader of the Democratic Party, Sali Berisha, was a member of PLA. Today the party wants to distance themselves from the communist past and does so by describing it as a horrible period not worthy to remember or by highlighting the negative aspects of the period. The bunker in Gjirokastra is assumed by the Democratic Party to be a negative thing and they therefore accept the idea of showing it to the public and tourists. The Socialist Party of Albania, a party which grew out from PLA, on the other hand generally emphasize the positive parts of the communist period, according to Informant 4. Thus, there is no balance in the discussion about the communist past and no objective viewpoint in the political debate. In the case in Gjirokastra the Socialist Party does not have a strong opinion, according to the informant, but they are not against the project since it hopefully will bring tourists.[258]

Locals in Gjirokastra have showed interest in the bunker, because they never had the chance to visit it before.[259] Another case where bunkers recently have become a tourist destination for both Albanians and foreign tourists is the archaeological site Apollonia. It was closed for archaeologists during communism and turned into a military area. Recently the bunkers within the area have been restored, including citations from Enver Hoxha's speeches written in the bunkers. The military communist heritage is integrated with archaeology and the visitor can experience both at the same time.[260]

6.6 The Pyramid

"Bolsheviks topple czar monuments, Stalin erases old Bolsheviks, Khrushchev tears down Stalin, Brezhnev tears down Khrushchev …" - Vitaly Komar[261]

Background
The pyramid shaped building along *Bulevardi Deshmoret e kombit* in the centre of Tirana was erected as a museum over the dictator Enver Hoxha after his death in 1985 (Fig. 12 & 13). It was said to be the most expensive building ever built in Albania and has a unique architectural style compared to other buildings built during the communist period. Since the early 1990s it has had different functions, for example as a centre for culture, offices and a night club.[262] The Pyramid is legally protected as a monument of culture in the second category, which means that the exterior is protected. The Pyramid, at the moment of writing, looks run-down and the explanation given by IMC is that a restoration project started.[263]

In October 2010 the government took the decision to demolish the Pyramid. The decision was only supported by the government and their governing coalition, while the opposition did not agree. Where the Pyramid is located a new parliament building will be constructed and completed by the hundred anniversary of the independence of Albania which will take place in 2012. Prime minister Berisha said that he does not want any traces left from Enver Hoxha in Albania and that "There can

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257 Informant 1
258 Informant 4. This description of the political parties is the informant's opinions.
259 Ibid.
260 Informant 3
261 Vitaly Kamar quoted in Lowenthal (1996) p. 26
262 Informant 1
263 Informant 2

be no Pyramid in downtown Tirana that makes memories of one of the worst dictatorships in Europe fixed forever in our minds".[264] The opposition on the other hand argued that demolishing the Pyramid cannot serve that purpose and said that nothing from the communist years or any other period should be demolished. A few years ago the same government as today decided to turn the Pyramid into a cultural centre and a restoration of the building started.[265] A proposed referendum on the future of the Pyramid was rejected as an unserious proposal by a representative from the government who wondered why people should be asked about the "worst person they've had in all the times".[266] A few weeks before the decision was taken the Minister of Culture, Ferdinand Xhaferaj, held a speech at Polis University after the presentations by students about a potential new museum and archive of communism (see 5.4). He said, on behalf of himself, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Defence, that they support the project to be realized since it is important to keep memories from the communist period alive in order to prevent the same mistake to be repeated.[267] The position of the government regarding how to remember the communist past and how to handle its heritage is thus ambivalent. The government's initiative of a restoration project of the Pyramid and then the decision to erase the building from the physical and memorial landscape give an unserious impression and raise questions of underlying reasons for the decisions.

Reactions and Arguments for Preservation

It was during the interview with Informant 1 that I first heard about the plans to tear down the Pyramid:

> "Did you hear that they wanna tear it down?! The Pyramid! [...] The chairwoman of the parliament. She wants to put it down. And build a new parliament building. I think she's utterly insane! If there's any... if there's any building that optimizes the communist building tradition [...] it's that building. And it's a fantastic piece of architecture, to be honest."[268]

Further the same informant talks about personal memories connected to the Pyramid:

> "I remember the moment it was opened in 1986 or 87. It was … *such* … a fuss. We were sent from our hometowns with buses to make excursions to see this new great piece of Albanian architecture, that was a museum of Enver Hoxha, at the time. [...] I remember I was organized […] with he best students of my school from my hometown where I was living […]. We were brought to see it. I remember the day very very well. It was one of the landmarks of my memory, of my childhood memory. So, even if I was not involved in heritage, just because, to me... the opening of the Pyramid was … was a great moment of my childhood. I would say, please leave it there! Why bother? It's there."[269]

The informant connects architectural, historical and social values to the Pyramid. The informant also connects individual memories to the Pyramid and believes that a lot of other Albanians share similar memories of the opening of the Pyramid. She also mentions that the Pyramid has had other roles in the city after 1991, for example as one of the first discotheques in Tirana, which could be worthy to emphasize in the debate instead of focusing on its original function. Further, she mentions the practical and economic aspect: why demolish an existing building?[270]

264 "Pyramid To Turn Into Parliament" (2010) and "Hoxha's Pyramid To Become New Parliament" (2010)
265 Ibid. and Informant 1
266 "Hoxha's Pyramid To Become New Parliament" (2010)
267 Open Forum, Polis University, 2010-10-05
268 Informant 1
269 Informant 1
270 Ibid.

Informant 3 starts the conversation about the Pyramid like this:

> "For the 100 anniversary of the independence day, which is in two years now, they [the government] think that they need a new building for the parliament. So, and, 'let's put down the Pyramid and let's build a new parliament building there'. […] What do you do, you just get rid of the image of the dictatorship, because the Pyramid *was* the symbol of the power of a particular individual. […] The new parliament, symbolic of the new power."[271]

This informant says that the Pyramid *was* the symbol of Enver Hoxha and communism, but not necessarily is today. The informant makes the decision and the idea of the government to appear as simple and hasty. He further talks about the architectural and historical values of the building:

> "It seems like […] all, many of us, totally disagree with the idea of putting down, turning down, destroying the Pyramid, which many of us think that is one of the very interesting … realist socialism... ideas in architecture and it's actually one of the best representatives of high qualitative … architecture, building, concept of the socialist period."[272]

Both Informant 1 and 2 think that the Pyramid reflects the architectural ideas of the time it was built, which to them are of great value. Informant 2 continues to talk about what the Pyramid may symbolize to Albanians today:

> "The Pyramid is an ideological, is a concept. The Pyramid is there to remind us that it was built for the dictator and it was going to be the museum of him, a celebration of his individual power. […] And you know, everybody … sees it as the Pyramid, as a building... not everybody! as I said, we are a lot of people that want to protect it, that want the Pyramid to be there to remind us of what the socialist ideology was able to do and how to materialize its ideology. […] There are many people who think it *should not be there*."[273]

In contrast to Informant 1 this informant presents two different views of the Pyramid. The Pyramid is the heritage of a perpetrator and the communist ideology materialized, which Informant 2 thinks is what many people still mainly associate with the building. However, for him the Pyramid could be preserved and symbolize Hoxha and the former regime with the purpose to remind people of the past without honouring it. Informant 2 is the informant who reflects the most about different interpretations of the Pyramid, while Informant 1 and 6 reject the demolition of the Pyramid as insane, without any deeper reflection about the reasons to tear it down:

> "[There are] people like me that think that history should leave its footprints. And we should have our footprints as much as possible before our eyes because they are reminders of what was done good and bad during these times. And there are people like others, like our chairwomen in the parliament, who thinks it's an ugly construction and instead of that you could build a huge parliamentary building."[274]

> "We are against the demolishing of the Pyramid, it's very obvious let's say. I have not heard until now any woman or man with some sense that would like to support the demolishing of the Pyramid."[275]

The reactions and arguments from the informants are both personal based on emotions and personal

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271 Informant 3
272 Ibid.
273 Ibid.
274 Informant 1
275 Informant 6

memories, and professional where cultural-historical values are emphasized. In the two citations above is the government's opinion about the Pyramid presented as a shallow opinion which is not based on knowledge and which they cannot understand. Maybe they find the demolition of the Pyramid too senseless to try to understand or explain that standpoint on a deeper level.

The Political Climate and the Debate

The decision to tear down the Pyramid and build a new Parliament building in its place was made without consulting architects and urban planners from the municipality, according to Informant 6 from the municipality. As mentioned in 5.1, architects and planners at the municipality could not express their professional opinions because that would be seen as taking a political stand. Instead they had to work in the background to support the protection of the Pyramid, for example by supporting a new forum which was created after the news about the Pyramid and because of the need to have a unified voice in heritage issues.[276] One of the members of the forum, Informant 3, says:

> "Hopefully, this would be the first case in which the society will fight for protecting, so... I think we are organized... We started today! There are 6 or 7 people in the paper of today, including myself, expressing ideas... No destruction, but if you wanna transform it, give it life, you know, as a parliament, that will be a good thing, but never think of destroying it. […] Now, these things can be used politically and many people use them, you know, the opposition use this to attack the government … But, beyond that, you know, we think we'll protect it. Or at least we will do whatever is in the hands of civil society to protect it."[277]

The political side of the question is almost always mentioned, as in the citation above. Informant 6, from the municipality, does not believe that the decision and the debate really are about the building itself and its history:

> "This is an issue that doesn't have to do with the Pyramid in itself. Maybe... this is simply … […] this is an issue, to avoid, or to turn the public opinion towards not the essential issues in the country but towards the second issues, so that we are not focused on the real ones. Yeah, this is... I don't know... A bit strange situation."[278]

The contradictory decisions to first restore the building and then tear it down raise questions and opinions as the one above. If the government's interest is about something else than the building or the communist past more generally, one wonders which arguments that could save the Pyramid. The informant who works for the municipality is the only one who mentions that the decision to demolish the Pyramid has to be approved by the city council and that the Pyramid is protected as a monument of culture, which should make it difficult to go through with the decision.[279]

Another Socialist Mausoleum - which was Torn Down

A case which has similarities to the Pyramid is the mausoleum of Dimitrov in Sofia. When the Bulgarian socialist leader Georgi Dimitrov died in 1949 a mausoleum was built for him in the centre of the Bulgarian capital. Dimitrov's body was removed from the building after the fall of the socialist regime. In 1999, after a long public debate, the government decided to demolish the mausoleum and re-create the site as it used to be before the mausoleum was built. By removing the

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276 Informant 6
277 Informant 3
278 Informant 6
279 Ibid.

physical traces from socialism the aim was to also demolish the memories of the period.[280] The prime minister at the time called the building a symbol of totalitarianism and ministers said that the building was an obstacle for redevelopment in the capital.[281] But after the building was gone, the place was commonly still referred to as "the mausoleum" and the memories of the building lived on in people's minds.[282] The opposition believed that the demolition of the building was done due to upcoming local elections. But according to an opinion poll, two-thirds of the population were against the decision.[283] The demolition of the mausoleum has afterwards been described as a symbolic re-appropriation of the urban landscape.[284]

The situation with the Pyramid in Tirana reminds of the story of the mausoleum in Sofia. The informants describe it as a hasty decision and a too easy solution of handling a difficult past. There are also voices saying that this not necessarily has to do with the building itself, but with other political purposes. The Albanian prime minister Berisha says in the newspaper *Tirana Times* that Tirana cannot have the symbol of the former dictator preserved, which is the same arguments which was used in the Bulgarian case. The informants who are opponents to the demolition of the Pyramid use the same arguments as in the Bulgarian case; the building is a good example of how the ideology at the time was expressed in architecture and illustrates an important period in the history of the nation. More than ten years after the debate in Bulgaria, a similar debate is held in Albania. However, the result could yet be different.

6.7 Strategies to Handle Communist Heritage in Albania

Several of the strategies presented in Chapter 3 have been used or discussed for the communist heritage in Tirana. In the first period after the fall of communism, the strongest symbols of the past regime were removed, such as statues, monuments and red stars. Names such as the Enver Hoxha University were changed. Buildings from the communist past have also been re-appropriated or so called profaned and used for functions far from their original purposes. For example when the facades of the Pyramid and the Palace of Culture were used to welcome the American president George W. Bush to Albania in 2007.[285] To turn the grey facades of apartment buildings into artworks in early 2000s was a strategy to express that Tirana and those buildings belong to the present and not the communist past. A non-handling of the communist past is performed in Tirana as well, as almost no information is available in museums, in connection to buildings or in tourist brochures about this period. Bunkers can also be said to be non-handled, by the state and the IMC, while individuals and GDCO use other strategies for single bunkers, such as profanation, re-appropriation or turning one into museum and thereby use it as a resource.

The solution to demolish difficult heritage as a way to move on from the difficult past and to build a cityscape of their own is practised by the government in the case with the Pyramid. The demolition of the Pyramid is one part of the Albanian government's strategy to demonstrate power of the new society on the date of the 100 anniversary of independence in 2012. This will be done by building a new Parliament building where the Pyramid today is located and to re-construct the Skanderbeg square.

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280 Vukov & Toncheva (2006) p. 128 f
281 "Communist Bastion finally crumbles" (1999)
282 Vukov & Toncheva (2006) p. 129
283 "Communist Bastion finally crumbles" (1999)
284 Vukov & Toncheva (2006) p. 128
285 For example photos from Flickr and The Swamp

7. Discussion and Conclusions

In this chapter I will re-connect to the research questions presented in 1.3 and present the conclusions of this thesis.

The research questions are:
- – Does heritage professionals and urban planners work with communist heritage in Albania? Who? How?
- – What constitutes heritage from communism in Albania?
- – How is tangible heritage of communism regarded and valued by heritage professionals in Albania today? Which are the reasons to preserve or not preserve communist heritage, according to heritage professionals?
- – Is the communist heritage an unwanted heritage in Albania today?

Communism affected the landscape and cityscape in almost every aspect. The built heritage from this period could thus be all kind of buildings: prefabricated housing estates, the nationwide defence system of bunkers, schools, bus and train stations, city centres and urban layouts, official buildings, buildings built to honour individuals such as the Pyramid built as the Museum of Enver Hoxha, sport centres, labour camps, industrial plants with belonging settlements etcetera. In the conversations the informants included all these different types of buildings in *communist heritage* as they spoke and did not seem to have a need to divide heritage and places from the communist period into heritage of perpetrators and victims. This is sometimes hard to do in a cultural landscape produced and transformed by a dictatorship, but some buildings as the Pyramid clearly belong or belonged to the perpetrators side. However, this was not mentioned by the informants who believe that all types of buildings from the communist period can tell something about that period and therefore are worthy of preservation. The communist heritage in Albania is thus not only a few unique official buildings, sites or buildings connected to specific events or any other specific group of buildings.

Some of the informants were chosen for this study because they work with communist heritage while others were chosen because they work with heritage or urban planning in general. The common viewpoint among the informants is however that different kind of communist heritage should be preserved. For them the Pyramid and other communist heritage carry several cultural values and represent an important period in the Albanian history and are therefore worthy to preserve, which they believe is possible without honouring the former communist regime. The Pyramid and other communist heritage sites and buildings are also storehouses for personal memories, both positive and negative, from the communist period and after 1991. A common argument to preserve communist heritage is that the communist period should be remembered, both at an individual level and in the Albanian society. Some of the informants dread an amnesia in Albania, which is one of their reasons to preserve heritage from the communist period. Younger and future generations will then be given a possibility to better understand the past of their society as well as the present and themselves. To remember is also commonly seen as a way to prevent the same mistake to be done again. Buildings and constructions as bunkers are results and a materialization of a strong ideology and it is therefore possible to use them to remember the ideology and dictatorship. Some of the informants may be called "memorial entrepreneurs" as they feel a responsibility and obligation to keep memories alive in their society.[286]

There is also an appreciation for the architecture itself among the informants. The Pyramid for

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286 Macdonald (2009) *Difficult heritage : Negotiating the Nazi Past in Nuremberg and Beyond* p. 3

example is regarded as an important example of architecture from the period and the ideology. Informants also mention that they can appreciate the aesthetics and functionality of some of the architecture and urban planning. Apartment blocks and neighbourhoods are said to have qualities that today's urban planning does not and we could learn something by studying them.

While the informants' arguments to preserve the Pyramid and other communist heritage are many and reasonable, a few of the informants showed little or no understanding for the wish to demolish this heritage and labelled that opinion as senseless. However, several of the informants also explained why there are little interest and knowledge about this heritage; the communist period is still recent and many Albanians directly or indirectly suffered during this period, which has not been analysed enough.

The work with communist heritage is going on in different levels in society. A debate has recently started and was intensified in the fall of 2010 after the governmental decision to demolish the Pyramid in the centre of Tirana. A new master and PhD program in heritage management and the government-sponsored workshop at Polis University to create a museum and archive of objects from the communist period are signs that interest and awareness about this heritage are rising. There are buildings from the communist period which are protected as monuments of culture by the state and within the Institute of Monuments of Culture there are interest and sensitivity for this heritage. However, this interest is connected to individuals rather than the organization and its policies. The Urban Planning Directorate in the Municipality of Tirana does not have any employee who works with heritage or any policies for heritage from the communist period. Neither does the municipality have possibilities to protect buildings with cultural values, since buildings only are protected on a state level in Albania. There are a few NGOs which work with communist heritage. Their focus have been and are still mainly on archaeology and more traditional heritage such as Albania's World Heritage sites, but their definition of heritage includes buildings from the communist period and recently projects to research, protect and emphasize different communist heritage have been initiated. Some of the informants work with heritage issues in different arenas, since they lack good possibilities to influence the situation from their professional positions. After the decision to demolish the Pyramid, heritage professionals, architects and others gathered and created a forum to have a joined voice in heritage issues, especially for the protection of the Pyramid. Urban planners and architects within the municipality of Tirana worked together with the civil society in the Pyramid issue, because they lacked possibilities to act as professionals within the municipality as a result of lack of experience of similar situations and a lack of interest from the government to include them.

Macdonald defined "undesirable heritage" as a heritage that the majority of the population would not like to have.[287] The weak and problematic relationship between the public and the state and the low interest from the public for public space have been problems since the fall of communism for urban planning and the heritage management. Citizens of Tirana have had few opportunities to discuss the recent past and express their opinions about heritage protection. This makes it difficult to know whether communist heritage is unwanted or not in Albania today. The Albanian government considers the Pyramid as an unwanted heritage and aims to remove all traces from Enver Hoxha. Even though it has been 20 years since the Pyramid was used as a museum over Hoxha it still carries that identity for Prime minister Sali Berisha. For him and his sympathisers the materialized identity from the past cannot be transformed into other identities and meanings and should therefore be removed. The government, however, at the same time wants to preserve and exhibit physical memories from the communist period, but in a museum outside Tirana and not

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287 Macdonald (2006) "Undesirable Heritage : Fascist Material Culture and Historical Consciousness in Nuremberg" p. 9

along the capital's main boulevard. The government uses the Pyramid – or the deleting of it – to construct and demonstrate their identity in the centre of the Albanian capitel. They want an identity disconnected from the communist past while some of the informants believe it would be a loss, or even impossible, to not include the recent communist past in today's identities of Tirana, Albania and Albanians.

The informants have confirmed what Glass wrote in her thesis, that it nowadays is easier and acceptable to talk about buildings that communism left behind.[288] Light wrote in an article ten years ago that "few people in CEE would regard the legacy of four decades of state socialism as of value".[289] This study is qualitative and do not aim to answer how Albanians in general value heritage from the communist period. However, the situation is more complex than to label the communist heritage as an unwanted heritage without values. There are wishes and attempts in Albania to erase the communist past from the cultural landscape and collective memory, which has been a common way to try to construct new national identities in Central and Eastern Europe after the collapse of the Berlin Wall.[290] But there are also individuals and organizations who are devoted to the preservation of heritage from this past. However, the protection of heritage from the communist period relies on individuals within IMC, the municipality and organizations, since there are no policies, routines or regulations or serious interest from the government for this heritage. These individuals who are represented among the informants often lack education in modern heritage and did not have any special knowledge or interest in modern heritage before they by various reasons ended up working with communist heritage in one way or another. There are interest and ongoing projects concerning communist heritage, but for many reasons it is still fragile. Further, the problems that Albania is facing with their communist past and its heritage are not only about the disagreement whether to preserve and remember or demolish and forget. The lack of economic resources, serious state institutions and heritage professionals together with the political climate in general affect the heritage sector and the possibility to have a serious debate and protection.

7.1 Proposals for Future Studies

A proposal for a future study of the heritage from the communist period in Albania is a version of this study where opinions and memories of citizens would be collected in order to grasp opinions of ordinary Albanians about this difficult heritage, something which has not yet been done.

Another interesting study would be to research communist heritage tourism in Albania. This type of tourism does not yet exist in a structured, large-scaled way in Albania, as it does in other post-socialist countries in Europe. However, bunkers are almost always photographed and described by foreign tourists and journalists in travel logs from Albania. It would be interesting to study if there is a conflict between locals and their opinions and conceptions of bunkers and tourists' interests and conceptions.

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288 Glass (2008) p. 66
289 Light (2000) *Gazing on communism* p. 160
290 Light (2000) *An unwanted past* p. 146 ff

8. Summary

This master thesis is based on interviews done during a two months long stay in Tirana, Albania. The research questions concern who works with communist heritage in Albania, what constitutes the heritage from the communist period and how the built heritage from the communist period (1945-1991) is discussed, valued and handled in Albania today. A general question is whether heritage from the communist period is an unwanted heritage or not today. The aim is to study what is happening with the physical heritage from the communist period in one of the countries in Europe where this heritage have been discussed and emphasized the least and also to contribute to the discussion about difficult heritage and show what different meanings it may have instead of labelling it an "unwanted heritage".

The history of Albania is described in one chapter in the thesis, with focus on the communist period. Albania was a closed country for almost fifty years, ruled until 1985 by the dictator Enver Hoxha. It was one of the strongest communist regimes in Europe and the poorest European country when communism fell. The communist ideology had huge impacts on the Albanian landscape. City centres were reconstructed, apartment blocks were built with pre-fabricated Soviet material, a nationwide defence system of bunkers were built, and large industrial complexes were constructed. Communism affected and controlled every aspect of life. After the fall of the communist regime in 1991 there was a rage among people against the state and public space. The state was weak, the urban planning profession did not exist and the need for dwellings in Tirana was extremely high since people from the countryside came there in search for a better life. This resulted in a chaotic urban development in the Albanian capital during the 1990s.

There are previous research about difficult heritage, such as Ashworth and Tunbridge's book *Dissonant heritage - the management of the past as a resource in conflict* and Macdonald's study *Difficult heritage - Negotiating the Nazi Past in Nuremberg and Beyond*, as well as research about communist heritage in different countries. However, few studies have been done about the heritage from the communist past in Albania and the ones which I have found focus on bunkers.

The concept of heritage is defined and discussed in the theoretical part of the thesis. In this study heritage is defined as parts from the past which we chose to emphasize because of contemporary purposes in the present. Heritage can be both material and immaterial parts from the past, but this thesis concerns built heritage. The concept of heritage has broadened from the grand and beautiful pieces of our past to the heritage of everyone and everyday life and even places of pain and trauma can be included in the concept. I use the notion *communist heritage* for buildings from the period 1945-1990 in Albania. Everything that was built during this period was controlled by the communist regime and was a way to express the ideology and the power of the regime, why every building from this period somehow is *communist*. Heritage is something that we chose and is also a storehouse of human experiences, including suffering and failures, and what gives a place its character. With that definition in mind, *communist heritage* is used.

Undesirable heritage is defined by Macdonald as "a heritage that the majority of the population would prefer not to have".[291] Ten years ago Light argued that few people in Central and Eastern Europe would regard remains from the former socialist regimes as heritage and something worthy to remember and preserve and he described it as "unwanted heritage". The period of socialist rule has in most countries in Central and Eastern Europe been seen as an aberration in history and the

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291 Macdonald (2006) "Undesirable Heritage : Fascist Material Culture and Historical Consciousness in Nuremberg" p. 9

wish to erase it from collective and historical memory has been widely spread and the most obvious material traces, as statues of socialist leaders, were immediately toppled. However, as time passes by, the recent socialist past and its heritage in CEE have more and more anew been included in the national narratives. There are several examples of buildings from difficult pasts, as the Nazi era and socialist oppressive regimes, have been labelled as heritage and preserved. There are today a number of museums over communism around Central and Eastern Europe and an interest from tourists for difficult pasts and difficult heritage.

In this thesis is the notion *difficult heritage* used. A difficult heritage is not per se an unwanted heritage. Nor is heritage from an oppressive communist regime per se a difficult heritage. However, the assumption in this thesis is that heritage from the communist period in Albania is a contested heritage, because of the harsh control of both people and environment that it meant and the closeness in time. The assumption that it is a difficult heritage is also supported by the fact that there are almost no exhibitions or projects where the communist past is emphasized and the current decision to demolish the Pyramid.

In the thesis I present several strategies to handle difficult heritage. Trauma cannot be entirely erased from individual memories or the cultural landscape, but traumatic memories are argued to be obstacles both on an individual and a group level when trying to shape a future distinguished from the recent past. A society can agree on collective amnesia, as was the case in many former socialist countries. However, it is a short term strategy as future generations often are more interested to remember and buildings still remain as reminders of the past. A common argument to preserve heritage from difficult periods and events is the wish to safeguard memories from an important period in history and thereby limit the risk that history will be repeated. As opposed to this is the argument that preservation of a difficult heritage site could be understood as a celebration and commemoration of the past regime, since sites or objects which are labelled as heritage traditionally are seen as parts of the past worthy of commemoration and admiration. One alternative to demolition is to deface buildings by making the origin of them unreadable and thereby removing their capability to communicate what they might were built to communicate. This can be done by removing the most obvious reminders of the buildings origin, as swastikas or red stars. A similar strategy is profanation, a strategy where a difficult heritage site is treated as any place and where every day activities are performed, in contrast to give recognition to the site as a difficult heritage. An alternative, or a non-way of handling difficult heritage, is simply to ignore it, both physically and socially, and let it decline. In some cases buildings from a recent difficult past remains because of practical and economic reasons, for example after the Second World War when there was a need for buildings and in post-communist countries where a majority of the population lives in apartment blocks made by the former regime.

The informants all work with heritage from the communist past in some way. They represent the state, the municipality of Tirana, two NGOs which work with heritage and two universities with education within heritage management, architecture and urban planning. The interviews had the form of conversations where the informants freely spoke about their work and opinions about heritage from the communist period. The interviews were supplemented with literature studies about heritage and the history and urban development of Albania and Tirana as well as newspaper articles concerning the Pyramid (see below).

Recently a debate has started to rise about communist heritage within Albania. However, the debate has not yet left any traces such as regulations on how to protect more heritage from this period. Several buildings from the communist period are protected as monuments of culture, as a result of engaged individuals within the state institution responsible for monuments, and this has not resulted

in any routines or policies regarding the communist heritage.

During my stay in Albania in the fall of 2010, the Albanian government decided to demolish the Pyramid, former Museum of Enver Hoxha built in the 1980s, in the centre of Tirana and replace it with a new parliament building. This was motivated by a wish to erase all traces of the former dictator to be able to move on from the communist past and is a part of the centenary celebration of the independence of Albania which will take place in 2012. The political opposition did not agree, and neither did the informants who expressed opinions about the future of the Pyramid. The situation in Tirana and Albania is more complicated than to handle a difficult heritage. Since the fall of the communist regime in 1991 have state institutions been weak, corruption is a problem in the Albanian society and the interest for public space among inhabitants have been low. There is also a lack of experiences within the state and municipality how to handle urban planning and heritage processes as well as a lack of heritage professionals with adequate education.

All of the informants would like to see more buildings from the communist period, including the Pyramid, to be recognized as heritage, preserved and protected. They connect various values to communist heritage, such as aesthetic, social, historical, architectural and architectural historical values. There is a fear among some of the informants that the younger generations and eventually society will forget about this past. Heritage from the period is seen as one way to keep memories alive. At the same time there is a wish among other groups and individuals to demolish the physical remains of the former regime to be able to forget painful or shameful individual and national memories more easily and develop Tirana and Albania in another direction. A common argument to preserve heritage from a difficult past, both in literature and among the informants, is that heritage and remembrance can prevent us from repeating the same mistakes again. Whether this works in reality or not is however not discussed by the informants. A lot of the building stock from the communist period remains because of practical and economic needs. A large part of the Albanian population lives in apartments built during this period and many buildings built as ministries, municipality offices and institutions still remain and function as such today.

Heritage from the communist past have been lost and will be lost, but because of the rising debate and because of the Pyramid case which has intensified the debate and engaged many Tirana citizens, much of it might be protected and preserved for the future.

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9.3 Informants

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Interview 2010-09-26

Informant 2. Works at Institute of Monuments of Culture (IMC), Ministry of Culture of Albania
Interview 2010-10-13

Informant 3. Works at University of Tirana and former employee at IMC
Interview 2010-10-20

Informant 4. Works at GDCO
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Informant 5. Works at Albanian Heritage Foundation
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Informant 6. Works at Urban Planning Directorate, Municipality of Tirana
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Informant 7. Works at the NGO Co-Plan and the Polis University of Architecture and Urban
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Visit at Surrel Workshop, Polis University of Architecture and Urban Development Policies, Tirana,
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10. List of Illustrations

All photographs are taken by Karin Myhrberg in 2010, except Fig. 1, 7, 13 and 19.

Cover picture. Relief on building, Rruga e Durresit, Tirana.

Fig. 1. Map of Albania and bordering countries. From: www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/maps/maptemplate_al.html 2011-01-14

Fig. 2. Polytechnic University in Mother Teresa Square, built as House of Fascism in the 1940s by architect Bosio during the Italian occupation of Albania.

Fig. 3. Apartment building from the communist years in the town of Lushnja, Albania.

Fig. 4. Apartment building in Tirana with an expression which distinguish it from other apartment buildings from the time, by architect Maks Velo who were jailed in 1978 for eight years for 'modernist tendencies' in his artwork

Fig. 4. The National History Museum in the Skanderbeg Square where construction work was going on. The big mosaic above the entrance was covered, but can be seen in Fig. 15.

Fig. 5. Examples of socialist realist art decorating facades in Tirana. To the left: Detail from building on Rruga e Durresit. To the right: Entrance to the former Stalin Textile Plant.

Fig. 6. Painted facades in Tirana. The initiative to paint facades of apartment buildings from the communist period came from the mayor Edi Rama in early 2000s, as a way to give Tirana a well needed facelift and make the inhabitants proud of their city and their houses

Fig. 7. Map of central Tirana. Screenshot from www.maps.google.se 2011-01-05 Map processed by Karin Myhrberg.

Fig. 8. Mother Teresa Square with the building erected for the Albanian Lictor Youth in the 1930s.

Fig. 9. Palace of Congresses.

Fig. 10. A small bunker next to the *Bulevardi Deshmoret e kombit,* Tirana.

Fig. 11. Council of Ministers

Fig. 12. Statues behind the National Art Gallery

Fig. 13. The Pyramid as the Museum of Enver Hoxha, late 1980s. Photographer unknown.

Fig. 14. The Pyramid, 2010. The Peace Bell installation in the front.

Fig. 15. Part of Skanderbeg Square. From the left: Et'hem Bey mosque, offices of Municipality of Tirana in a building built during the Italian occupation and the clock tower behind, the first of the ten new towers which will be built around the square.

Fig. 16. National History Museum in Tirana. How to handle the socialist realist mosaic has been

discussed by for example the former director of the museum. A red star and a book by Hoxha have been removed. In 2010 a restoration of the mosaic started.

Fig. 17. The former house of Enver Hoxha, located in Blloku area in Tirana.

Fig. 18. A tourist photo of a bunker of the smallest model.

Fig. 19. A bunker is painted and used for a party. Photo by Ada Bufi.

Appendix 1

Interview Guide - General

(Presentation of myself, my study and my questions.)

Background

What education do you have? Education/work experience from abroad?

Have you worked with modern heritage before? How come you work with this now?

Work place

Where do you work? What is your position?

Can you tell me something about the organization? About the project? (if any specific)
Who are your donors? (if any)

What are the organizations relationship to municipality/state institutions/citizens?

Communist heritage

What does heritage from the communist period symbolize today? What values and qualities does it have? Is it important to preserve communist heritage? Why/Why not?

Is there an ongoing debate about this heritage in Albania? Can you tell me about it?

The Pyramid – What is your opinion about the recent decision? What has been your role in this discussion?

Have you experienced an interest from tourists for the communist heritage? Your opinion about it?

Interview guide – Specific questions for informant from IMC

How can buildings be protected in Albania?

Which buildings in Tirana are protected as monuments of culture from the communist period?

What does the protection mean? Why do buildings which are protected look ruined?

Who is responsible for to maintain and control the monuments of culture?

What possibilities do inhabitants have to express their ideas and opinions to IMC?

Can there be a conflict/problems when protecting communist buildings?

When a building is protected – how does the process before look like?

Interview guide – Specific questions for informant from Urban Planning Directorate, Municipality of Tirana

How does the municipality work with buildings from 1945-1990? Policies?

Does anyone in the Municipality work especially with heritage/historic buildings?

Is it possible for the municipality to protect buildings with cultural values?

What possibilities do inhabitants have to express their ideas and opinions about urban planning to the municipality?

Describe your role/opinions in the Pyramid question?