



**Sosyal Bilimler
Enstitüsü**

T.C.

MARMARA ÜNİVERSİTESİ

SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ

İŞLETME (İNGİLİZCE) ANABİLİM DALI

YÖNETİM VE ORGANİZASYON (İNGİLİZCE) BİLİM DALI

STRATEGY AS A NARRATIVE PRACTICE: THE STORY OF TIRANA

MASTER PLAN TR030

Doktora Tezi

by

VEHAP KOLA

İstanbul, 2022

T.C.
MARMARA ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
İŞLETME (İNGİLİZCE) ANABİLİM DALI
YÖNETİM VE ORGANİZASYON (İNGİLİZCE) BİLİM DALI

STRATEGY AS A NARRATIVE PRACTICE: THE STORY OF TIRANA
MASTER PLAN TR030
Doktora Tezi

By

VEHAP KOLA

Danışmanı:

PROF. DR. HANDE SİNEM ERGUN

İstanbul, 2022

T.C.
MARMARA ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ

TEZ ONAY BELGESİ

..... Anabilim Dalı Bilim Dalı Yüksek Lisans/Doktora öğrencisi’nın
..... adlı tez çalışması, Enstitümüz Yönetim Kurulunun tarih ve sayılı
kararıyla oluşturulan jüri tarafından oy birliği / oy çokluğu ile Yüksek Lisans/Doktora
Tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir

Tez Savunma Tarihi/...../.....

Öğretim üyesi Adı Soyadı

İmzası

1	Tez Danışmanı	Prof. Dr. Hande Sinem Ergun	
3	Jüri Üyesi	Prof. Dr. Gonca Günay	
4	Jüri Üyesi	Prof. Dr. Müjdelan İpek Yener	
5	Jüri Üyesi		
6	Jüri Üyesi		

ÖZET

BİR ANLATI PRATİĞİ OLARAK STRATEJİ: TİRAN MASTER PLANI TR030'UN HİKÂYESİ

Bu çalışma, Tiran kent planlaması (TR030) bağlamında anlatı praktikleri ve strateji oluşturma arasındaki ilişkiyi izah etme çabası olarak ön plana çıkmaktadır. Söz konusu çaba, aşağıdaki araştırma sorularına yanıt vermek suretiyle gerçekleştirilmeye çalışılmıştır: Çatışan taraflarca anlatılan hikâyelerden kentsel planlama bağlamındaki bir strateji nasıl ortaya çıkar? Strateji hikâyelerinde hangi güç unsurları yer almaktadır? Etkili stratejik hikâye anlatılarına gerekçe teşkil etmek üzere hangi rasyonaliteler bir seçim kriteri olarak hizmet etmektedir? Bu araştırma, anlatı paradigmasını nitel temelli teori ile birleştirmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu sayede, strateji yapıcılarının anlatı rasyonalitesinin başarısını ve şehrin geleceğine dair önceden belirlenmiş bir hayal gücünün gerekçelendirilmesini ve mistifikasyonunu tanımlamak ve açıklamak için kavramsal bir çerçeve ortaya koymaktadır. Dolayısıyla da kentin geleceğine ilişkin önceden belirlenmeye çalışılan tahayyüllerin/vizyonların gerekçeleri ve karanlıkta kalan yönleri belirlenmiştir. Bu tez kapsamındaki araştırmada üç ana bulguya ulaşılmıştır. İlk olarak, bir anlatı rasyonalitesinin sosyal bir ortamda başarılı olması için uygun anlatı ekosisteminin kurulması gerekmektedir. İkincisi, etkin anlatı rasyonalitesini destekleyen nedenler, hikâyelere gömülü değerler tarafından ortaya çıkarılabilmektedir. Üçüncüsü, hikâyelerin anlatı etkisi, dost bir çevrede gerçekleştirilen tarafları birleştirici/uzlaştırıcı bir anlatı rasyonalitesi tarafından garanti edilebilmektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Anlatı pratiği, anlatı ekosistemi, anlatı rasyonalitesi, güç ilişkileri, pratik olarak strateji.

Vehap Kola
Marmara University

ABSTRACT

STRATEGY AS A NARRATIVE PRACTICE: THE STORY OF TIRANA MASTER PLAN TR030

The present study is an effort to tap the relationship between narrative practices and strategy-making in the context of city planning of Tirana (TR030). It tries to do so by providing answers to the following questions: How strategy emerges from stories narrated by contending parties in an urban planning context? What power devices are accommodated in the stories of strategy? What rationality serves as a selection criterion for effective strategic storytelling? Coupling narrative paradigm with qualitative grounded theory this inquiry extracts a conceptual framework for describing and explaining the triumph of the narrative rationality of the strategy-makers and the justification and mystification of a pre-set imagination of the future of the city. Three are the major findings of the study. First, for a narrative rationality to succeed in a social setting, a narrative ecosystem must be established in advance. Second, good reasons underpinning narrative rationality are informed by values embedded in stories. Third, the narrative effect of the stories is only warranted by a unitary narrative rationality farmed in a friendly ecosystem.

Keywords: Strategy-as-practice, narrative practice, narrative ecosystem, narrative rationality, power relations.

Vehap Kola
Marmara University

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TEZ ONAY BELGESİ.....	III
LIST OF FIGURES.....	X
LIST OF TABLES.....	XI
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	XII
DEDICATION.....	XIII
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	XIV
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Research Background.....	1
1.2 Research Problem.....	2
1.2.1 Research Aim	2
1.2.2 Research Objectives	3
1.3 Research Methodology.....	3
1.4 Thesis Structure.....	4
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW.....	6
2.1 A Brief History of Paradigmatic Clashes.....	6
2.1.1 The Practice Turn in Social Sciences.....	9
2.1.2 The Narrative Turn.....	15
2.1.3 Strategy-as-practice Perspective	19
2.1.4 Research Gaps in the Literature	24
CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY.....	25
3.1 Introduction	25
3.2 Research Scope	26
3.2.1 Research Purpose	26

3.2.2	Research Questions	27
3.2.3	Research Paradigm.....	28
3.3	Research Strategy	33
3.3.1	Design: Qualitative Grounded Theory	33
3.3.2	Scope: Exploratory.....	35
3.3.3	Approach: Narrative Interviewing	35
3.4	Participant Selection.....	37
3.4.1	The Sample of Participants	38
3.4.2	Informed consent.....	40
3.5	Data Production.....	41
3.5.1	Defining Data	41
3.5.2	Narrative Interviews.....	42
3.5.3	Published Documents of TR030 and Related Deeds	43
3.6	Data Analysis	44
3.7	Coding of the Data	44
3.7.1	Open Coding	44
3.7.2	Axial Coding	46
3.7.3	Selective Coding	47
3.7.4	Constant Comparison Method (CCM)	48
3.8	Limitations and Strengths of the Research Design	54
3.9	Quality and Rigor: Reliability and Validity	54
3.9.1	Narrative Probability and Fidelity.....	55
3.9.2	Credibility/ Internal Validity.....	58
3.9.3	Dependability/ Reliability	61

3.9.4	Confirmability/ Objectivity	61
3.9.5	Transferability / Generalizability	64
3.10	Research Ethics	67
3.11	Chapter Conclusions	68
CHAPTER 4 DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS		69
4.1	Background of TR030	69
4.2	Narrative Ecosystem of TR030	70
4.2.1	Ecological Selection	71
4.2.2	Directional Selection	118
4.2.3	Conclusions to Narrative Ecosystem of Strategy	146
4.3	Narrative Rationality of TR030	150
4.3.1	Urban space as a justification for a new urban plan	150
4.3.2	Commoners do not think, they make sense	152
4.3.3	Power Knowledge Relations	158
4.3.4	The More the Data, the More the Rationality	168
4.3.5	Conclusions to the Narrative Rationality of the Strategic Storytellers ..	177
4.4	The Narrative Reality of TR030	181
4.4.1	Storied City	181
4.4.2	Stories strategizing agency	212
4.5	Conclusions to the Narrative Reality of the Strategic Stories of TR030	226
CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS		229
5.1	Summary of the Inquiry	229
5.1.1	Narration and the Political Context	229
5.1.2	The Exclusive Nature of Narrative Rationality	231

5.1.3	Narrativity and Strategy in TR030	233
5.2	Contributions to the Existing Body of Knowledge	238
5.2.1	Contributions to the Strategy as Practice	238
5.2.2	Contributions to the Narrative Inquiry	238
5.3	Limitations of the Inquiry	239
5.4	Recommendations for Further Research	240
5.5	Concluding Remarks	241
	REFERENCES.....	242
	APPENDIX A NARRATIVE INTERVIEW GUIDE.....	271
	APPENDIX B REFLEXIVITY PROCESS QUESTIONS.....	273
	APPENDIX C CODEBOOK GENERATED FROM MAXQDA 2020	274
	APPENDIX D CONSENT LETTER	279

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2-1 A Theoretical Framework showing the relationships between Practice, Praxis and Practitioners	23
Figure 3-1 Data Collection and Analysis Process.....	45
Figure 3-2 Axial coding procedure for social science research questions.....	46
Figure 3-3 Process of ensuring rigor in narrative research	57
Figure 4-1 Too critic to participate subcodes weight and distribution*	82
Figure 4-2 The Iron Fist of Hearing Sessions subcodes weights and distribution*.....	90
Figure 4-3 Sustainable Urban Development Tales subcodes weights and distribution*	110
Figure 4-4 Muting Differences subcodes' weights and distribution*	132
Figure 4-5 A proposed conceptual framework of the directional selection phenomena	145
Figure 4-6 The conceptual framework of the experiences of participants with the narrative ecosystem of TR030.....	149
Figure 4-7 The conceptual framework of the narrative rationality employed in city strategizing.....	180
Figure 4-8 Storied City subcodes' weights and distribution	181
Figure 4-9 The conceptual results on the role played by stories and the adopted values in TR030 storytelling.....	228
Figure 5-1 The Conceptual Framework of the Narrative Practice of TR030	237

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3-1 Contemporary theorists and practice	11
Table 4-1 Paradigmatic Delineation of Steps Toward Theory Building.....	29
Table 4-2 Stages of Constant Comparison Procedure*	53
Table 4-3 Questions guiding reflexivity process.....	65
Table 5-1 Agenda setting agency subcodes weights and distribution*	72
Table 5-2 Chronotopicity subcodes weights and distribution*	96
Table 5-3 Reducing Dialogue subcodes' weights and distribution*	119
Table 5-4 Commoners don't think subcode' weights and distribution*	153
Table 5-5 Power-Knowledge Relations subcodes' weights and distribution*	158

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CCM - Constant Comparative Method

JICA – Japan International Cooperation Agency

MA – Municipal Assembly

MOT – Municipality of Tirana

QGT – Qualitative Grounded Theory

S-a-p – Strategy as practice

ToDR – Transfer of Development Rights

TR030 – Tirana Master Plan 2030

DEDICATION

To my beloved family!



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am deeply grateful to God for inspiring me to pursue my most elevated of feelings in digging into the books for the intriguing stories and explications of the very phenomena of existence and experience. I was divinely blessed by a difficult and destitute living for the most part of my life, an absolute precondition to the unseduced love for knowledge.

My late father departed this life before he could witness the end of the journey he persistently pushed and supported me to attend. I wish I could see him in his eyes and say: Thank you, Father! However, I know he will be satisfied to have me pronounce the same words of gratitude to my beloved mother, who did no less to provide for me while a child and a grown-up student.

As the youngest in a politically persecuted family, I direly needed the initiation of my elder sisters and brothers, of whom I singled out my older sister and my very first teacher, Remzije. My wife Pranvera and my sons Lindiell and Maldrit, have shared with me the struggles and deprivation, waiting for my monthly visits for almost 3 years. May God help me recompense them with my dedication and love for the rest of my life!

Words are never enough to thank my thesis advisor, Prof. Dr. Hande Sinem Ergun. I owe my entire methodological and theoretical journey to her tolerance and understanding of my intellectual infantility as well as her diluted delivery of disciplinary knowledge and research guidance. My slow working pace and consecutive delays made her life more difficult, however I only received encouragement and support from Professor Sinem. Thus, my gratitude to her is complete and humble.

I don't want to miss this chance to thank each of the professors of the Business Administration (English) Department at Marmara University for believing in my research skills and heartening with words of appreciation in conclusion of my comprehensive examination. On this occasion, I express my gratitude to all the teachers that facilitated my figuring out of the unknown.

And many thanks to my friends, who helped and supported me during these times of difficulty.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Research Background

The Municipality of Tirana (MoT) kicked off a process of urban planning in 2015, immediately after the newly elected administration assumed office. An Italian consortium of companies, Steffano Boeri Architetti and UNLAB¹ were selected to develop the new master plan, coined TR030, a direct indication for the long-term vision implied in it. The new master plan, contracted only 4 years after the previous one was adopted, would regulate the urban development of Tirana of the next 15 years. The urban strategy-making process lasted one full year and it was adopted by the Municipal Assembly in the end of 2016.²

It is legally compulsory for the Albanian public institutions to organize and hold public consultations with the local communities and stakeholders and draw on their demands, opinions and expectations and consider them in the strategy design. MoT held a few consultations with the local communities and several expert tables to discuss the technical challenges of TR030 master plan. This study was prompted by the present researcher's noticing of extensive use of storytelling by MoT representatives and the urban planners during the public hearing sessions. The purpose of this inquiry was to unearth the functions dearth narration played in marshalling support around the proposed draft of TR030 and the interests served by the very same stories.

Strategy research has recently expanded its scope to include a myriad of strategy-making processes that take place at each organizational level while spanning through the end of the strategic planning period. Strategy-as-practice (Whittington, 1996; Johnson et al., 2007) is one of the relatively recent discoveries in the map of

¹ <https://www.stefano boeri architetti.net/en/project/tirana-030-2/>

² https://tirana.al/uploads/2019/5/20190516132410_new-doc-2017-02-08-141650.pdf

strategic management research. Employing a practice perspective to strategy has proven to be a productive theoretical and methodological lens in a plethora of inquiries (Carter et al., 2008; Chia & Holt, 2006; de La Ville & Mounoud, 2015; Grand et al., 2015; Jarzabkowski, 2004; Jarzabkowski et al., 2007; Whittington, 2007; Whittington & Cailluet, 2008).

Furthermore, expanding the portfolio of practice theoretical and methodological lenses to include the narrative approach/paradigm has been recommended by numerous authors (Brown & Thompson, 2013; de La Ville & Mounoud, 2015; Kornberger & Clegg, 2011), particularly in an urban planning setting (Ameel, 2016; 2021; Finnegan, 1998; Throgmorton, 2007; Sandercock, 2003). Following this bouquet of recommendations, investigating the role of storytelling in the strategy-making process of TR030 emerged an intriguing enterprise.

1.2 Research Problem

City planning is an umbrella field of social and political activity that shelters a throng of disciplinary practices from social research to underground infrastructure design, from strategic planning to community works projections. The chief role of strategic thinking and practices in the making of an urban space, makes this setting an attractive territory for strategy researchers. Particularly, the recent trends in employing storytelling practices in the strategy making episodes has opened the way for the narrative theoretical and methodological lenses to study and render these activities knowable and understandable. The present inquiry intends to unearth the myriad of inter-structural and intersubjective relationships emerging and constructed by the human and non-human actants in the domain of city strategy in the framework of TR030. Of special interest is the use of power relations and the role of rationality in justifying and mystifying the strategizers' work and the respective outcomes.

1.2.1 Research Aim

The present study is set to serve the researcher's aim to understand the multiple ways mutually exclusive stakes have been reconciled or selected in and out by the strategy-makers in the process of urban planning. In doing so, this study helps split the

power devices from the rationalization strategies and the outcome of coupling both in the storytelling practices of the strategy-practitioners.

1.2.2 Research Objectives

This research enterprise is designed to allow the present inquirer to pursue the following objectives:

- Investigate the ways in which strategy is practiced in the process of designing TR030.
- Explore the narrative tools employed by the strategy practitioners to gain public approval, marshal political will, and legitimize the strategic choices.
- Analyse the narrativity of the urban strategizing activity as a social practice that advances certain stakes and subdues other voices.
- Interrogate the power relations between the lines of the narrative plots used in the strategizing activity and the strategy text itself.

1.3 Research Methodology

A narrative paradigm (Fisher, 1984; Warnick, 1987; Bruner, 1990; Barry & Elmes, 1997) was employed to study the strategy-making episodes in the framework of the public consultation process of TR030 master plan. Qualitative grounded theory (Glaser & Anselm Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Holton, 2005; Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Corbin & Strauss, 1998; Corbin, 2012; Bakker, 2019) proved a productive method in informing the present inquirer's methodological decisions about several issues, from research questions formulation to participant selection (Blaikie, 2018; Braun & Clarke, 2019; Cleary et al., 2014; Conlon et al., 2020; Crouch & McKenzie, 2006; Draucker et al., 2007), data collection (Corbin, 2012; Francis et al., 2010; Guest et al., 2006), and analysis (Hoare et al., 2012; Kolb, 2012; Boeijs, 2002; Glaser & Holton, 2005; Böhm, 2004), and theoretical scaffolding. Narrative interviewing was used to draw the experiences of participants in strategy-making events and their reflexions on the overall storytelling practices of the MoT representatives and international and local experts hired to prepare TR030 master plan. Collected stories were analysed on MAXQDA

2020 software on three levels of coding, i.e., open coding, axial coding, and theoretical coding and, simultaneously through the Constant Comparative Method (CCM).

1.4 Thesis Structure

Chapter 1 of the present study introduces the background of the research, states the research problem and presents the research aims and objectives. A summarized presentation of the methodology is also included.

Chapter 2 offers a condensed literature review of narratology adopted as a paradigm in this research, qualitative grounded theory employed in sampling, research design, data collection and analysis, and strategy-as-practice as a domain of research.

Chapter 3 makes a detailed description of the employed methodology. The research scope demarcates the aims and objectives, lists the research questions, explains the embraced paradigm and research strategy. Further, participant selection criteria and procedures, as well as data production operations are described in detail. A special attention is paid to the coding of the data and the CCM. The chapter thoroughly defines the rigor and quality standards. Each of the criteria for reliability and validity are discussed side by side a robust support in the qualitative research literature. Finally, limitations, strengths and research ethics are featured to help the reader understand the added value of the present study.

Chapter 4 offers a thorough discussion of the qualitative findings of the coding and CCM conducted on MAXQDA, accompanied by thick description and frequent citations from the narrative interviews with the study participants. Three main themes of theoretical scaffolding emerge throughout this chapter: narrative ecosystem of strategic storytelling, the narrative rationality that dominated the story-world of TR030, and the narrative reality of the future city as inspired by the tales of strategy-making in the context of urban planning. Each of the main themes is summarised in a partial conceptual framework.

Chapter 5 begins with a summary of the theoretical findings and a conceptual framework of the overall inquiry. In addition, this chapter briefly states the contributions of the present study to the body of knowledge of the strategy-as-practice perspective, as well as to narrative inquiry. After making mention of the limitations,

and risks that accompany this study, chapter 5 concludes with recommendations for further research.



CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

2.1 A Brief History of Paradigmatic Clashes

In his “The Revolt of the Masses” (1957), Ortega Y Gasset has offered one of the most blatant descriptions of the nature of knowledge. He maintains that in facing with a novel, science resembles the reality itself; but when compared to the authentic reality, it becomes clear that what the science borrows from the novel, fantasy, and the mental structure of an imaginary edifice (Gasset, 1957). The scholarly polemics on where to draw the demarcation line between knowledge and fiction is a by-product of the ontological dissent on the nature of reality. On what an understanding of the reality and human nature a positivist is expectedly prone to, is object to later discussions within this work.

The distinction between what the academic discourse calls the objective and subjectively produced knowledge was not yet made when Socrates, Plato and Aristotle first laid the ground for such differences. Mythos and logos, imagination and thought were not yet exclusive realms of reality. Rather “[l]iving myth” was deemed “truth” itself, “the very instrument of truth” (Fisher, 1985, p.76) in what is represented as truth in the Greek word Aletheia. The intellectual concern of the pre-Socratics was not the truth itself as much as the language employed to manifest it was.

The first attempt toward discern between the probabilistic knowledge and the descriptive science is assigned to Plato, who contradicted the sophistic and rhetoric idea that knowledge grounded on chances might be included in what was then known as logos. He is, therefore, acknowledged the merit of technologizing logos and serve it in an abstract language and philosophical discourse (Fisher, 1985).

This tradition of epistemic formalization was followed by Aristotle who further emphasized the distinction between some forms of discourse and others in their rapport with true knowledge (Fisher, 1985). According to Aristotle’s view, knowledge was exclusively created by the accumulation of the scientific discourse thanks to its

exclusive relationship with reason. Henceforth, he agrees with Plato in admitting that non-scientific discourse including the rhetorical one could only yield probabilistic knowledge, often deprived of any scientific content.

What Plato and Aristotle had previously initiated, Bacon was to further intensify by extolling the scientific discourse and distinguishing it from any other form of human communication. He established a new theory of knowledge, one that concerns the material reality to the extent of the rest of existence, with empiricism at its foundation. Himself a by-product of a marriage between the British empiricist tradition and continental rationalism, Francis Bacon introduced a reversal of the philosophy's logic of scientific inquiry from deduction to induction (Bacon, 2015). This was how he dethroned the authority of the philosopher and coronated the dynasty of method. Consequently, the ancient rhetorical mode of discourse was assigned the status of a "managerial" art (Fisher, 1985), rather than an inventive epistemic tool. Because it was only capable of reinstituting an existent theory or knowledge, rather than establish it from the beginning (Campbell, 1963).

This newly established tradition of empiricist and rationalistic science founded on the Baconian paradigm, found in Descartes an example of a partial following. To the latter it is attributed the merit of setting up the logical positivist school, a more rationalist emphasis on the so far identified gap between the rational and non-rational sources of truth (Fisher, 1984). Logical positivism maintained that whatever expression fell beyond the empirical methods capability of authentication does not comprise proper knowledge (Descartes, 1953). Descartes was a student of rationalism and held that ideas, as expressed in human propositions, were knowable through pure reason (Descartes, 1953). Therefore, induction, as a method of inquiry, had to retreat in favour of deductive argumentation.

Heretofore, the conception of what was knowledge made up of, reaches the issue of demarcating between what represented proper scientific statements and what not. With Locke, this demarcation line would be loaded with moral judgements. While Descartes (1953) was a radical sceptic, but again maintained that certain human thoughts are as clear as to make sure their truth, Locke disagreed with the idea that thinking alone is sometimes enough. The problem that this idea, according to Locke, posed was that of the correspondence between the meant thought and a final material

reality (Locke, 1689). He spoke of things “as they are” and deemed the rhetoric works of communications nothing but “perfect cheat” (Locke, 1689). Their sole virtue, to the extent it could be called a virtue, was to convince humans buy into wrong ideas (Fisher, 1984). These arguments mark another move forward to the dominance of empiricism over rationalism.

For Locke and his thought peers, true knowledge was only obtained through sense experience, and for him to handle the cartesian objection of frequently hallucinate impressions, he (Locke, 1689) offers the distinction between the primary and the secondary qualities of things, thus proposing a modification at the ontological level of his paradigm. Characteristics of physical objects such as solidity, density, weight, mass, extension, height, depth, and width, as well as the form of an object are deemed primary qualities and, therefore, real. As far as our impressions about an object are concerned, such as colour, smell, taste, texture, or sound, these represent secondary qualities to the object under study. As a result, empiricism would be rescued of any subjectivist weakness (Locke, 1689).

Another sceptical wave towards empiricism would be easily assigned to David Hume (2007), with his argument that it is not always possible to distinguish between ideas and impressions, or two kinds of perceptions. Questioning the very idea of a body or memory theory (Locke, 1689), Hume (2007) might have paved the way to a theory of experience that shall later serve to revive the narrative paradigm with authors such as James and Dewey. From Hume’s (1969) point of view, the impossibility of an unchanged identity implies a variation in the reflections on ideas and impressions, therefore making stable knowledge improbable.

However, the fatal blow to the logical empiricism or positivism was to be expected from Karl Popper. Popper (1959) proposed falsifiability as the criterion of demarcating the empirical science from non-scientific pursuits. His thesis was a critical response to the criterion that scientific knowledge is what is verifiable, proposed by the Vienna Circle of logical positivists. The distinctive doctrine of logical empiricists was that there exist only two varieties of knowledge: analytical knowledge and scientific knowledge. Analytical knowledge was justified by formal proof, while scientific knowledge is justified by the means of empirical verification.

Popper was an opponent of Hume's view when stating that the scientific theories are typically universal generalizations unverifiable by any finite amount of evidence. There is an asymmetry between verifiability and falsifiability since some hypotheses are open to scientific falsification but unable to be verified empirically. Existential statements may be verifiable but not falsifiable. The epistemological error has often been discovered.

Alarmed by the idea that no longer would truth be pursued and maintained, Thomas Kuhn (1962) objected Popper's falsificationism for its destructive power to any current scientific achievement and along with other authors such as Laudan (1978) introduced the compromise of a communitarian science. Kuhn (1962) and Laudan (1978) have somehow misunderstood Popper's intention, since his aim never was to reveal a surer epistemic warranty or evidential ground for science than for non-science. Nor was it Popper's aim to show that Newtonian mechanic scientific, or Freudian and Adlerian psychoanalysis and Marxist "scientific socialism" unscientific. These were examples that prompted him to philosophical action.

The principle of falsifiability is not designed to demarcate the scientific from non-scientific, but to demarcate the empirical from non-empirical. This is stated clearly in *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (1959) with the claim that the main problem of philosophy is the critical analysis of the appeal to the authority of experience.

The scientific certainty of logical positivists has also been attacked by postmodern humanists, such as Gadamer (1982/2013), Habermas (1983) and Rorty (1979) and has been criticized for rejecting the role of values in the scientific pursuance. Sociologists such as Jerome Bruner (1990, 1991) have clearly maintained that cultural products such as language, play a meaningful role in mediating thoughts and enabling a process that is best described as the narrative construction of reality. Produced through a twofold process of imagination and reasoning, knowledge is delivered both in imagery and conceptual technologies (Croce, 1992).

2.1.1 Practice Turn in Social Sciences

In line with this everlasting dichotomous development of the humanities is the emergence of the practice theory or theory of practice, a worldview that rationalizes the social world as emergent and production of the repetitive human activity (Feldman &

Orlikowski, 2011). Its relevance to the organization studies is established through three foci of practice: the empirical focus which grasps the human relations within an organizational setting, the theoretical focus that scrutinizes the rapport between human action and established organizational structures (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990; de Certeau, 1984; Giddens, 1984; Latour, 1990, 2005; Schatzki, 2001, 2002) and the philosophical focus that entails the entire organizational life as composed of practices (Schatzki, 2001, 2002; Schatzki, Knorr Cetina, & Savigny, 2001; Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011; Orlikowski, 2010).

The first focus, the empirical one is a direct response to the predominant conception of the organizational life as fully constrained and determined by the structures, while ignoring the weight of human constant action and impact on the shaping of organizational reality. It assigns to human agency the primacy of structuring the organizational fabric, rationalizing therefore the leading role of practices in the organizational setting. The second, the theoretical focus takes for granted the human agency in shaping the organizations and moves toward understanding the strategies it follows to perform this task. Authors such as Bourdieu (1977, 1990) and Giddens (1984) have produced their theoretical constructs, *habitus*, and *structuration* respectively, to explain the relationships between structures and human actions. The third focus, the philosophical one is an existentialist view of the social world, presuming it as an outcome of the human activity.

In its efforts to provide with a satisfactory answer to the fundamental question “is human behaviour predetermined or is it voluntary,” philosophy has not been unified. Modern thought has developed three core approaches towards the interpretation of action and social order: the first is the purpose-oriented theory of action, which perceives the condition of the human action as *homo economicus*; the second is the norm-oriented one, which views this condition as *homo sociologicus*; and the third is social practice theory (Bourdieu, 1990), a direct result of the culturalist revolutions in the twentieth century (Reckwitz, 2002), which recognize a reciprocal role of the social order and human agency (Lamsal, 2012) in carving and organizing the social reality. According to this stream of sociological thought, human reasoning could emerge through the practical activity in a certain social context (Vygotsky, 1978), where

activity is understood as a holistic construct situated over goal-oriented actions and respective constituting operations (Hasan & Kazlauskas, 2014).

Table 2-1 Contemporary theorists and practice

Genre	Social theorist	Work	Analysis of practice
Philosophical practices	Wittgenstein	1958	- Emphasize non-propositional knowledge
	Dreyfus & Taylor	1991 2015	- Practices underlie objects and subject
Social theory and practice	Bourdieu	1977,	- Activity is viewed as free
	Giddens	1984	from objectified systems and structures
	Lynch	1979,	
	Schatzki	1984	- Questions whether individual actions are the building blocks of social phenomena
		1993 2001, 2005	
Cultural theorists	Foucault	1976,	- Practices as non-structuralist discursive activity
	Lyotard	1980	
		1984,	- Practices are the immediate context in which social life is constituted
		1988	

Source: Chia & MacKay (2007)

Researchers of the practice turn in social theory, implement qualitative research methods as opposed to quantitative approach in the traditional sociological research which reduces people to judgmental information (Garfinkel, 1967, p. 1). The individual is determined by the extant structuration of society, but structure is also an outcome of the social practice (Giddens, 1984), with a mediating role of habitus, which is a “durably inculcated system of structured, structuring disposition” (Bourdieu, 1990), hence rejecting the methodological individualism and attributing a significant role to human agency. Therefore, structures are sets of rules and resources whose availability

is secured by structures of signification, domination, and legitimation (Giddens, 1984). Society is diversified in autonomous fields (Bourdieu, 1990), which are locations of unceasing struggle and subject of change, where equilibriums are results of social positions and power relationships (Hurtado, 2010), contrary to the system view, which is a rigid framework requiring regulated functions and internal cohesion.

Philosophers and social scientists have always been concerned with questions about the way order in a society is achieved and maintained (Schatzki, 2001, p. 51). In a model of homo economicus reality, social order is achieved at the intersection of the individual purposes, intentions, and interests, while in a homo sociologicus model of reality, social order is a result of a normative consensus (Reckwitz, 2002). Authors such as Bourdieu (1990), Giddens (1984), Garfinkel (1967), Vygotsky (1978) and Leontiev (as cited in Hasan & Kazlauskas, 2014) developed several propositions on what constitutes a practice turn in the perspective on social order constitution process (Reckwitz, 2002). The practice turn is an attempt to transcend the duality of objectivism and subjectivism (Bourdieu, 1990) while explaining the nature of human action through a dialectic relationship between structure and human agency (Giddens, 1984). Hence, individuals were neither determined, nor completely free in making choices and decisions; they were conditioned by the existing structuration of semantic rules, resources, and moral rules (Giddens, 1984). Meanwhile, through a unconscious way of acting (Bourdieu, 1990) of human agency, people can reshape the social practices in a recursive manner (Giddens, 1984). While the normative consensus or the intersection of the individual interests and intentions is often unachievable, the result of this perpetuum mobile is the momentous social practice, which in turn shall affect the way human agency reshapes it.

As it is a phenomenon that does never identically repeat itself, since it takes place at a framework of relations between bodies, agency, and meanings (Reckwitz, 2002) – due to the transforming effects of the interaction between social practice and human agency – macro-level research unfolds insufficient. For a social scientist to be able to observe and understand this process of becoming of social practice, traditional quantitative research methods would fall short, what makes qualitative approaches recommended substitutions for quantitative techniques (Garfinkel, 1967). The scope of the practice research is the micro-level practical actions (Garfinkel, 1967) towards an

expected comprehensive approach enriched with sufficient cases that would support a macro-perspective development.

Ontologically speaking, practice theory might be situated in constructivism or relationalism as it struggles to address the conflict structuralism versus individualism. Epistemologically, practice theory finds its expression in interpretivism as the object of its research is deemed knowable through a process of sense-making and reflection taking place in the human mind. Interpretivism is founded on the subjective approach to the analysis of the social reality and the assumption that human world is cohesive, ordered, and integrated, while functionalism is founded in an objective conception of social reality, sharing the same sociology with interpretivism (Burrell & Morgan, 1979).

The split of organization studies scholars in two camps with respect to their view of organizational reality (Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005), hosts the camp that approaches the organizational reality as an emerging phenomenon, the becoming of which is an ongoing activity known as organizing. In strategy research, the corresponding phenomena is that of strategizing, as opposed to strategy as an objective reality, clearly bounded and defined. An organizational reality that is socially constructed is an infinite quest for connotation and new meaning (Weick K., 1995). “The basic idea of sense-making is that reality is an ongoing accomplishment that emerges from efforts to create order and make retrospective sense of what occurs” (Weick K. E., 1993).

The interpretive paradigm originates from the German idealist tradition established on the Kant’s work as a projection of a philosophy of society that accentuates the spiritual nature of the social world. Thus, an interpretivist approach is concerned in understanding the social reality at its deepest level of subjective experience. According to this ontology, individuals and communities enter relationships in the framework of a social system, and further give rise to concepts or mental representations of the respective behaviours. Over time, these concepts/mental representations gain locus into the mutual functions adopted by the agents in relation to one another. As these functions find wide acceptance and application within the society at large, they gain institutionalization, what assumes the socially embeddedness of the meaning. Therefore, the cognitive models employed to perceive reality is embedded in

this institutional fabric of the social order, what makes the reality socially constructed (Berger & Luckmann, 1967).

In the framework of an organizational reality, the social construction of the organizing phenomena is embedded in the materialized meaning of the circumstances, which is above all “an issue of language, talk, and communication” (Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005). Therefore, the emergence of the situations, organizations and events is described as a talked process (Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005).

The constructor of a social phenomenon, from this point of view is the individual subjectivity and the reality generation takes place within the domain of human consciousness, entirely distinct from the projections of the observer. Hence, epistemologically the socially constructed reality is completely conceived through the investigation of the subjective interpretation and experience of the reality at the individual subjective level. As the social world is grasped as existing only in the individual consciousness and their inter-subjective nexuses, it is investigated as a fabric of assumptions and intersubjectively shared meanings (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Therefore, it is in this fabric of fundamental meanings at the core of social life where the social scientist directs his/her quest for knowledge. At the organizational level, the epistemological plane is composed of a two-floors question: first, how something becomes an event to organizational stakeholders? And second, what is the connotation of that event? (Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005). Having its existence or better say emergence and becoming in the depth of the human consciousness, social theoreticians are only able to detect social reality through qualitative methods of research, such as observation, ethnography (Garfinkel, 1967), narratives (Fisher, 1978, 1984, 1987; Warnick, 1987; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1968; Strauss & Corbin, 1990), or action research (Berger & Luckmann, 1967).

While the classical authors such as Karl Marx and Max Weber paid too much attention to the scientific objective knowledge, the truth is that this category of knowledge comprises only a tiny part of the social knowledge and covers extremely limited constituencies in the human society. Not only scientific knowledge cannot tap the traditions, customs, and institutions, and much of the subjective knowledge, but it is completely incapable of grasping the intra-subjectively constructed knowledge (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). The social world of myths, morals, wisdom, values, and

beliefs falls beyond the scope and coverage of scientific methods. Therefore, the first clash between the traditional scientific view and the postmodern worldview is epistemology. According to the latter, there is a vast world of meaning beyond the rational world: the intersubjectively constructed meaning.

2.1.2 The Narrative Turn

Heretofore, narrative inquiry has once more claimed its scholarly status among the scientific disciplines along with the advent of constructivism, structuralism, and the respective postmodern upheavals of the later. The narrative paradigm has increasingly widened its scope across a multitude of research methodologies and has proven an ability to raise its authentic boundaries of a scholarly field (Riessman & Speedy, 2006). No longer are narratives constrained within the limits of the literary scholarship, as they are approached as a social phenomenon (Atkinson & Delamont, 2006), and as embedded in intersubjectively related contexts, such as organizational surroundings (Czarniawska, 2002).

A re-introduction of the narrative paradigm among the scientific communities has given rise to new debates between scholars of two rationalities: the narrative rationality and the logical rationality (Fisher, 1994). It is accepted that the application of the scientific body of knowledge is fully assured in an unregulated context of social or natural world. Especially the domain of intersubjective relations (Berger & Luckmann, 1967), social world and cultural realm are not very well described by the rationalist conceptual frameworks (Bruner, 2004), whereas reflexive processes play a significant part in sense-giving and explicating human experience (Bruner, 1991). This is especially true if we recognize that what we mostly accept as scientific knowledge is a one-way understanding of the natural world rather than the inner metaphysical or intellectual worlds.

A deeper understanding of this partiality is especially gained when, scrutinizing the narrative approaches, we adopt in organizing our experience and memory of past events. Under the vast influence of the logical and scientific methodologies, we self-critically assign to such processes a non-scientific capacity, because we cannot, following a formal logic of verification or falsification, claim the veracity of such statements (Fisher, 1994; Bruner, 1991, 2004). Accordingly, stories, myths, style, and

human reflections on their experiences with the material elements of reality are mistakenly excluded from the realm of theory.

The part played by the narrative knowledge of the world, as time passes, shapes the ways the human experience of social events is understood, just as scientific knowledge tends to shape our perception of the natural world (Bruner, 1991). Narratology researchers have long been interested in grasping the pathways the narratives are instrumentalized as intellectual vehicles in the search for narrative truth.

Not all knowledge of reality is tapped by the empirical methods of scientific research. Beyond the natural sciences domain, particularly across the human disciplines landscape, the truth of the scientific enterprise tends to be more pluralistic, less unitarian and multifaceted. Conceiving, analysing, and describing this multifaceted reality of the social relations requires, therefore, approaching it from multiple viewpoints. Thus, limiting the range of research methodologies to empirical methods only deprives humanity from understanding of, and benefiting from, significant dimensions of the character of interactions constantly occurring in human society.

Recognizing, henceforth, the merit of empirical methods in discovering and explaining social phenomena, narrative paradigm aims at catching those intersubjective relations and human experiences that remain under-researched or are left outward scholarly endeavour. This realm of existence is hardly grasped by a logic of reasons, or cause-effect laws, or formal logic. Put differently, the place of these events in completing the puzzle of scientific truth not necessarily lies in its connection to a reason, but its value lies in the practical contribution it makes in an individual's or community's living (Fisher, 1978). Accordingly, what makes a human event, action, or interaction researchable is the good reasons behind it.

Another argument for the comparative scientific status of the narrative paradigm is the rhetoricity of the scientific discursive practices. Though there is debate among, i.e., organization scientists about what is theory and what is not (Pfeffer, 1993; Chia, 1995; Bacharach, 1989; Astley & van de Ven, 1983; Santos & Eisenhardt, 2005; Sutton & Staw, 1995; Weick, 1995; Whetten, 1989), the role of the graphics, tables, pictures, metaphors, formula, and style in presenting scientific works is not denied (Fisher, 1994). Hence, the strategic use of these elements serves the rhetorical objectives of

convincing the audiences and gaining acceptance among the respective academic community.

Narrative paradigm is, thus, offered to address the under-researched human experiences and social phenomena that objectivist scientific procedures cannot tackle; that part of reality which lies beyond the rational order of existence. It is the narrative world which is construed “by the human beings as homo narrans” all the sorts of storytelling they deliver in their everyday communications (Fisher, 1994; MacIntyre, 1981). This non-academic discourse, full of human errors and nondeliberative in nature, makes up most of the human communications, which unfortunately is left unscrutinized by the scholarly enterprise.

Narrative studies are commonly referred to as a method of inquiry or mode of discourse (Rowland, 1987, 1989), therefore, assigning to it only a methodological agency and depriving it the status of the paradigm (Spector-Mersel, 2010). Scholarly attempts to establish the paradigmatic mission of the narrative (Fisher, 1978; Fisher, 1984; Spector-Mersel, 2010) are based on a perception of human beings as story-telling animals (MacIntyre, 1981). MacIntyre views “enacted dramatic narrative” as the “basic and essential genre for the characterization of human actions” (1981, p. 215). The rationalistic representation of the man disregards the part values play in human judgement and actions. Put differently, humans “are as much valuing as they are reasoning animals” (Fisher, 1978, p. 376).

Such a perception of the human ontology gives birth to the respective epistemological aspects. First, the notion of logic undergoes a transformative process, ceasing to function as a formal logic and embracing an intra-paradigmatic status of a logic of good reasons, “a systematic set of procedures” that enable an “assessment of elements of reasoning in rhetorical interactions” (Fisher, 1978, p. 377). These reasons are what make a rhetorical communication acceptable by virtue of advice provided thereof (Czarniawska, 2002). The said procedure, introduced by Walter Fisher in his seminal paper, *Towards a Logic of Good Reasons* (1978), follows 5 critical steps.

The first step, coined “the question of the fact” (Fisher, 1978) looks for the manifested and tacit messages inculcated in the body of a message. The second step, or “the question of relevance,” tests the appropriateness of values to the decisions the messages are said to sustain (Fisher, 1978, p. 379). At the third step, the outcomes of

one's adherence to the current value according to the one's self-image and one's relationship with the society (Fisher, 1978). The issue of consistency is checked at the fourth step and finally the role of the values contained in the message as quintessential basis for human behaviour, is verified at the fifth step, or the transcendence (Fisher, 1978).

For the narrative paradigm to work as such and to offer its mechanism of narrative reality investigation, another kind of rationality is to be adopted. Equipped with this epistemic tool, narrative paradigm can stipulate if a story is serving as a cover for hidden motives of the narrating agent (Fisher, 1985). Narrative rationality puts forward its two criteria for determining the proper messages contained in a human communication, describing human experience, social phenomena, or intersubjective relations (Warnick, 1987). These two criteria, narrative probability, and narrative fidelity (Fisher 1978, 1984, 1985), ensures the internal coherence and the external reliability of a text or communicative product.

Narrative probability is tested by asking two questions: (1) does the story hang together? and (2) is the story free of contradictions? (Fisher, 1985; Warnick, 1987). A confirmative answer these questions is what grants the researcher's assurance to the internal coherence of a statement, a plot, or a story. Narrative fidelity determines the degree of a story's reliability by testing how sound are the reasons that justify a story or a plot, and the degree these reasons match and conform the accepted reasons in a particular epistemic or value community (Fisher, 1985, 1994; Warnick, 1987).

Researchers test coherence at three levels. First, stories and texts are tested for argumentative coherence (Fisher, 1994). In doing so, a narrative inquirer looks for a claim-data-warrant argumentative relationship in accordance with Toulmin's (1956) model of argumentative cohesion. Second, stories and communications are tested for material coherence (Fisher, 1994), which implies testing the truth value of a narrative against alternative narrations available. Third, human communications are tested for characterological coherence (Fisher, 1994). This measure taps the ethical views of a narrator.

On the other hand, fidelity is looked for in the factual claims of a statement or a story. It is at this level of testing that a narrative inquirer explores the story for elements that make it reliable to its audiences, when they compare it against their experiences

(Fisher, 1994, 1995). Another procedure that grants the narrative fidelity of a statement or a story is its suggested values' compliance with the audience's established or adopted value system (Fisher, 1994, 1995). Consequently, a story or a statement is deemed to enjoy narrative fidelity if the facts contained in it and the values it proposes fit within the experience and value system.

2.1.3 Strategy-as-practice Perspective

The application of the practice turns in organizational studies and, especially, in strategy research has given rise to a large body of knowledge coined as strategy-as-practice (Whittington, 1996; 2006). Drawing upon the assumptions of the practice-turn in the social theory during the second half of the twentieth century, Richard Whittington (1996) introduced the idea of enhancing this practice turn into the field of strategic management. Over five years, the strategic management researchers manifested an encouraging response to this call, conducting numerous research projects and consolidating the theoretical foundations of the approach (Jarzabkowski, 2004; 2005; Johnson, et al, 2005; Vaara & Whittington, 2012; Jarzabkowski & Spee, 2009; Jarzabkowski, Balogun, & Seidl, 2007; Chia & Mackay, 2007).

Thanks to its methodological pluralism, researchers have applied the strategy-as-practice approach to investigate the strategizing activity of strategy practitioners in different contexts such as, universities (Jarzabkowski, 2003), arts organizations (Daigle & Rouleau, 2010), orchestra (Maitlis & Lawrence, 2003), individual artists (Poroy, Ergun, & Yener, 2014), official strategy of a city (Pälli, Vaara, & Sorsa, 2009) and urban strategy (Kornberger & Clegg, 2011). Other scholars have studied the politics as an interpretive procedure rather than pre-existing asset organizations have (Mueller et al, 2013), the ways the compromise is achieved between managerial and cultural values (Idris, 2007; Daigle & Rouleau, 2010), and the conflict between various categories of justifications (Denis, Langley, & Rouleau, 2009).

An obvious advantage of the strategy-as-practice discipline is its ability to research organizational phenomena beyond the traditional scope of for-profit entities, therefore enhancing the research foci toward non-for-profit organizations, artistic groups, and political parties (Whittington, 1996). For example, Pälli and Vaara (2009), have drawn upon Fairclough (1992, as cited in Pälli, Vaara, & Sorsa, 2009) in referring

to the city's strategizing as a genre not only as a text, but as a face-to-face relationship as well, while Kornberger and Clegg (2011) find strategy also as a performance that is done. However, limited research has been conducted in the strategizing practices of the local government units (Vaara & Mantere, 2008; Jarzabkowski & Fenton, 2006; Kornberger & Clegg, 2011), hospitals, universities, and non-governmental organizations (Jarzabkowski, 2006).

From the perspective of strategy-as-practice, strategy is not seen as a product of scientific planning; it is an outcome of a crafting process (Whittington & Cailluet, 2008), practical coping (Chia & Holt, 2006) or detached coping (Tsoukas, 2009). Daigle & Rouleau (2010) have investigated the role of the strategic planning as tool for compromise between managerial and cultural goals in cultural associations, whereas Poroy *et al* (2014) have found that networking is employed by an artist as an adaption strategy to survive in a certain market context. Finally, Clegg *et al* (2004) have directed an onslaught on what they call "the fallacies of strategic planning" and "Cartesian Split between mind (*res cogitans*) and matter (*res extensa*)" (p. 21). The gaps they have identified split the organization into two parts, one of them consisting in managerial fantasy, planning, goals, means, and order and the other comprised of actual organizational capabilities, unpredictable future, difficulties of implementation-as-planned, and the disobedience of actual disorder (Clegg, Carter, & Kornberger, 2004).

The legacy of traditional approaches to strategy have produced a flourishing knowledge base and dynamic tools to assist the decision makers in making effective decisions about the long-term perspective of the corporations. Ten schools of strategic thought (Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, & Lampel, 1998) have reliably established the milestones of this development with a plenty of instruments and explanations of how organizations can predict and influence their futures. Most of these schools either advanced a top-down perspective in planning or argued the distinction between planning and application, knowledge, and action (Mintzberg *et al*, 1998). Those were approaches to strategy drawing upon objectivism and positivism as their epistemological ground. Organization was perceived as mechanistic (Mintzberg *et al*, 1998), whereas planning could predict the course of organization development.

Influenced by the practice turn in the social sciences and especially relying on the theory of Giddens' theory of structuration (1984), Richard Whittington (1996)

proposed the concept of strategy-as-practice. The core idea behind his proposal was that strategy is not something organizations have, but something they do (Whittington, 1996), and the researchers focus become the micro-activities that take place during strategy making (Jarzabkowski, 2004).

From a traditional perspective on strategy, companies might have diversification strategies, strategic planning processes, and change management processes completely formalized as best-ways to lead their strategic decision-making process (Mintzberg et al, 1998). S-as-p sees strategy, not as something companies have, as something companies do (Whittington, 1996). Scholars of this approach, alternatively to strategy, utilize the concept of strategizing, which semantically is an active noun, comprised of three dimensions: praxis, practices, and practitioner (Johnson et al, 2007). In this view, the approach to strategy is grasped as an exercising of practitioner's human agency drawing on extant practices while fine-tuning and appropriating them to localized needs of a specific organization. Jarzabkowski (2005) provides with the following definition of strategy from a s-as-p perspective: "Strategy is conceptualized as socially accomplished activity, constructed through the actions, interactions and negotiations (i.e., praxis) of multiple actors (i.e., practitioners) and the situated practices upon which they draw."

S-as-p researchers, henceforth, replace the concept of strategy with the active concept of strategizing, comprised of a trinity of (1) practitioner, (2) praxis and (3) practice.

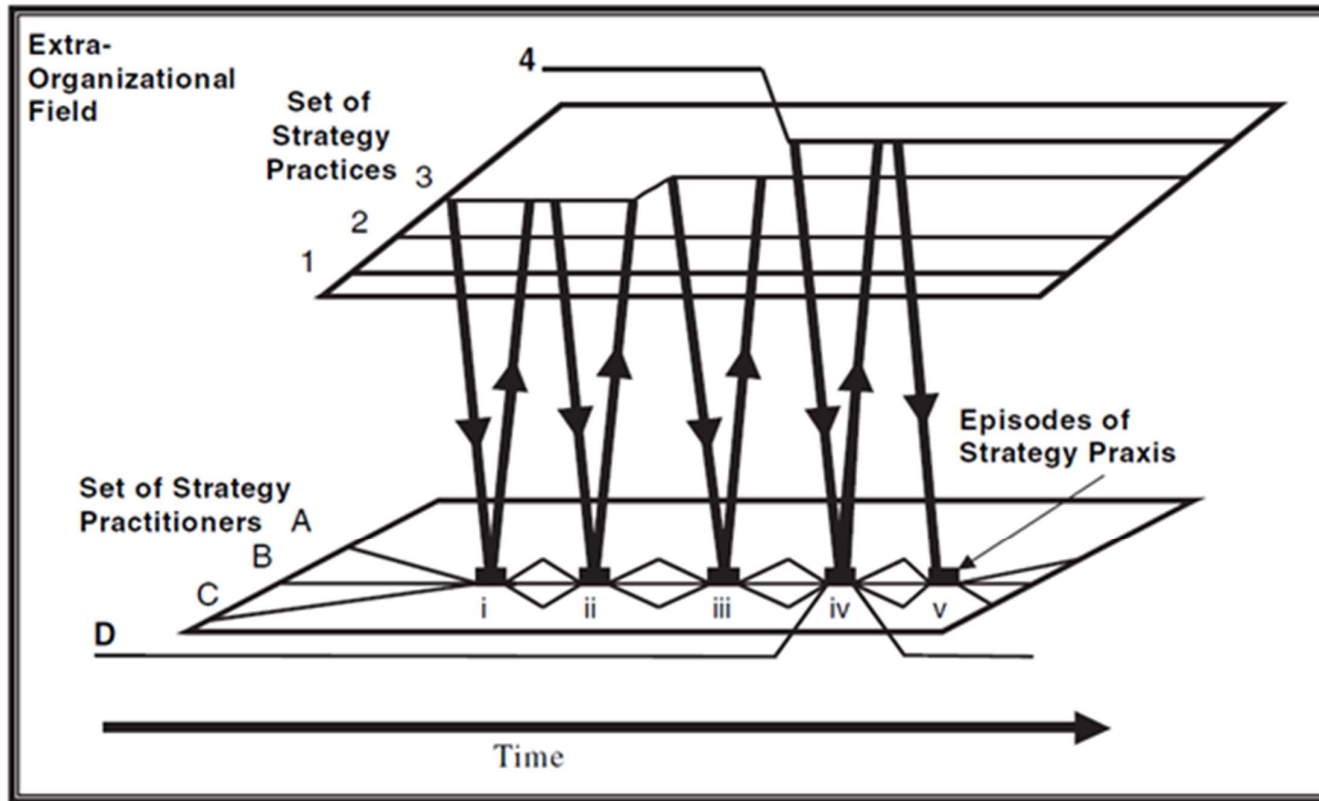
There is a risk of interchangeably using practice and praxis. Practice connotation is not mere practical activity or task, since it refers to a legacy of approaches toward accomplishing a job or event, linking the research in strategy-as-practice with the theoretical and empirical traditions in different disciplines (Vaara & Whittington, 2012). Practices are the core underlying the events (Vaara & Whittington, 2012) that are difficultly noticed in the everyday routine or urgent activity (Bourdieu, 1990). The practices stock involves various tools, books of policies and procedures, strategic analytical tools such as SWOT and Porter's Five Forces, business, and strategic planning (Vaara & Whittington, 2012) the social, symbolic material tools through which the work of strategizing is conducted (Jarzabowski & Spee, 2009), the shared behaviour routines (Reckwitz, 2002).

As a definition, practices are routinized types of behaviour which consist of several elements, interconnected to one another: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, 'things and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge (Reckwitz, 2002).

Meanwhile, praxis marks the activity involved in the process of strategy making (Vaara & Whittington, 2012), "the flow of activity in which the strategy is accomplished" (Jarzabkowski, 2005, p. 27). It is the real work done by the strategy practitioner, "an empathic term to describe the whole human action (in contrast to theory as mere thinking)" (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 249).

Practitioners are the players who produce praxis by implementing practices (Jarzabowski, Balogun, & Seidl, 2007), "critical connections between the intra-organizational praxis and extra-organizational practices" (Whittington, 2006, p. 620).

Figure 2-1 A Theoretical Framework showing the relationships between Practice, Praxis and Practitioners



Source: Whittington (2006)

When, for example, strategy practitioners participate in a praxis episode (i) such as a proposal presentation, they draw upon the set of strategy practices, a PowerPoint presentation (3) in this case. While the intra-organizational practitioners make use of this technique during their proposal presentations, at the second episode (ii) they modify the practice, marked by the kink in the plane of upper parallelogram. Similarly, the practice set at the fourth praxis episode (iv), might be enriched by an extra-organizational strategy practitioner (D), who might be a consultant suggesting the practice number (4).

2.1.4

Research Gaps in Literature

Though an emerging domain of strategy research, strategy-as-practice has inspired a myriad of research enterprises and a rich body of knowledge owing to its theoretical and methodological generosity. However, limited research has been done using the narrative paradigm tools and lenses (Rouleau, 2015) to identify, describe and explain the strategy-making practices in both corporate and public sector. Particularly, in the public sector is the strategy research from a narrative perspective has not been sufficiently scrutinized. Scholars have been more interested in discursive practices (Pälli et al., 2009), performative practices (Kornberger & Clegg, 2011), and materiality (Lê & Spee, 2015) in strategy-making.

Multiple calls from the strategy scholars (Barry & Elmes, 1997; Brown & Thompson, 2013; Clandinin, 2006; de La Ville & Mounoud, 2015; Fenton & Langley, 2011; Rouleau, 2015; Vaara & Reff Pedersen, 2013) to employ the narrative paradigm (Spector-Mersel, 2010) in decoding the job of the strategy-makers make a study of narrative practices of strategy a necessity.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

Strategy-as-practice (S-a-p) is an effective perspective to studying the strategy-making phenomena across multiple organizational contexts. An obvious advantage of the strategy-as-practice discipline is its ability to research organizational phenomena beyond the traditional scope of for-profit entities, therefore enhancing the research foci toward non-for-profit organizations, artistic groups, and political parties. Nevertheless, there is not sufficient research effort in strategy-as-practice scrutinizing the local government units as study settings, while the non-for-profit and artistic groups have attracted several scholars' interest. Public administration institutions have not been extensively researched by the s-as-p community of scholars. Limited research has been conducted in the strategizing practices of the local government units by Vaara & Mantere, Jarzabkowski & Fenton, Kornberger & Clegg, and hospital, universities, and non-governmental organizations by Jarzabkowski. The current research intends to study, from a s-as-p perspective, the applicability of the practice turn in social sciences in the context of a local government unit, i.e., the Municipality of Tirana.

Our research object is the strategy-making phenomenon in the framework of designing and modifying Albania's capital Master Plan, Tirana 2030 Urban Development Plan. A purely qualitative research paradigm and methods will be employed to investigate the object of the study. Narrative inquiry is selected to study strategy-making practices emerging in the context of TR030 design process, the use of narrative devices to advance certain stakeholders' interests at the expense of the others', and the use of storytelling to urge people make sense of the final strategy text and strategic priorities linking them with the future of their city. Narrative inquiry is a rewarding method for the collection of individual thoughts, feelings and experiences which are sensitive to the issues that may not be revealed by more traditional methods. The study is guided by these questions: How strategy emerges because of contending

interests of an urban plan? What power devices are employed to earn justification, gather legitimacy for certain stakes at the expense of the others? How is storytelling used to define and inform the direction of the strategizing practice?

3.2 Research Scope

3.2.1 Research Purpose

This inquiry intended to scrutinize, from a strategy-as-practice perspective, the applicability of the practice turns in social sciences in the context of a local government unit, i.e., the Municipality of Tirana. Our research object was the strategy-making practice in the framework of designing and modifying Albania's capital Master Plan, Tirana 2030 Urban Development Plan (TR030).

This research project intends to achieve the following objectives:

- Investigate the ways in which strategy is practiced in the process of designing TR030;
- Explore the narrative tools employed by the strategy practitioners to gain public approval, marshal political will, and legitimize the strategic choices;
- Analyse the narrativity of the urban strategizing activity as a social practice that advances certain stakes and subdues other voices;
- Interrogate the power relations between the lines of the narrative plots used in the strategizing activity and the strategy text itself.

Along these broad research lines, the research problem in QGT studies is unknown to the investigator (McCallin, 2003; Glaser, 1978). If known, it is a tool in the hands of the intelligent inquirer to refine the scope of the study by pushing the demarcation line towards captivating new research questions (Wolfswinkel, Furtmueller & Wilderom, 2013; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

The qualitative grounded theorist does not imagine his/her research questions with prior clarity, unless he/she borrows from existing research (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) but they emerge as the gaps between existing theory and constructed data become

manifest (Wolfswinkel, Furtmueller & Wilderom, 2013; Morse, et al, 2020). Consequently, they may be fine-tuned, modified and adapted in accordance with theoretical needs of the investigator (Morse, et al., 2020), since their role in GT is to provide him/her flexibility and freedom for exploration (Glaser, 1978; Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Backmann & Kyngas, 1999).

The following research questions are a direct output of the deliberating process about the above-listed research objectives and are linked to data generated from the current research.

3.2.2 Research Questions

In line with the above research objectives, the project struggled to answer the following questions:

- How strategy emerges in the context of mutually exclusive interests of contending stakeholders of an urban plan?
- What are the power devices concealed between the lines of a narrative practice that justify, and gather legitimacy for, the interests of certain stakeholders' stake at the expense of other stakeholders' stakes?
- Which narrative practices are employed to define and inform the course of strategizing practice and its outcomes?
- How is storytelling adopted in imposing certain power relations between contending stakeholders' interests in the strategy-making process and strategy text itself?

Qualitative research, especially the research ventures employing QGT as an inquiry method, differs from quantitative perspective in the unplanned nature of the research design, in that it is almost impossible for a qualitative inquirer to predict details of each and every step of the process (Heath & Cowley, 2003). The initial form of the research questions was that of a tool capable of noticing the phenomena of interest to the researcher (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) and only later, as the phenomena began to emerge to the surface, was the investigator inspired to choose between the research questions of concern to him (Heath & Cowley, 2003). This is the reason the questions

in the beginning were broader and general, while they get sharpened as the data and meaning saturation unearths narrower notions and constructs (McCallin, 2003).

3.2.3 Research Paradigm

QGT and narrative paradigm share the same origin: the American pragmatism and the symbolic interactionist sociology. We can trace the roots of pragmatist philosophy back to the ancient Greek philosophers' debate on the concepts of logos and mythos (Fisher, 1984) or in the physicalist – psychologist struggle down to the post-modern times (Bourdieu, 1989). The late 19th and early 20th century American pragmatist philosophers Charles Pierce, William James, George Mead, and John Dewey turned their focus toward the real-life practices of the human socialites' and deemed the social reality as something in the making. Inter-subjective construction of experiences and sensemaking processes assumed a dominant position in their sociology of symbolic interactionism (Dewey, 1906, 1939; James, 1907).

Pragmatists looked at knowledge as temporary and paid attention to its social impact rather than to its veracity. According to James “[i]deas ... become true just in so far as they help us to get into satisfactory relation with other parts of our experience.” (1907, p. 34). A reality might not be true, but if it plays a role in shaping the shared experiences and meanings in a social setting, it exists and deserves scholars' interest.

Consequently, pragmatic epistemology regards as knowledge the experiential phenomena rather than a measurable reflection of an objective corporeality. As such, researcher can never reach a point of ultimate knowledge or conclusive theory as the reality is constantly in the making in the inter-subjective world of human relations (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Fisher, 1984; Clandinin, 2006). Our attachments to the social worlds we belong are mediated, therefore, by our sensemaking and interpretation of the same.

The present research's epistemology is, accordingly, interpretivist with some radical humanist aspects overlapping in the data analysis process and criticizing, as well as a single structuralist overlapping in structural analysis that helped the researcher identify sources of domination and the potential points of leverage. Some authors

(Putnam & Pacanowsky, 1983; Gioia & Pitre, 1990) identify interpretivism and radical humanism as part of a single paradigm called interpretism.

Table 3-1 Paradigmatic Delineation of Steps Toward Theory Building

Interpretivist Paradigm	Radical Humanist Paradigm	Radical Structuralist Paradigm	Functionalist Paradigm
Opening Work	Opening Work	Opening Work	Opening Work
<i>Selecting a Topic</i>	<i>Selecting a Topic</i>	<i>Selecting a Topic</i>	<i>Selecting a Topic</i>
What are the issues?	What are the issues?	What are the issues?	What are the issues?
What are the research questions?	What are the research questions?	What are the research questions?	What are the research questions?
<i>Designing Research</i>	<i>Designing Research:</i>	<i>Articulating Theory:</i>	<i>Reviewing Literature:</i>
What are data?	What are data?	How is the topic a "potential" special case of a grand theory?	What do we know?
Where to find data?	Where to find data?		Finding a Gap
How to record data?	How to record data?		What is missing
			Putting a Framework together:
			What are the relevant theories and variables

			Formulating hypotheses Designing Research What are data? Where to find data? How to measure data?
Data Collection	Data Collection	Data Collection	Data Collection
<i>Identifying Specific Cases</i>	<i>Identifying Specific Existing Research:</i>	<i>Probing historical evidence:</i>	Probing representative samples of subjects: According to the
<i>Questioning Informants</i>	<i>Questioning informants</i> According to what is relevant to them: contextual information pertaining to deep structure.	according to a grand theory	hypotheses formulated.
Analysis	Analysis	Analysis	Analysis
<i>Coding</i> Provide a description at the first and sometimes at second level of abstraction	<i>Coding:</i> Provide information at the first level of abstraction	<i>Arguing:</i> Use specific instances to further validate the theory.	Testing hypotheses: Evaluate the significance of the data according to initial problems and hypotheses.

Formulating

conjectures

Identify the relations between concepts at first level or across levels of abstraction.

Formulating a

Description

Structural

Evaluating conjectures

Deep Analysis

Analysis

Validate with informants through new data collection.

Reflect on what makes people construct their world the way they do.

Identify the sources of domination and the potential points of leverage.

Formulating theory

Criticizing

Identify the emerging concepts and relationships.

Unveil how deep forces influence the first level of abstraction. Identify whose interests are served.

Reviewing literature

Identify what was already known.

Theory Building

Theory Building

Theory Building

Theory Building

Writing up a substantive Theory

Writing up dialectical analysis:

Writing up rhetorical analysis:

Writing up results:

Show how it all fits together	Show how the level of consciousness should change.	Showing how the praxis should change.	Show how the theory is refined, supported, or disconfirmed. Show what it tells the scientific community and the practitioners.
-------------------------------	--	---------------------------------------	--

Source: Gioia & Pitre (1990)

According to Fisher (1987), human beings are storytelling animals that make sense of their world and lives through narrative devices of perception. Stories are conceived as chronological alignment of sequential elements (Brown, 1990), characterized by a coherence that is known as “plot” (Czarniawska, 2013). “In narrative, the perceived coherence of the sequence (temporal order) of events rather than the truth or falsity of story elements determines the plot and thus the power of the narrative story” (Czarniawska, 2013).

But this disinterest in the truthiness of a story makes narrative approach to organization studies and strategy-as-practice research vulnerable to criticism by the logo-scientific epistemology. Narrative compensates for this lack of passion for the truth with its skill to render the unexpected intelligible. Because it is narrative’s mission to search for intentionality that “makes comprehensible a deviation from the cultural canonical patterns” (Bruner, 1990). Narrative analysis deals with the ways pursued by the protagonists to interpret things as such (Brunner, 1990).

A purely qualitative research paradigm and methods have been employed to investigate the object of the study. Narrative inquiry is selected to study strategy-making practices emerging in the context of TR030 design process, the use of linguistic devices to advance certain stakeholders’ interests at the expense of the others’, and the use of storytelling to urge people make sense of the final strategy text and strategic priorities linking them with the future of their city. Narrative inquiry is a rewarding method for the collection of individual thoughts, feelings and experience which are

sensitive to the issues that may not be revealed by more traditional methods (Czarniawska, 2004).

Narrative inquiry is grounded in interpretative hermeneutics and phenomenology and is based on the belief that we can understand and assign meaning to our lives, as human beings, through our stories (Barry & Elmes, 1997). This type of qualitative research realizes this by collecting stories that are written, spoken, or visualized focusing upon the meaning that strategizing practitioners attribute to their experience.

3.3 Research Strategy

3.3.1 Design: Qualitative Grounded Theory

The challenging decision for employing QGT as a research methodology for the current research is underpinned by the very merits of this methodology to facilitate the interpretation of sophisticated social phenomena (Jones & Alony, 2011; Charmaz 2003), its capacity to investigate socially constructed knowledge (Charmaz 2003; Goulding, 1998; Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Strauss, 1967) as well as its ability to identify and demarcate building blocks of experiences based on first-hand concepts by means of an abductive method (Jones & Alony, 2011; Hoare, Mills & Francis, 2012). GT methodology was itself a discovered one (Glaser, 2004; Bryant, 2017a) thanks to the research efforts paid by social scientists exploring human experiences.

Social theories need to be grounded in data (Denscombe, 1998; McCallin, 2003; Hoare, Mills & Francis 2012) and QGT offers the systematic procedures that guarantee the link between the data (Thistoll, Hooper, & Pauleen, 2015; Oreilly, Paper & Marx, 2012; Locke, 2002; Morse, 2009) collected from participant observation, in-depth interviews, semi-structured interviews, focus-groups, case-studies etc, and theoretical scaffolds is not broken. This premise allows for strengthening the bonds between the QGT as a method used as theorizing method and narrative paradigm as a study of human experience, as defined by Dewey (1906).

To the extent the choice of method proves itself a positive motivator to the researcher's commitment, the autonomous preference of the researcher is welcomed

(Walsham, 2006; Jones & Alony, 2011). QGT is assessed fit to this research project by virtue of its capacity to inquire and scrutinize experiences and events without explicit hypotheses (Suddaby, 2006). To the extent the present research represents an effort to studying human experiences and the corresponding recalling of those experiences by partakers in the public consultation meetings in the framework of TR030, QGT is an effective research method. The current researcher might be armed with an assortment of pre-existing knowledge or a batch of abstract expectations, but he is assumed to establish a new theoretical framework, not analyse, and test an existing theory.

Especially, for a novice researcher as is the case, QGT might sound unfamiliar and difficult to apply, while it also hosts a set of eases that allow the researcher to move back and forth from data collection to analysis and vice-versa until the theoretical saturation has been achieved. The present researcher took over the risk of a probable failure to unearth any meaningful theory or relationship from the data collection and analysis (Jones & Alony, 2011; Glaser, 1978).

A foundational attribute of QGT is found in the assumption that theory emerges from data and not vice versa when data are collected according to an extant theory (Hoare, Mills & Francis, 2012). First, the nature of the analysis of these data is, therefore, pragmatic (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; McCallin, 2003) allowing for strengthening the bond between the QGT as a method used in the current research with Narrative paradigm/inquiry as a study of human experience, as defined by Dewey (1906). Henceforth, QGT is also permissive to the researchers' courage to experiment and explore new possibilities equipping them with general principles and procedures suitable for a noble intellectual enterprise (Strauss & Corbin, 1994; McCallin, 2003).

Second, hereof, the mission of naturalistic inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) is to enable the social scientist to explore brand new notions and propositions (Denscombe, 1998; McCallin, 2003). A theory about the narrative practice of the strategy-makers in the case of TR030 did not pre-exist and it was the purpose of the researcher to dig into the human experience through the narrations of the participants in the process to produce a theoretical proposal about the said practice.

Third, in QGT, it is the data that shows the way forward (McCallin, 2003; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1998), though being open-minded does not imply the scholar

being blank-minded (Creswell, 1994). Consequently, the investigation of the phenomena evolved around the knowledge constructed through the interviewer-interviewee interplay and was refined onwards as the literature review, data collection and data analysis procedures set off interchangeably.

Another foundational attribute of QGT is its agility to sampling method. Theoretical sampling is a method that allows the researcher to judge the saturation based on the needs for additional data, not on the people interviewed (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; McCallin, 2003; Glaser, 1978). The present analyst's decision on whether to proceed further with data collection or to stop was dependent on the trajectory of the process of emergence of theoretical concepts and scaffolds (Glaser, 1978; McCallin, 2003).

3.3.2 Scope: Exploratory

Strategizing practices of public administrations are understudied. The use of narrative strategies, devices, and plots to marshal support and advance certain stakeholders' interests at the expense of public interest is more understudied. Only a couple of study ventures scrutinizing the strategizing practices of local government institutions and city administrations a performative practice (Kornberger & Clegg, 2011) and as a discursive practice (Palli, Vaara, & Sorsa, 2009). Consequently, the present study is exploratory by nature as pre-existing knowledge is not sufficient to begin data collection with a conceptual framework.

3.3.3 Approach: Narrative Interviewing

Narrative interviewing was adopted in the present research venture thanks to its powerful agency in unearthing the patterns of human experience. The targeted reality is not a corporeal entity or identity that exists out there independently from the interviewer and the interviewee. It is co-constructed during an interplay among and between the both, social structures, and the reflexive sense-making efforts of the storyteller about his or her past and its significance to his/her life-story. Kvale's (1996) metaphors of the miner and the traveller, whose objectives differ and force different approaches to their missions, the earlier being clear about the object of his search and

the second constantly reframing his object of investigation as it progressively changes its shape and, in turn, reshapes the perception of the master.

It is a rewarding technique for novice researchers and exploratory study ventures that are afflicted by a limited prior understanding or fore-knowledge on the topic of interest. As participants interpreted their own experiences with the strategy-making practices of TR030, the inquirer was able to understand the concurrence of the structures and forces and their weight in shaping the final shape of a political field's strategy (Kornberger & Clegg, 2011). Narrative interviews are ascribed the merit of providing "access to plurivocal" social worlds (Søderberg, 2006).

The present research's interview consisted of two stages, with a third stage selectively added in cases more data were deemed necessary for the theory to emerge in a manifest way (Kvale, 1996; Clandinin, 2006). The first stage was the storytelling one, guided by a wide-scoped narrative questions that invited the participant to share his/her experience with the strategizing practices in the framework of public hearing sessions organized and hosted by the MoT and the strategy-making team. The interviewees were allocated unlimited time and freedom to reflectively construct their individual stories with TR030 consultation sessions. Interviewer's mission at this stage was limited to keeping the participant on track by asking questions that encouraged the storyteller to provide more details of the storied experience and complete the chronological flow of the said story.

The second stage of the interview, the narrative follow-up, was usually dedicated to digging into more details about the narrative and rhetorical devices employed by the strategy-making practitioners to marshal support around a set of projects and priorities. Depending on the direction the interview took during the first stage, aspects of power-knowledge relations as well as competing stakeholders power differentials were also addressed during this second stage of the interviewing. Whenever coding of the data discovered holes or disruptions in the storyline, the interviewees were contacted again, by phone, for example, to agree on the arrangement of the events in the story or set the dates right.

Interviews lasted between 90 to 120 minutes. Of the 14 interviews, 3 of them were conducted online via Zoom or Skype, while the rest were performed in situ, in the

interviewer's office or in coffee-bars of interviewee's convenience. All the interviews were audio-recorded by participants' consent. The role of the researcher during the interview was limited to asking questions, assuring the participant's narration was focused on the topic under study, sometimes bringing the narrator back to the point (Czarniawska, 1998) and taking notes and observing interviewee's body language and emotions (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Riessman, 1993). Nevertheless, the status of the inquirer as a co-author of the stories by virtue of interpretation and asking questions is widely accepted in the narrative paradigm.

3.4 Participant Selection

Sample size and participant selection in QGT research are processes significantly informed by the evolution of the nature of reasoning forced by the very features of this method. This reasoning system shifts from inductive at the beginning of research (Sim et al, 2018; Charmaz 2009), to abductive during the collection and analysis of data that provide the first concepts and their probable causes (Sim et al, 2018; Charmaz, 2009; Blaikie, 2018), to retroductive during a stage of broadly viewing the unearthed concepts so that the researcher might combine both inductive and deductive logic (Sim et al, 2018; Charmaz, 2009; Blaikie, 2018; Conlon et al, 2020).

As the researcher sets for the scientific journey, unbiased and uninfluenced by one's pre-existing knowledge of the theoretical constructs that might emerge, inductive reasoning is rewarding in completing the puzzle of characteristics of general phenomena, in response to WHAT research questions (Blaikie, 2018). Once lay concepts about how people make sense of their past experiences have come forth, the challenge to the novice researcher is combining the operation of typifying the categories with abstracting efforts in a back-and-forth procedure from data collection to analysis and vice versa. It is by adopting the abductive reasoning that this process is accomplished (Blaikie, 2018). The need for additional data and the very character of the necessary information conditioned the current observer's decision to whom to invite for an interview.

At a later stage of the research project, the researcher faces the challenge of testing the existence of the revealed mechanism of theoretical relations in the study

setting: human experience and sensemaking (Conlon et al, 2020, Sim et al, 2018, Blaikie, 2018). In doing so, the inquirer adopted a deductive logic and repeatedly detected the need for additional data to the project. The narrower the need for data, the more clearly depicted the profile of the further potential candidates for participation.

It was an objective of the current study to interview as many as 30 participants in the strategy-making process, such as strategic team members and experts, as well as more than 15 conscious citizens, journalists, activists, and critics. As with everything in GT, in addition to the limited experience of the novice researcher, determining the sample size in advance is a troublesome venture (Sim et al, 2018; Hennink, Kaiser, & Marconi, 2019). Beyond debates about the critical threshold of rigorous sampling in qualitative research, saturation is accepted as the best measure of adequate sample size (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006; Sim et al, 2018; Hennink, Kaiser, & Marconi, 2016, Bryman, 2016).

Creswell (1998), for instance, prefers a sample size of twenty-thirty interviews for QGT research, while Kuzel (1992) maintains that a six to eight data sources for a homogenous sample and up to twenty for a heterogenous audience have proven rewarding to their own research (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). These findings are objected by Blaikie (2018) and Braun & Clarke (2019) on the basis that they represent inappropriate imports from the principles of quantitative research methodology. Nevertheless, the current study paid due attention to an acceptable number of participants in terms of a minimum threshold while using the concept saturation and the fit of the obtained data (O'Reilly & Parker, 2013) as the guiding principle to the sampling method.

3.4.1 The Sample of Participants

A theoretical sampling procedure was applied to the current research project. The purpose of the researcher was to interview members of the strategizing team of TR030, participants in the public hearing sessions, activists from the civil society, journalists, and citizens sensitive to the topic of urban development and planning in Tirana. Accordingly, planning, transport, hydrology, environment, culture, and economy experts involved in the strategy-making process were interviewed, along with

several Municipality Assembly members, journalists, and activists. The core criteria for interviewing were the interviewees participation in at least one session of public consultation in the framework of public hearings process organized and led by the MoT and the private consortium of urban planning companies.

Following an iterative approach, 14 members of the strategizing team, members of the Municipal Assembly, and active citizens/experts were interviewed as well as eight video materials of the final presentation of the TR030 strategic urban plan were transcribed to supply the data with an official perspective. It was a non-fruitful effort to obtain appropriate data from ordinary citizens due to the controlled nature of public hearing sessions organized by the MoT and the biased view of the invitees who came from constituencies loyal to city's political management body.

Opting for narrow or sparse samples is not only a matter of inquirer's prospecting power, allocated time and costs, but also a methodological question. Small samples are accepted and recommended for intensive observer-participant communications that yield rich information power (Malterud, Siersma, & Guassora, 2016), the object of the study is the in-depth analysis of narratives (Malterud, Siersma, & Guassora, 2016; Suri, 2011), and interviewees provide with other's views in addition their own views and reflections on the experience under scrutiny (Morse, et al, 2000; Sim et al, 2018). Dreher (1994 as cited on Crouch & McKenzie, 2006) argues that small samples that ensure multiple contacts between the researcher and the interviewees boost the validity and the reliability of the study. On this account, the present research's sample size is methodologically justified and robust, and capable of informing a rigorous process of data collection, analysis, and reasoning thereof.

The participant selection rational was comprised of three criteria as follows:

- The interviewee was a participant at least one public consultation session organized by MoT in the framework of drawing publics' opinions on TR030.
- The interviewee was a member of the strategizing team, a hired expert, a member of the City Assembly, an active citizen, a journalist writing on the topic of TR030.

- The participant was not an official of the MoT, central government agencies or state-owned corporations depending on central government or the MoT for funds or administration.

Following this rationale, seven members of the strategizing team and hired experts, four members of Municipal Assembly, and three journalists and activists were interviewed, while eight transcribed presentations were added to the analysis to allow for enriching the participants reflexivity on their experience with TR030 public consultations. The participants were selected so that they can supply the study with a pluralistic set of reflections on the above-mentions experience. Only four members of Municipal Assembly could be reached through the duration of this research. The interviewed journalists and activists were selected based on their active voicing of the critique towards TR030 and the consultation process.

3.4.2 Informed consent

The participants were invited to voluntarily contribute to the research, no rewards or promises of any kind offered to them by the researcher or related parties. They were updated on the present study venture, informing them about the exact use of the data they provided and the procedures that granted their confidentiality and anonymity. A detailed list of rights and responsibilities was included in the Consent Form as attached in Appendix 4. The participants have been provided the opportunity to ask questions and request information about the research project. They were also aware that the nature of the current research was not investigative of facts of the experiences of their own in the framework of strategizing process of TR030. On the other hand, informing the participants and granting them confidentiality and anonymity is also an effective tool to enhancing narrative probability and narrative fidelity (Fisher, 1985; 1994; Warnick, 1987) of the study.

3.5 Data Production

3.5.1 Defining Data

The first challenge a grounded theorist faces is lacking a definition of what is exactly considered data. According to Glaser (1978, 2013) everything that is encountered by the researcher in his pursuit of topic related information is considered data and should be accepted as such (Müller & Olbrich, 2012; Thistoll, Hooper, & Paule, 2015). Backman & Kyngas (1999) went further maintaining that even investigator's pre-existing experience was to be accepted.

The original view of data that Glaser & Strauss (1967) adopted was objectivist, thinking of data as factual and distinctive from the subjectivity and inter-subjectivity of a researcher-participant interplay (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2018). The epistemological implication of such a worldview is that concepts and intellectual properties of data are intrinsic to the very nature of facts (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Opposing to that view, the constructivist grounded theorists approach data as realities assembled during the interaction between the investigator and the interviewee (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2018; Charmaz, 2014; Jones & Alony, 2011).

Since from a constructivist point of view, social reality is not an objective corporeality, knowledge is emergent and interpreted by both the interviewee and interviewer (Jones & Alony, 2011), meaning is negotiated among them and only through the communicative interplay is the same meaning made known or transferred to the researcher (Charmaz, 2017; Charmaz, 2014, Charmaz, 2016). The present research venture, approaches data as an inter-subjective output of the observer-participant interplay, which are interpreted and made sense of through the lenses of the interpretivist paradigm (Berger & Luckmann, 1967).

In so doing, data in the current research emerge from the minds of the narrators in the form of stories and plots through a reflexive process of sense-making (Weick, 1979) of the past experiences. Knowledge is constructed and is only rendered knowable through this social construction and shared sense-making about human experiences (Backman & Kyngas, 1999; Chenitz & Swanson, 1986; Charmaz, 2003). Social construction and shared sense-making about human experience does not erase the

differences among individuals (Charmaz, 2017) it is the common language and socialization (Backman & Kyngas, 1999) that accelerate the reflexivity within individual selves.

3.5.2 Narrative Interviews

In narrative inquiry, there is an elevated risk of untruthfulness, distortion, memory impairment, misrepresentation due to existing threatening to the storyteller, non-sharable nature of the stories. Another threat to the truth of narrative research findings, is the researcher's interference. It has been found that researcher's standpoint towards the research topic may infect the inquiry conclusions in three ways: (1) by sharing the same views with the respondent, (2) by shaping the relationship between the researcher and the researched, and (3) by projecting the researcher's *weltanschauung* on the findings and inferences of the research (Berger, 2013).

The TR030 strategic text, transcripts of stories told by strategizing committee members while introducing and advocating the strategic choices to the public opinion, the transcribed audio recordings of the narrative interviews, notes and photographs were analyzed in the framework of this study. 15 one-to-one interviews were administered with members of the strategizing committee members, environmental experts, civil society activists, community representatives and investigative journalists who have had an experience with the TR030 strategy-making activities.

The narrative interview was prepared both in English and Albanian, as some of the targeted interviewees were not of Albanian origin. The first part of the interview attempted at investigating how the final strategy text emerged in the context of mutually exclusive interests of contending stakeholders of TR030. The second part explored the narrative devices employed in the strategy-making practice of the strategizing committee to justify, and gather legitimacy for, the interests of certain stakeholders at the expense of other stakeholders' stakes. The third and final part searched for the performative practices, story-telling and other sense-making plots involved in the process of defining and informing the course of strategizing practice and its outcomes.

All interviews were audio-recorded. The questions were open-ended, and interaction was carried out in a conversational style. Field notes were written in

conjunction with the interviews, follow-up interviews, observations, and casual encounters with subject. Memoranda were also written while listening to taped interviews, typing transcripts, and reflecting upon a particular interview. In addition to the interviews and follow-up interviews, other data were gathered throughout the study. Each participant agreeing to be interviewed was asked to read and sign an informed consent form prior to participating and promised their complete anonymity.

The interviews held in Albanian were transcribed and translated into English by the researcher himself and were uploaded on MAXQDA 2020 software for coding, constant comparison, and further analysis. Once the first interview was held, transcribed, translated, and analysed on MAXQDA 2020, and initial codes emerged out of it, the second interview was carried out and, following the same procedure, the first two interviews were subject to constant comparison to identify similarities, discrepancies and for further reviewing of the questions in accordance with the needs for data and concept saturation. The said procedure was repeated up until the last interview.

3.5.3 Published Documents of TR030 and Related Deeds

In addition to the narrative interviews and their follow-up update, eight presentations of the mayoral and strategizing teams' members held on April 12th, 2016, in Hotel Tirana International were transcribed and analysed to reinforce the primary data. The videos of these presentations were accessed on the dedicated YouTube channel (Municipality, 2016) created in the framework of the TR030 communication campaign. Most of the presentations were held in English by the foreign members of the strategy-making team, while the presentations in Albanian were translated into English by the current researcher. The content was analysed following the same data analysis procedures applied to the narratives obtained through the interviews. Combining multiple kinds of data in QGT research is endorsed and recommended by several social scientists and grounded theorists like Glaser (1978), Charmaz (2012), Tie, Birks, & Francis (2019) etc.

3.6 Data Analysis

The key feature of GT method in the family of qualitative methods is the simultaneous procedures of data collection, data analysis and theory formulation (Corbin & Strauss, 2018; Thistoll, Hooper, & Paule, 2015; Backman & Kyngas, 1999; Charmaz & Belgrave, 2018; Charmaz, 2014). Engaging in QGT research, thus, implies adopting to a non-conventional set of procedures, especially to those who are rarely involved in qualitative research through inductive, abductive and retroductive approaches.

The parallel conduct of data collection and analysis made the communication between actual data and emerging patterns of theory (Backman & Kyngas, 1999) a dominant event within the research process. Once the first interview was conducted, transcribed, and translated to English, the coding process on MAXQDA took on generating 64 open codes. An intensive reflexive process of interpretation, sensemaking (Denzin, 1998) and commenting (Glaser, 1978; Blumer, 1969 as cited in Strauss & Corbin, 1998) through memos went side by side with coding procedure. Line by line coded segments of the text were constantly compared (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2018; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978; Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Boeije, 2002) to each other digging for emerging patterns, similarities, and differences with the same code. The constant comparison operation as repeated for each additional interview sharpening the nuances of categories (Bakker, 2019) and their respective dimensions and properties (Backman & Kyngas, 1999).

3.7 Coding of the Data

3.7.1 Open Coding

Open coding is an analytical procedure that allows for organizing the information into categories. The assumption behind the adjective “open” is that the analysis at this level is done with full open-mindedness (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998; Glaser, 2013), i.e., unbiased towards emerging ideas or views of the participants, though the researcher’s background and knowledge of the discipline might help with labelling. Through this procedure the text of the

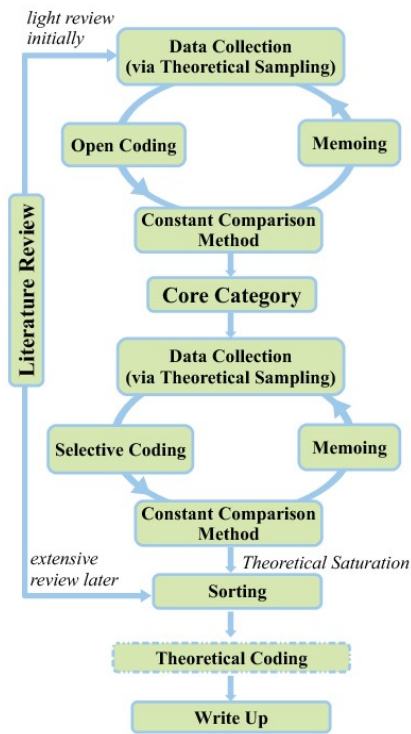
interviews was examined line by line for significant characteristics. Thus, the text units were tagged applying labelling in full loyalty to the language of the participants.

However, being loyal to the language of the interviewee means not drag-and-dropping, using conservative interpretation so that the labels are less descriptive but grounded on the text (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In fact, both QGT method and narrative paradigm are rooted in the sociology of symbolic interactionism (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Fisher, 1979, 1984, 1987) established and developed in the framework of the pragmatist philosophy. The code names should be inclined towards phenomenon representation and analytic power. Consequently, inquirer's interpretation is never excluded and is always of help in laying the ground for axial and selective coding, as well as for the theoretical scaffolding.

The text units linked to each code generated from the analysis of the first interview, was constantly compared to the text units of the second interview, an operation that was repeated with all the consecutive interviews (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Glaser 2013; Charmaz & Belgrave, 2018). During this coding stage, the researcher was able to seek for possible theoretical categories that might undergo further scrutiny for additional complementary or contradictory stories and examples from next interviews.

Concluding the open coding of the very first interview, a code system of 64 codes was generated to serve for the constant comparison process (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2018; Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Strauss, 1967) once the second interview was finalised, transcribed, and translated into English. The second passage coded under an existing category is compared with the existing coded passage. This was also an opportunity to reflect on the semantics of the code and enrich the memo ledger further.

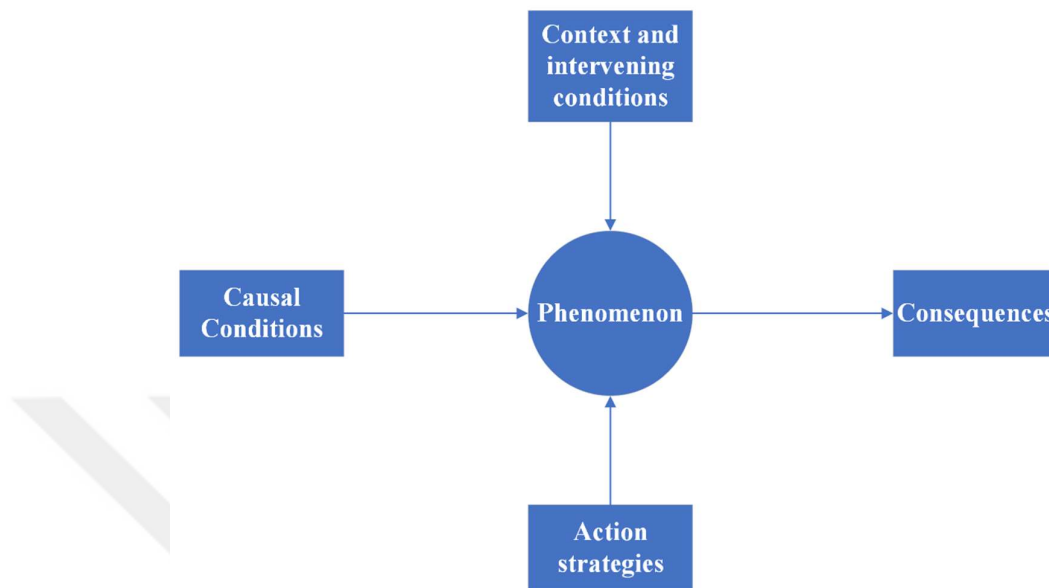
Figure 3-1 Data Collection and Analysis Process



3.7.2 Axial Coding

According to Glaser & Strauss (1967), Strauss & Corbin (1990), Corbin (2012), and Corbin & Strauss (2018), axial coding procedure begins with the departure of comparative comparison, that is the moment a code is applied to a second segment. Hereupon, this operation might commence during the analysis of the very first interview. As data were collected gradually so that theoretical sampling was approached (Walsh, et al., 2015), axial coding moved forward up to the point where no additional theoretical insights were gained through interviewing. The decision to conclude data collection did not, therefore, interfere with the researcher's pondering on the unexploited connections and intersections of the open codes and uncoded data.

Figure 3-2 Axial coding procedure for social science research questions



Source: (Böhm, 2004)

The purpose of this stage of data analysis was to explore the possible relationships of the categories and establishing reasonable connections between them. In conducting the axial coding procedures, the already coded segments were subjected to an analysis of causes, contexts, phenomena, strategies, and consequences adopted from Böhm (2004). According to Böhm (2004), the phenomenon marks an episode or evidence, the causal conditions represent situations that inform the occurrence of the central phenomenon, context is the setting where the events or episodes occur, strategies are the course of actions followed to achieve the intended goals, and consequences are the outcomes, or the results of strategies applied.

3.7.3 Selective Coding

Through selective coding the researcher was able to consider one by one each code obtained through open and axial coding to finally identify the core category and its links with the rest of the categories (Vollstedt & Rezat, 2019; Böhm, 2004). Identifying the core category and relating it with other categories helped create a story line (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Scott & Howell, 2008) as well as integrating the fractured data back into a coherent theoretical scaffold (Tie, Birks, & Francis, 2019). Story line

is the soil where theoretical seeds hidden in data pieces are planted to raise into a coherent and harmonious theory (Tie, Birks & Francis, 2019).

As shown in the research questions, the main phenomenon expected in the current inquiry was the way linguistic and narrative devices are used to advance certain groups interests at the expense or at the exclusion of other groups interests. However, by virtue of GTM and the genius of naturalistic inquiry, the core phenomenon might unexpectedly emerge to be another concept. It might be one of the categories obtained through axial coding (Heath & Cowley, 2004) or a new construct reached through a process of abstraction (Vollstedt & Rezat, 2019).

According to Strauss & Corbin (1990), the label selective implies that the agency of the researcher is much wider at this third layer of coding (Bruscaglioni, 2016). Strauss (1987) offers a set of criteria to spot the central phenomenon:

- Centrality and density of connections with other phenomena.
- Frequency in the data; and
- Easily linkable with the rest of the phenomena.

3.7.4 Constant Comparison Method (CCM)

The Significance of CCM

Though Glaser & Strauss (1967) introduced CCM as the GT itself and they even considered titling their book Constant Comparison Method, they did not depict a clear-cut set of procedures or a sequential process of conducting it. The universal framework of four stages of comparison proposed by Glaser & Strauss (1967, p. 105) does not allow most of the novice qualitative researchers to applying proper data analysis operations or comprehensively present their methods in their articles or dissertations. According to Suddaby (2006) “many of the primary techniques of grounded are developmental” (p.639). As Boeije (2002) has put it, doing open, axial, and selective coding, memoing and literature review, creating graphs and charts and sensemaking, are processes that help constant comparison but cannot substitute for it. But it is only

through CCM that an inquirer can sense the point of theoretical and meaning saturation, therefore being capable of doing theoretical sampling.

In the framework of the current study, the five-steps constant comparison approached developed by Boeije (2002) was adopted and modified in accordance the specific features of the present sample. As the participants in this study were classified according to their participation in the public hearing process in the capacity of (1) strategizing team-members or (2) publics, only a three-stages approach was found adequate for the needs of the current data analysis:

- The internal comparison within a single interview
- Intra-group comparison between different interviews within the group of strategy-makers
- Inter-group comparison between the interviews of the two main groups

Stage 1: The Internal Comparison Within the First Interview

The process: Comparison within a single interview was conducted as coding operation progressed from the very first coded segment to the multiple segments coded under the same category. If a code had been assigned to more than one fragment or passage of the said interview, then the passages were compared with one another to dig for differences and similarities as well as to consider modifying the code label or creating new subcodes. Throughout this process, we looked for commonalities, differences, aspects of the observed phenomenon and the context where the story was implanted.

The purpose: The purpose of CCM at this stage of the analysis was to internally compare the interview, to check for probable discrepancies and contradictions, similarities, and extensions of the scope of meaning for every individual code as well as to refine the code labels in accordance with their semantic capacity to carry the meanings, ideas, and messages of the interviewee.

The questions: Questions such as: “does the story hang together?” “Is the plot free of contradictions?” “Is anything lacking in the plot?” “What events, facts and people are missing?” were addressed during this stage of operation. These questions

served to deal with the concerns of coherence of the plots. Other questions such as, “what does the participant mean and intend by his story?” “What is the impression the interviewee intends to put?” are asked to better unearth the message of the participant.

The outcomes: By internally comparing the content of the interview, it was possible to check for probable discrepancies and to ensure internal coherence of the narration (Fisher, 1978, 1985, 1985, 1987). The correct application of this first layer of CCM allowed for establishing narrative probability of the told stories, one of the two pillars of narrative rationality (Fisher, 1985, 1994; Warnick, 1987; Rowland, 1989) alongside narrative fidelity. As a result of this procedure, for each of the interviews (1) a profile of the interview was produced containing the message of the interviewer and his/her views, (2) a codebook was obtained, (3) detailed memos were prepared and (4) plots of the personal stories were created.

Stage 2: Intra-Group Comparison of Interviews

The process: The first step was applied on all interviews as depicted in Boeije’s (2002) approach. The second step, that of comparison between the interviews began once the second interview was conducted. Participants’ responses of the consecutive interviews were constantly compared to the previously coded segments under the same coding label to, once again, look for differences, contradictions, similarities, extensions of semantic scopes of the codes etc. Following Boeije (2002), stories and experiences of the first group of interviewees, who shared the characteristic of being members of the strategizing teams, were constantly compared to one another. The emergence of interim theoretical categories facilitated further the identikit of the potential interviewees and the list of the narrative interview questions.

It is during this second stage of CCM that it turns evident what codes work together to create categories of concepts and notions, what codes need additional data, what questions need responses and what disruptions are found in the participants’ plots. The same intra-group analysis procedure was applied to interviewees from among the members of City Assembly, journalists, and active citizens.

The purpose: In accordance with Boeije’s (2002) framework, the purpose of this stage was to enable a process of condensing of the original codes into more

universal categories through axial coding. From the second interview onwards, the researcher was, to a certain extent, led by the need to prove or disprove the previous interviews findings and the unearthing of the missing components of the existing stories.

The questions: The questions that drew the attention during this stage of analysis are as follows:

- How similarities and differences help us connect the parts into a coherent and logically sound story?
- What explains those similarities and differences?
- How individual codes might merge into more universal categories and what typologies are obtained from the condensing categories?

The outcomes: The original codebook is enriched with additional codes emerging out of the consecutive interviews until CCM is applied on the last coded segment. Thus, a complete codebook is a final product of this stage. Comparison between interviews, according to Boeije (2002), allows for perceiving the laws underpinning the differences between the stories of different strategy-makers or participants in the public consultation sessions. These laws are called dimensions of a typology.

Stage 3: Inter-Group Comparison of Interviews

The process: When mentioned distinct groups of interviewees, we can only distinguish the members of the strategizing team and the other, since members of the MA, journalists and active citizens have only had the opportunities to participate in the public hearings, and, to a certain extent, have an image of themselves as powerless spectators and critics of the process and its products. Thus, we compared the interviews from the group of strategy-making team members with those from the MA members, journalists and active citizens taking a circumstance or an experience at a time to contrast against it.

The second group of interviews followed the same pathways as those of the first group, beginning with the same generic questions but equipped with a much deeper

understanding of the phenomena under study. Especially helpful were questions dealing with the ways the strategy was narrated, the narrative devices used to gather support for the proposed plans, the ways the strategy-making team handled the critiques and concerns of the publics, and the visualization strategies used to render the city knowable and to facilitate imagination. The second group of interviewees supplied the present research with sense-making about story-telling techniques employed by the political leadership of the MoT.

The purpose: As Boeije (2002) proposes, the main purpose of this comparison procedure is to cross-check the narrative coherence and narrative probability of the respective stories told by members from two distinct groups, a process called triangulation in QGT (Kolb, 2012). Triangulation is a process that enhances the internal and external validity and reliability of a study (Thurmond, 2001). When appropriate, pieces from different stories are arranged to complete the sequence of stories told by other interviewees.

The question: This operation is intended to provide answers to the following questions:

- How stories or viewpoints of participants from the distinct groups differ from one another?
- What patterns of experience emerge more clearly in each of the group?
- How stories of one group supplement the stories of the other group with facts, experiences, and reflections?

The outcomes: The results of this procedure are not manifest in tangible elements of the analysis, this step, as it was expected (Boeije, 2002; Kolb, 2012; Thurmond, 2001), sharpened the interpretative tools of the researcher.

Table 3-2 Stages of Constant Comparison Procedure*

Comparison Stage	Process	Purpose	Questions	Outcomes
1. <i>Internal comparison within a single interview</i>	Open coding; Line by line coding; Between segments comparison;	Establishing first level of categories;	Does the story hang together? Is the plot free of contradictions? What is missing in the plot? What does the participant mean and intend by his story? What is the impression the interviewee intends to put?	Codebook; Detailed memos; Plots of personal stories; Refined list of interview questions;
2. <i>Intra-group interviews comparisons</i>	Axial coding; Developing comparison criteria; Interpreting the emerging patterns of similarities & differences; Creating categories of concepts and notions;	Condensing the original codes into more universal categories; Connecting the dots in the incomplete existing stories;	How similarities and differences help us connect the parts into a coherent and logically sound story? What explains those similarities and differences? How individual codes might merge into more universal categories and what typologies are obtained from the condensing categories?	A complete codebook; Patterns of similarities and differences at the intra-group level; Dimensions of the typologies; Memos;
3. <i>Inter-group interviews comparisons</i>	Selective coding; Triangulating data sources; Develop universal categories and	Cross-checking narrative coherence and probability of the told stories; Completing stories with	How stories or viewpoints of participants from the distinct groups differ from one another? What patterns of experience emerge more clearly in each of the group?	Main patterns and concepts; Complete stories; Memos;

interpretatio	data	from	How stories of one group
ns	different		supplement the stories of
	viewpoints;		the other group with facts,
			experiences, and
			reflections?

* Adopted by Boeije (2002) and modified for the needs of the present inquiry

3.8 Limitations and Strengths of the Research Design

The main risk this research venture faced was that of potential unwillingness by the MoT top management team members to participate in the narrative interviewing process. Triangulating the information collected from different stakeholders and interviewing members of the strategizing committee who currently are not employees of the Municipality subordinate agencies reduced the impact of this risk element on the rigor of the study. The researcher also used the transcribed presentations of the MoT representatives as an additional triangulation strategy.

A second important risk factor is the evolving nature of the object of the current research. TR030 has been undergoing compelling modifications and changes afterwards its approval in 2016. New key objects such as commercial, residential and infrastructure projects have emerged during strategy's implementation. Managing this risk category entails reviewing the respective by-laws, collecting planning documentations and conducting additional interviews with stakeholders and civil society activists.

Another expected significant risk is represented by the tight deadlines for collecting and analysing the data, as well as the insufficient time allocated to thesis writing. An enormous amount of data was produced by the narrative interviews what took a long time to transcribe and translate into English, as well as coding and constantly comparing coded segments to one-another.

3.9 Quality and Rigor: Reliability and Validity

Trustworthiness in qualitative research is a challenge. Quants disqualify qualitative studies as imbued with subjectivity and missing scientific instruments and procedures that grant rigor to their findings (Cutcliffe & McKenna, 2005). Lincoln &

Guba (1985) recommend four pillars of scientific rigor in qualitative inquiry for a wide acceptance and acknowledgement of their respective outcomes: (1) credibility which is the qualitative corresponding criteria of internal validity in quantitative research; (2) confirmability, which stands for objectivity of the interpretation; (3) transferability, or the counterpart of external validity; and (4) dependability, what in quantitative approach is represented by reliability.

In the present study, a set of quality procedures have been applied in pursuance of an increased trustworthiness of the findings and interpretations. Due to the narrative paradigm adopted in this research, besides the above four pillars of trustworthiness, two additional dimensions of narrative probability and fidelity (Fisher, 1978, 1984, 1985; Warnick, 1987) are employed as strategies of inquiry quality enhancement.

3.9.1 Narrative Probability and Fidelity

There is enormous pressure on the novice researcher to establish data collection and analysis procedures that provide rigor and quality in qualitative research, a pressure that emerges both from academic criteria of publishable work and from the difficulties of applying qualitative methods in real-life inquiry. Inductive, abductive and retroductive studies are by nature risky to the extent they are rich in potentials of discovering novel concepts and relationships of interest to the readers and scientific communities. Thus, designing conducive strategies to revelatory as well as rigorous inquiry is even more challenging to a doctoral student.

Nevertheless, beginners are given due freedom to combine best practices and experiment their tentative procedures (Grodal, Anteby, & Holm, 2020) to capturing the essence of their study object as rigor follows vigour (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Instead of rigidly applying and using templates developed by the journeymen of the field, novice researchers are encouraged to be fully transparent to the readers to compensate for their trial-and-error stratagems (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Grodal, Anteby, & Holm, 2020). Adopting such a research policy helped tackling the restrictive impact of strict adherence to the extant body of knowledge (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2013).

For the narrative paradigm to work as such and to offer its mechanism of narrative reality investigation, another kind of rationality was to be adopted, which

implies that criteria different from that of the rational world paradigm are applied to verify rigor of a scientific undertaking. Equipped with this epistemic tool, narrative paradigm proved capable to stipulating whether a story is serving as a cover for hidden motives of the narrating agent or not (Fisher, 1985). Narrative rationality puts forward its two criteria for determining the proper messages contained in a human communication, describing human experience, social phenomena, or intersubjective relations (Warnick, 1987). These two criteria, narrative probability, and narrative fidelity (Fisher 1978; Fisher 1984; Fisher 1985), ensures the internal coherence and the external reliability of a text or communicative product.

Narrative probability is practically tested by asking two questions: (1) does the story hang together? and (2) is the story free of contradictions? (Fisher, 1985; Warnick, 1987). Therefore, transcribed and translated narrative interviews were checked for internal inconsistencies and incoherence. A confirmative answer to the above questions granted the present researcher's assurance to the internal coherence of a statement, a plot, or a story.

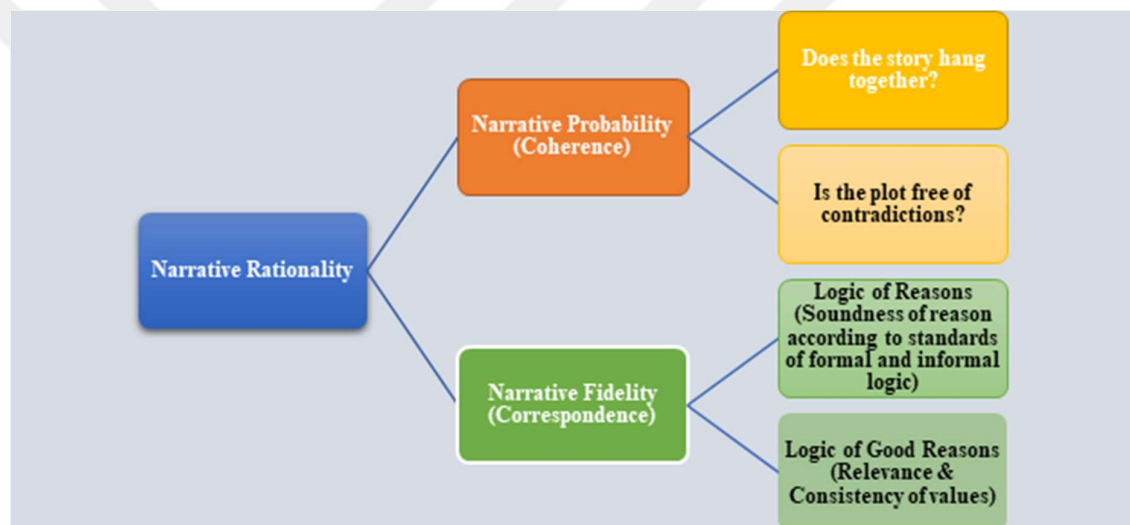
On the other hand, *narrative fidelity* determines the degree of a story's reliability by testing how sound are the reasons that justify a story or a plot, and the degree these reasons match and conform the accepted reasons in a particular epistemic or value community (Fisher, 1985; Fisher, 1994; Warnick, 1987). In assuring narrative fidelity to the interviewee's stories, their reasons were checked against published set of documents of TR030, peer experts and researcher's experience and knowledge of the topic.

The researcher tested stories coherence at three levels. First, stories and texts were tested for argumentative coherence (Fisher, 1994). In doing so, the inquirer looked for a claim-data-warrant argumentative relationship in accordance with Toulmin's (1956) model of argumentative cohesion. Second, stories and tales were tested for material coherence (Fisher, 1994), which implies testing the truth value of a narrative against alternative narrations available. Third, human communications were tested for characterological coherence (Fisher, 1994). This measure tapped the ethical views of the interviewees.

On the other hand, fidelity was looked for in the factual claims of a statement or a story. It is at this level of testing that the researcher explored the story for elements

that make it reliable to its audiences, when he compared it against their experiences (Fisher, 1994; Fisher, 1995). Another procedure that granted the narrative fidelity of the statements and the whole stories was their suggested values' compliance with the interviewee's established or adopted value system (Fisher, 1994; Fisher, 1995). Consequently, a story or a statement was deemed to enjoy narrative fidelity if the facts contained in it and the values it proposed fit within the experience and value system.

Figure 3-3 Process of ensuring rigor in narrative research



Source: (Fisher, 1985; 1994; Warnick, 1987). Compilation of the present researcher.

Rigor is, a fortiori, enhanced through quality sampling procedures and sample size. A sample size that grants information power or theoretical saturation (Malterud, Siersma, & Guassora, 2016; Guest, Namey, & Chen, 2020), allows for in depth analysis of the participants' experiences and reflections (Malterud, Siersma, & Guassora, 2016; Suri, 2011), and targets fully aware participants (Collingridge & Gantt, 2008; Cleary, Horsfall, & Hayter, 2014) adds to the rigor of a research enterprise.

Distinguished authors have compiled a list of five principles of participant selection to lead the way to rigorous and quality sampling process for a qualitative research design. According to Curtis et al (2000), Tuckett (2004), and Walsh & Downe (2006) the said principles are as follows: (1) thoroughly investigated limited numbers, (2) purposively picked up interviewees, (3) concept evolution driven selection (in QGT), (4) consecutively selected participants rather than pre-arranged fixed list, and

(5) a clearly stated logic of selection. Our current investigation fits to the first principles by its repeated investigator-participant communication, to the second principle thanks to the exclusive filtering process of partaking strategizing team-members, experts or members of the Municipal Assembly who were present in the public hearing sessions, to the third principle for its theoretical sampling approach, to the fourth principle by virtue of collection-coding-sampling-collection-coding-constant comparison process, and to the fifth principles on the merits of a clear definition of what is a participant the public hearing session.

3.9.2 Credibility/ Internal Validity

Credibility of the study shows findings ability to capture the reality in the field (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). In the words of Lincoln & Guba (1985), validity is the degree to which the findings are credible as far as the given data are concerned. In a qualitative research venture, validity is way more undefined and difficult to prove due to its reliance on the context (Maxwell, 2013; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Loh, 2013). Consequently, applying multiple procedures to test the internal validity of the findings strengthens the link between the real-world experiences and the corollary interpretation of them.

Three procedures have been employed to grant the credibility of the present study: (1) prolonged engagement (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Creswell & Miller, 2000; Maxwell, 2009, 2013; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Creswell, 2009; Yin, 2011); (2) data sources triangulation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Creswell & Miller, 2000; Maxwell, 2009, 2013; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Creswell, 2009; Yin, 2011; Patton, 2015); and (3) member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Creswell & Miller, 2000; Maxwell, 2009, 2013; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Creswell, 2009; Yin, 2011; Patton, 2015). The researcher's decision to limit the confirmability granting procedures to only three out of eight (Loh, 2013) is supported by the community of scholars' consensus on the discretion of the constructivist researcher to decide the best techniques of validation (Loh, 2013; Thomas & Magilvy, 2011; Maxwell, 2013).

Prolonged Engagement

The present topic of research was selected in January 2019. Firstly, the researcher was immersed in reviewing the existing documents, media content and secondary data about the TR030 designing process. 2 years later, the data collection through narrative interviews was launched, a process that took another full year hand in hand with the data analysis following the qualitative grounded theory methods. Time has been a key factor in drawing and filtering correct data, intensively interacting with the targeted audience to build trust and veracity. Time spent in the field is positively correlated to the depth of understanding the phenomenon and the ability of the researcher to trustworthily deliver the particularities of the said phenomenon (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Creswell, 2009; Maxwell, 2013; Patton, 2015).

Prolonged engagement is key to omitting distorted information (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), warrants a pluralistic perspective to the phenomenon (Creswell & Miller, 2000), and establish a sound ground for a balanced construction of meaning (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2015; Creswell, 2009; Creswell & Miller, 2000; Maxwell, 2013). The necessary time for a sufficient immersion in the research context is subject to data saturation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Lincoln & Guba, 1985), with constructivists advocating for longer periods of engagement for increased rigor (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Combined with data sources triangulation and member checking procedures, prolonged engagement in the phenomenon has contributed to the enhancement of the credibility of the present research's findings.

Data Sources Triangulation

One of the main validity threats to the findings of the present study is the lack of input by the top-leaders of the project, i.e., MoT representatives as well as the representatives of Steffano Boeri Architetti Ltd., and UNLAB, the two companies hired to prepare the urban plan. While the strategy-makers audience has been one of the two main groups of contributors through narrative interviewing, along the Municipal Assembly members, activists and journalists, their perception of the narrative practices applied in the framework of TR030 might be a by-product of the power relations within

the strategizing team. The present researcher has applied the data sources triangulation as a method of testing the validity of the strategy-making team members narrations of their strategizing experience. Secondary data, i.e., (1) comments of professionals of urban planning and architecture on a published presentation of the principles of TR030 on google documents, (2) comments on the media by journalists and specialists, (3) as well as the transcribed video-presentations of the main strategy-makers at the presentation event of the first draft of the plan, were used to check part of the findings from the narrative interviewing.

Triangulating different data sources is acknowledged as one of the three triangulation procedures in constructivist research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Creswell, 2009; Maxwell, 2009) and establishes coherent justification for the emerging theoretical categories (Creswell, 2009). Within method or one type of triangulation is applied, the internal validity of the findings and enhances a study design's ability to interpret the findings (Thurmond, 2001). Correspondingly, the data triangulation procedure has strengthened the credibility of this research and the current design's interpreting power.

Member Checking

Member checking was used to enhance the present study's findings, especially to provide with a reconciliatory approach to the interpretation of the data. Participants were supplied with electronic or hard-copy versions of their coded interviews with the purpose of (1) checking the codes' labels against the intended meanings of their narrations, (2) adding further data to their interviews when assessed necessary or new episodes/events were recalled throughout the reflexive review of their interviews, and (2) correcting numbers, dates or even linguistic tools used in the first round of their interviews.

Employing member checking in qualitative research is strongly recommended by numerous scholars to establish dialogue between the researcher and the participant (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Creswell, 2009; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Maxwell, 2009). It is considered "the most crucial technique for establishing credibility" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.314) and "the single most important way of ruling out the possibility of

misinterpreting the meaning of what participants say and do" (Maxwell, 2013, pp. 126–127). It helps the researcher transfer testing for study's internal validity towards the informant's responsibility (Creswell & Miller, 2000), therefore laying the ground for a co-construction of the theory out of the data.

3.9.3 Dependability/ Reliability

Warranting dependability of a study is a precondition to its validity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Dependability is under constant threat of careless proceedings of the research process, obsolete instruments or insufficient immersion into the topic and context. One view of reliability in qualitative research is that a reliable method imparts equivalent results if applied repetitively (Ford, 1975, as cited by Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility of a study is manifested by the extent to which another scholar can apply the same inquiry sequence of procedures (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). The most accepted procedure of proving dependability of a research design is dependability audit (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), found as audit trail in Creswell & Miller (2000), Merriam & Tisdell (2015), external auditor in Creswell (2009) and expert audit review in Patton (2002). A single audit procedure to determine the dependability and confirmability (Halpern, 1983, as referred by Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of the current research venture was conducted, as recommended by Lincoln & Guba (1985).

3.9.4 Confirmability/ Objectivity

Confirmability is achieved once the rest of quality pillars have been established, therefore the study is deemed internally and externally valid, and reliable (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). This pillar intends to attest the link between research data, findings, and interpretations (Loh, 2013). The confirmation of this correlation by the auditor produces a mutual understanding between the researcher and the auditor, therefore between two observers, that the study findings and interpretations are objective. To warrant the confirmability of the present study, a confirmability audit was conducted as follows.

Dependability & Confirmability Audit

Confirmability audit is a quality procedure that grants the study its objectivity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Loh, 2013; Thomas & Magilvy, 2011; Creswell & Miller, 2000). In line with the objective to increase the confirmability of the findings of the present research, an audit trail (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Merriam, 2009) was conducted by Dr. Ardian Muhaj from the Albanian Studies Academy (ASA) and Dr. Mentor Beqa from the Faculty of Administrative and Political Sciences, University “Aleksander Moisiu” Durres (UAMD), Albania at the conclusion of the present research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Creswell, 2009; Thomas & Magilvy, 2011).

A qualitative inquiry’s audit intends to scrutinize two dimensions of a research project: its process and its outcome. Dependability audit deals with the process while the confirmability one deals with the outcomes of an inquiry (Miller, 1997). The object of this procedure was receiving an independent and outsider’s evaluation of the entire research venture from accuracy of transcriptions to the link between the research questions and the data, to the degree of theorizing and interpretation from the primary and secondary data (Creswell, 2009). Following Lincoln & Guba (1985) guidelines, the auditor was provided with the research proposal, methodology of research, audio recordings of the narrative interviews, the respective transcripts, the secondary data and their source documents, sampling approach, participants consent forms and their contact details. For a complete audit process, in full accordance with the quality standards (Halpern, 1983; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Cutcliffe & McKenna, 2004) the following information was provided by the researcher:

- Audio-recordings of the narrative interviews (when the interview was held in English), labelled, dated;
- The text files of transcribed (and translated into English for interviews held in Albanian) narrative interviews, labelled, dated;
- The electronic text files of the secondary data, opinions of independent urban planners and architects attached to a google docs presentation of the principles of TR030;

- Products of the coding process on MAXQDA, including field notes, memos, quantitative summaries such as graphs and tables generated on MAXQDA;
- Outcomes of data coding and reconstruction such as Codebooks, findings and discussions, and conclusions, included in a study report, equipped with the respective literature review that justifies the presented relationships and interpretations;
- Research methodology, including study design, paradigm, research strategies, and research quality procedures and instruments;
- Data collection instruments, the pilot forms and the gradually modified versions of the instrument, reflexive journals, index cards and memos;
- Consent forms signed by the participants and their contact details.

Dependability was scrutinized through a four-steps procedure (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Thomas & Magilvy, 2011; Loh, 2013). First, the auditor checked out the theoretical basis of methodological decisions made throughout the research process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). Second, researcher's bias was weighed up carefully examining the sampling method and data saturation criteria (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Third, the risk of researcher co-optation was evaluated searching for episodes manifesting such risks (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Finally, the research design was analysed thoroughly to judge its fit to the research questions.

Confirmability, also, was investigated following a four-steps approach (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). First, the auditor verified the soundness of data-findings relations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). This step was easily pursued on MAXQDA which offers multiple ways of checking the link between the categories, codes, subcodes and coded segments from the raw data files. The auditor sampled several segments for each theoretical dimension to confirm the existence of the claimed link. Second, the auditor scrutinized the use of analytical techniques, labelling of the codes and the power of interpretation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Loh, 2013; Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). Third, the explanatory power of the categories, their cohesion within the same theoretical framework and the researcher's bias implications were judged. Finally, the auditor evaluated the stringency of the quality procedures applied by the

researcher, such as prolonged engagement, member checking and data sources triangulation.

3.9.5 Transferability / Generalizability

In granting parsimony to the present research venture, the inquirer adopted the following premises. First, exorcizing the situated practices enables a researcher to make contributions to the overall understanding of a proposition (Cronbach, 1975) and data-supported narratives are scientific (DiMaggio, 1995). Second, explicating, rather than predicting, patterns of relationships between constructs and elements, therefore serving an intermediary level of investigation between the raw narrative and universal laws (Davis & Marquis, 2005), is the job of the researcher, i.e., theorizing (Weick, 1995). Third, the findings from research of locally embedded practices tends to represent a working hypothesis, not a conclusion (Cronbach, 1975; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Cannella & Paetzold, 1994). Finally, the transferability of a research findings is related to the extent two settings under scrutiny resemble each other, what Lincoln & Guba (1985) names fittingness. Consequently, the establishment of the external validity in positivistic or post-positivistic terms is almost impossible in qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

However, the above premises are not a prepaid justification or warning for the improbability of generalizing the conclusions drawn in the present study. Overall, the strategies of transferability in naturalistic inquiry differ from those used in quantitative world paradigm. Two of them are thick description (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Creswell & Miller, 2000; Maxwell, 2009, 2013; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Creswell, 2009) and reflexive journal (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Creswell & Miller, 2000; Maxwell, 2009, 2013; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Creswell, 2009; Patton, 2015).

Thick Description

According to Lincoln & Guba (1985), thick description is the only effort a natuarlist inquirer may pay to grant transferability to his/her study. One element of thick description is the detailed demographic profiling of interviewees and the boundaries of the geographic setting of the inquiry (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). Thorough

descriptions of the context the research was conducted in and the time features accompanying it is intended to allow potential appliers of the study findings make judgement decisions about the degree of transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Denzin, 2001; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Clearly described and introduced contexts, relationships, situations, geographies, and demographics of the inquiry render the findings transportable to similar settings by the readers themselves (Creswell, 2009), therefore adding to, as well as extending the validity of the research conclusions.

Reflexive Journal

Though included in the transferability subsection, reflexive journal procedure has been a research-wide operation that mirrored the entire process of data collection, analysis, methodological decision-making, and premises adopted from time to time by the inquirer (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Consoli, 2021; Thomas & Magilvy, 2011).

Reflexivity occurred during the interviewing process when the inquirer pondered on non-wordy elements of the communication of the participants, during the process of transcribing the audio-recordings, during the process of multiple readings of the transcriptions, throughout the translation of the interviews held in Albanian, during the open coding, axial coding, constant comparison, and selective coding procedures (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2018). The said process was guided by questions about three audiences: participants, inquirer, and study audience, while keeping in mind cultural, economic, social, political, and professional sources of the above three audiences (Patton, 2015). Table 4, below, presents the questions used as a guideline throughout the study-wide reflexivity process (Patton, 2015; Charmaz & Belgrave, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Pässilä, Oikarinen, & Harmaakorpi, 2015):

Table 3-3 Questions guiding reflexivity process

Questions about interviewees:	Questions addressed to the researcher oneself:	Questions asked about the audiences of the present inquiry:

1) How did they learn what they claim about the reality of strategizing in the framework of TR030?	1) What does the inquirer know?	1) What are the strategies they follow to connect with the present study?
2) What premises do they take for granted when they enter the interview?	2) What is the epistemological stance of inquirer's accumulated knowledge?	2) What worldviews do they use to test the current findings?
3) What is their perception of the inquirer and what are the methods to measure this perception?	3) What are the premises that underlie researcher's worldview?	3) What is their view of the inquirer?
4) What is the inquirer's perception of them?	4) In what ways do researcher's biases impact the data collection and analysis process and outcomes?	4) What is the inquirer's view of them?
	5) What is the inquirer's perception of the participants?	5) How do these subjective views impact this study's findings and the respective presentation in front of them?
	6) What is the voice I use to explicate my viewpoint?	
	7) What do I use the present research's outcomes for?	

Overall, the quality procedures pursued to grant quality and rigor to the study, are summarized in Table 4. Trustworthiness criteria and techniques for establishing them (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Creswell, 2009; Creswell & Miller, 2000; Thomas & Magilvy, 2011; Patton, 2015; Pässilä, Oikarinen, & Harmaakorpi, 2013).

Table 3-4 Summary of the research rigor granting procedures

Criteria	Techniques	Reference
Credibility/ Internal Validity	Prolonged engagement	Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Creswell & Miller, 2000; Maxwell, 2005, 2009; Merriam 2009; Creswell, 2009; Yin, 2011.

		Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Creswell & Miller, 2000;
	Data sources	Patton, 2002; Maxwell, 2005, 2009; Merriam
	triangulation	2009; Creswell, 2009; Yin, 2011.
		Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Creswell & Miller, 2000;
	Member checking	Patton, 2002; Maxwell, 2005, 2009; Merriam
		2009; Creswell, 2009; Yin, 2011.
	Dependability/	Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Creswell & Miller, 2000;
Dependability/	confirmability audit	Patton, 2002; Merriam 2009; Creswell, 2009.
Reliability		
Confirmability/		Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Creswell & Miller, 2000;
Objectivity		Patton, 2002; Merriam 2009; Creswell, 2009.
		Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Creswell & Miller, 2000;
Transferability/		Maxwell, 2005, 2009; Merriam 2009; Creswell,
Generalizability	Thick description	2009; Yin, 2011.
		Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Creswell & Miller, 2000;
		Patton, 2002; Maxwell, 2005, 2009; Merriam
	Reflexive journal	2009; Creswell, 2009.

3.10 Research Ethics

Ethics is a threshold that the researcher must constantly adhere to throughout all stages of scientific research. From research design to literature review, data collection, analysis, and publication of results, at every step of the research process the scientific researcher must follow the principles of, autonomy, privacy and confidentiality, originality, respect, and recognition of the research work of other researchers, the uninterrupted presentation of data and results and non-duplication of findings and conclusions.

The primary data used in the present research venture are collected through narrative interviews and represent an original work of the researcher himself. The secondary data combined in the analysis for the sake of triangulation of data sources have been retrieved from the public domains of the Municipality of Tirana dedicated to the communication of the TR030 Master Plan. All the participants are granted full confidentiality and anonymity, while each of them voluntarily signed a Consent Letter

agreeing to contribute to the research without compulsion and protected from any breach of privacy by the related parties.

3.11 Chapter Conclusions

This chapter delineated the research methodology adopted and finetuned to the needs of the present inquiry. A narrative paradigm design utilizing Qualitative Grounded Theory (QGT) was employed to investigate the experiences of participants in public consultations sessions with the narrative practices exercised during strategy-making process in the framework of TR030. Sampling method and data production techniques are explained into details to enable independent auditors and external readers a thorough understanding of the data collection process and its quality.

Data analysis procedures on MAXQDA are clearly presented, describing in detail the open, axial, and selective coding procedures, and offering the necessary justifications for the methodological decisions made by the present researcher. Especially, the Constant Comparison Method employed as an analytical tool is thoroughly explicated, including but not limited to, the constant comparison process, its purpose, questions asked throughout this operation and the outcomes of such an analysis.

Furthermore, limitations and risks to this study besides the strategies employed for addressing them are presented with transparency. The quality assurance procedures are introduced and thickly described across the four pillars of rigor in qualitative research, i.e., credibility, confirmability, transferability, and dependability. In addition to the standard quality procedures, two additional trustworthiness filters are added in respect with narrative paradigm: narrative fidelity and narrative probability. Finally, the ethical standard pursued throughout this research venture are described satisfactorily. The following chapters present the data analysis, findings, and present author's discussion of these findings out of this inquiry.

CHAPTER 4

Discussion of the Findings

4.1 Background of TR030

Tirana urban plan TR030 was one of the very first major ventures of the new administration of the MoT. Once mayor Veliaj entered office in July 2015, he switched on the engines of a project that will change the face of the city and the urban living forever. For the first time in the post-communist history of Tirana, a comprehensive urban plan was adopted by the Municipal Assembly in 2012. However, a series of political and administrative events had changed the context of urban living and served as a justification for remaking the metropolitan master plan of Tirana.

Firstly, in 2014 a new territorial reform had changed the structure and the borders of the local units, and the respective administrative aspects of local governance. Rural and urban municipal government units were merged into mixed municipalities. Consequently, Tirana was extended to include a vast territory previously covered by the rural municipalities around it. The existing urban plan regulated only the territory of the urban areas, while most of the rural municipalities either entirely lacked urban development plans or had managed their territory through partial plans and construction permits.

Secondly, the previous administration had prepared a master plan that was simultaneously praised and admonished for being very technical and leaving no room for manoeuvre to the political leadership of the MoT. For those who do not have a clue from the ways Albanian capital was developing during the 30 years long transition to democracy and rule of law, Tirana came to be the single major pole of economic, demographic, and urban development of the country. Informal and problematic constructions had scattered throughout the plains around the city to address the aggressive demand for sheltering spaces. Therefore, the construction permits were a tremendous weapon of financial and political power in the hands of the mayor.

Hereof, adopting a technically strict master plan meant removing this weapon from the hands of the mayor. Mayor's powers would only suffice for him to supervise the compliance of the construction industry projects with the heretofore approved plan. Even empirically, the four years that plan ruled the urban territory, the construction market experienced a sharp downturn in the capital. Maintaining the status-quo would mean a further extension of the period of a powerless mayor and limited construction.

Hereupon, the newly elected municipal administration was quick to begin with the plans to change the plan. In January 2016, the Municipality of Tirana hired Steffano Boeri Architetti, an Italian studio, to develop the new master plan of the new metropolitan city of Tirana. The project would regulate the territory management of not only the rural municipal units without a regulatory plan but would also turn upside down the existing master plan of the urban areas, previously comprising the city of Tirana.

The Albanian legal framework on urban planning¹ enforced the local government units to hold public consultations for any community projects. MoT planned, organized, and hosted 7 public consultations with the communities across the city and 7 additional expert tables in fulfilment of the above-mentioned legal requirements². The impact of this series of public hearings on the outcomes of the city planning process have been scrutinised in the present research.

Departing from a strategy-as-practice, the present inquiry has managed to draw on the experiences of the strategy-making practitioners, community representatives and urban planning professionals with the process of narrating the city. Narrative interviewing was coupled with grounded theory to analyse the collected data and come up with a theoretical framework for the role of storytelling episodes in strategy-making practices. In the following sections, the findings of this research project are presented and discussed thoroughly from a strategy-as practice perspective.

4.2 Narrative Ecosystem of TR030

The story-world within which TR030 master plan was narrated and adopted by the Municipal Assembly of Tirana on December 29, 2016, developed as an eco-system formed by both a "population of signs" and "a network of vectors and material bases

for the signs” (Debray, 1996, p.108). The interplay between these two dimensions of the ecosystem laid a fertile ground for the stories from the future of the city to thrive and proliferate. The power relations applied by the contending actors granted the story-world the conditions that preferred and bolstered certain strategy-making stories at the expense of others, causing a process of ecological selection that allowed the existence and development of those narrative niches and species that served the interests the most powerful contenders and selected out the rest.

4.2.1 Ecological Selection

A controlled process of narrative ecological selections was designed and implemented to render strategic storytelling smooth and easy. Only the narrative niches and species that fulfilled the favourable criteria were allowed to develop and thrive. Other spaces and practices were disregarded, selected out and censored. Owing to the pre-arranged settings and selected instruments, the strategy-practitioners managed to get away with easy questions and rare polemics.

Narrative Niches

From the onset of the strategy-making process, the MoT representatives paid due attention to establishing friendly narrative geographies for their city-making storytelling practices. The operations of public consultation of the proposed master plan required minimized critique and resistance for they were set in particularly vulnerable terms. These amicable geographies were laid down by means of three major event planning tools: setting the agenda, filtering the participation, and moderating the hearing events.

4.2.1.1.1 Agenda Setting Agency

To create a set of favourable pools of strategic navigation, the MoT representatives had to indisputably control the agenda of the public hearings and expert tables sessions. As it will be shown below, events were planned, announcement were published, and hearings were moderated in ways that granted the MoT the tools and

powers to minimise the resistance of the stakeholders and rapidly advance its draft of TR030 urban plan.

Table 4-1 Agenda setting agency subcodes weights and distribution*

Subcodes/Documents	Documents	Percentage	Percentage (valid)
Knowledge as a function of time	10	38.46	76.92
Disqualifying/rescheduling proposed variations	9	34.62	69.23
Municipality controlled hearings	8	30.77	61.54
Constraining the emergence of variations	6	23.08	46.15
Documents with code(s)	13	50.00	100.00
Documents without code(s)	13	50.00	-
Analyzed documents	26	100.00	-

* Generated from MAXQDA 2020

4.2.1.1.1.1 Municipality Controlled Hearings

To this day, the public opinion is not informed about the process of selecting in and out the partaking experts in the expert consultation sessions. The operation developed under full control of MoT representatives, while neither prior call, nor methodology, nor selection eligibility criteria to participating were made public in advance. The MoT staff had autonomously designed the entire move. Taking over the responsibility for organizing the meetings, thus, yielded immense controlling power over the events:

They invited us to participate in these roundtables together with other participants, often unknown to us. They did everything in organizing, actually. They chose the venue. They decided the time of the meeting. They also appointed a moderator to each table [Lukas].

While some of the participants would frequently open to discussion issues that were selected out of the agenda, the moderators tried to close those discussions with the

justification of following the agenda (Holmes & Stubbe, 2003; David & Seidl, 2015). Even the duration of the public hearing sessions and the time allocated to experts' discussions served as a restrictive tool to contributions by experts and publics. Within one hour, several teams were pushed to present their findings, comments, and corrections, what would reduce the available time to discussions of a team down to only several minutes. The said rush is evident in the talk of Boeri himself:

... so what I'm proposing you is to start up and you say in 10 minutes with the roundtables well as you as you know very well 40 days ago with the first presentation of the methodology of this strategic vision for Tirana 2030 and up as you know we were proposing three key issues (Boeri, 2016).

The added value of those tables planned with caution by the MoT staff is questionable. Obviously, the formal allocation criterion was the technical background of the partaking experts. In reality this criterion generally made no difference, since the real characteristic of most of the participants in those expert meetings was the political correctness and the full alignment with the MoT's agenda. They "were only formally assigned to the respective tables in the beginning of the discussions" [Adam]:

It was the technical staff of the Municipality [who spoke there], the directorate of urban planning, some organizations that deal with this work, it was the team that made the plan, the architects, and we were also, the environmental consultants. I made the presentation [Flavio].

When the final draft was presented to the external audiences, the experts were not allowed to answer to the questions. They only introduced the findings of their disciplinary research but were not involved in the Q&A session. This component was sensitive to the MoT representatives and demanded intense use of communication strategies. A participant recalls that "members of the project management team from the MoT oriented the discussion" [Artur].

At a certain moment of time, during the final presentation of the master plan TR030, and in stratifying the participation management techniques, MoT administration jumps to another tactic, that of allowing the presence of the media by stripping the journalists of the right to ask questions. An interviewee called it a "plan B. ... only half of it is made public till now: the media is allowed to stay during the

presentation of the issues, but they won't speak during the Q&A session (Rama, 2016). The power relations are so manifest that the MoT representatives can violate any information rights rationalization.

MoT's degree of control over the process is not fully comprehended if power relations between the MoT and the hired companies are not unveiled. Multiple interviews confirm the subdued role of the grand architects to the MoT representatives. A participant recalls that "[e]ven the studio staff that prepared the publication was not very much involved" [Ada]. The full comment on the process is the following:

Even the studio staff that prepared the publication was not very much involved. The municipality determined the individuals who would participate and were mainly either freelance experts, or from various institutions, i.e. from the ministries, from the central government, and from the Municipality. For example, at the table of tourism and culture that I was [leading], there was a girl from the Municipality of Tirana who was the director of culture, i.e., people who belonged to the field. But there was no external public [Ada].

Logically, the later were the clients, thus the market rationality employed in this process rendered the MoT omnipotent during the process, that in turn deemed the MoT omniscient. Omniscient MoT, therefore, was dominantly capable of imposing its view on what counts as professional and technical contribution and what not. Consequently, tacit and explicit use of power enabled MoT representatives to force their instrumental rationality and to select out sensemaking efforts that challenged this established rationality.

4.2.1.1.2 Constraining the Emergence of Variations

Whenever proposals for variations emerged, the MoT representatives and grand architects resorted to constraining techniques. The deliberateness of this practice is established by mayor Veliaj's strategy of shunning critique either by disregarding it as "small calculation" or by stigmatizing it as part of partisan concern, not a civic interest at all. On the other hand, the MoT's presented vision of the future city was deemed completely representative of the best public interest:

We have two opportunities: to use this fantastic chance to give Tirana a vision and a platform of where we will go in the next 15 years for which perhaps the children and grandchildren of this city, of this forum will be grateful, or we will make small calculations of the day and avoid strong debates or political clashes to squander a historic chance at hand (Veliaj, 2016).

By disqualifying variations from the sometimes-contending parties, mayor Veliaj exerted the power to define what logic is good, beautiful and right, and what is not. The partisan stigma, meanwhile, worked to classify citizens, experts and politicians into legitimate contributors to the imagined future city, and to illegitimate ones. Therefore, the practice of constraining proposed variations was permeated by power (Flyvbjerg, 2002). Veliaj's rationality is, therefore, longsighted, visionary and "fantastic", while it needs to fight with the opposite of rationality, with the short-sighted, small calculations of his opponents.

Another practice of constraining proposed variations was that of avoiding confrontation in public. In refusing to answer to the questions from powerless stakeholders, MoT representatives and grand architects succeeded to disqualify issues that were relevant to the earlier. A journalist describes this seizing of the public consultation by power:

It happened exactly as predicted. When the specialists of the opposition understood that there wasn't any hope left, they abandoned the room. Then Stefano Boeri also left. Deputy Mayor Arbjan Mazniku, Elisa Spiropali, and a few leftist councillors hadn't returned yet after the break. The ways used to avoid confrontation with the public, the media, and the opposition had worked (Rama, 2016).

The emergence of experiential rationality (Rivero et al, 2017), that would be expected from the urbanists, environmentalists, activists and citizens in general, as opposed to the instrumental or market rationality advanced by the MoT representatives and grand architects was, therefore, deemed almost impossible. Hired experts were only allowed to fill "in the missing data... while proposals and ideas, it is not that they took place immediately there" recalls expert EB. In another account, "they did [field] work

instead ... they were told “do this and that”, so they “were not those who proposed ideas” [Ada].

While stories of orbital forest and vertical forest have experienced prominent levels of narrative mobility (de Fina, 2020), others, i.e., increasing construction density within the perimeter of existing urban areas, have been “talked into the corner” (Miskimmon et al, 2013). From a narrative point of view, the competing stories of the critical publics were not allowed to be told, while the official stories of the “structured group that was part of the planning” gained narrative mobility by circulating across the mass media and social media. *Bosco verticale*³ and *bosco orbitale*⁴ is an example of coined metaphors that was widely used in both formal and non-formal communication about TR030.

By constraining the emergence of alternative stories, where variations would be implanted, the hosting party, i.e., MoT, shaped the agenda in friendly terms to the intentions and expectations of the powerful strategy-makers, while the alternative stories and proposals didn’t find a fertile ground to develop. Consequently, agenda setting emerged as a narrative niche that endorsed the generation of certain imagination about the future at the expense of others.

4.2.1.1.1.3 Disqualifying/ Rescheduling Proposed Variations

MoT representatives and grand architects set the meetings and hearings agenda in multiple ways in advance of, and during the events. When filters applied by agenda-setting tactics prior to the event, the during-event agenda-setting tactics came into play. Such was the disqualifying of the proposed variations and modifications to the official draft. Mayor Veliaj’s narrative sets the trend in coping with possible polemics or objections toward the MoT’s draft:

³ Vertical forest (from Italian) - author’s translation

⁴ Orbital forest (from Italian) - author’s translation.

We have two opportunities: to use this fantastic chance to give Tirana a vision and a platform of where we will go in the next 15 years for which perhaps the children and grandchildren of this city, of this forum will be grateful, or we will make small calculations of the day and avoid strong debates or political clashes to squander a historic chance at hand (Veliaj, 2016).

Veliaj's rationality is, therefore, longsighted, visionary and fantastic, while it needs to fight with the opposite of rationality, with the short-sighted, small calculations of his opponents. In the same logic, those who question and object the official draft are immediately aligned with the partisan politics of the "small calculations". It was a death sentence to any opponency to the master plan.

The last filtering operation to the participation of possible oppositional voices in the meetings is the tight physical control of the entry by guards. A naked power practice is exercised in front of the mass media:

At the entrance, the guards of the municipality and the guards of the hotel were supervising together. A notable example of a public-private partnership! The message: The meeting is public, but only under our strict supervision. Only minutes before the discussion is opened, the request of the media to be inside the conference room is refused. The situation is tense, so the guards try to act objectively. The cameras of Top Channel also remain out. No exceptions (Rama, 2016).

Neither public nor mass media escapes the full-scale assault against unauthorised participation. The power-relations employed in this case are not emerging from knowledge, expertise or any sophisticated technology: they are a direct offshoot of physical force of police.

After delivering his speech, mayor Veliaj left the meeting with the excuse that he had to go to the Municipality to make a celebration, exactly at the moment when the right-wing councillors asked to ask questions to the mayor [Ardit].

The power relations here are manifested by way of not expecting the seriousness of the opposition members of the municipality council and by ignoring their questions, concerns and critiques. Mayor and Deputy Mayor do not relate to them at all and leave the room without hearing their concerns. Depriving the councillors of the opportunity

to ask questions and to be heard is a tacit form of disqualifying any variation that might emerge amid those polemics.

Reconciling the positions of certain experts or stakeholders with those of the MoT was not the job of the strategizing team. The MoT doesn't seem to establish a clear, transparent and formal procedure and structure to deal with the proposed variations, even when they arise. The destiny of the conclusions of those powerlessly frustrated expert roundtables was determined:

There was not much design team that dealt with the mediation part, but it was more the staff of the Municipality. Certain people are not allowed to be involved in public hearings that may have happened. I think it happened because I saw myself that people were often selected to be in public hearings, as it is common in Albania [Ada].

By retaining the power to define what counts as knowledge and expertise, the strategy-makers held the power to define reality. As Flyvbjerg (1998; 2002) has previously found, power either ignored or projected "knowledge at its convenience":

There was not much design team that dealt with the mediation part, but it was more the staff of the Municipality. The people who work in the Municipality, who were hired, who led the process, knew where things went wrong and knew where to lead it to. They were the ones who mostly ran it as a process, i.e., it is not that it was exactly Boeri's product, at the end of the day [Ada].

Another way the municipality controlled the content of the public hearings, especially consultations with experts, was by demarcating the scope of the discussions in the roundtables. Ready-made documents were pre-printed and put on the tables and the experts were invited to comment on them, to add information and to correct inaccurate data. However, this prevented them from commenting the product as a whole, viewing and assessing the inter-sectoral issues and concerns, and proposing solutions that would fall into the strategic layer of the document.

A pre-printed document was usually found on the tables, during the analysis stage, such as the analysis of infrastructure, and this was discussed further. When Francesca made the technical presentation, she said that as for the infrastructure, we found these [findings] [Artur].

Variations that would emerge, especially during the expert roundtables were usually rescheduled for further discussions and review by the MoT representatives and grand architects. In truth, they are not disqualified at once, but their authors are plainly warned by the mayor about the partisan filtering of their feedback, leaving room to the MoT to bracket out what didn't fit to their official draft:

In the end, I want to close it where Joni closed it. This is a conversation that should not be closed. This is a conversation that needs to continue. With some of you it will continue in much more focused groups. While for those who live abroad, we will have to use our site which is tr030.com. Not only will we clarify, of course with your permission, all the proposals you have given, but we want this to be an ongoing conversation. It is better to ventilate all, even those who for certain political reasons will go against the plan without any clear reasoning but only that there should be a debate on everything (Veliaj, 2016).

Even in the TR030 final document it is difficult to find the traces of the public or civil society proposals. No program or project was changed because of the pressure emanating from any of the social factors involved in the strategy-making process. The acidic environment either blocked the release of any public pressure on the official draft or mercilessly corroded any proposal that made it to the public hearing or expert roundtable and finally neutralized their impact. TR030 added to the existing conviction (Cole & Caputo, 1984; Checkoway, 1981; Adams, 2004; Jarzabkowski & Seidl, 2008) that the public's feedback cannot affect the blueprints proposed by the more powerful strategy-makers.

4.2.1.1.1.4 Knowledge as a Function of Time

The public hearing hosts controlled the time and got what they wanted. "They set the time of the meeting" Lukas told the present researcher. This power tactic was supported by other uses of control over time, such as late announcements of the meetings, limited time to participants' involvement, and early leaving of the MoT representatives. Announcements and invitations were disseminated between 1 to 48 hours in advance, presentation to the City Council being scheduled for weekend. "[T]he

announcement was made in violation of every law and procedure: it was announced on Saturday, leaving the Council members less than 48 hours to prepare” said Ardit.

Time is the single major reason behind public’s denial of community affairs, says Putnam (2000). The rhetoric questions asked by an urbanist aside the online publication of a document stating the principles on which TR030 was to develop, says it all: “is that why the invitation to the presentation went out just an hour prior to the event?” (Pira, 2016) No reply to this comment was seen by the continually active Director of Urban Development and Strategic Planning at the MoT. The reason to this silence probably being, if you can’t beat it, ignore it as insignificant.

Setting the agenda was sought also through unjustified delays in the very days of consultation. It added to the tiredness of those who could make it to the meeting venue. Unprepared, in certain cases puzzled by the topics of the meetings, people had to waste their time for the sake of the seemingly remarkably busy schedule of mayor. Finally, waiting proves not worth it as the mayor leaves very quickly:

The meeting started an hour late due to the failure of the mayor to appear in time, who in obvious prejudice had thought that the opposition councillors, including me, would not appear. Rather, we came and asked questions and got no answers. In some cases, the experts even told untruths. The chairman himself, after opening the meeting with unnecessary replies, did not stay in the meeting for more than 10 minutes and avoided confrontation. In the middle of the meeting, the deputy chairman also left [Mikaela].

Using a marriage ceremony as a justification to leave a public hearing of the metropolitan master plan sounds ridiculous. The courage to look ridiculous might be confounded as a weakness, while it emerges as a distinctive trait of massive power owning, as nobody in the room can object it. Veliaj shows the audience he’s got the power to make fun of the fragile audience’s commitment to a formal process. Meanwhile, he gives the process the seal of vanity:

After delivering his speech, mayor Veliaj left the meeting with the excuse that he had to go to the Municipality to perform a marriage ceremony, exactly at the moment when the right-wing members of Municipal Assembly wanted to ask questions to the mayor [Ardit].

Maintaining the right of asking questions, besides the telling rights, the MoT representatives and grand architects controlled the power to structure the discussions and debates. Though Veliaj left the meeting immediately after his speech, grand architects didn't compensate for his absence. They followed a deliberate flow of the process, making the active participation of challenging voices almost impossible:

I tried to write down some notes in a hurry and prepared some questions but as soon as he finished, he didn't sit down! He said he had to leave. Erion was avoiding the confrontation with the specialists in front of the media. Plan B was being firmly executed. He said he was in a rush to go to his office. According to him he had to be in an important marriage celebration that, in fact, turned out to be real. It was a marriage within the inner circle of the municipality. According to Plan C, the group of architects would answer only at the end. And so, after all questions were asked, part of them pre-planned, after the socialist specialists were also heard, the group of Italian architects demanded a fifteen-minute break adding therefore to the confusion that hovered over TR030 (Rama, 2016).

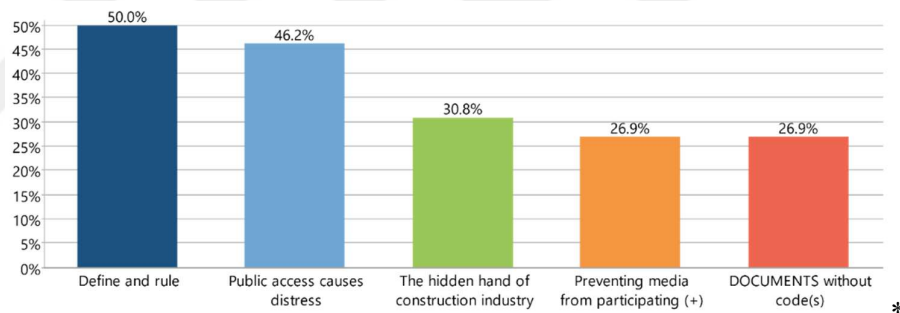
Limited time allocated to the meeting and to each of its components produced a precipitation effect on the quality of analysis and proposed solutions (Seidl & Hendry, 2003; Seidl & Guerard, 2015). While the MoT representatives and MoT hired experts were allowed to tell stories that served to legitimize their proposals and perspectives, the participants were barely allowed to have a say, let alone a story, that come against the official ones. Since the construction of valid knowledge in a social context develops through a multilateral conversation process, limiting, and sometimes even fully denying, time allocated to public involvement contributed to a one-sided knowledge construction process.

MoT representatives and grand architects left no room for alternative storytelling, depriving the present stakeholders of the chance to make their narrative rationality known to the audiences. Therefore, the power employed through agenda setting proved effective in shaping a non-welcoming narrative niche to the participatory city planning.

4.2.1.1.2 *Too Critic to Participate*

In addition to full control on the agenda and late announcements, other filters were applied that discouraged or prevented the participation of the critics and potentially resisting audiences. Firstly, the MoT representatives prepared on their own the lists of participants who deserved an invitation to the closed meetings of expert tables and certain public hearings. Secondly, the selected participants were either from among the staff of MoT and its subordinate agencies, or they were formal representatives of central government institutions that had been instructed to behave in friendly terms.

Figure 4-1 Too critic to participate subcodes weight and distribution*



Produced on MAXQDA 2020

4.2.1.1.2.1 **Define and Rule**

A selector mechanism used to establish a friendly narrative ecosystem to the MoT proposed draft of Tirana master plan was the arbitrary definition of what counted as audience and what not. The Municipality representatives and grand architects had a clear definition of what represented a favourable audience to the proposed draft and what not. This criterion was applied on every stratum of participation at every layer of public consultation process, from expert tables to public hearings. The following is the experience of a participant with the expert table audience definition and selection:

In the beginning, hearings were held with groups of experts. I was there. So, there was no public and, I remember very well, that even the public that wanted to participate was not allowed. The municipality determined the individuals who would participate and were mainly either freelance experts, or from various institutions, i.e., from the ministries, from the central government, and from the Municipality [Ada].

The extent to which the MoT filtered the participation and the application of its definition of valid audience is manifest in the described experience of one of the participants:

I am referring to the group I partook in, we were the group of engineering infrastructure ... and systems ... water supply, sewerage, electricity ... In this table ... all ...[them] were from the Municipality, none from the central government; all from local [units] [Artur].

At the level of public hearings, the public was invited to play a passive listener's role. The events were typically designed as presentations of the proposed master plan and the constituting projects. No feedback from the public was reflected in the minutes. No feedback could be drawn from a powerless and nominated public:

I remember specifically in Kombinat, there were more to explain the pilot projects, the reactivation of Kombinat as one of the centres of Tirana and how this whole area would develop and always the language with the experts has been different from the language used with the general audience [Zamira].

What feedback is expected from an uninformed audience?! Without a project and ripped of a meaning to relate to, citizens were non-deliberately converted into spectators and the public hearings into shows:

... it was not an audience ... spectators. Because in the end we are planning, what will happen in my neighbourhood, how many mansions will be built. And if he does not give this kind of information to the public, he cannot blame them for not knowing what to say [Flavio].

The public hearings announcements were published in a way none of the participants could recall. Only a handful of public consultations were held in a city of approximately 800 thousand inhabitants and tens of municipal units. As a result,

participation in the said events was neither democratic, nor effective because they neither represent the populace quantitatively, nor their concerns:

People are powerless and when you are powerless in Albania you have nothing. You are crushed, these people are crushed. You do not need to communicate with them. In the same way that you do not need to communicate to construction builders that are your friends, you do not need to communicate to these people because they have no power [Paris].

Apart from public, who are powerless, and experts who are widely co-opted, a key audience of a city master plan is the developers: the construction and real estate companies. Strangely, they do not express any concerns or debate the draft proposed by MoT and grand architects. Were they satisfied with the future city? Obviously, the answer to this question is positive: “Construction companies are not even an audience in a sense that Rama does not need to say anything publicly to any construction company. You will be fine” [Paris].

Obviously, an audience that gained the MoT’s real attention was the international audience. The communication efforts paid to the international media and to the international recognition of TR030 was enormous. Contrasted with the total disregard for the local audiences, especially the general populace, the international audience emerges as the real audience of the project. This is the impression of one participant the present study:

It is my impression that most of the discourse around this territorial reform was not aimed at Albania but aimed at EU, it was aimed at the internationals. And the parts of discourse that were aimed at Albanians were very localized in a sense like look we are making a park for you here. So, like basically feeding into this type of patronage attitude like the only good that comes out of it is what is directly visible to your eyes because your children can play in this park, rather than, you know, large infrastructural reform, by-passes ... [Paris].

By ruling the general populace and other local audiences out of their definition of the audience, MoT representatives and grand architects paved the way to shaping the city’s strategy and its future in the midfield established by the interaction with the international audience. The narration stage for TR030’s development was, thus, the

negotiated space of international media, and the narrative offshoot of the targeted negotiation was an output that pre-existed the narration, just branded in an acceptable storyline. Whereas the local populace and CSO-s played no role at all in developing the internationalized story of the city's future.

4.2.1.1.2.2 The Hidden Hand of Construction Industry in City Planning

The purpose of demarcating audience typology was pursued by a multi-faceted strategy. Besides implicit and explicit definition of audience, hiding the very target audiences of the master plan helped the strategy-makers maximize the power-effect of the applied narrativity. Efforts paid to this venture are primarily obvious in Veliaj's enhancement of an urban plan's definition:

I am glad that none of these topics read the word building permit. In what sense? Because for an exceptionally long time the urban plan and the general local plan was synonymous with the platform on which the mayor gives a building permit. In fact, this is not the case at all. Building permits are only part of the urban plan. Especially in a country where we have areas that are developed irrationally, especially the [suburban] local government units that are attached [recently] to Tirana, [the urban plan] is everything else in these cases, except the building permit (Veliaj, 2016).

The overwhelming tension in this statement of mayor Veliaj pops up from an expected public labelling of the rapid process as clientelist and unnecessary, except for the construction industry interests. This is especially valid when an urban plan was approved and adopted 4 years ago. By this statement, Veliaj releases his plan to break with the negative tradition of the last 15 years of local governance in Tirana. Therefore, there should be no public concerns about construction. To commit to a sympathetic rationality, Veliaj states that not only he believes that he needs to suppress the further constructions, but he also offers his engagement to either stop that degenerative process at the cost of lost jobs and business for a chain of industries and professions.

If there are still sceptics about the seriousness of the mayor's intention to stop the overbuilding of the city, Veliaj offers an additional guarantee to this: his full

awareness that this decision is painful, and it will take supplemental work and plans to recover the lost jobs from the moderated impact of the construction sector on the city's economy. Using an environmentalist's tone, he states:

I believe that the pressure that comes from builders' associations where employment is required only if we give a building permit should be moderated. I am not naive. I know that building permits, building palaces employ people: cement factories work, brick factories work, construction brigades work, all those who sell household appliances. I am clear about this. But this must have a limit (Veliaj, 2016).

Therefore, if he has already in mind the ways how to mitigate the negative impact of reducing constructions, the participants' attention has already shifted from the veracity of "no more construction permits" commitment to the necessity of an alleviation plan that compensates for the lost jobs. On the other hand, according to Veliaj, construction boosts the economic turnover increasing the demand for bricks, cement, construction labour and home appliances. This rationality rationalizes, therefore legitimizes (van Leeuwen, 2019) the expectedly generous construction permits issuance by the MoT.

The new strategy of the city, he implies, aims at diversifying the portfolio of employment opportunities beyond construction. De facto, construction industry is disregarded carefully by excluding the building permits as a motive for a rapid urban planning process. The realtors and developers need not pass any test of public and professional scrutiny because their interests are best served by the MoT's strategy of disguising their actual 'hidden hand' in city planning.

Disguising the audiences by never mentioning them while discussing the city's new strategy is an example of how power is not only exercised through decision-making (Pettigrew, 1973; 1985; Child, 1972), but also through non-decision making (Bachrah & Baratz, 1962). The discussions evolve around numerous issues, except for the stakes of the real-estate developers and their imagination of the city's future. Neither are they present or represented in the public hearings and expert tables, nor are they mentioned by the strategy-makers. One of the interviewees, involved in the process as a consultant, describes the concealing of the construction industry this way:

In the meetings I participated, no such discussions with the construction industry representatives were held. I have no idea how these are involved as stakeholders. Architects know better. That has been the focus of their work. I do not believe the developers had seen any restrictions on the whole plan to worry about. That is how I understand it. I do not believe they felt threatened by the plan. Because there were building spaces, red spots. I do not know if there were any influencing. Since they also have legitimate influences if they want to influence. Once again, I did not notice that they felt anxious [Flavio].

In slightly differing with the MoT representatives, grand architects make absolutely no mention of the construction industry in their presentations. Apparently, the challenging task of rationalizing and selling the “no more constructions” engagement to the public was assigned to the political representatives of MoT. On the other hand, grand strategists use the terms stakeholders and civil society to overlook the phrase construction industry. The following is an example from the presentation of the first draft of TR030 master plan:

... the urban government is starting a new phase, a new process, a process that is able to negotiate between top-down needs, top-down decisions based on the principle of the common good, and diverse cultural, social, economic interests imposed by this civil society (Baroncelli, 2016).

Is civil society an overarching categorization grasping the public opinion, NGO, universities, expertise, politicians and business, particularly the construction industry, employed here as a rhetorical strategy to hide the construction industry audience? Baroncelli uses the overarching concept of civil society to mean the entire social and economic forces, just after mentioning the supply-side role of the governments. A bit earlier, she makes mention of the term in a relationship between the 2008 global economic crisis and the necessity of governments bailing out ‘civil society’. Thus, construction industry is erased with due caution from the official narrative.

Construction industry is erased with due caution from the official narrative. The foreign urbanist uses the overarching concept of civil society to mean the entire social and economic forces, just after mentioning the supply-side role of the governments. Civil society becomes, therefore, a rhetorical device that disguises one of the real

stakeholders of TR030: construction industry. If we link the concepts of building cities through construction permits with the civil society as the implementing party of this process, we can easily notice the part the civil society, as a rhetorical, device plays in disguising the real audience: construction.

Another rhetorical device used to disguise the construction industry is that of the stakeholders. The same international urbanist employs the term stakeholder aside all the major stakeholders of a master plan apart from construction industry, when she considers “urban plan as a negotiation between ... as a collaboration between politicians, international expert, stakeholders, citizens, universities, thinkers, artists, NGOs and so on (Bedo, 2016)). Stakeholders stands, here, for an occult category of parties. While the rest of audiences are nominally mentioned, the construction industry and the business in general is not mentioned at all.

By excluding the construction industry actors from the public consultation sessions, the decision-makers are not depriving them of access to the strategizing activity. Indeed, they are safeguarding them from public critique – especially from the partisan and media representatives – and avoiding the necessity to produce a rationality to subdue the publics rationality of an overconstructed city. This choice is deliberate to the extent it serves the best interests of the construction industry. Lack of a discourse about developers has been adopted as a strategy to avoid public accusations towards them, according to a participant to the present study:

Is there a public narrative of the government towards construction companies?

I do not think that there is any public narrative. These people are never addressed. There is no public discourse about construction companies. There is no narrative even about the way they serve the country. They are never mentioned. They are never mentioned. How many times Rama has said [developer name]? Or [developer name]? Publicly. Never! Never! Never! Never! These people simply exist. Which is of course completely in their interest. The more these names are repeated, the clearer it becomes that these people have extracted enormous amount of capital from the Albanian people in illegal ways [Paris].

Therefore, the disguising of the audiences by never mentioning them while discussing the city's urban strategy is not only exerted through decision-making (Pettigrew, 1973; 1985; Child, 1972), but also through non-decision making (Bachrah & Baratz, 1962). While audience definition helped the strategy-makers demarcate the typology of the participants in the consultation process, disguising the real beneficiaries of the MoT's TR030 draft enabled branding it in environmentally friendly qualities in the international communications campaign.

4.2.1.1.2.3 Public Access Causes Distress

Given the selective nature of the meetings and the interest of the strategy-makers to contain discussions to obedient audiences, people were bracketed in and bracketed out (Boden 1994; Schwartzman, 1989) in accordance with the MoT instructions. Invitations were sent extremely late (Steckler & Herzog, 1979), a well-known strategy for participation reduction. The following is the reaction of an urbanist to the late announcement of a public consultation session:

... is it why the invitation to the presentation went out just an hour prior to the event? It is hard to engage the public and it is even easier to claim it's hard and not aim for transparency and dialogue (Piro, 2016).

Regardless of the MoT's participation filtering moves, interested citizens and activists who made it to a meeting were enough to force the MoT staff pay maximum efforts with implementing the next steps of the public access denial strategy. Neither the public, nor the journalists are allowed to enter the meeting room: "The situation is tense, so the guards try to act objectively. The cameras of Top Channel stay also out. No exceptions [Bernard]." Only after long and fierce debates between the MoT representatives and the CSO's, "representatives of these groups [CSO's] and the media" were "allowed in the hall as listeners" [Ardit].

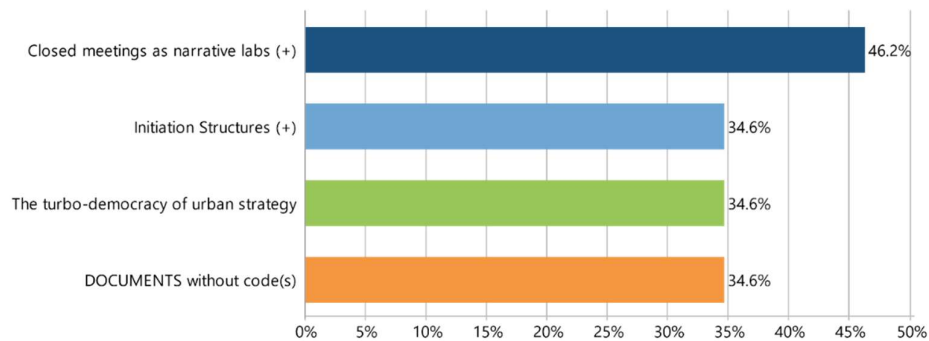
The disputed territory where the agreement was negotiated was the territory of the public and media rights for information and participation in a highly significant process for the future of the city they are to live in for a predictable period. The achieved results are much less than the legally established citizens' rights for participation and

information. According to one of those journalists who were present in the event, “[t]hat’s how easy it is to silence the voice of the journalists and the accountability of the public in Veliaj’s so-called European metropolis [Bernard].

4.2.1.1.3 *The Iron Fist in the Hearing Sessions*

The public hearings and the closed expert tables worked as strategy-making fields where the MoT representatives and the grand architects, undisturbed, experimented, tested, and applied their power relations and their dominant narrative rationality. The strict control of initiation structures (Jarzabkowski & Seidl, 2008), their driving of an extensively rapid process, as well as their rendering of the public hearings into laboratories for official narrative prototypes testing gave rise to a non-democratic, non-participatory process of public consultations. These measures are explained into details in the following sections.

Figure 4-2 The Iron Fist of Hearing Sessions subcodes weights and distribution*



* Produced on MAXQDA 2020

4.2.1.1.3.1 Initiation Structures

The first meetings of TR030 were organized in a close manner with preselected experts of different fields as organizers tend to use them as legitimizing tools for open meetings (Jarzabkowski & Seidl, 2008). The active participation of the experts is conditioned by the time allocated to each of the components of the consultation, by the language that orients discussions towards imagining possible futures of the city. The

grand architects and MoT representatives organized and oriented the schedule, the topics, the composition of the expert tables, as Boeri himself introduces below:

But just after that immediately after that starting at 2pm we want to start with the roundtables, and roundtables will be there, let me see the main part of this, of this working day, and we want you, if we are asking you and we are really happy that you are here with us, to let me subdivide into ten tables which are 10 issues about the future of the city, and for each table our proposal is: start to imagine, to produce a free list (Boeri, 2016)

The initiation structure of public hearing sessions and expert tables assumes a symbolic authority (Jarzabkowski & Seidl, 2008) of the grand architects that is hidden between the lines. Furthermore, the internationals, supported by the widespread impression that they bring vast knowledge and experience, as well as building upon their skills and technologies, established an asymmetrical rapport (Seidl & Guerard, 2015) with the local experts or publics.

The content the experts need to consider while reflecting and proposing modifications, changes or direction shifts is vast. The time allocated to this assignment is extremely limited, generally not more than 1 hour. The capacity of an expert table to review them in group is dramatically questioned. So is the quality of the recommendations. One of the experts shares their thoughts on the sophisticated nature of the job:

That it is not just that strategic document. There are regulations, so there are many things that ... there is transformation, there is zoning, determining the structuring of the territory that it already decides how ... when applying for a permit how much you can develop. They are all from behind and as a common public you do not see them but they are part of the work [Ada].

Boeri pays no efforts to conceal from the participants the pre-existing nature of the strategy. He presents in front of them the components of the master plan and the fill-in blanks where they can accommodate their opinions and recommendations. The participation of the experts is, therefore, conditioned by the way the meeting is set up, the people allowed to partake and 'legitimate' issues to discuss:

There will be a general model that will show the Tirana of 2030. It will be a letter, a letter in the sense of a summary of principles and rules, truly clear, extraordinarily strong, not numerous in number and amazingly simple in the way they serve everyone to understand how to properly do, where to go and how to intervene. The third part will be an atlas of transformation projects that will highlight some areas where we think the maximum energy should be invested for the transformation of the city (Boeri, 2016).

So, how did Boeri bracket in and bracket out topics when initiating the public hearing sessions? He managed to do so by directly offering a template where the experts could work upon. This granted the strategy-makers the assurance that once the meetings ended, the recoupling of the strategy process with the pre-existing structures of guiding approach would be smooth and painless. On the other hand, the public consultations and expert tables supply the MoT narrative with a vibe of legitimacy (Adams, 2004) it needs to disregard any critique to the poor democratic nature of the process. Aware of the possibilities that their dominant rationalization might be challenged and defeated, the MoT representatives and strategy-making team were cautious to limit participation, preselect the participants and strictly delineate topics of discussion.

4.2.1.1.3.2 The Turbo-Democracy of Urban Strategy

It was the mayor himself who openly rationalizes the limited time assigned to the urban planning process. Even though the existing urban plan was approved and adopted a couple of years ago, he insists to advance a hurried operation. The rationale behind this haste is not public and no credible arguments were offered to it by Veliaj or his team. He, skilfully, struggles to project in the minds of the participants a smooth and natural flow of the process by employing rhetorical devices such as journey or long way to characterize the process itself:

Because after all, it is a journey that we started a while ago. Today we have come a long way and I believe on this draft we will discuss next time until we have a concrete proposal which I requested within June (Veliaj, 2016).

More than studying the actual tight deadlines, it is interesting to scrutinize the tones of disappointment in Veliaj's speech. It seems the planned timeline was even more radical, as one of the involved experts' reports:

... it started in 2015, at the end of 2015 as a process and it was thought that in June 2016 it would complete. But it was not closed because it was actually a noticeably brief time to allocate only 6 months to an urban regulatory plan, which had many other things within [Ada].

The time allocated to the overall process as well as to its minor components, such as public hearings and expert tables thoroughly permeates the planning process by rendering it superficial and irreflexive. According to some of the experts involved in the process, this irreflexive nature of the city planning and consultation sessions might have rendered the final master plan TR030 questionably effective as an urban plan:

First of all, it was a very rapid process. It was not it was a very hasty process as a whole. It did not receive the right time to process all that information, to produce a product which would be a real regulatory plan. But it was more of an instrument to make a plan that paved the way for, so to speak, other construction permitting processes [Flavio].

Apart from the rapidity of the chronological time, the experiential time was also very tight. City councillors, often had to review thousands of pages of text and maps within an extremely limited time horizon.

Materials with 4800 pages of text and maps were provided to us only 48 hours before the meeting and only in electronic form (Aliaj, 2016)

The MoT representatives were also cautious to abandon the public hearing premises as soon as they finished their staged storied speeches, allowing the participants no opportunities to shape the meetings' agenda through questions and polemics.

After delivering his speech, Mayor Veliaj left the meeting with the excuse that he had to go to the Municipality to make a celebration, exactly at the moment when the right-wing councillors asked to ask questions to the mayor [Ardit].

Leaving the meeting premises early was, to the experience of some participants, a well-thought strategy intending to rip any critique or concern off the public relevance,

that is usually achieved through mass media broadcasting and relaying. The “good time” (Schwarz, 2009) of giving the floor to the public was also well-planned:

... the organizers had planned to forgo the explanations and arguments: all the questions were grouped, and the answers were to be given in groups as well. This technique skipped the direct answers and so the city municipality morphed the answer only to a shape that was conducive to its interests (Rama, 2016).

Still others believe the public hearings were formally convened and played no role at all in the outcome of this urban planning process. According to them, the real plan was drafted on the backstage, while the citizens were told inspiring stories about how living in Tirana would be in once the plan was successfully implemented: “As the real reasons for the plan have nothing to do with the citizens, the entire process of drafting it took place in secret and with legal violations” [Armanda].

Whenever the MoT representatives felt insecure about the validity and efficiency of their arguments or when they felt they lacked a rational one, they employed strategies of distortion, ranging from brutal use of force to delaying sessions. Delaying the slice of time assigned to public feedback worked as an effective strategy to reduce the attendance (Steckler & Herzog, 1979) and to divert the attention. Practically, delaying meant disregarding:

It happened exactly as predicted. When the specialists of the opposition understood that there was not any hope left, they abandoned the room. Then Stefano Boeri also left. Deputy Mayor Arbjan Mazniku, Elisa Spiropali, and a few leftist council members hadn’t returned after the break. The ways used to avoid confrontation with the public, the media, and the opposition had worked (Rama, 2016).

In summary, rapid process of public hearings and consultation contributed to establishing a narrative niche that worked as a friendly environment for MoT and grand strategists’ city narratives while hostile to the powerless citizens, activists, opposition councillors and critical journalists. By shunning the clarity (McCabe, 2010) during most of the public hearings and closed meetings, the MoT representatives and grand architects managed to avoid resistance and clear the way for the official narrative.

4.2.1.1.3.3 Closed Meetings as Narrative Labs

The media, opposition council members and certain activists have criticized the consultation process as either inexistent or formal. However, it seems not all topics have developed smoothly. There have been debates during the experts' tables, but these polemics rarely reached the mass-media or the public opinion. The closed nature of the expert tables does not allow for a public sensemaking of the degree to which such debates have influenced the outcomes. This is how an expert summarizes some of these polemics:

There have been debates about the environmental issues, protection, which areas should be protected, which should not be, what does this mean. There have been [discussions] about the river Lana, what to do with Lana, because it is very polluted, there are also hospital spills thrown into it. I remember as a discussion, that someone said we should cover it and someone else not. I think there have been many [debates] but in general the staff always consulted with the Municipality, with the technical staff of the Municipality for certain problems. Because at the end of the day the plan belongs to the Municipality [Ada].

Attendance reduction strategies worked hand in hand with the formal nature of the consultation process. Though people criticized the MoT proposals and offered alternative strategies, they were ignored. But these critics were, surely, the softest. Other layers of diversion strategies had bracketed out harsher critics and opponents of this abrupt reset in the urban planning process. One of these strategies was the short notice:

Is it that why the invitation to the presentation went out just an hour prior to the event? It is hard to engage the public and it is even easier to claim its hard and not aim for transparency and dialogue (Piro, 2016).

Once again, closed meetings emerged as effective tools in the hands of strategy-making top-managers to develop coping strategies for open public meetings (Jarzabkowski & Seidl, 2008). TR030 strategizers used the formality of closed meetings to design a narrative niche that would help them deal with the public reaction

during the open public hearings. It is within these labs that most of the social experiments were developed and from there they learned their practical lessons.

Narrative Species

Only a narrow narrative species survived the process of ecological selection in the framework of TR030 master plan, i.e., chronotopic practices and the tales of sustainable development of the city. The former ones were allowed to thrive in view of their ability to bolster the strategic storytelling of the MoT representatives and the grand architects. By virtue of assigning a spatial axis to the chronological narrations of the strategy-makers, chronotopes proved invaluable to persuading the addressees and marshalling their support of official draft of TR030. The latter compose the flesh and the blood of the very process of strategic narration, thus constituting the set of first-hand tools of strategy-making.

4.2.1.1.4 Chronotopicity

The necessity to study the discursive practices underpinning the knowledge-production settings has been emphasized by social and organizational scientists (Kaplan, 2011; Orlikowski, 2010; Schatzki, 2005). The ability of material and textual tools to mediate strategy-making practices is an understudied phenomenon (Kaplan, 2011).

Table 4-2 Chronotopicity subcodes weights and distribution*

Subcodes/Documents	Documents	Percentage	Percentage (valid)
Statistis for rhetorics	10	38.46	50.00
One photograph talks one thousand words	10	38.46	50.00
The powerhouse of the PowerPoint	9	34.62	45.00

The tick-tock of the Renaissance frescos	7	26.92	35.00
3D city	6	23.08	30.00
Let the papers talk	6	23.08	30.00
Vivid videos	5	19.23	25.00
Screaming screens	3	11.54	15.00
DOCUMENTS with code(s)	20	76.92	100.00
DOCUMENTS without code(s)	6	23.08	-
ANALYZED DOCUMENTS	26	100.00	-

* Generated from MAXQDA 2020

During the TR030 public hearings and expert table meetings, space was extensively used to establish a storyline in the framework of TR030 public consultation. Images, videos, frescos, PowerPoint presentations, screens, and graphics helped the strategy-makers get away with drawbacks in the officially sponsored rationality. On the other hand, visuals make up for 80% of the human impressions of the world (O'Malley et al., 1996). Visual practices play a mediating role in fulfilling the citizens experience and perceive the future city in advance, as well as in building consensus around it (Bishop & Lange, 2005).

4.2.1.1.4.1 Let the Papers Talk

The most comprehensive form of chronotopes in TR strategic planning process was the use of documents. By means of documents, the strategy-makers were able to compress multiple semiotic components in one single tool. However, the way the documents were designed and served to the audience hindered the sensemaking capabilities of the public hearing sessions' participants. The degree of technicality and the vast volume of the content the sets of documents involved rendered their review impossible.

Participants' reflections on the role of those documents are abundant. One of them called them "a compilation of technical maps" while the strategizing team "had the full master plan document" at the exclusion of "municipal councillors" [participant KO].

Another participant raises the issue of volume and insufficient time available to reviewing and commenting. “Materials with 4800 pages of text and maps were provided to us only 48 hours before the meeting and only in electronic form” (Aliaj, 2016). However, the presence and mediating role of the documents is not questioned by none of them.

The Charter was another form of document agencement that set the tone of contributions by experts in the city planning process. An expert reveals to the present researcher how the Charter assumed the function of a manifesto, a theoretical ground for practical actualizations proposed by urban planners, architects, environmental experts, and hydrology engineers.

“They created a Charter, this is how they called it, which was like a kind of a rule, and this is how the use of language shows how people, when they try to make a political statement, write a manifesto. For people who love architecture and heritage conservation, this is typical. Whoever wanted to create a theory, has first developed a Charter. These are the rules now, you must follow them altogether [Ada].

The use of documentary practices helped the MoT representatives and grand architects establish a legitimizing context, a spirit of professionalism and disciplinary setting that had to be endorsed by the participants from all levels of society. Participants’ inability to read the technical and visual content of the documents provided the strategy-makers with a narrative advantage that lubricated their flow of proposals. It rarely triggered opposition and aversion.

4.2.1.1.4.2 Statistics for Rhetoric

Data driven storytelling (Knowles, 2018) was used by the strategy-makers to instil hope and grand expectations in participants’ minds. Mayor Veliaj, deputy mayor Mazniku, grand architect Boeri and his team projected a fast-growing Tirana by extrapolating, by speculating, and by mixing data from diverse sources. Participants were not prepared nor able to check the veracity of the data or to object them. They were left with only one version of the story of future of their city.

In the words of Laura Gatti, a member of the strategic planning team, “over the next year's the population of the Tirana metropolitan area is expected to increase.” Therefore, “we need more water not just for domestic uses, but we need more water for food and energy production” (Pastore, 2016). Population growth projections were enthusiastically high:

According to the TR030 Master Plan, the population in Tirana is projected to be 1.6 million inhabitants by 2031. So, the designers predict a doubling of the population in the next 16 years. This means that they have drafted a master plan which provides housing for 800 thousand more inhabitants. Which means more construction [Ardit].

The sources of such information and data are never disclosed during the speeches and presentations. The strategic storytellers, thus, assume an authority that is beyond their capacity as politicians or urban planners. Indeed, they are only circulating popular myths and beliefs about the current population of the city and a never-quantified growth pace. One of the participants has noticed that:

We know very well that if we need to know the population, INSTAT says one thing, the civil registry says another. How do I know which is right ... We do not know how many people live in Tirana ... So, it depends. And the issue of using the population of Tirana ... Veliaj always says 1 million. In fact, it is lower than that. It is not 1 million, it is 800 thousand based on some other data. But who knows, we will wait for next year 's census to find out [Ada].

On the other hand, numbers and projections helped the MoT representatives and grand architects draw nearer their Achilles' heel: high rise constructions. They tried to prevent opposition from the environmentalists and activists by projecting limited use of land in exchange for high-rise buildings. These were the hopes Veliaj was intending to trigger in one of his speeches:

The justification for high-rise construction was to save space. Veliaj said, for example, that the city does not suffer for air but for land. Therefore, let us save the surface of the land and build at height. This is not a terrible thing, of course. There Veliaj presented the ceiling of the land use coefficient, 45% [Juliana].

However, MoT representatives and grand architects failed to offer a monitoring and evaluation basis for their forecasting. Obviously, municipality has not even developed a cost projection of the programs adopted by the leaders. Thus, the narrative effect of the used numbers is evident in employing them only for the sake of inspiring an optimistic imagination of the city's future. Veliaj represents the clearest example of this approach: We have set a target. In the Municipality of Tirana, we plant an average of 30-35 trees per day, which means 1000 trees per month. We want to close this mandate with 50 thousand trees.

To help the audience in the meeting as well as the wider audience through television imagine how one of the weakest points of the city would be addressed, Veliaj tries to establish a relationship between TR030 objectives and environment and air quality. He does so by means of figures. A participant assesses the use of figures to ignite hopes around the future city:

Veliaj said that in the next 15 years 2 million trees would be planted. It took a big, pompous, compelling figure to balance the great dissatisfaction that exists among the residents for the quality of the environment in this city [Juliana].

The most fragrant example of the use of space to make sense of time is comprised of some parts of Veliaj's (2016) speech such as this one, while he is presenting the polycentrism as a solution to the city's projected enhancement:

... these five poles to slightly relax the pressure that the only centre of Tirana has of 1 million inhabitants of a Tirana that is to be no longer 40 square kilometres, as it is today, but 1200 square kilometres.

These statistics posed multiplied opportunities for economic development and growth. Development and growth are translated into jobs, employment, improved livelihoods, and quality of life for most of the citizens of Tirana. Geographically enhanced, with a much larger population and huge economy, a city that safeguards its green areas and builds vertically, Tirana of 2030 is a city that inspires imagination and raises hopes. Therefore, the strategy-makers got away with the critique, opposition and questions thanks to the narrative inequality that was established thanks to the chronotopes used throughout the process.

4.2.1.1.4.3 One Photograph Talks One Thousand Words

This is a public library in an informal settlement in Bogota uh ... in Medellin sorry – opened her presentation Lorenza Baroncelli, one of the strategic planning team members. The use of imagery during the consultation process was vast. From frescos to 3D models to videos, the strategy-makers hugely relied on the power of visualisation to marshal support around their proposed urban plan. Sometimes, the audience was happy with the mediation function that visual practices played throughout the process:

3Ds are not used much. Images were used more. There were some videos that were used in the beginning. They have used them but not all the time. They have been as much as in any development plan. Keep in mind, when you have architects working, images will be used [surely] [Ada].

The MoT representatives and grand architects, obviously, built upon this public acceptance of the presences of the images as legitimate tools used in planning. The natural ability of the visual practices to mediate a memorable and vivid imagination of the future's city facilitated their use in the process. This is how a participant recalls the overuse of imagery by the political leaders of the TR030 urban planning:

... when the leaders of the Municipality presented, such as Veliaj, Mazniku or Baboçi, or when Boeri introduced. They talked more and, in the background, had a slide, a photo, a 3D view and video-simulation that helped the audience imagine what the city would be like in 2030 according to the proposed TR030 plan [Zamira].

The images of Barcelona of 19th century, of the library of Medellin placed in an informally developed area, or of frescos of Lorenzetti's good and bad government allegory are employed to evoke familiar stories from the past or imagined ones from the future of the city, our city, thanks to the narrativity they are imbued with. In themselves, they are not stories and cannot tell a story, but they can generously help the narrators to keep the audience on the desired page and, eventually, reach to a mutual understanding of the future city. "That is why Boeri used videos, images that in this context are not common, that is, in the context of presenting a plan of a city, how common they are for a project in architecture" Zamira told the present inquirer.

4.2.1.1.4.4 Screaming Screens

Agency assignment to non-human actors, as represented by the concepts of material semiotics (Law, 2009) or actor network theory (Latour, 1990) is a well-accepted and accommodated idea in the social science. According to this understanding of the co-construction of reality by both human and non-human actants, the material practices or semiotics have their own say and contribution to the offshoots of the social interactions.

How significant was the contribution of the non-human elements to the narrative operation exerted by the strategic storytellers in the framework of TR030 planning process, is manifest in the care that the MoT representatives and grand architects took to refining them. “What was this show without spectators, for the sake of the spectators? Was this a plan, a mockery, or just a number: TR030? Was this really a project, or just a coloured screen?” (Rama, 2017) an activist journalist reflects on the experience of participating in one of those meetings.

Using screens as a material and visual practice to accelerate the mental digestion and adoption of the proposed futures of Albanian capital city is considered a major narrative strategy by experts involved in the process. This is how one of them recalls the role these material practices played in the making of the plan:

It was the main element of the presentation of the plan. Of course, it presented an incredibly beautiful futuristic vision with some of the works that Boeri had implemented abroad. So, this was one of the most powerful elements that was then combined with the narrative of those who presented it. It has been used as a tool to promote it [Flavio].

The function these screens carried out in the city planning is comparable to the role television screens play indoors. They are the conveyers of the official narratives to the watching public. They are instruments of power that put the strategy-makers in an asymmetrical relationship with the participating and watching public. Screens, and therefore all the materially semiotic practices, are not only full of narrativity but also tools for the enhancement of tellability of certain urban stories of the future. This

rapport is best marked in the allegorical sensemaking of the activist journalist Rama (2016): “[a] room filled with militants and a plan with no authorship ... on the screen.”

4.2.1.1.4.5 The Tick-Tock of the Renaissance Frescos

Among all visual practices in urban planning narrative, frescos are the most effective multimodal elements to establishing a chronological link between past, present, and future (Bateman & Wildfeuer, 2014; Groensteen, 2018). The intention to make such a chronological link is explicitly expressed in Boeri's statements:

So, the first was the opportunity to develop a fresco. When we say a fresco as we are talking about the opportunity to imagine the future of Tirana considering a future which is not too far as not too next. So, the idea was to imagine the future of 2030 as a future that we can control nowadays, so as a future which has a direct relation with our present action (Boeri, 2016).

Adopting Lorenzetti's allegory of Good and Bad Government embedded in the fresco Boeri is referring to, where the author praises the government of Siena of 14th century, is a loud alert to the intentions of MoT representatives and grand architects to produce a panegyric work to the MoT rather than a functional master plan. On the other hand, the allegory helps the strategy-makers get away with the poor analysis of the situation and missing reliable data. The storyline only develops as a dotted line when covering the present account of the city. A cautious and close observer of the process commented it as follows:

This was the report ... is not that how they started with the allegory of good government. That is their plan. Their plan ... started with these paintings, with Renaissance paintings, the city with the good ruler and the city with the bad ruler, right. These Renaissance allegories, I remember. And what follows is a completely nonsense story. It is completely incoherent, and they are just hoping that nobody ever reads this [Paris].

However, the MoT representatives and grand architects were intentionally borrowing from the Lorenzetti's allegory whatever matched with their narrative needs and left the rest of the allegorical implications of the fresco. Participants and observers

are often incredulous about the fit of the selective adoption of the good and bad government allegory by a group of people who were disregarding the factual issues the city was experiencing. Commenting on the online publication of the planning principles and strategic objectives of TR030, an urbanist emphasized the communicational favourability of this step while side-lining the challenges of the city:

This is a strange question, but I am curious if there is a concept behind the chronological distortion--why is Lorenzetti's fresco dated to the early 20th century? Does this actually have a kind of role in the historical concept you are trying to activate, or is it simply the result of an over-hasty attempt laying out of the ideas framing the project? (Pira, 2016).

But while the urbanists and qualified objectors of the communicational artefacts of the TR030 planning process questioned the validity of collecting nice metaphors, allegories, and stories that aimed at legitimating the MoT's strategic objectives, they could not grasp the intentions of MoT representatives and grand architects to employ a set of visual and material practices that made their propositions relevant to city-making, rather than just establishing a cautious causal relationship between past, present, and future.

Lorenzetti's allegory accommodates a major commandment that deals with the citizens participation. The citizens contribution to the wellbeing of the city should be to supplement the government's efforts. This component of the Renaissance allegory was, deliberately or not, actualised during the public hearings and experts' tables. Citizens were invited to unite around the grand strategies and objectives of the new master plan that was compiled by the MoT administration and the contracted corporate agents. In doing so, Lorenzetti's fresco added to the narrative mobility of the stories told by MoT representatives and grand architects.

4.2.1.1.4.6 Vivid Videos

"After an imaginary trip through the "Orbital Forest" of Stefano Boeri we returned to the real Tirana, in its centre, at Hotel Piazza, its height forever drowning the grave of Kapllan Pasha" (Rama, 2017). The presentation of TR030 final draft was

scheduled a couple of days before the voting process in the Municipal Assembly. One of the most recent high-rise constructions turned into a hotel was selected as the venue for the event. The hall furnishing was carefully perfect to a staged event:

The first to arrive were the light and sound technicians. It was a big conference room adorned with heavy dark curtains. In the centre, up on the front, there was a modern screen. On the white screen there was a green logo (Rama, 2016).

The narrative event is, therefore, not only informed by the background steady images, frescos, and data, but also by the dynamic and vivid presence of the 3D videos from the future of the city. Participants are watching the future of the city with the eyes of the strategy-maker, marking a panoptic intersection between the two (Foucault, 1982). Ideologized with the purposeful view of the promised city, the audience becomes the agent of the strategy-maker. What more sublime an intention would have pushed the MoT representatives and grand architects toward using videos in the presentation of a metropolitan city master plan? The simple and direct words of a participating expert converge with the present author's interpretation:

That is why Boeri used videos, images that in this context are not common, that is, in the context of presenting a plan of a city, how common they are for a project in architecture. I think this has been (an effort) to make it marketable (strategy) in front of an audience that is more captivated in the images than by the part behind them, the content, and the real implications [Zamira].

The function screens played throughout the proceedings of public hearings and expert tables is typically that of a non-human actant in social activities. Hand in hand with the human actants, i.e., the strategy practitioners, screens co-constructed the imagined future of Tirana and co-facilitated the adoption of this imagined future by the participating publics. It assisted the mental process of support-generation to the draft proposed by the MoT representatives and grand architects:

... visualization is particularly important in architecture and urban planning. [It h]elps audiences to visualize the future state of objects. For example, do you have in mind these animated videos of people moving between the apartment-blocks, along the designed yet not built streets? These "shootings" help people

a lot to imagine the stuff. The way they are presented there, the art of visualization, is important to gain the support of people [Flavio].

Videos were the most vivid visual artefacts that connected the dots of small narratives (Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008; Georgakopoulou, 2006a) told by the strategic storytellers during the public hearings and expert tables. Tirana of the future was rendered knowable and imaginable to the present and distant audiences and the process of self-identifying with the drafted urban plan was accelerated at the right time. Combined with other visual artefacts and narrative ecosystem elements deployed by MoT representatives and grand architects, these non-human actants intertwined with the human participants to cocreate the full official story of TR030. Their power effect on whose rationality would prevail in the city-making process was immense.

4.2.1.1.4.7 3D City

Some of the visual and material practices that accompanied the journey of the strategic stories along the strategy-making process played a comparably more significant role in shaping the narrative of the strategy practitioners. Surely, renders were among them. Those awarded with the strategic tellership roles would watch on the screens displaying the architectural renders to tell the stories of the streets, apartment blocks, forests, parks, and neighbourhoods they had implanted into the bedrock of the future city. This is a typical case of a grand architect presenting the 3D or 2D renders to the present audience:

These are like simple sketches, and I do not think any of this will ever appear in Tirana but [it] is for us to be able to visualize the relationship between the body of the building and the space, and the nature, and the light. And that is, you know, a forty-year little flick of drawings (Vimercati, 2016).

The language of the vivified images, renders and videos was “the only language that immediately communicated to the audience what would be the transformation” Zamira told during the interview. Dynamic and impressive as they were, these frames of storytelling were impossible to be affected by the participants. Even the MoT representatives and grand architects themselves would only fill in the blanks with

storied future of the city. The rigidity the 3D and 2D renders represented was enforced by the impossibility of changing them.

The storied renders gained a time-dimension thanks to the colourful description borrowed from the future urban life within the neighbourhoods they intended to mirror. Hours, days, nights, seasons, and lifetimes were embedded in them thanks to the stories they were capable of accommodating. This temporal quality of the renders made them into anchors of the stories from the future city. Because of such powerful traits these visual artefacts are furnished with, they have been frequently excluded from official processes of bidding for public contracts. The following is the reflexive comment of an expert hired by the corporate architectural studios that carried the planning works out:

... especially architects and urban planners do a lot of visual planning to the point where it becomes ridiculous. That 3D world discourse still exists there [in Albania]. In Turkey, it is forbidden, in these official competitions, when you go to a municipality, you are forbidden to participate with 3D, only technical drawings. Because the reasoning behind this, is that this gives a non-existent presentation of reality since many years ago. Because the world would come in unprecedented 3D forms [Margarita]

Renders, though less dynamic than the videos, were the widest windows on the tomorrow's city, seducing the participants to abandon the scepticism and objections and to immerse themselves in the prospective experience of living in Tirana of 2030. In this capacity, they were key actants in the efforts of the strategy practitioners to censor opposition, to downplay the critical arguments and proposed variations, as well as to marshal unfiltered support around the officially proposed draft of TR030. Thanks to visual practices that incarnated the imagined metropolitan Tirana, MoT representatives and grand architects staged a narrative ecosystem that was friendly and promoting to the official stories about the city.

4.2.1.1.4.8 The Powerhouse of PowerPoint

The importance of tools and techniques in strategy-production processes is acknowledged by the SAP scholars (Kaplan, 2011; Orlikowski, 2007), especially in

strategic meetings (Jarzabkowski & Seidl, 2008). Barry and Elmes (1997) have early found that strategic narratives that comply with standard configurations are more legitimate in the eyes of the audiences than the those that do not. Sometimes, these standardized configurations become the real goal of the strategy-making process (Kaplan, 2011).

In the framework of TR030 consultation process, PowerPoint served as a powerhouse to assume functions that not only rendered it an actant in the strategy-making activities but assigned to it a power to define and filter the contributions of participants. “Now there is simply a truly short sequence of slides. You can go one by one just to show the different issue of the different tables” Boeri told the assistant dealing with the slideshow during one of the expert table meetings. Thus, slides were not only used to inspire certain imaginations at the exclusion of others, but also as instruments that set the agenda and demarcate the boundaries of contribution by the participating experts.

The presence of slides was pervasive. “In every session, there was always a dense presence of 3D city views, videos, PowerPoint presentations and simulations” [informant MB]. Use of PowerPoint in strategizing processes is often considered a *sine qua non* to the success of this undertaking (Rasche & Chia, 2009; Kaplan, 2011). Due to this generous use of the PowerPoint, the public hearings and expert table consultations of TR030 were made into college classes, with the strategy practitioners as lecturers and the participating publics as students. Hence, strategy making was exercised in a science-production way, where PowerPoint assumed the functions of an “epistemic machiner[y]” (Knorr-Cetina, 1999, p. 10).

Another participant confirms the regular use of slides in the public hearing sessions:

It was the main element of the presentation of the plan. Of course, it presented an exceptionally beautiful futuristic vision with some of the works that Boeri had implemented abroad. So, this was one of the most powerful elements that was then combined with the narrative of those who presented it. It has been used as a tool to promote it [informant KA].

It is not the first time, PowerPoint is considered a co-constructive actant in the process of strategic knowledge production (Kaplan, 2011). PowerPoint presentations' rules of writing, such as the optimal number of words, the optimum number of rows and the optimum font size force the strategic practitioners that use them compliantly, thus making PowerPoint into a co-creator of the strategy content.

Furthermore, PowerPoint served the strategy-practitioners' interest of getting away with the details, thus reducing the chances of confronting with the participating public on practical implications of the master plan. The slides content was often in total disregard of any practical issues concerning the citizens, as the following comment to the PowerPoint presentation introducing the general principles of planning, uploaded on google docs:

I do not know, and I cannot seem to be able to grasp, nor even imagine what "towards global and intense city" could mean, but if I were guessing I would say that they are constructs, not of place, but social constructs, pop art perception, a global one, not Albania specific, meaning and value of which I am not sure I know (Piro, 2016).

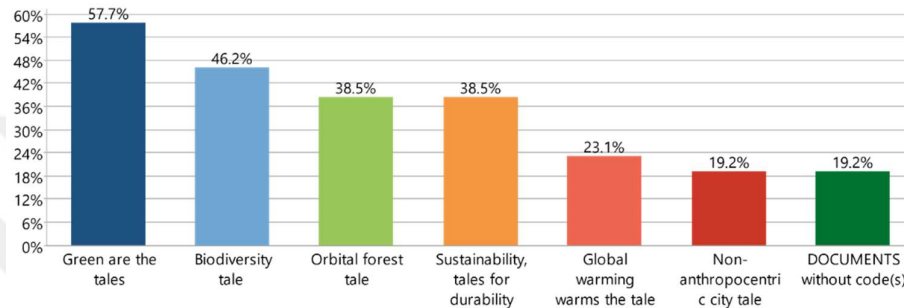
In so doing, PowerPoint mediated the sensemaking process and shaped the nature of participation in the public hearing sessions by legitimising the MoT representatives and grand architects as the only group of participants that would talk on behalf of the city. Owing to this narrative inequality, those with a PowerPoint presentation were able to impose their views and rationality whereas those without it were automatically delegitimated as reliable and professional contributors.

4.2.1.1.5 *Tales of Sustainable Urban Development*

A second major set of narrative species that developed in the story-world of TR030 urban planning was the set of tales of sustainable urban development. These tales were mobilized to carry out an epistemological mission to make the city a tangible and knowable reality from the future. Among the most frequently used stories, those of the green city or green infrastructures, social and economic sustainability, non-

anthropocentric city, global warming, biodiversity and orbital forest made it to the last level of data analysis.

Figure 4-3 Sustainable Urban Development Tales subcodes weights and distribution*



* Produced on MAXQDA 2020

4.2.1.1.5.1 Green are the Tales

Green rhetoric was used and abused by the strategy-practitioners. A bouquet of green-related terms such as green infrastructure, environmental sustainability, biodiversity, climate change and landscape enhancement projected a flourishing city in terms of its sustainability.

“[T]hese instruments that use vegetation of soils and natural process to create healthier urban environment are generally recognized as green infrastructures” - said urban planner Laura Gatti (2016) while a picture of the Youth Park at the downtown of Tirana shows on the background screen. It is one of the remaining green areas in the overbuilt city and is often adopted to environmentally friendly paint presentations and propaganda products.

“Green infrastructure,” she proceeds, “has recently gained importance as a planning tool of the regional and local levels while it provides a range of ecosystem services” (Gatti, 2016). Definitions and wordy explications of green infrastructure and its implications to the city's future development show on the screen. The title of the

slide is REGENERATION, FURTHER DENSIFICATION: Subtitle: Green Infrastructures.

The camera zooms out to show a room full of people of different ages, officials, professionals, dressed in suits, white shirts and wearing glasses. The room is quiet, and the presenter does not raise her head from the paper, English with Italian accent: “the underlying principle of green infrastructure is that the same area of land can often offer multiple benefits of its ecosystem if its ecosystem is not in a healthy state” (Gatti, 2016).

The overall conversation is quite technical lacking any inspirational agency, easy enough to summarise it to a childish and student-like desire to make a beautiful and impressionable presentation. Naturally, the projections struggle to set up links with the future. However, the connection to the present is very weak, with no reliable data showing the equation of transforming Tirana into a TR030 city. Nobody was able to tell the audiences what would MoT do to make Tirana of 2030 an environmentally sustainable city.

4.2.1.1.5.2 Sustainability, Tales for Durability

As in each narrative effort, the strategy-makers combined several practices including linguistic ones and chronotopicity to “create an appetite in the mind of the audience” (Burke, 1968, p.31) and to immediately satisfy the above appetite. Thus, Boeri introduces the sustainability of Tirana 2030 in promising language: “sustainability, biodiversity and economic resources that can be reborn through a balance between nature, agriculture and the city” (Boeri, 2016).

Narration about the future is, hereby, used more as a representational device (Robert & Shehav, 2014) that carries persuasive functions rather than telling ones. Therefore, it is not the plot that inspires and convinces, it is not the story about the future that marshals support around the drafted urban plan, but the linguistic devices that are employed to gestate the audience expectations with the images aimed by the MoT.

The trouble the strategic storytellers claim to address is the non-sustainability of the city as it is. “The absence of an integrated strategy for the urban build and green

areas and the low connectivity with the Intel and green areas were the main weakness of the city” (Gatti, 2016). It is the trouble created by the earlier administrations of MoT which has fatally deteriorated the credibility of the MoT administration of the present. However, it is not the trouble that drives the strategy-makers and participants’ contribution to the process: it is the storyline set up through strategic tellership that counts as a significant change in imagining the future of the city.

The series of public hearings and expert tables organized by the MoT, forced by a recent legal regulation that required the local government units to conduct public consultations before any urban project of great significance, are replete with word devices that make up the discourse of sustainability. Tirana was to be “an accessible metropolis that promotes a sustainable mobility” (Baboci, 2016), renewable energy, biological corridors, demineralised buildings, suburban areas as an inverted zoo, while adding to the extant construction density. Some of these expressions are meaningless, while others are adopted for the sake of a narrative setting that makes the story trustful. In sum, what is meaningful overall is the construction density. The municipality was planning to build, even if they sometimes tend to disguise this.

4.2.1.1.5.3 Non-Anthropocentric City Tale

TR030 – Kick off presentation published on google docs introduces “Tirana, a non-anthropocentric city” as one of the main perspectives to what the city is supposed to be in the future. It is difficult to decode what the strategy-makers intend with “non-anthropocentricity” of the city, which still is an enigma years after its pronounciation. MoT representatives did not address the questions of the interested urbanists despite their persistence to unearth the intention behind non-anthropocentricity (Baboçi, 2016), a clear argument that they did not even understand it.

The only sense non-anthropocentricity seems to make is that Tirana of 2030 is conceived by the strategy-practitioners as a city against humans. Heretofore, the city has assumed that status with its unwelcoming spirit to its citizens, as the following analysis puts it:

Tirana is already a “non-anthropocentric city”; not because of all the wonderful wood critters and butterflies surrounding my daily walk through avenues blessed with myriads of Biblical flowers, Qur'anic trees, and Old Testament shrubberies, while smiling and singing children carry the crops from the urban gardens to the school canteen, but precisely due to the constant destruction of green spaces, the complete lack of consideration for the actual people who live, work, and move inside the city, and the arrogant insistence on corporate expropriation under the euphemism of “intensification” (van Gerven Oei, 2016).

The upper hand of a covert group of people at the top of MoT and their corporate grand architects in defining how the city would develop throughout the next 15 years is a sufficient sign of the complete anthropocentricity of a chosen group in urban decision making. In doing so, they set up the anthropocentricity of a few. The reaction of an urban planner to the linguistic efforts to sell a sustainability narrative says it all:

a lot of big generic words and concepts are thrown around such as 'smart city', 'high-tech', 'biodiverse', 'non-anthropocentric', etc. My comment is simply asking: What do they mean in the context of Tirana? It is too late to have a non-anthropocentric city since we are well into the anthropocentric age (Bendo, 2016).

But “what is the city but the people” would Shakespeare contest this postmodern cliché borrowed unconsciously by the MoT representatives and grand architects? While the common citizens of Tirana would find it difficult to distil the meaning and relevance of non-anthropocentricity in the framework of city planning, the failure of MoT representatives and grand architects to decode it to the professional audience shows that their target audience were the internationals, as explained earlier in this study. The international professional media audience are sensitive to the role of humans in the climate change (McShane, 2007). Therefore, claiming non-anthropocentricity in urban planning is an appeal to the above-mentioned audiences.

4.2.1.1.5.4 Global Warming Warms the Tale

A major characteristic of the narrative strategies applied by the strategic storytellers during the public hearings and expert tables for the needs of TR030 master plan, was the projection of Western anxieties onto Tirana, as though it was the Albanian Shanghai. “The predicted climate change will increase intensity and frequency of heat waves and, thus, amplify biophysical load” - confessed one of the grand architects in front of a conference hall full of municipality-friendly experts. How would Tirana play a role in reducing the impact of global warming in the urban life, was not made clear in any projects or investment plans.

The Western anxieties were projected in a very lecturing way. Theoretical concepts, causal relationships, and normative statements were shared with the audience without a single practical relevance to the future Tirana. Echoing the imperfect and under-researched assignments of the students, the presentations often established very shallow causalities. In so doing, the strategy practitioners made efforts to order the experiences and imaginations of the participants along storylines that followed the dominant narrative of sustainable development of the city. Similar shallow causalities are easy to be noticed throughout most of the strategy-makers presentations, such as the following:

The predicted climate change will increase intensity and frequency of heat waves and thus amplify biophysical load. Greater attention is needed on integrating the economic environmental and social benefits produce particularly in the context of climate change. By identifying working towards win-win solution Land Trust can help communities plan management to promote resilience systems that are able to respond to current and future climate change impacts (Gatti, 2016).

The lecture style of the presentation played a significant role in organising the participants understanding and knowledge. The way the present and distant audiences thought about the city, the stories employed by the protagonists to tailor their understanding of urban reality, and the monolithic nature of contribution to the story construction altogether set up ready-made patterns of thinking, understanding and imagination for the public to pursue. In so doing, the MoT representatives and grand architects produced a grand narrative of a metropolitan city sustainable development.

4.2.1.1.5.5 Biodiversity Tale

The strategic storytellers went as far as to evoke the hanging gardens of Babylon as examples of biodiversity in urban life as if industrial revolution had not happened centuries ago or its impact did not count for the organization of the urban space of the modern cities. Vegetative structures, to quote the strategy practitioners, would logically stand for the postmodern equivalent of the ancient hanging gardens, though the latter's existence has never been proved scientifically (Dalley, 2015). However, the temporal frame is stubbornly applied, and the historic inaccuracies pass unnoticed by the audience:

Some changes in agricultural techniques could have a profound impact on biodiversity, in peculiar way soil biodiversity. Professionally designed parks ... green roofs and green walls can all contribute to biodiversity and to take all climate change. The concept of vegetated roof and walls is not modern. History also the Babylonian Hanging Gardens dating back to ancient history. It is, however, a modern concept to use vegetative structure for the express purpose of conservation and decreasing biodiversity loss effect (Gatti, 2016).

Though Babylonian Hanging Gardens do not necessitate the temporal perspective of the biodiversity, they enable the grand architects base their narrative transition to the happy-ending proposals of TR030. By delving into explanations of the elements of the proposed view of the city, the ordered sequence of the events gains empirical qualities. Green roofs and green walls are offered as spatial intersections of the storyline. It is via biodiverse agriculture that the challenge of sustainability is addressed properly and illnesses of the current way of development are healed.

The moral overtones of the 'modern,' 'conservation' and 'biodiversity' set the pace to a moral solution of the plot: decreasing biodiversity loss effect. Speculative expectations exploit the audience's common knowledge about the climate change and global warming, which in turn puts them in a position to choose between good and evil. The participants either silently agree or are unable to object this logical flow of the

story. Other audiences, such as construction industry is not present, though its financial and power interests are fully represented in the sustainability of planned constructions. Overall, they are aware that green painting of additional buildings stands for just more construction.

As the city expanded, the centre's deficiencies were offset by the orbital forest on the outskirts. It was alienated and camouflaged ... all the attention was focused on these units, the orbital forest, the energy corridors, the blue corridors, the green corridors [Flavio].

The always happy fulfilment of the stories told by the grand strategists and MoT representatives provides sufficient coherence among the imagined and promised episodes and, therefore, grants a smooth flow of events towards the urban life of Tirana in 2030. Interestingly, the happy fulfilment stories about the urban living in the future Tirana are not counterbalanced by any narrative of concerns or uncertainties about the possibility of the defended plot.

4.2.1.1.5.6 Orbital, a Forest for the Tales

Stories of Utopia (Finnegan, 1998) were employed by multiple strategic storytellers during the public hearings of TR030. Aside from the non-anthropocentricity, European capital of sustainability, demineralisation of the buildings, the first European capital with a high percentage of electric vehicles, the bucket list of strategy-makers includes even “buzz words” [Margarita] such as orbital or vertical forest. “The green stain again appeared on the screen. From the speaker one could hear: “The Orbital Forest,” the Green Ring, public transportation, first mile and last mile... (Rama, 2016).

The term, originally having nothing to do with urban planning, was adopted and re-semiotized by Boeri to project a radical, utopian idea of a green strip of 2 million trees that would encircle the overbuilt city. The narrative function that the phrase carries out is addressing the widespread concerns of the environmental crisis Tirana is experiencing since the first wave of massive constructions that began 15 year earlier.

As the public perception did not endorse more construction within the existing urban space, and as the municipality was planning to increase the construction density within the same area, a radical promise, a utopian project was adopted. This conclusion was based on the data obtained from the involved experts, such as the following:

The orbital forest has been more used as an element to show the will to stopping the intensive constructions in Tirana and it has been the reason the orbital forest has been used. But in the meantime, it is now being sold simply as green rhetoric. It has been more than that [Zamira].

It gained high narrative mobility as it was one of the catchy words that triggered too much attention among the generic and professional media. The corporate urban planners hired by the MoT to prepare TR030 master plan did an excellent job in spreading the news (Zogheib, 2016; Sustainable cities, 2016) about the innovative approach being implemented for the first time ever in a remote capital city of Europe. International financial stakeholders, such as EBRD, were pulled into the story, what enhanced the reliability of the promise. Experts told the present inquirer that, apart from genuine re-semiotization of the phrase, the orbital forest was a forced solution. I have quoted at length one of the experts for he offers a complete account of the context that pushed strategy-makers to this solution:

Orbital forest! The orbital forest has two aspects. The first one is the indispensable, the necessity to have the green dimension in this city. I do not believe that there is anyone who opposes it or says that Tirana does not need more green elements. And secondly, the forces of the urban economy in this. Where can you put it? You cannot put it in the centre because there is no space. Furthermore, the land in the centre is more expensive [Margarita].

If nothing else, orbital forest was a complete fabrication of the MoT representatives and grand architects. It is a small narrative from the future of a city of which its citizens were only guests. Citizens were not allowed to consider, reshape, and verify the narrative role of this story. Orbital forest is a tangible proof of Tirana 2030 as a city of the builders, not of the citizens, though it struggles to evoke future images of an environmentally, socially responsible city.

then I remember that this element of the orbital forest was used a lot in the language that still to this day has become a bit like a joke in public. This has been a strong statement. Boeri has [produced] this too [Ada].

The orbital forest, along with other utopian narratives, is recited in a litany singing way across the planning period and the times following it. Not only did it gain narrative mobility, but it also depicted, unconsciously, the future city in two basic components: the concrete grey coin of constructions put within a green ring of trees. However, there is still consolation in the fact that it was simply a slogan. Citizens will not have to run to the suburbs to breath fresh air for there shall be neither forests nor fresh air there. Many experts hired in the planning process attest that:

So, it is more the way it is talked about than it really was. But it has to do with the fact that it is one of those parts of the slogans used by these PR studios that ok, the orbital forest, and then just this phrase was repeated everywhere [Zamira]

Later, the orbital forest ideal proved to be elusive. The small-scale activities of planting a handful of seedlings with the presence of the mayor and full media coverage cannot accomplish the huge 2 million trees forest objective in 15 years. After a couple of years intensive mentioning and using the orbital forest narrative, the MoT representatives have, at least discursively, abandoned the project. In effect, the project was destined to be limited to the communicative activities rather than practically planting and maintaining such a huge green area. The strategy practitioners did not include a financial analysis and sources of funding in the master plan, what openly predicted its destiny.

4.2.2 Directional Selection

In much similar fashion to the natural selection, the strategy-making practice of TR030 public consultations was designed to favour certain typologies of stories over the others, causing the story-world of city making in Tirana to shift on a direction that bolstered the rationality of the MoT representatives and the interests of the construction industry while weakening the rationality of the critics and resistant audiences and the representation of the respective interests. Owing to the preferentiality of the controlled

directions, certain stories thrived and led the process of urban planning while others diminished and eventually faded away, unable to influence the outcomes of the strategic planning process.

Reducing Dialogue

From using unreliable data to advance the official draft of TR030, to English as an esoteric language of strategy-making, to centralized decision-making, to exclusive communication links granted to special stakeholders, i.e., the construction industry, a series of strategies were employed to reduce the dialogue opportunities between the strategy-makers and the audiences. The narrative effect of the reduced potentials for dialogue was the contribution to the establishment of a narrative ecosystem that supported and advanced the official position of MoT to the city planning.

Table 4-3 Reducing Dialogue subcodes' weights and distribution*

Subcodes/Documents	Documents	Percentage	Percentage (valid)
I plan, therefore I rule	10	38.46	55.56
Two-tier architecture of storytelling	5	19.23	27.78
English as an esoteric language of strategic storytelling	5	19.23	27.78
Good data, bad data	5	19.23	27.78
Broken telephone of MoT	5	19.23	27.78
Talk to the hand mode of feedback	5	19.23	27.78
Official means right and just	3	11.54	16.67
DOCUMENTS with code(s)	18	69.23	100.00
DOCUMENTS without code(s)	8	30.77	-
ANALYZED DOCUMENTS	26	100.00	-

* Generated from MAXQDA 2020

4.2.2.1.1 *Good data, bad data*

The first stage of urban planning in the framework of TR030 development process was the Territorial Analysis. Throughout this stage, the strategy-making team would collect data from a diverse range of sources and be acquainted with the recently expanded territorial authority of city. Instead of employing a rigorous research methodology, the strategy-practicing team would skip going the long way, thus cherry-picking data in conformity with the narrative needs of the leading strategic storytellers. Consequently, the collected data would be split into good data that boosted the official narrative of MoT representatives and grand architects, while bracketing out data that would disprove the official story-world.

Another real issue with baseless decision-making would not only be incomplete and unreliable data but also the absence of alternative data sources, be it from the experts, activists, CSO-s or opposition representatives. Therefore, it was not only impossible to judge whether the data used in the process were sufficient or not to support the proposed ways of city-building, but also the tools and arguments available to judging the very options adopted by the MoT were scarce. As a journalist puts it, “despite the fact that the Strategic Plan of the capital is a big project, both in terms of size and ambitions, it has very little data” (Rama, 2016).

Ignoring certain categories of data and silencing or muting differences, thus, emerged a constant practice throughout the public hearings process. Consequently, rationalized arguments were disabled, and the political power substituted for them. The dominant position of power of MoT, then, seals the result of this process.

No data at all. Not only for transport, but also data on the territory. As it always happens in Albania, we do not keep data because since we do not make decisions on data, we make decisions ad-hoc, then why do they need that complete system? [Lukas]

Avoiding knowledge as a threat to effective action by powerful parties in city planning has been previously evidence by Flyvbjerg (1998, 2002, 2014) in the city of Aalborg. The powerful player in the TR030 process is the MoT and, as data shows, it has been interested in adopting, instead, the strategy of the mirage of an imagined future that is enacted by the storytelling tightly controlled by them, while bolstered by the

visual and material practices of the narrative ecosystem that was established through naked power exercise.

4.2.2.1.2 *I plan, therefore I rule*

Despite the debates within the roundtables or consultations with experts, the final decisions were made by the MoT. Not only did MoT develop an official draft of TR030 master plan on its own, far from the sight of the civil society, but it constantly rejected proposals for changes and modifications by experts, activists, community representatives and political opponents. The newly sit administration exercised centralized urban planning as a form of manifesting its political power to the citizens and to itself. The principle would be summarized in the maxim “I plan, therefore I rule”. This logic of centralized decision-making was particularly employed by MoT representatives and the strategy-makers to support a market rationality, as the following comment states:

Another example of how the plan does not serve the problems and interests of citizens, even after articulating them, is the public-private partnership project for school construction. At first glance, the plan mentions the fact that Tirana has overcrowded schools, with two or three shifts. This creates the expectation that the Municipality will propose a solution to this problem with the construction of new schools. Wrong! The municipality has another concern. The Municipality of Tirana envisages the construction of 17 schools with the public-private partnership scheme. So, the whole concern of the Municipality is to find more profitable schemes for businesses that will gain the right to build these schools [Armanda].

A city in need of additional educational premises cannot always fund the construction of new schools but can dig for creative solutions in the market. Public Private Partnership is, therefore, assigned a social function of solving a key social issue.

What is interesting is that nobody in the room objects this option, nor, at least, offers data that challenge the reasonability of the proposed way. How much do PPP's cost the municipality budget overall? In what ways are the benefits to the citizens estimated? What alternatives were deselected and, if yes, on what basis? Such questions

do not arise, and the powerful politicians smoothly get away with it. The hosts have been cautious enough to filter the participation of only conforming voices at the exclusion of any opposing view. Dispute is impossible if the power differential is used to block all parties equally participate in the decision-making process. Therefore, dialogue was reduced using the position power (French & Raven, 1959) to impose their version of the plan. Again, it is not the contention of rationalities which define the most reasonable reality of the strategy. Rather it is the use of naked power (Foucault, 1982) to disqualify the critics from participating that paves the way towards the centralized decision-making.

Apparently, MoT did not feel the need to use persuasion through rational arguments. It is often read as an indication of powerlessness, a perception that would radically harm its power to define what is rational, therefore, real in Tirana. Flyvbjerg's (1998) principle "the greater the power, the less the rationality" was repeatedly proven throughout the strategy-making process of TR030. In the story-telling context of the present study's data, the above principle would be rephrased as "the greater the power, the less the narrativity".

4.2.2.1.3 *English as an Esoteric Language of Strategic Storytelling*

Another strategy employed to reduce dialogue was divisive communications. Strategy-makers relied extensively on English as esoteric language of the strategic storytelling. Adopting a foreign language in the process of developing a city's master plan when substantial segments of the city's population cannot comprehend it, effectively excludes them from the consultation and decision-making process. In so doing, the MoT representatives and the grand architects got rid of any necessity to address the public at large. Local audiences were just silenced with some cookie-like minor projects, but never were they discursively welcomed into the grand-narrative debate:

... the parts of discourse that were aimed at Albanians were very localized in a sense like look we are making a park for you here. So, like basically feeding into this type of patronage attitude like the only good that comes out of it is what

is directly visible to your eyes because your children can play in this part, rather than, you know, large infrastructural reform, by-passes, or like [Paris].

English as a lingua franca assumed another distinguished agency in the strategizing process: it rendered Tirana a European and scientifically mastered city: “In English Tirana sounds like a real European city” coined journalist (Rama, 2016). Using a foreign language also paid back as a censor to the questions from the public. Often helped by the disorganized atmosphere within the venues, the grand architects were able to make light of the questions from the public:

So, the answers of Boeri started in a charged situation due to the overpopulation in the room, which worked in favour of the foreign architects. The focus was distracted by the noise, the opening and closing of the doors, and a certain nervousness of the participants that didn’t understand English (Rama, 2016).

In another narration, the same author highlights the obvious incapacity of even the socialist members of the City Council, to understand the poetic English story told by Boeri:

I listened and my mind flew to those common socialists, present in the artistic monologues of Stefano Boeri. I was feeling mind blown as I tried to understand how the simple minds of the present people interpreted these architectural lessons in English (Rama, 2016)

Divisive communications were also exercised by employing non-popular communication tools such as social networks. A presentation of planning principles and strategic objectives was published on google docs by the Director of Urban and Strategic Planning at the MoT, again in English. Citizens were invited to ponder about and comment to the document, while the English language of the document and the limited popularity of google docs among the public might have prevented them from actively participating.

One thing that impressed me, the Director of Urban Development, Joni Baboçi, published the whole publication, put it in a google docs, posted the whole publication and people could make comments. And he posted it on Facebook, on twitter ... it is no longer [accessible] ... I remember people had comments. They have even posted on social media. This was posted from the very

beginning when they compiled the entire the vision, which is the charter, atlas, etc. etc. There was a lot of attention, I remember [Ada].

From the general public perspective, English content of the online published documents and the presentations made in English by the foreign urbanists and architects was represented as a technical standard and competency that prevented their active participation, even asking for the meaning behind those encoded communications. Using Twitter, Facebook, or google docs to communicate and draw public opinion worked as a strategy for audience selection, providing access to people who effectively use the social media, especially google docs, and depriving the general public from such as access. Consequently, inaccessibility of language was combined with the inaccessibility of the communication routes to establish narrative inequality (Hymes, 1996) and limited telling rights (Shuman, 1986, 2005).

Finally, divisive communications were deployed as an audience nomination strategy. In certain occasions, mayor Veliaj prejudicated the expected feedback from the opposition representatives at the Municipal Assembly. Taking advantage of his leadership position, he utilized a partisanship rationality to deprive his opponents of rationality and arguing power. Consequently, he exclusively entitled the MoT and strategy-makers to political rationality and rationalization legitimacy while disqualifying any alternative political rationality.

This is a conversation that needs to continue. With some of you it will continue in much more focused groups. While for those who live abroad, we will have to use our site which is tr030.com. Not only will we clarify, of course with your permission, all the proposals you have given, but we want this to be an ongoing conversation. It is better to ventilate all, even those who for certain political reasons will go against the plan without any clear reasoning but only that there should be a debate on everything (Veliaj, 2016).

The narrative effect of adopting this narrative strategy was the extension of the negotiation hand only towards those without an argument, therefore without rationality. Obviously, these consultations' target audience were not the Albanians, not the citizens of Tirana. Rather, the strategic narrators generously addressed the international audience. Thus, English, and social networks, as well as the poeticized urban discourse

were adopted as the main communication media, at the exclusion of television, radio and in-site meetings which would grant a wider participation by the locals.

It's my impression that most of the discourse around this territorial reform was not aimed at Albania but aimed at EU, it was aimed at the internationals. People are powerless and when you are powerless in Albania you have nothing. You are crushed, these people are crushed. You do not need to communicate with them [Paris].

Using English as lingua franca in the in-situ and online presentations voices cultural evaluations of practices (Wortham & Rhodes, 2015; Hill, 1995), because English language is associated with professionalism and reputation. Even though the English repertoire of the English-speaking foreign experts sounds sometimes extremely limited, it is accepted that mastering it may establish narrative inequalities (Hymes, 1996), therefore projection power relations in the process. In the framework of TR030 consultation process, English is used as an esoteric language of business, of the foreign experts, of the principle of authority that is embedded in the image Albanians have established about the foreigners.

Hymes' (1996) argument of impossibility of doing the same things in all languages is true even for the use of English in the framework of TR030, in both directions: Albanian native speakers, publics, and even specialists, cannot fully and clearly express their critique, opinions or proposals in English. Whereas foreigners are endowed with the blessing of talking in an authoritative language. Consequently, participants in the public hearing sessions quickly become students of the English-speaking foreigners who bring with themselves expertise and authority. They cease participating in the immediate sensemaking process. They are selected out as potential narrators and their stories are selected out of the narrative ecosystem as potential framing tools of the imagined future of the city.

4.2.2.1.4 *Two-Tier Architecture of Storytelling*

Dialogue was also reduced by applying different telling roles within the participating experts. Internationals were imposed as the visionary, strategic thinkers armed with the forefront urban planning knowledge and tools, while the locals were

only assigned basic tasks, such as administrative support, data collection, when necessary, etc. This is how an international expert outlines this nationality-based power differentials:

I'm Italian but I work for Grimshaw, quite a large office in London and the reason that I show this is that, not to talk about myself, but the fact that by working in a lot of various places around the world, we kind of look to find what we can move, what we learn somewhere that we can take somewhere else. And so, we have our ways of looking at things and we develop this sense of observation (Vimercati, 2016).

This implies international experts bring with them an experience that imbues them with superior skills, authoritative perspectives and attributes that naturally rank them in a position of power over the local experts. Local expertise can only contribute to the process from the perspective of local citizens who recollect stories of experience from their families and themselves, but when it comes to perspective, to technical skills, to envisaging Tirana of the future, they really lag.

When a foreign studio joins an Albanian studio, the Albanian studio always ends up as an implementer, i.e., it knows the context, collects data, tells two or three things about the context. But the vision is always brought by foreign studios. It always happens that way [Ada].

Locals, as insiders, are in a way immersed into their extremely limited, suffocating familiar context of their comfort zones. It takes internationals to ask questions that drag them out of those zones and light their minds: “And when I came here and I asked, 'how do I get to the Tirana River', which is the name of the city, nobody could tell me how or even if there was one” (Vimercati, 2016). More than dialogue, internationals and locals of the strategy-making team played complementary roles. Locals had internalised the power-relations underlying that process: internationals were the visionaries; locals did the field work.

However, the international experts make use of expert power to emphasize the said power-relations. What the locals can contribute overall is no more than a metaphorical context, which will play no role in the planning process and will not impact at all the output of this process.

And uh ... so we use the skills that we built by being traveling around the world for the last few years to look at a place... And then if you look at that, we have the ability of controlling the massing of the spaces and so that gives the architects that will design the building where you are going to live the right tools and the ability to tailor... (Vimercati, 2016).

Therefore, the superiority of the internationals over the locals does not come just from their vast experience across the world, but also from their innovative computational methodologies embedded in software. So, they can better envisage the future of the city and, thus, better tell its story to the lay citizens. The experience of a local expert with the consultation process confirms the hierarchical relations that were established by the international leading strategy-makers and experts:

The Albanian part did not have a substantial role. To be honest, the Albanian staff was involved in specific expertise because they [the foreigners] did not have it because they do not know the context, the ones I mentioned, the engineering part, the cultural heritage, the environment, the culture [Ada].

On the other hand, it is impossible for the local stakeholders, including the hired freelance experts to affect the work of the internationals. The latter are not new in the club since some of them have been working in Tirana and with the MoT for the last 4 year. Thus, they already know the context, and nobody can even dare to play around with them:

I can talk about myself for a while if you want. So, when we go anywhere, but especially we came to Tirana into 2012 for a competition for the boulevard, context is particularly important. ... so, we did walk as much as possible and as independently as possible, chased by dogs and all sorts of other things. ... because yes, I am in London, in London we plan and we are precise, so they say, but I am also Italian. So, I know that things do not happen the way you hope them to happen (Vimercati, 2016).

4.2.2.1.5 *Official Means Right and Just*

Legitimizing official orientations and, thus, “bracketing out” (Boden, 1994) alternative orientations was another strategy that reduced dialogue and, hence, served

as a directional selection procedure that favoured the official stories and selects out the contending ones coming from the public, CSO's or independent expertise. Even the data have been collected having this end in mind. As one of the interviewees states it, "they have had more [the approach] that this should be the end result, now let's get data to make this come out" [Ada].

It is an example of power defining reality by defining what is knowledge and what is narrative rationality by defining what is a valid story. Therefore, the stories were produced to serve the interest of those in power.

...it was used to justify things they wanted to do that they had simply decided, that could have been good things too. Not all things are bad. As far as I know, they would make new schools and they released, they got some data that showed that there are so many schools, and it is a problem, and they just justified the action [Ada].

The mayor and deputy mayor entered the stage armed with well-structured stories that justified the need to redo the master plan less than 4 years after it had been approved by the Municipal Assembly and projected this commitment as a moral mission of doing what is right and direly needed for the city to flourish and grow. Consequently, their narrative struggle manifested their intention to advance an unedited version of their official draft of TR030 and to shun, based on moral terms, the criticism and resistance of civil society and political opponents.

4.2.2.1.6 *Broken Telephone of the Municipality of Tirana*

The horizontal dialogue options were kept under tight control also by prohibiting the simultaneous participation of contending stakeholders such as the landowners and the construction companies' representatives, the tourism industry, and the cultural heritage experts, etc. Apparently, this was not at all a challenge to the MoT representatives and the strategizing grand architects, since the construction industry did not perceive any threat coming out of this process:

I do not believe the developers had seen any restrictions on the whole plan to worry about. That is how I understand it. I do not believe they felt threatened by the plan. Because there were building spaces, red spots. I do not know if

there were any influencing. Since they also have legitimate influences if they wish to influence. Once again, I did not notice that they felt anxious [about TR030] [Flavio]

The construction industry stakeholder group did not perceive the need to participate in the public hearings because these meetings were ripped of the capacities to serve as “tracks along which the policy ideas travel” (Dye, 1995), the core reason for this strip off the public consultations being the participants who usually did not come from the powerful elites (Tepper, 2004; Dye, 1995). Real estate developers were sufficiently cognizant of the fact that the Master Plan shaping agency resided somewhere else, behind the closed doors of the power elites. Interviewee EN described this awareness: “There was not much design team that dealt with the mediation part, but it was more the staff of the Municipality”

4.2.2.1.7 *Talk to the Hand Mode of Feedback*

There were still options left to the opposition, CSO-s and active citizens to impact the strategy-making process: proposing technical amendments and officially asking questions to the MoT representatives and the grand architects. Yet, there were a multitude of ways the Municipality could have done away with these challenges. However, the political decision-makers and the Master Plans grand architects took the straightest way to disregarding and disqualifying technical proposals and questions. Besnik Aliaj, a known urban planner, university professor and opposition representative in the Municipal Assembly asked the MoT representatives and the strategizing team a list of questions but they failed to respond:

In the presence of the chair of the commission who was correct, I raised a series of questions and queries that required analysed answers. For correct reasons, I left time for the municipal administration to send me specific answers in writing, in official form or by email if they could not respond directly. They failed to do so before the City Council meeting (Aliaj, 2016).

The design of the public hearings or consultations also determined their ability for sustained follow-up. Strategic forums that are not open-ended or lack built-in follow-up institutions cannot produce significant impact of policy issues (Tepper,

2004). The ad-hoc practice adopted by the MoT to handle the technical recommendations and to respond to policy questions arising amid convenings was designed to be ineffective. The procedure involves reception of questions and proposals and submit it to the MoT representatives for consideration, which in most of the cases meant dismissal. One of the experts who dealt first-hand with the management of proposals and questions recalls the way they were coped with:

As I told you, they have never been (reflected) directly. I was engaged to the completion of the plan and then continued working for another year with the studio and I did not see directly that a missing element was mentioned or that this detail was translated directly into the final object. It has never been directly. ... as for proposals and ideas, it is not that those find their way directly to there [the Master Plan]. It has not been that directly because of this a change took place. It has never been so to my knowledge, at least my impression is this, that nothing has changed, nor has it been considered at all [Zamira].

Another participant, puts forward his experience with the way the moderators of the public hearings coped with the questions of the participating political representatives, experts, activists, and citizens:

... the organizers had planned to forgo the explanations and arguments: all the questions were grouped, and the answers were to be given in groups as well. This technique skipped the direct answers and so the city municipality morphed the answer only to a shape that was conducive to its interests (Rama, 2016).

The probability that officials would not only disregard, but also forget the public comments (Adam, 2004) when finalizing their decisions combined with the lack of an institutional framework responsible for considering, filtering, and reflecting such feedback in the final content of the strategy made the effective follow-up almost impossible. As follow-up options were significantly harmed, through deliberate and non-deliberate action, political opposition, expertise and citizens were excluded from partaking in the strategy-making process, thus reducing the dialogue between legitimate stakeholders.

By personalizing and publicly casting doubt about the motives of the questioner, the strategy-makers could divest those questions of the power to unearth

realities that fell beyond the MoT defined and desired reality. “Even, by not answering the questions, they often tried to personalize and divert the conversation to issues that have nothing to do with the plan of the municipality of Tirana” (Aliaj, 2016).

Ignoring the legal obligation to respond to citizens requests for information, MoT representatives exercised naked power practices that enabled the creation of a narrative ecosystem exclusively dominated by the MoT’s agency at the expense of any alternative story-world. In so doing, strategic practices entirely emerged unmodified offshoots of previous practices and discourses, as the MoT representatives and grand architects did not allow for any reshaping contribution by the current participants (Knights & Morgan, 1991).

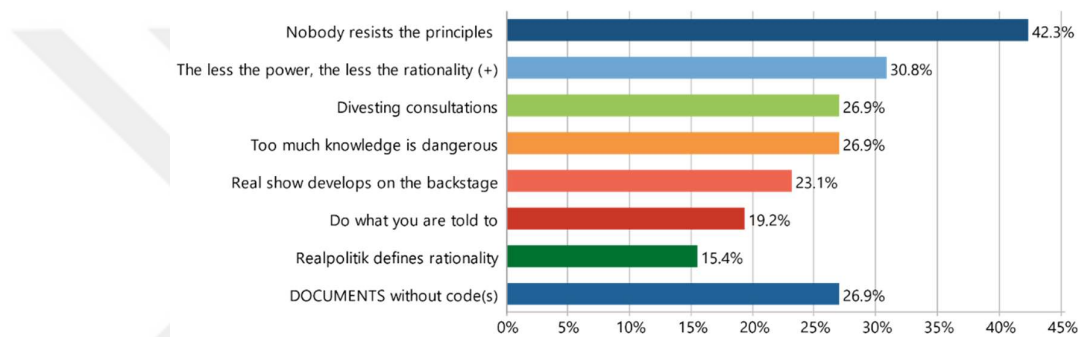
From a Foucault’s (1969) perspective, social practices evolve through the constant effect of rival practices and their relation to an assemblage of material and discursive network of practices. Such an architecture of the practice ecosystem determines what is tellable or doable in a certain domain in a certain time. What was achieved through dialogue reduction during the public hearings and consultations was exactly this: the strategy-making practice of public hearings borrowed a lot from the non-democratic legacy of the past and, through a chain of steps and tools, the fresh contributions of the partaking actors were blocked or censored. The social practice of public hearings in the framework of an urban planning process mostly skipped the efforts to reshape and modify it. Thereby, what was tellable, thus also non-tellable during TR030 was determined by this dimension of the established narrative ecosystem.

Muting Differences

Another dimension of the directional selection was the effort paid by the MoT representatives and the grand architects to mute differences that might emerge between the MoT proposed city strategy and the contending parties such as experts, CSO-s, active citizens, and the political opposition. By silencing the alternative views, the strategy-making MoT representatives and grand architects allowed a favourable direction of the strategizing process that brought about the desired outcomes. Differences were muted applying different tactics such as limiting access to the

documents, limiting the scope of contribution by the involved stakeholders, disregarding critique, following formal procedures of consultation and planning, restricting the focus on practical issues, and having the central government agencies paralyzed during the process. Each of these elements is narrated and explained into details in the following.

Figure 4-4 Muting Differences subcodes' weights and distribution*



* Produced on MAXQDA 2020

4.2.2.1.8 *Too Much Knowledge is Dangerous*

In addition to divisive communications, publics were limited access to significant information by limiting access to the official documentation too. The first group deprived of approaching and contributing to the final outcomes of the strategizing process were the freelance experts. Though hired to carry out specific technical missions in the framework of TR030 planning process, they were allowed to have their say on the proposed Master Plan but were later denied any access to the documents:

So, it is clear that after this meeting, where it was confirmed and given the first signs of a generalization of the general plan draft, where it was said that the experts have done their job, so the work of the experts was legitimized regardless of what they had written and from that moment, the next day, we were no longer provided access to contribute to any change or improvement and the job was, thus, completed [Artur].

The opposition representatives in the Municipal Assembly were also denied access to the complete set of documents that comprised the new Master Plan. By depriving the opposition councillors of direct access to documents, MoT representatives and grand strategists established asymmetrical relationships (Goffman, 1981; Lou, 2010).

The municipal councillors were not only not given the master plan in advance, but they were not given the material during the meeting either. The only material available was a compilation of technical maps. Veliaj's staff also had the full master plan document, but not the municipal councillors [Ardit].

Another strategy that resulted in limited access was the composition of the documents and the respective texts in an indigestible language to the public. Though the documents were later uploaded on the MoT's official website, experts estimated poor degree of public access due to the readability of the text:

... these were then followed by the Municipality in cooperation with the National Agency for Territorial Planning that made these DCMs, which are attached to the plan, and these are things that are not very legible to the public. But they are especially important [Ada].

Using foreign language in documents proved effective in hindering public access to documents. Professionals question the truth-value of using participative language while most citizens are deprived of understanding the documents either through the technical nature of the language used or the naked use of a foreign language in documents that are meant to communicate with a local audience. The following is a comment of an architect to the presentation of the TR030 planning principles and strategic objectives on google docs:

Lovely nod to the US Constitution and the notion of grassroots design but this very document is not translated and made available in Albanian, so I am puzzled who the "we" refers to and who the "people" are (Piro, 2016).

Depriving the present as well as non-present publics of the access to the documents, laid the ground for the stories told by the narrating representatives of the MoT or the strategy-making team members to gain asymmetrical power over the publics, be it for the invited experts or the public. MoT representatives, thus, blocked

another chance for powerless audiences to influence the rationality behind this Master Plan, influencing the direction of the planning process and its outcomes thereby. Consequently, the direction imposed by the political will of the most powerful actors selected out the contending wills, contributing to the creation of a narrative ecosystem that supported an official story-world.

This practice once more proved Flyvbjerg's (1998) conclusion that power defines rationality. Whenever confrontation or antagonism was seen as a recourse to powerless public's rationalities, it only served as a litmus test to the power-rationality relations. Power-defined rationality became, thus, only a mask to the true face of power.

4.2.2.1.9 *Do What you are Told to*

MoT's perspective is translated into TR030 without any single influence by the publics or unaligned stakeholders (Flyvbjerg, 1998; 2002). The role of the expertise could be defined as a “complementary, accessory” one, as an involved expert told the present researcher. Thus, the MoT and the grand architects team just asked the expertise to fill in the missing minor elements of the plan or state the legal requirements related to their strategic projects and orientations. Another informant described his experience this way:

... the experts were more in a complementary, accessory role. You cannot change anything. I was not even asked what is missing, for example, in the city centre. I was told this was the plan. These are the transportation systems. Now, evaluate what environmental [legal] obligations we have. But we were not factors in the design and planning, to place, for instance, the green spots. I think that was the approach [Flavio].

Expertise was frequently shunned by the MoT representatives or the grand architects even when its role was relevant. For instance, during public hearings with the members of Municipal Assembly or common citizens, strategy-makers decide to hold under tight control the role of responding to the questions. Though the questions were often of technical nature, the political leadership of the strategizing process preferred to exclusively deal with them. Such an experience is described by an interviewee as follows:

I was the main part of the project defence. I mean, I was accountable directly to the groups that asked the questions and I never spoke. Because Joni [the Director of Strategic Planning at the MoT] was telling me “To stay calm because I will be the one who is going to respond”. Yes, that sounds pretty crap to me. Looks like it isn't for me either. So that's what ... I had nothing to talk about anymore, that's it [Artur].

The nature of the changes proposed by the audiences was defined by the strategic orientation offered by the strategy-making top-managers and MoT representatives. What counted as contribution was defined by what counted as innovation according to the MoT representatives and grand architects. “I wouldn't not call them innovative. There have been [proposed] a couple things, but just complementation rather than innovations” Ada explained the nature of the experts' and publics' contribution to TR030.

4.2.2.1.10 *The Less the Power, the Less the Rationality*

An often-used strategy to disregard critique and opposition to the MoT proposed strategy in the framework of TR030 consultation process was creating and moderating expert roundtables or taskforces and throw ideas, proposals and arguments aboard. Mayor Veliaj and his team would not ignore the chances to stage acceptable critique and host a formal degree of oppositional standpoint. Leaving some room for critique might itself serve as a strategy to stabilize the dominant instrumental rationality by the powerful actors as in Kroes, Franssen, & Bucciarelli (2009). For instance, they would tolerate the opposition and certain journalists' critique of their ambitious goals but would underestimate them by a policy of no follow up or mockery. This is the experience of a participant with the TR030 consultation process:

The councillors were invited to a meeting to discuss Tirana's development master plan. The manner and form of convening the meeting, but also the manner of its conduct was not only in violation of the law, but also completely abusive and degrading to the representatives of the people of Tirana. The members of the Municipal Assembly are the representatives of the citizens of Tirana, but mayor Veliaj treated them even

worse than his subordinates. In fact, he mobilized his subordinates to prepare mockery and manipulation of Assembly members [Ardit].

Singularly relying on the power of telling the truth, the contenders of MoT's rationality only aggravated the problems they intended to address without power to support their rationality, the decision-making process was deemed less democratic (Flyvbjerg, 2002).

The meeting started an hour late due to the failure of the mayor to appear in time, who in obvious prejudice had thought that the opposition Assembly members, including me, would not appear. Rather, we came and asked questions and got no answers. In certain cases, the experts even told untruths. The mayor himself, after opening the meeting with unnecessary replies, did not remain in the room for more than 10 minutes and avoided confrontation. In the middle of the meeting, the deputy mayor also left (Aliaj, 2016).

The power relations here are manifested by way of not expecting the seriousness of the opposition members of the municipality council and by ignoring their questions, concerns and critiques. Mayor and deputy mayor do not relate to them at all and leave the room without hearing their concerns. A fuller version of the story is offered by a participating journalist and activist:

The showdown happened on the last Monday of the year, in the Queen Geraldina room, on third floor of Plaza Hotel. The opponents: municipal council members of the Democratic Party. The reason: To avoid the real confrontation! Erion was avoiding the confrontation by [putting] the specialists in front of the media. Plan B was being firmly executed. He said he was in a rush to go to his office. According to him he had to be in an important celebration that, in fact, turned out to be real. The meeting lasted until late afternoon and even as the dusk fell outside, the guy with the pullover didn't return. The hosts had planned to forgo the explanations and arguments: all the questions were grouped, and the answers were to be offered in groups as well. This technique skipped the direct [critical] answers and so the city municipality morphed the feedback only to a form that was conducive to its interests (Rama, 2016).

As a result, disregarding critique paid back as an effective strategy of muting differences between the contending stakeholders and, especially, between the Municipality and the publics. The expert roundtables and the public hearing sessions were used as oxygen generating machines to “keep” the MoT representatives’ and grand architects’ “ideas alive” (Tepper, 2004) rather than as TR030’s redaction and enriching opportunities for the sake of a more comprehensive and consensual master plan.

4.2.2.1.11 *Divesting the Mechanisms of Consultation*

Limiting access to documents, limiting the scope of contribution and disregarding critique cannot be comprehended remotely. The nature of the consultations and the expert tables emerges very formal. The brief time allocated to entire process of developing and approving the master plan foresees a superficial phase of reflection and feedbacking. Mayor Veliaj bluntly states the time constraints and predicts a rapid process of city planning:

It's one year since our new administration [is in office]. And I would like that first draft to be passed on the site during the summer and within the year to close the history of the urban plan and the general local plan of Tirana (Veliaj, 2016).

By setting tight deadlines, the mayor is adding to the formal nature of the public consultation process, as he limits the timeframe of the citizens involvement and contribution. This emerges as a discursive practice embedded in the bureaucratic power that a Mayor of Tirana receives from the formal position. The mayor does not draw on the opinions of the experts or participants about the timeframe of such an intensive process, but easily projects his opinion in the form of expectation, therefore setting the objectives of strategizing team performance.

Not only the public hearing sessions, but even the technical world tables were reduced to the minimalist functions of providing stories, experiences and memories of changes and transformations of the past. The technical contribution was to be made by the internationals:

So, when we go anywhere, but especially we came to Tirana into 2012 for a competition for the boulevard, context is particularly important. And uh ... so

we use the skills that we built by being traveling around the world for the last few years to look at a place and that doesn't substitute you as the people that live here that know it, that feel it, that have this memory built through families, through stories of change and through struggle. So that's something that we as designers need you to bring to us. But we have certain skills of looking at things that in diverse ways with a certain detachment that may help us to define new ways to move forward (Vimercati, 2016).

The expert tables and the public hearings are hosted for the sake of meeting some formal criteria set by the legal framework. It is the entire process that lacks seriousness and veracity what imposes these standards of formality on the consultation stage. The poor democratic experience of our society plays a significant role in this:

... we do not have that mentality for public hearings. Normally, these are carried out for show. Everything! Even environmental studies are conducted for show. Because the whole society is not aware of this yet [Lukas].

Taking advantage of such social unawareness, the mayor and the grand strategists assume the functions of the publics during these meetings and perform the role of commentator and feedback provider. As the authors of the proposed strategy and the commentators are almost the same people, differences and polemics hardly arise. Once again, the public hearings were manifested as “poor mechanisms for deliberation” (Adams, 2004; King, Feltey, and Susel, 2008; Kemmis, 1990; Checkoway, 1981). They only allowed the political decision-makers, including the grand architects, to turn away the public’s minds (Tepper, 2004) from factual issues of the city-making and future-city imagining process.

A fuller story of the experience with seriousness of TR030 strategy-making process is told by the following participant:

Look, I do not want to prejudice them, but at that time it was a statutory requirement to hold public consultations, as far as I remember. We had to do this and the whole procedure was followed by the National Agency of Territorial Planning, for all these plans, not only for the plan of Tirana. That it is an initiative ... It is not just that it was made for the plan of Tirana. It was a national initiative to make regulatory plans that did not exist until that day. I

mean after the dictatorial regime. No plans had ever been made. Small plans were made but no regulatory plans at this scale. It was a government initiative and among the rules that were set was to hold a certain number of public hearings. It was the rule that they should do this. It is not that they intended to make this a public hearing and from there to get more information and modify it ... in my opinion. It had to be done, then let us do it. If an expert tells us valuable things, we can take them into account. But that has never not been the goal. Often, from my own experience, but I told you that I do not remember this, these [public consultations] are done just to check the list, that this thing was done too. The consultations in the presence of different stakeholders were held, but they are done a bit later, unfortunately. They were not held in the beginning. This I think is a drawback, as they had to be included from the beginning. They sometimes emerged even a bit fictitious [Ada].

The formal nature of public hearings and expert roundtables once again puts forward arguments in favour of a pre-existing master plan, to the extent TR030 fit the structure of a master plan, way before the project was open, to the extent it opened, for public debate. The possible differences were muted. Consequently, the adversary and resistant stories of the lay citizens, activists and critics of the official draft of TR030 were selected out, while the MoT representatives and grand architects' stories thrived and were reproduced from one public hearing session to another.

4.2.2.1.12 *Real Show Develops on the Backstage*

City planning was also reduced to setting out some generalized strategic orientations with no clear and plain breakdown to projects and action plans. For instance, instead of delineating a plan about the ways the strategic orientation of mobility is projected as a tangible future, the strategy-makers only offer some minor strategies that are easier to imagine, such as pedestrian areas and bicycle lanes:

The municipality states that mobility within the city should be on foot or by bicycle. There are no plans to build a modern transport network, tram or metro, but attempts will be made to improve bus transport [Armanda].

The real work is focused elsewhere, mainly in the communications strategy and, surely, in projecting stakes that do not resonate with the public expectation from a master plan. It is difficult to identify a correspondence between what the urban planning is and what the grand architects and the MoT representatives were presenting to the public:

And Boeri is quite clear that he didn't care of a master plan. He hardly worked for it. Boeri just dumps his orbital forest on what's now a plan. You know that's literally what he did. He did extraordinarily little [Paris].

A typical practice of a formal nature of urban planning in the framework of TR030 master plan was the generalist vision, problems or imagined future, usually adopted from master plans across the world. For instance, instrumentalizing the urban plan of a peripheral contributor to climate change to address problems caused by the latter is close to being comic. The reflection of an urbanist to the new vision of Tirana metropolitan city master plan better condenses this mixed feeling of comedicity:

I don't say this to patronize but rather to point out that a lot of this "vision" is importing in copy-paste format concerns that originated with actors that have had a leading role in causing climate change. To carry over this responsibility to tiny Albania seems entirely out of touch (Piro, 2016).

The role played by knowledge and expertise was mostly a role assigned and legitimated by the power, not by its agency to produce meaningful and common solutions. Power-rationality relations were, therefore, asymmetrical (Flyvbjerg, 2002). By avoiding decision-making about key issues and planning their corresponding resolution, strategy-makers exerted the power of non-decision making (Bachrah & Baratz, 1962) to define rationality, and, thus, reality of a metropolitan city. Therefore, superficial coverage of the city problems and demands served as an effective tool to silencing differences by by-passing the issues that might cause them. Bertrand Russell's (as quoted in Edvardsson & Hansson, 2005) definition of reason as the choosing of the appropriate means to achieving a set out end is actualized here.

4.2.2.1.13 *Nobody Resists the Principles*

Differences were also muted by avoiding talk about practical issues. The strategic conversation was always wandering around universal imaginary futures supported by material, visual and narrative practices that inspired imagination, rather than critical thinking. Details were excluded, data were invented or made up, and project were not exposed to professional critique. A participant recalls this practice as following:

It has never been detailed. The third phase, which was incredibly detailed, also specifies the pilot projects, and I do not remember any part of the process being described in detail. But I do not mean that they were not aware of this. There is a hierarchy ... Presentations have always been like presentations ... I would describe them on the same level as projects in architecture are presented. In competitions it is quite common that when you seek to get a contract from a client you present it not extremely specific, in details, such as how much funding it needs, how long the technical process lasts, you do not present details of the building [Ada].

The problems considered by the MoT representatives and the grand architects were borrowed from global clichés, such as global warming, environment protection, green infrastructure, mobility, connectedness, etc. Since the research phase followed a non-rigorous approach, the data supporting the master plan were incomplete or distorted. The logical outcome of such a non-professional process is easy to conceive. For instance, environmental approach of TR030 is described below by one of the involved experts:

As a rule, a plan should be provided to solve a certain problem. Do we have problems with the environment? Where do we start? We will start by solving the problem. What do we have? We lack green areas. Then as a first stem we will build green areas. Then, what is left for construction. But that was not the approach. The plan did not set out to solve some problems, at least for the environment. ... its negative impact on the environment and what is necessary to manage this impact [Flavio].

The flagrant incongruity between the city's challenges and the communicated fancy image of the propagated city is skilfully represented by the comment of a urban planner to the TR030 vision presentation on google docs:

It is great to dream that everyone has a functioning smartphone to look at an app, but that is rarely the reality, and the plan should reflect the necessities of that reality. So first: 'how to develop the dynamic signage on a wall that tells you that the southern bus station is now located somewhere different? (Isto, 2016).

One of the grand architects openly explains how the strategy-making team had opted for an instrumental rationality by choosing to develop TR030 as a tool toward achieving their preferred future city:

And, of course, we kind of had to establish a vision. I really share what Lorenza said earlier about the time of urban planning changing and our idea was to establish a vision for an exceptionally prolonged period for this area, so, but design a system, not a design, not an architectural proposition, but a system that would allow us to pursue this vision and take into consideration all the changes that that may happen. That willing to occur because, yes, I am in London. In London we plan, and we are precise, so they say, but I am also Italian. So, I know that things do not happen the way you hope them to happen. So, I'm really keen and especially with this project with the research we're doing to be able to create a resilient system that allows a direction of travel to exist coherently for a long period, so that people can make that their life vision you know for 20, 30, 50 years but also for things to change quickly and to adapt to new economies, the new needs, to a new population and so forth (Vimercati, 2016)

As Herbert Simon (1983), has best defined it, grand architect Vimercati's words seem to echo the management scientists' postulate "reason ... cannot tell us where to go; at best it can tell us how to get there" (pp.7-8). Intertwined with poor public understanding about the sophisticated urban systems and models, the blurred presentation of major strategic projects helped strategy-making team escape polemics and reduce resistance to the official draft of TR030.

By maintaining the discourse on a level of universal principles, MoT representatives and grand architects managed to establish an atmosphere of mutual

understanding and reduced resistance, while by-passing the tangible challenges and interests of the lay citizens. The stories of the latter were not boosted by any obvious danger or threat since that would be identified should the practical components of the plan get uncovered for public debate. Consequently, the official tales of the future city reigned supreme and shaped not only the opinions of the lay public, but hidden hand of the construction industry fixed its interests unnoticed by the public awareness.

4.2.2.1.14 *Realpolitik Defines Rationality*

In addition to the celebrated incompetence of public agencies in doing their job, MoT representatives play an active role in paralysing their involvement. It is interesting to research the causes to this paralysing agency of MoT, as it goes beyond the focus of the present study. MoT's incompetence, though vivid, has not affected its agency to shape and direct the impact of the other institutions on the urban planning enterprise. Its incompetence is, however, interesting to notice: "when I came here and I asked, 'how do I get to the Tirana River', which is the name of the city, nobody could tell me how or even if there was one" (Vimercati, 2016).

Another experience with the incapacity of MoT, lack of a research approach, concisely describes the general institutional culture of last-minute reaction and ad-hoc decision-making:

No data at all. Not only for transport, but also data on the territory. As it is in Albania, we do not keep data because since we do not make decisions on data, we make decisions ad-hoc, then why do they need that entire system? [Lukas].

By excluding them from the decision-making about TR030, MoT representatives and grand architects, the power of legal rights is substituted by the naked power of the large and rich MoT. Realpolitik prevails over the law and the MoT can project a dominant realpolitik via its political and financial power. Such a projection of power by MoT is evident in the narration of one of the partaking experts:

... did the municipality of Tirana have a coordination with the central government in this project? There was not, I did not see it at any moment, because there should have been the State Road Authority in the part for roads and there should not have been a deadlock later as was the Ring Road deadlock

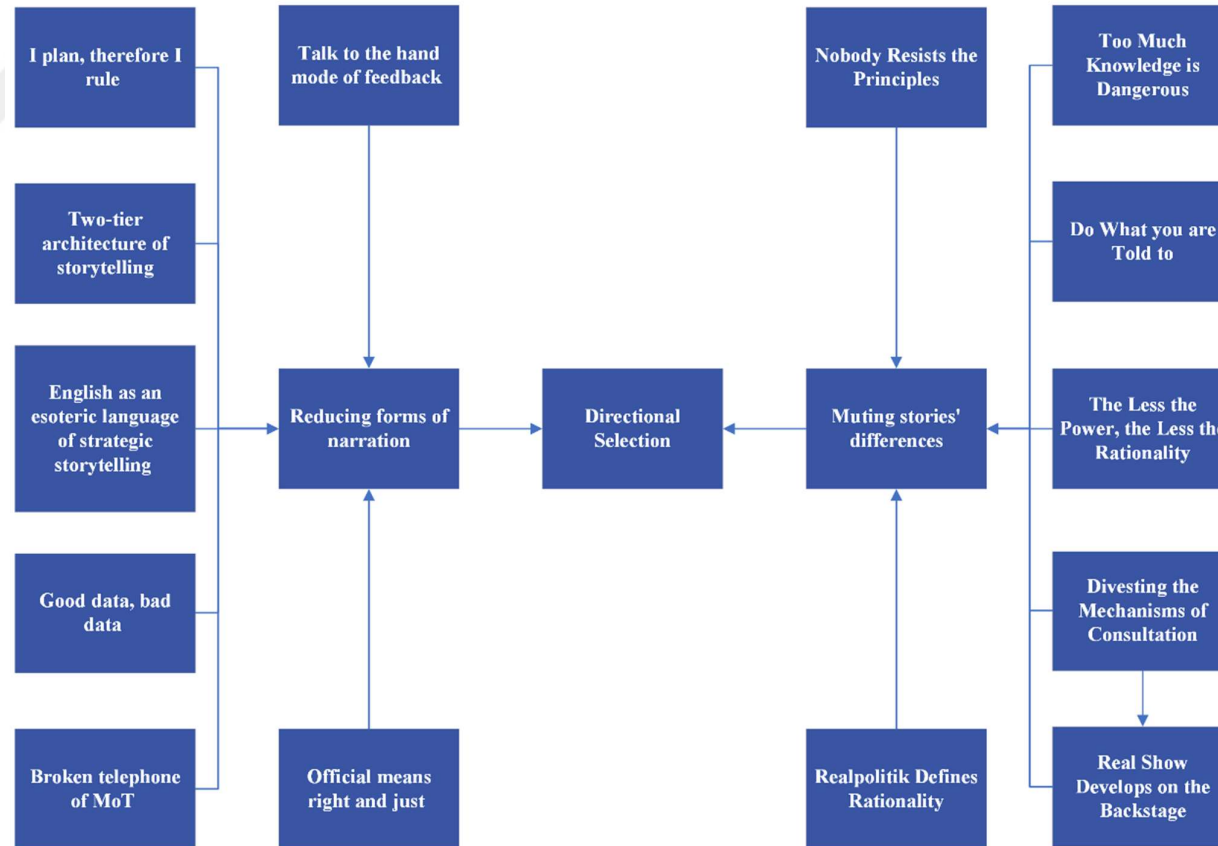
... All of these were from the Municipality, none from the central government; all from local [units] [Artur].

However, MoT's political and financial power cannot surpass that of the National Territory Council (NTC). The failure of a superior regulatory institution to audit MoT's decisions raises concerns of possible collusion between these institutions. This is the reflection of an involved expert 5 years after the master plan was adopted:

Finally, it is the National Territory Council's [NTC] turn to check: have you addressed these community problems? Have you had [problems] raised? Have you addressed them? These are not audited at all. These issues do not arise. These decision-makers keep saying that ... the NTC does not check them either [Flavio].

Legally required opponency by the regulatory institutions and central government agencies during the process and afterwards was absent. Either imposed by the realpolitik of the political and financial power of MoT, or self-imposed in compliance with any collusive agreement between the involved institutions, it accelerated the smooth and superficial progress of the city strategizing activity. This silence by the central and regulatory agencies weakened any opposing voice and, simultaneously, strengthened the position of MoT in setting the direction and selecting out hampering arguments. The conceptual relationship between the events that shaped the directional selection process is shown in Figure 4.5 below.

Figure 4-5 A proposed conceptual framework of the directional selection phenomena



4.2.3

Conclusions to Narrative Ecosystem of Strategy

It is interesting to notice that while the MoT representatives and grand architects had narrowed the definition of the potential participants in the consultation process, as well as disguised the major beneficiaries of the intended draft, they also had to deny the public access to the public hearings. The consultation process was only projected as a staged performance of an already tailored draft of TR030 in the backstage. Thus, the public participation resembled the undesired and unnecessary interruptions of film shootings from the occasional passers-by, that should be reduced to the minimum level possible and managed thoroughly.

Events that do not pertain to our memories, do not contribute to our sensemaking processes. MoT representatives managed to prevent most citizens from creating and collecting memories from this process thanks to its efforts to reducing and ineffectualizing their presence in the said process. Thus, designing the future of the city became a covert operation, and the future of the city became a matter of the views and interests of a closed group of people.

By creating an acid environment to the emergence and the survival of the proposed variations, MoT representatives and grand architects laid the ground for nature of acceptable proposals and feedback. The scale of such influence reaches the level of constructing and organizing the feedback of the expert of public audiences to the strategy making activity. By assuming the responsibility for hosting the consultation event, the MoT reserved to itself full controlling power over every event component. What deemed MoT omnipotent, rendered it omniscient too, manifesting the enabling qualities of power in relation to rationality.

By including certain topics and, meantime, excluding other ones from the consultation session agenda, the strategy-makers accelerated the "bracketing effect" (Seidl & Guerard, 2015; Boden; 1994) on the tellability of certain stories. Limited time allocated to the meeting and to each of its components produced a precipitation effect on the quality of analysis and proposed solutions (Hendry & Seidl, 2003; Seidl & Guerard, 2015). Following Hume's remark of instrumental rationality, Veliaj's instrumental rationality "preferred the destruction of the whole world to the scratching

of" his "finger" (Hume, 1969 (1739-40), p. 462). The rationality of MoT, represented by both the MoT representatives and the grand architects, supported by the narrative niches that were created by them, did not allow any alternative rationality to shape the TR030 Master Plan.

From "intersection of multiple narratives" (Massey, 1999, p.165), the city of Tirana emerges as an intersection of human and non-human actants that possess narrativity. Narration and chronotopes, therefore, joined forces to convey certain meanings and experiences at the exclusion of other meanings and experiences. The narrative effect of the material semiotics was, hereby, exerted through the ability of the material objects to tell certain stories and censor others. By virtue of their control on the material and visual practices of the storytelling process, MoT representatives and grand architects were able to impose a narrative inequality and power relations that favoured their version of rationality and downplayed chances for an alternative rationality to emerge therein.

The stories told by the strategic storytellers during the public hearings or expert tables intersected with the visual artefacts to recreate narrative possibilities about the future of Tirana that intended to recruit public support for the drafted strategic plan of the city. Public hearings were, therefore, made into the stages for show rather than arenas for dispute between the parties. The visual artefacts were smoothly diluted into narrative through their capacity to make people imagine and wish for themselves a city that nothing in the master plan promises to build. Thus, the seductive power of the strategic narration rests, same as in the case of music, not in the sound but in the silence of the semiotic artefacts that persistently act on the background.

The chronotopicity of the visual artefacts is manifest in the way they the stories and the artefacts were immersed in the same storyline and advanced the same future into the minds of the present publics. Space and time were not antinomic components of TR030 storyworld. On the contrary, spatial elements were diluted into the strategic stories and awarded these stories the time pigment of both the past and the future, same as words were planted into the topography of the artefacts to animate and vitalize the spatial elements.

The narrative offshoot of the marriage of visual artefacts, such as screens, with the oral stories and small narratives of the strategic tellers was an actualised form of the future of the city, a videosphere (Debray, 1996). This marriage established a narrative inequality that enabled strategy practitioners to impose power relationships that either directly or indirectly enhanced the support to the officially proposed version of Tirana metropolitan city strategic plan. Consequently, they were able to select out the good reasons (Fisher, 1978, 1984, 1985, 1994) coming from the powerless audiences and render their own good reasons unchallenged.

It is obvious that the employed narratives played a role in imposing that development of Tirana as desirable by all its citizens. The strategy practitioners weaponized their story-telling rights, chronotopes, and power relations to advance their strategic choices as unanimous preferences of all the stakeholders. Strangely enough, all the stakeholders of the city planning gained everything and lost nothing simply by virtue of MoT caution to do the perfect justice to the urban planning process.

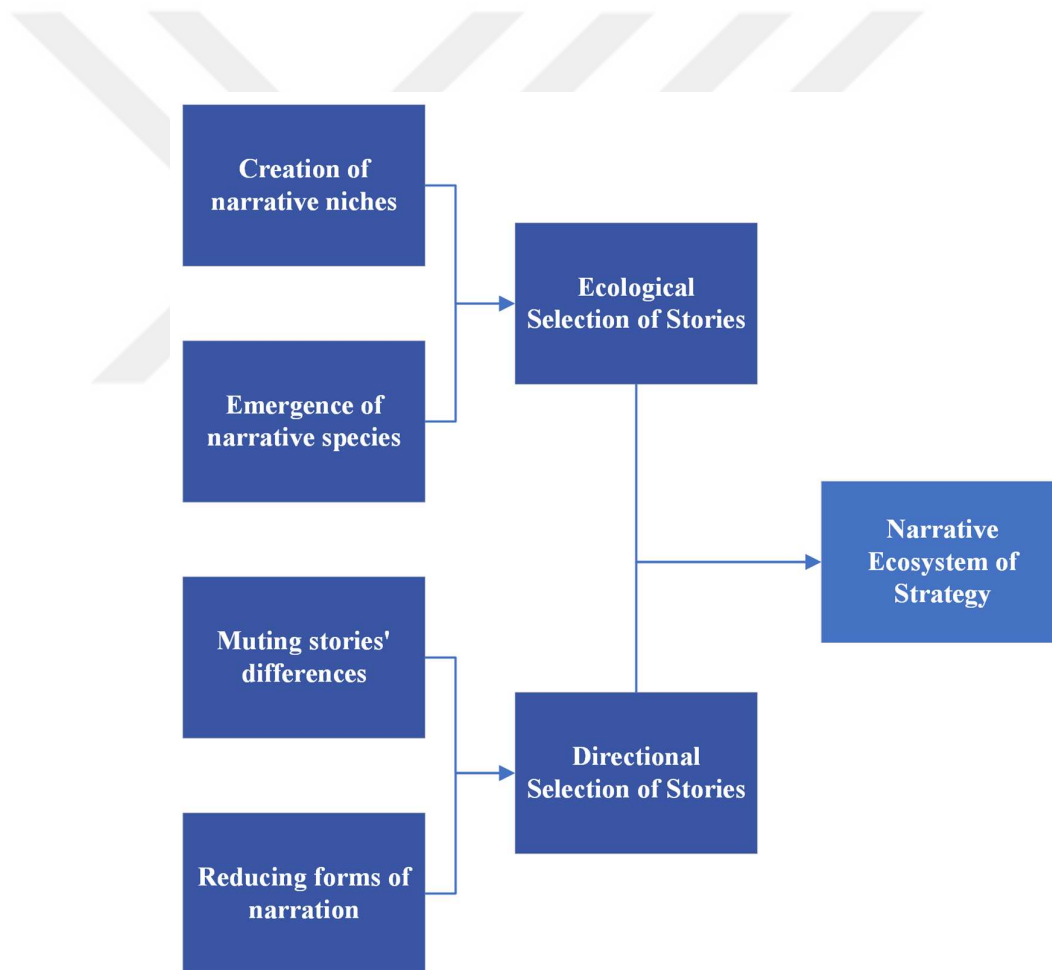
The narratives of sustainability were stories from utopia that extrinsically overlapped with the public sentiments of green spaces, fresh air, and quality of life, while intrinsically fulfilling the construction industry appetite for more building areas. The actual dominant image of the city would rather be the grey concrete towers across the city centre and teeth-filling style building of apartment blocks throughout the neighbourhoods and suburbs. Public hearings organised by the MoT to project an image that was not: the image of MoT and grand architects cooperating with the public to design the future urban living. Indeed, the overall process was staged via narrative practices, chronotopes and story selection processes that established a friendly setting for the official story world, meantime acid to the alternative storytelling.

The strategy-making team was more concerned with defining what the city was and shall be in the future than with researching and understanding it. Lack of data, superficial use of figures, incomplete planning of the strategic programs and projects, etc, are part of the evidence to this. Strategy-makers led by mayor Veliaj and deputy mayor Mazniku would not allow reason to show them the future. Rather, they subdued reason to serve their vision, to show them the way towards their arbitrarily imagined future. The Flyvbjerg's (1998) principle "the greater the power, the less the rationality"

was faithfully applied by the MoT and grand architects. They didn't feel any significant pressure to allow differences and alternatives arise and cope with them appropriately. On the other hand, MoT representatives and grand architects adopted strategies of communication that drastically reduce chances for differences to emerge.

The conceptual results of these findings are represented in Figure 4.6 below:

Figure 4-6 The conceptual framework of the experiences of participants with the narrative ecosystem of TR030



4.3 Narrative Rationality of TR030

While the narrative ecosystem farmed by the MoT power relations assisted the process of laying down a fertile ground for official strategic storytelling, the narrative rationality granted the necessary structure to organize and legitimize the talk of the few at the expense of the talk of the many. In differing with the modern paradigm rationality, the narrative rationality is raised upon the logic of good reasons (Fisher, 1978, 1984, 1985; Warnick, 1987), which is established by the internal coherence and the external correspondence of a story.

In addition to it, the MoT representatives and grand architects employed Toulmin's (1956) claim-data-warrant argumentative relationship by applying selective mechanisms of data collection and legitimation. All these operations were helped by the power-knowledge axis and the agency of technology in projecting possible futures. The following sections offer detailed accounts of how the narrative rationality organized the sensemaking process of the present and distant addressees of the public consultation stage of city planning.

4.3.1 Urban space as a justification for a new urban plan

The first challenge to the narrative rationality of the strategy-makers was the need to justify the abolishing of the existing urban plan, adopted only 4 years ago and the financial and administrative burden of making a new one. Veliaj's argument was that expanding the territorial map of Tirana made a new strategic plan necessary. According to Veliaj, the city is 25 times bigger now. According to his claims, in 2030 Tirana would have 1.5 million inhabitants. This would be, based on the data of the Municipality, 1/3 of the population of the country in that year. Mayor's rationalization, though based on unreliable statistics and unclear projections, followed a causality that made his arguments sound acceptable.

However, deputy mayor had a much more thoughtful narrative. His point of departure was a chronology that started with Tirana in 1990-91, related to the Tirana of transition and imposed an image of the next level of Tirana in 2030. Deputy mayor's

narrative is best condensed in the thick description from one of the present study's interviewees' stories:

The first stage of Tirana's social and economic development began in 1990, in the most private place possible: the toilet. According to him, a social negotiation for the reconstruction of Albanian society started here. According to him, the second stage of the social and urban development of Tirana moved to another private but not so intimate terrain, which was the kitchen. For all those who remember the apartments built during the dictatorship, the kitchen and living room were together. It is a private place, says Mazniku, because the family spends most of its time there [the part that serves as the living room] and also where meals are cooked and consumed. However, in the logic that he follows in this story, the living room is also a bit public because there, in the living room, an Albanian family from the 1990s welcomes friends to visit. At the third stage of the transition from private to public, Mazniku presented the negotiation that took place between the neighbors of the same floor or the same building for the maintenance of the common premises of the palace. Here, I am probably wrong, but Mazniku considers the horizontal negotiation between the citizens themselves to be over. Up to this point it is not necessary for a superstructure to intervene from above to resolve conflicts or administer affairs. Then, if I do not remember wrong, this is the stage of the palace administrator, where the verticalization of negotiation between citizens begins. But still the common denominator negotiated at this stage is that of the third stage. We have not yet left the space that does not belong 100% to the city, the public in the exact sense of the word. The last stage, and here I do not believe I am wrong, is that of the administration of public space. Here, not literally but with the logic that I remember, the need emerges for a superstructure and that is the Municipality, to take over the decision-making for what is public. The role of the Municipality, according to Mazniku, during this stage is to soften the negotiation between the citizens for the spaces between the palaces towards the big negotiation for the way the city should be. I do not remember 100% of his words, but the impression I created from the argument he made to this phase

was that the municipality had the right to decide on the size of the city because that is why it was trusted by the citizens. Perhaps he also meant the fact that the municipality has the capacity to provide professional solutions and this issue is not a political issue, but deeply technical [Juliana].

This was the story of the development of Tirana from the deputy mayor's point of view presented as a shift from the deeply private to fully public space. The logic behind this rationalizing story is that time had come for a new urban strategy, because people were emancipated enough to participate and give mature consent to such a choice. He claimed that in 2012, 1989 or 1938 when the preliminary urban plans were drafted, people had not reached this civil maturity.

However, the mayor was using the new territorial map of the city to legitimize the remaking of the existing urban plan of the urbanized Tirana, adopted 4 years ago. Described by the several participants as an old school and rigid master plan, it did not create room for manoeuvring with the construction permits and zoning. According to that plan, the single authority that remained with the MoT was that of formalizing the construction permits for buildings of already defined rise and land use.

What is the value of a master plan to a mayor if not allowing him or her space for pulling strings of hundreds of millions of euros a business, i.e., construction industry? Claiming that Tirana was being built in the shape of dormitory-like apartment blocks, the new master plan was practically projecting a city resembling a vast 5 stars hotel. Retrospectively evaluating TR030, experts stressed that the wave of high-rise constructions, the rapid increase in buildings density and the erasure of cultural heritage and community spaces have irretrievably harmed the quality of life in the city.

4.3.2 Commoners do not think, they make sense

A particular rationality inherent in the distribution of telling rights and storytelling agency among the participants in the public hearings and expert tables was that of a rationally bound public. According to this rationality, city planning is not the job of the lay people. Rather it takes the concerted efforts of the visionary and highly experienced urban planners, preferably internationals, to kill the pains of the urban space.

Table 4-4 Commoners don't think subcode' weights and distribution*

Subcodes/Documents	Documents	Percentage	Percentage (valid)
Urban living, architects' domain	10	38.46	62.50
Rationally bound public	8	30.77	50.00
Isolated critical voices	7	26.92	43.75
DOCUMENTS with code(s)	16	61.54	100.00
DOCUMENTS without code(s)	10	38.46	-
ANALYZED DOCUMENTS	26	100.00	-

* Generated from MAXQDA 2020

Consequently, for the strategy makers to be able to marshal support, establish legitimacy and award to themselves public representation, they were forced to manifest a better claim to rationality. How this representation was used and how the superior rationality of the strategy practitioners was employed to censor and silence the rationally bound publics, is shown in the following sections.

Rationally bound public

Considering citizens as rationally bound sounds a borrowing from Herbert Simon (1990). However, the bounded rationality of the public in the TR030 public hearing sessions is adopted and re-semiotized to mean that the common citizens were considered incapable of understanding and make decisions about the urban living of the future. Rationality boundedness is a widespread belief among various categories of participants in this study as it reflects the widespread nature of this belief among the overall population. An expert of TR030 reflects the same patterns of thought and, to a certain extent, justifies the choice of the strategy-makers to keep people far from the process:

Because the whole society is not aware of this yet. Even developed societies today have become conscious after many years. Because they have polluted the environment more, they have destroyed it ... the audience is not prepared for the field [in question] ... because they are very technical processes and cannot contribute constructively. They cannot give any opinion to [Lukas]

Judging citizens at large as lacking major political and reasoning faculties is less appealing for research than the hasty nature of conclusions that are either drawn or adopted indiscriminately by the participants. Part of the participants agree with the MoT representatives, while others offer comments of the kind as a reflexive pondering as citizens thought they might be aware of the simplification that this corollary entails. The following comments from an expert of the master plan discovers some of the root causes of the bounded rationality of the citizens:

...the audience did not ask, but neither were they introduced to ... It was somehow planned but because the civil society here is not very informed ... it catches a momentary cause and ... there are no good support either [Flavio]

Another legitimate cause for the public lack of understanding of the municipal issues in general and urban planning is the sophistication of the infrastructural works in the modern city. Unqualified for offering professional opinions and proposals about the urban living, common citizens are only invited to comment on the general principles of the city planning. The details of the planning process are handled by the representatives of the people, i.e., the MoT and the internationally recognised professional teams, i.e., the grand architects. One of the grand architects throws this idea in a subtle language as follows:

So, you are not any more aware of what was the water coming from, how does it go away, unless you have problem of provision your, unless you have problem of discharge, unless floods happen. So only in case of failing of the infrastructure (Pastore, 2016).

This disregard for the public at large is manifest in the way MoT representatives consider the comments of the citizens on the google docs presentation "Tirana030 - Kick-off" (Baboçi, 2016). In other cases, MoT representatives even denied the legal responsibility of conducting public consultations (van Gerven Oei, 2016). It is easy to notice that the strategy-makers of TR030 were quite edgy when it came to listening to the ordinary people who elected them as city administrators a year ago.

Planning the urban living, the grand architects' domain

The ideation and projection of the urban living in the Tirana of 2030 was left completely in the hands of the grand architects, who in turn were closely supervised by the MoT. Even the local experts hired by the international companies, or the MoT were not taken into consideration for sharing technical details. The latter might contribute to the planning process in data collection and minor comments, but they were not qualified for macro approaches to the plan. One of the grand architects expresses this view openly in the framework of an expert table:

And then the way we work we understand all these things then we put fixed points that we I really do not want to tackle because there are too complex and we call them constraints, and there's property boundaries, property ownership, progress' information of planning roads, key things, and key policies that within our scope we were not able to change (Vimercati, 2016).

Most of the experts were only involved in sectoral analysis, data collection and flash commenting the proposals. Often, they accepted they were not sufficiently briefed on the vision, strategic objectives and their practical implications in the city's infrastructure and lifestyle. The grand architects never broke the project down to an understandable work, told the present researcher one of the local experts:

It was not a straightforward process to understand. A man with normal knowledge of such processes found it difficult to understand what this plan would really bring to his life, to the quality of life. I was not able to fully understand this as a product. Very wide, very expansive, very general. More directed towards a kind of populism, the revolution in the city [Flavio].

Land management instruments were extremely difficult to grasp for the ordinary citizens, thus they were unable to predict the impact of this master plan on their properties and businesses. Transfer of the development rights was a typical instrument that was not easy to comprehend and digest. A local expert expressed the following concerns to the present researcher:

... it is an instrument that you tell someone that you are going to build ... here you are allowed to build 8 floors. If you build 9 floors and pull back a little more

and leave more public space, we accept it. Or if you are going to build 10 floors, you build a park around the building to offer a value to the public and get something for yourself. These instruments are mentioned there, and the transfer of development rights is similar. If the Municipality wants to develop a certain area for public interests, it gives the landowner the right to develop it elsewhere, under certain conditions. Since these are not detailed as they are and are exceedingly difficult legally as instruments, you get into a lot of problems ... they are like policies, but they are not detailed ... they find it difficult to implement them [Ada].

Data presentation was often inappropriate, using tools that distorted the understanding of the audience and their ability to judge and reason based on the provided visuals. It may sometimes seem these inappropriate tools are not a sufficient *casus bello* to the MoT because they have little relevance to the overall master plan, but they contribute to establishing a perception setting in which Tirana is experienced. They carry out instrumental functions to imagining the city future the way it is convenient to strategic narrators. As such, these tools are instrumental to MoT representatives and grand architects' interests at the expense of the citizens' interests in city planning. The following quote from van Gerven Oei (2017a) offers an illustration of how inappropriate tools reduced people access to information and hindered their understanding of TR030 master plan:

If, for example, the pie-shaped graph used to inform the audience about the level of water supply in some administrative units of the Municipality of Tirana, we would transform it into a bar-shaped graph, then we can compare different units administrative without reading the numbers (van Gerven Oei, 2017a).

Heretofore, power relations emanated from the ability of the MoT and grand architects to present their own story of Tirana at a universal, political, city level, while denying the necessity to provide the public opinion with access tools that would enable them to gain legitimacy and rationality and react to the master plan accordingly.

People with better access to the data and longer experience with the construction industry could more easily decode MoT's real intentions behind the blurred image of Tirana of the future. In case the information would be easy to access, citizens would

have understood they had been stripped of their rights to develop their properties and these rights were assigned to the MoT. An informant explained this scheme as follows:

But building permits would not be issued directly to families. If families were allowed to build on their own, bypassing large firms close to the mayor, then the entire construction industry would benefit from the construction. Therefore, the way of issuing the permit had to be centralized. They invented this idea of organizing a group of families to unite their lands for a common construction. But only a few companies can get the permit from the Municipality [Juliana].

The construction permits more than the sophisticated planning tools presented in the plan prove much more effective instruments of shaping the city of the future and the urban living for 800 thousand citizens, if we do not consider the population growth patterns assumed by the MoT. Heretofore, the rationality served by the MoT representatives and grand architects was context dependent (Flybjerg, 1998, 2002) and was applied from time to time as per the rhetoric needs of the official narrative.

Isolated critical voices

The official narrative faced difficulties when the critique emanated from reputable sources such as Max Velo, a renowned architect, urban activist, and public figure. Hist “screaming... that they [the towers along the central boulevard] are annoying the boulevard because the boulevard must respect a standard [construction] height” [Ermira] were echoed by the local media and required a response or an argument by the MoT. Nobody from the MoT wanted to respond to his accusations, questioning the ownership of the master plan. So, whose was the urban plan, after all?

The issue of the plan’s ownership arose even during the experts’ tables. As the proposed variations were disqualified and the proposing experts were not informed about the MoT’s decision to disregard their proposals, one expert openly discredited the plan content. If their written contribution was being silently altered while their authorship retained, was this master plan a reliable document? The following witness summarizes this crisis of reliability:

The only case that escaped them was when infrastructure expert Edmond Alite saw that his report was different from the one he had submitted. And he says,

look, we are part of a scheme that results different from what I have written there [Artur].

Such cruel interventions in the very authorial work of the experts were carried out with the political support of the MoT political leadership. The vast political power that sprung from the politicians did not exist in vacuum: it was based on the support of the central government to pass a new master plan three years the previous one was adopted by the City Assembly. No technical or legal rationalization was offered by the MoT representatives for their disregard of the expert's proposals. These power exercises applied Flyvbjerg's (2002) principle of the inverse relation between power and rationality.

4.3.3 Power Knowledge Relations

The famous Baconian principle says, "knowledge is power." In the case of TR030, the reverse was true. Power was used extensively to impose a certain view of city researching and urban planning. Apart from the very superficial research and the insufficient data collected randomly, the strategy-practitioners exercised power relations that censored and disqualified the public and expert contribution to the drafted master plan. One of those power differentials with the critics and opponents of TR030 was the disproportionate public relations campaign on the national (Basha, 2016; OraNews, 2016; TopChannel, 2016) and international media (Walsh, 2017; Domusweb, 2017).

Table 4-5 Power-Knowledge Relations subcodes' weights and distribution*

Subcodes/Documents	Documents	Percentage	Percentage (valid)
Architecture is the king	11	42.31	61.11
The power of ignorance	9	34.62	50.00
I tell, therefore I plan	9	34.62	50.00
The (in)significance of expertise	9	34.62	50.00
Agencement of technology	5	19.23	27.78
DOCUMENTS with code(s)	18	69.23	100.00

DOCUMENTS without code(s)	8	30.77	-
ANALYZED DOCUMENTS	26	100.00	-

* Generated from MAXQDA 2020

I tell, therefore I plan

Mayor Veliaj cannot hide his joy with the resultant of this power differential at the national and international level. Addressing the experts from a dozen of disciplines gathered to listen to the strategy-makers' presentations and, if allowed to, comment on the content of the plan, he told them he was “glad that, even reading from the topics, but also some of the minutes I read on social networks, where I saw some of you who were highly active” (Veliaj, 2016) the MoT’s public relations campaign was hitting it off. Another strategy-maker, Lorenza Baroncelli once more mentions the aggressive coverage by the media as an endorsement to the quality of the job done. Otherwise, the project would not have “been published several times on the news networks.” So revolutionary a plan it was that “a new kind of city was created, generated there” (Baroncelli, 2016) she infers.

A fuller story of what Tirana was poised to look like in the international public opinion and especially international community decision-makers is offered by the following thick description by one of the participants in the present study:

So, the communication to let us say, the outside, to the internationals is ‘we are following the highest international standards, we are doing this according to whatever, Copenhagen criteria and bla bla bla. There is this discourse of modernity that is basically underlying, they are signalling anyone who does not speak Albanian. Anyone who does not speak Albanian, right, anyone who does not speak Albanian gets this discourse of modernity. People like, you know, let us say, elephants from the nineties, because that is like, we get this kind of third-way labour propaganda. ... this type of nineties effect is, this type of nineties third way socialist-neoliberal propaganda kind of gets recycled by Rama with the same people, right, with the same people. What otherwise is Alastair Campbell doing in this house, what is Tony Blair doing there, what is Bernard Kushner doing there? There are all these kinds of, you know, in a way,

completely derelict, irrelevant, hugely paid consultants that try to reiterate some mythology that is like end-of-the-world-Fukuyama [stuff], end of history Fukuyama [stuff], that no one believes anymore. His communication to the people of Tirana is hardly existent. I mean he uses Veliaj for that and Veliaj has basically in his way that he communicates to the people of Tirana, he has a bully attitude. He is like, 'I am doing more of this for you, you protest me. I even invite you to this hotel, you are asking critical questions. Like he does not seem as ... he does not take citizens seriously. And he does not care because he knows he can get away with it. Because they have the electoral machine. They now have the election machine to continue to win the elections. Like this is Rama 3, Rama 4, Rama 5. Until he is dead. I really do not see a way out. And this is problematic. So, I suppose that their divisional communication is enormously important, they have obviously understood this [Paris].

As stated elsewhere in the present research, a major reason for hiring Boeri to do the job of urban planner in Tirana was found to be his enormous communication network. His company is a vast public relations machinery aside from the planning and architecture expertise. According to one of the present study participants, the international communication campaign:

... was provided by Boeri, who has a team, which, as it was said at the time, Boeri has a floor in his studio dedicated to public relations. Every communication with the audience and any changes or stages that were completed was publicized on his site. And he then had communication from the international media of the sector [Zamira].

MoT would not escape social media, which creates amazing opportunities for relating to people who are unable to access the official propaganda on national televisions and newspapers. These are typically the diaspora supporters of the present mayor and his political party. If not propaganda, what else is the purpose of posting selective visual content on social media while not disclosing the full matter of the new master plan?

they have also published it online. One thing that impressed me, the Director of Urban Development, Joni Baboçi, published the whole publication, put it in a

google docs, posted the whole publication and people could make comments. And he posted it on Facebook, on Twitter ... it is no longer [accessible] ... I remember people had comments. They have even posted on social media. This was posted from the very beginning when they compiled the entire vision, which is the charter, atlas, etc. There was a lot of attention, I remember [Ada].

The MoT representatives' choice to post the kick-off presentation (Baboçi, 2016) on google docs exclusively in English restricted the access of vast majority of citizens to basic information about the new master plan. As one of the least foreign language speaking populations, Albanians were fully disregarded and excluded from the process. The strategy practitioners, thus, retained full control on the public narrative about TR030 and using the exclusive telling rights as a strategy to establish narrative inequality over the rest of the population of Tirana.

Heretofore, rationality was not a tool for imposing power-relations in the framework of TR030. Power relations as projected through narrative inequality defined the dominant rationality that led the strategic planning process: the rationality of the MoT representatives and of the grand architects. Those who were assigned the right to tell the story of and about the TR030 were able to determine what counted as knowledge and rational option and what not.

Architecture is the King

The outcome of the urban planning process, TR030 master plan, resembles more a construction plan than an urban plan. The underground infrastructures are only included as a bucket list without a rigorous field study, engineering and construction projects, and financial projections. The major projects' costs, the statistics of the population or the trees to be planted in the framework of the orbital forest is inaccurate. The new master plan has a lower degree of technicality, as one of the participants assessed it, left more room for manoeuvre compared to the extant one that anticipated every single urban project, building maps and criteria:

... comparing it to what it already was in place in terms of strategy, the previous plan, which I have seen very shortly and do not want to go too deep professionally, it can be considered in the language of planning, old school. He

was very technical, unbelievably detailed and in terms of strategy did not leave much room to manoeuvre. Maybe, this may have been somehow the need to have this new plan. More as a strategy than as detailed [Margarita].

The underground and ground infrastructure were literally left out of the plan, with just mentioning and putting a narrative description of each of the major programs. The real issue the grand architects were concerned with seemed to exclude the challenges a growing capital city is facing. Those challenges were bracketed out through agenda setting, censoring the critique, and disqualifying the proposed variations that emerged from the audiences, of both the public hearings and the experts' tables. Another participant established this argument as follows:

And Boeri is quite clear that he did not care of a master plan. He hardly worked for it. Most of the work was done by UNILAB in Tirana which was like ... gather all the necessary data from the municipality of Tirana on the watering... They did actually a good job in letting all those infrastructures out. Like the actual work done by UNILAB in trying to map out all the water-waste, you know, there were no maps of these, and they made them. Painstakingly! [Paris].

Though several urbanists, experts of hydrology, environment, culture, and tourism were part of the team, they either were reduced to architects, or they were disabled to the degree of no access to the content of the new master plan. Often, it was by virtue of acting as an architect or having a previous experience as such that experts were promoted to the leading positions within the strategy-making team, as is instance presented below:

In the room remained Joni Baboçi, a young architect that Erjon Veliaj had appointed as Director of Urban Planning right after he was elected Mayor. This young urban planner without enough experience in the field of urban planning had chosen a career of heavy paperwork instead of technical drawings. And maybe his good relationship with the Belgian studio 51N4E when he directed Atelier Albania, of which 51N4E is still a part, had given him a boost in his fast career (Rama, 2017).

Why urban planning has not been a leading knowledge in this process? Why architects are the ones exerting most of the power in the process? Because, urban

planning is, first, not that intensely linked to construction industry compared to the architecture designing. Architects, not the urbanists, are here projected as armed with skills and perspectives that make them particularly important and dominant during this process. They are the ones capable of more clearly defining the “ways to move forward” (Vimercati, 2016).

Architects, not the urbanists, were the kings of the urban planning in TR030 framework thanks to their ability to better read the unexpressed needs of the construction industry as well as thanks to their skilful visual techniques that planted trees, gardens, and community infrastructure where it would never be. This was a direct result of the MoT’s concern with the real estate development market and its downplaying of the issues of the underground infrastructure and respective planning needs.

The (In)Significance of Expertise

A major aspect of unearthing the power – knowledge relations during the public hearings and expert tables, is the weight of experts' contributions to the strategizing process compared to that of the public. Though various aspects of the said relations have been scrutinized heretofore, the question of the relative influence of the experts brought to light another interesting pattern of relations within the strategy-makers. Herein, with experts it is meant the freelance specialists who were hired by the MoT and the corporate urban planner to offer disciplinary knowledge and expertise. The following disproportionate nature of contribution was noticed between the experts and grand architects:

As far as I remember, they [experts] have always been involved. Probably not directly, they did not directly affect the development plan, but were part of the second phase, the territorial strategy. Or in the first phase, that is, in cases where information that was part of the analysis was missing, then what was missing was directly filled in. The input, as far as I remember was more of the kind “these are the ones we miss the most” than comments on the project. [Zamira].

Thus, even among experts there were ranks: the local experts can make crucial contributions in understanding the context, but the international experts, those with

professional experience in renowned urban planning studios in London, Milano, Amsterdam etc, they can connect the dots of an urban plan. This is the answer of an informant to the present researcher's interest in the weight of the experts' contribution to the process:

Let me tell you something, from within, as I said at the beginning, the application is made by 3 and a half people. Andreas, Francesca, me, and that accountant who confirmed the budget, the accountant that the firm had hired [Margarita].

This reporting is congruent with the information from other participants who witnessed that the local expertise was disregarded when it came to the proposals for the solution of the existing challenges and the future development of the city. Their contribution was limited to data collection, consultative meetings, and legitimacy provision by listing their names and disciplines as authors of the final report. The comments by an informant once again confirm this finding:

There have been many meetings that I have been part of, especially at the environmental ones. But they are never oriented according to the technical discussions of experts. They are always discussed according to the interests of the groups [Artur].

Another participant told the present researcher "I remember only being consulted at the beginning about the landscape part, landscape design" [Ada]. Then what was the real significance of expertise's contribution to the strategy content? The really contributing expertise was that of the internationals, heretofore called grand architects. Mayor Veliaj praises them for the know-how they bring thanks to their world-class experience: "I am also glad that the dowry from this unpaid work is in fact a body of knowledge that each of you has acquired over the years" (Veliaj 2016).

By endorsing internationals' superior body of knowledge, Veliaj adds to the existing power differential between the internationals and the locals, contributing to an asymmetrical rapport vis-a-vis each other. They are projected as teachers and instructors of the local experts since they can offer them the tools to ponder and reason about the urban plan: "And I think this might be like a tool. The goal, my objective is

to give this to all of you like the tools, some tools for the discussion of the afternoon” (Baroncelli, 2016).

An issue that arises from having international experts offer the tools to the audience might quite well be a strategy of influencing the audience with the values those tools embody. Tools are not value-free. So, knowledge and expertise, as enshrined in the technology of urban planning, is used as a power device to shape the opinions and the behaviour of the participating audience. Thus, a second layer rationality is once again produced by the power of the tools controlled by the grand architects. The power effect of this operation is that the MoT is equipped with power generating expertise that enables it to force the strategic options it endorses most.

The Power of Ignorance

The will to power (Nietzsche, 1917) of those who led the strategic planning process was translated into bracketing in and out knowledge in accordance with the MoT’s needs for passing its drafted plan. In so doing, the will to power was easily translated into will to ignorance, as it downplayed the knowledge that emanated from freelance experts and community activists across the city. Often the output of the strategy-making team was a student-like, as Ada informed the present researcher:

... even here when I am engaged in a project, I see that when you hire a consultant, the consultant just gives you a report. But what will it be used for, how? They just do the conventional methods of doing research, as we did in the school, you do a report on something, this or that happened, but you have no objective or purpose for what this thing will be used for. Same thing with the plan, I think. These old methods have not evolved with the steps of time that need to do research, there should be a practical use, with accurate data [Ada].

Overemphasis on construction and urban development diminished the significance of a multi-disciplinary approach based on the best expertise from each discipline of city making. The strategy practitioners spent more energies in fitting the findings of the research to the projections established by the official draft of the master plan than in connecting the disciplinary dots of expertise. For instance, the will to ignorance was manifest in pushing economics and financial implications of the

officially projected future aside. The grand architects did not show caution to the cost of those projections, impact of this master plan on the urban economy and the wellbeing of the citizens. Such a concern is not only evident in the TR030 final report, but also remains with the freelance experts, of which is the following comment:

All modern concepts come a lot from economics, from economics. As an economist and engineer working with both parties, I realize that many concepts are particularly important for people to understand. The mistake that engineers make is that ... it is not a problem to build today. The problem is to produce and optimized solutions [Lukas].

Behind stories of the kind lies the discontent with the MoT's general approach to city planning. The administration was underqualified for handling the job and the corporate urban planners hired to produce the master plan showed loyalty to the MoT's will to ignorance at the price of "ill-treatment, ridicule and misinformation against citizens, professionals and academic" (Aliaj, 2016). The amateur quality of the municipal administration and of the planning process in its entirety is manifest in multiple narrations from the present study's informants, such as the one below:

If the data is taken seriously, I will tell you so, [the data are] very banal. It is not that an accurate statistical study has been conducted. They have not conducted data collection. They have obtained data from INSTAT and the Municipality. Yes, the Municipality has extremely limited data on everything. We know very well that if we need to know the population, INSTAT says one thing, the civil registry says another. How do I know which is right [Ada].

The significance of expertise of the grand architects cannot be explained in isolation from the use of ignorance as a power-generating tool. Same as power produced ignorance, ignorance in turn produced power creating a vicious circle of power-ignorance that dominated the city planning process. As we will see later, this vicious circle will prove pivotal in defining the nature and the content of TR030 master plan. The major strength of this relation was enshrined in the exclusive telling rights of a group of experts at the expense of others, that allowed MoT and grand architects to establish storylines and story-worlds that emphasized the imagination of a green, non-anthropocentric, sustainable city and downplayed the holes and drawbacks of TR030.

Agencement of Technology

The applied strategies that intended to control the participation in the public hearings and experts' tables, the narrative inequality and the power relations would not be so effective if applied naked, without the mediation of the technology. Apart from its major function as an accelerator of knowledge applications, or the calculative part of the human brain as in Aristotle, technology was employed during the public hearings and experts' tables of TR030 as an active agent of urban thinking. Technology is, thus, assigned the human function of imagining the possible futures of the city, granting the overall mind sloth of the present human agents:

Right, we have to deliver a plan, we have to do some rules, we have to leave some quantity of buildings, normally at all these scales but our aspiration was "can we have one place where we can play with all the scales interdependently all at the same time? Because I think that responds to the need of the economic cycle that we have now. We want this happening now, what does it mean in 50 years? We have to know that. Can we do it inside a computer? (Vimercati, 2016)

Software emerges here as a major tool to designing the future of the city, claiming agency from the human decision makers (Latour, 1990; 1996). The imagined possibilities and the actual ones are, therefore, co-constructed by the soft and the experts. In addition to the lulling the human minds, technology, as projected by the strategy makers, was to take over the knowledge production functions even in very subjective, or even collective, issues of how we govern our cities. Baroncelli (2016) openly credits digitalization the virtue of inspiring our storytelling of our cities, a process that often needs no human mediation since the direct offshoots of technological imagination, the buildings, can speak of themselves and of the city:

What is interesting is that how technology is now changing the way in which we govern our city. This is something that they can digitalize also building[s] so we can really start a new era of narration of our city. It is not only about a social media but it's also how we use our buildings to tell new stories about the city (Baroncelli, 2016).

Technology is, thus, assigned a proactive agency not only in shaping the future of the city but also in the way how we render our cities knowable and tellable (Kornberger & Clegg, 2015). It was made into an epistemic machinery that not only helped people calculate, design, and order the way it was commanded, but also it also taught people what to imagine and even silenced them when it came to telling the story of the Tirana 2030.

Equipped with this gigantic superiority of such an intrusive technology, MoT representatives and grand architects were able to have their proposals pass without polemics or significant resistance from the audience. On the other hand, totally disarmed of commensurate tools, freelance experts, activists, journalists, and common citizens were incapable of telling a challenging story of the future city they wanted or imagined. Technology was, therefore, weaponised against public resistance and critique, what rendered the narrative inequality irreducible.

4.3.4 The More the Data, the More the Rationality

TR030 was not only a domain of technology and power, but also it worked as an arena of applying the Knowles (2018) principles of analytical data and storytelling to have people behave and think the way the MoT representatives and grand architects were willing to. Taking full advantage of poor datasets available to the experts and to the public, they managed to use the figures, statistics, and analytics to compose reliable and robust stories from the future of the city that made the official draft of the master plan unbeatable. The MoT's rationality established through data gained strength from numbers and statistics to project its absolute reign on the desired future of Tirana.

Data Food for Reason

In a roomful of quantitative, natural sciences and engineering professionals, data reign supreme. Basing statements and projections on data is the only way to get approval for a certain project. Apparently, this practical truth was clear to the strategy-makers. They knew they would not be able to get away with the challenges of the green and community spaces just with mere promises and commitments. They need to manifest they were in full command of the issue, and they were there to take actions:

Even the few spaces that were left at the time the plan was drafted, are being occupied with high construction and without any urban and environmental criteria. To get out of this situation, a statistical strategy was apparently chosen. As Tirana expanded to include the surrounding rural areas, a greenery of the rural areas would be used to improve the grey statistics in the urban area [Juliana].

According to Veliaj (2016), Tirana was to grow to a city of 1.6 million inhabitants in 2030. After the recent administrative reform, the territory of the territory under the MoT's administration multiplied. Therefore, the city needed an orbital forest of 2 million trees. Proportions of population with education and health infrastructure were also established on statistics. The passive listener would easily be convinced that the people who took on the quick remaking of the city's urban plan were seriously and rigorously engaged in their task. Consequently, the presented future of the city was the logical outcome of these historical data.

Meanwhile, the methods the employed data were extracted or generated was not clear. On the one hand, the common citizens are not aware of the research methodologies, and of the issues of reliability and credibility of the data collection and analysis techniques. On the other hand, experts, journalists, and activists are not completely uninformed about the discussions' agenda, so they are unprepared to test or disprove the official statistics. The following detailed story told by an informant to the present inquiry sheds additional light on this methodological and ethical crisis:

No one understands that in the world today we do not speak with perceptions. Today we talk about the database. That is, decisions supporting the system is driven by data, not what people say. A bit difficult for us as a system to understand. This is the problem. We need to understand that people need to be asked, this needs to be asked that they are beneficiaries. That is why we, not just us, but Americans in general - a consultant once told me - only Americans have bottom-up systems. All systems in Europe are top-down. They pretend to take their opinion, but they honestly do not because they do not understand. They do not understand it because Europe comes from another story and America comes from another story. This is all the problem we have here because we have 30

years to adopt a system and we fail to understand it. Therefore, the public hearing must be real, it must be both quantitative and qualitative. Yes, of course it starts with the quality and continues with the quantity, to calibrate the ideas of the quantity and then to get through long interviews ... [Lukas]

The systematic lack of reliable and credible information is evident at all levels of city planning. If in the urban units of the MoT the bureaucratic procedures were to a certain extent pursued, and datasets were richer, the rural municipal units had no databases in place. For this reason, the only method left to the strategy practitioners was to collect primary data through direct interviews with the municipal administrators and community representatives. However, tight deadlines and rapid process of planning did not help in quality data collection and analysis. Multiple participants reported non-systematic data collection and deficiency in research rigor:

Numbers are used ... because I work with data currently. We have an excessively big problem with data. We do not have [data]. Even when we have them, we do not have them at the municipal level. We have them at the county level. INSTAT also produces them at the county level. What did the staff do? They got whatever data they found, they tried to put it together. But I am very sceptical about how accurate that data is. For example, the prediction that Veliaj always uses, which says that Tirana is growing: where does he get that data from? I think with this he justifies the constructions. "Students will come, Tirana is growing". I am a bit suspicious myself. I have never stepped into the issue of data, but Albania is declining. Now, if Albania is declining, Tirana will grow to a point and then it will fall that ... who is going move to Tirana? It makes no logical sense, I think. So, I think, they just turned them around and are using them for their own personal interests to explain the numerous constructions, which to me are not being completed using legal money and there will be a bubble, after a while, of constructions in Tirana. I just think they were interested in saying that Albania, Tirana is growing to justify this, and they have done all this. Data were used to justify things they wanted to do that they had simply decided, that could have been good things too. Not all things are bad [Ada].

As the above informant confirms, the reasons behind the decisions of MoT and grand architects differed from the interests and expectations of the citizens at large. The power projections of the earlier play at a global level while the later are intricately connected to the neighbourhood, place, and city (Castells, 1996). Strategy practitioners' interest was to justify and legitimise their program of urban density increase and substitute the existing historic or socialist style buildings for skyscrapers, and vehicle-based transport for bicycle lanes and pedestrian areas. While citizens would expect wider green and community areas, better education and health infrastructure, less traffic and easier access. The strategy practitioners exclusively made use of statistics and analytics that supported their stories and ensured that their interests, not the citizens interest, are served by the plan.

Reason Prevails, not the Details

The practice of urban planning in the case of TR030 openly narrowed the possibilities for citizens participation by keeping the discourse at the strategy level and by-passing the practical projects that would ignite more community reaction. Adopting this position practically meant dismissing the legal and political recommendations of participatory decision-making in domains of city-wide choices. Consequently, the politicians and architects' instrumental rationality of high-rise constructions, replacements of historic buildings with skyscrapers and increasing the urban density within the perimeter of the existing urbanized Tirana took precedence over the citizens rationality of a more liveable city, with more green areas, less traffic, conservation of cultural heritage and improved education and health infrastructure. The following informant offers several instances of poorly informing the public, if at all, about the tangible projects and implications of the strategic decisions the strategy-makers were making:

As I said, the plan itself, when you see it as a non-technical person, there has never been major things that come against it. So, it is not that there was a [plan for the] demolition of the theatre in the [urban] plan. Or something people may have ... they may realize it is wrong. But if you look at the plan, the transport is not detailed. There are roads, so what would the roads be like, they made some

cuts, but it is not so detailed. I think they avoided it a bit because they were afraid to go too deep into it. They closed it, that is, because it did not exist, it was not included in the details. In fact, in other countries it is done in such a way that a detailed plan for transport was developed. So, there is a strategic transport plan on its own. Maybe that was the reason. But there was the economic component, the decentralization of the city, the development of the poles, and others that I do not remember now. Yes, they are there. There are about 7 poles of development. And these also had the economic and social dimensions. But in addition to the plan, they have also prepared the regulation that I believe the Municipality has had more freedom of action. And the regulation defines the different areas that it is very technical and detailed, that for each area you have defined how much you can build, what percentage of the land and how, to what extent it is allowed, how much you must withdraw from the road, that these are especially important [Ada].

By passing the supplementary documents to the master plan, the MoT representatives proved they were much aware of the indispensable role of the tangible issues in planning, but they intentionally eliminated the one and only contribution the public would make by denying them the access to this level of examination and debate. In so doing, the strategy practitioners reduced the significance of the public expectations, and the ways citizens require to experience the city. The premise behind this power strategy is that the long-term urban choices adopted by the MoT political leadership are in themselves matters selecting the best and the wisest of public will and imagination. The major issues of demarcating the construction criteria, green areas, and underground infrastructure were left to the MoT's planning committee:

When you have a plan made with strategies and not so detailed with these, the idea of throwing strategies in the territory, in developing territory passes through the DLP-s [Detailed Local Plans]. And here is probably what we Albanians say, where the devil stands. Maybe it took more to get into this. I believe it was hidden. What we got was the strategic plan, then the development plan of Tirana. Next is what is the Master Plan, will be taken by the central government and through DLP-s will specify how certain areas will be developed

within the strategy. Then comes the building permit process. So that is a degree of detail far behind me when I was involved in the plan. I have not heard it in these events, on television. But I do not know what to say what he meant by that [Margarita].

The power of developing the DLP-s rests with the General Directorate of Territory Planning and Development at the MoT. Thus, the citizens issues as claimed by the strategy-makers failed to be such. On the contrary, preselected participation, agenda setting, technical and professional language, chronotopic practices, and dialogue reduction made the participation and contribution by the citizens and community representatives increasingly difficult. As a result, the real issues of participatory democracy and citizens participation were not settled, although MoT's communications made great efforts to establish the narrative of consultation and citizens inclusion in the urban planning process:

The third phase, which was detailed, also specifies the pilot projects, and I do not remember any part of the process being described in detail. But I do not mean that they were not aware of this. There is a hierarchy. I would describe them on the same level as projects in architecture are presented. In competitions it is common that when you seek to get a contract from a client you present it not specific, in details, so how much funding it needs, how long the technical process lasts, you do not present details of the building. The presentations were more comprised of 3D or external images of a house if you will win the project for that house. I compare it to saying that at that level of detail it has been [Zamira].

Tirana is still in confusion over the way the master plan was examined, debated and adopted. The issues of construction criteria, density indicators, green area per capita, the costs of the orbital forest, the fiscal implications of the strategic programmes remain an enigma to the public opinion. Settling the problems that concerned the stakes of all citizens should have not been left to the closed meeting rooms of the planning and development teams, that often are blamed for cheating on behalf of the financially powerful construction industry at the expense of improved urban living. On the

contrary, these options should have emerged from a participatory democracy or referenda.

Open the Gates to the Data that Waits

Collected data were usually enriched by applying loose collection procedures. One of the main relaxing factors in data gathering in the framework of TR030 was the missing full-fledged urban planning approach. Experts were completely aware of their job description since no clear-cut expectations were set by the strategy-makers. Consequently, entire domains of urban living were left with no data at all and were supplied later with guessing or unreliable data. Economy and community domains are two examples of this culture of omission:

The plan does not provide any other economic or social infrastructure and services. The municipality has not made any analysis of such economic and social needs. Inexplicably, she has not done any analysis of the progress of the mobility [Armanda].

Another example of non-rigorous research and analysis operations is the transport. Even though the strategy-makers from mayor Veliaj to the last architect talked repeatedly about increased mobility as a major strategic objective of the new master plan, they never quantified this objective. On the contrary, they wish-listed pedestrian and bicycle lanes, electric cars, and other collective mobility ways with no clear measures of the work volumes, time schedules, and costs. Why could they not mention a quantifiable measure of these projects? The following interviewee unearths the reason:

No data at all. Not only for transport, but also data on the territory. As it is in Albania, we do not keep data because since we do not make decisions on data, we make decisions ad-hoc, then why do they need that entire system? [Lukas]

As long as the public institutions do not need the data as a basis for their policy decisions, they cannot establish and upgrade their research and understanding capacities, the epistemic technologies that grant the governance the intelligible sense and rational decision-making. However, copy-and-paste fit better with the rapid process, once planned to last 6 months, and finally closed within less than a year. The

detailed reflection of the following interviewee once again confirms the findings of this study:

In general, our government faces challenges with data systems. We do not know how to collect [data]. But we even lack the mindset to collect data. I think the plan does not have particularly good predictions from this point of view. Some data are provided, for example, I remember, for transportation that the data were obtained entirely from a previous study of 2011 by JICA, which is a Japanese agency. They are simply taken and put there. They obtained what they found and put it there, but data was not processed. To be very honest, most of the things contained there are obtained from somewhere else, they are taken in copy-and-paste mode. Nobody even thought about it at all. They have also obtained ... some data from another study called Metabolism of Albania conducted by some Dutch companies, it seems to me. And they have taken them, put there that this is the prediction, but it is not that a processing or analysis has been done that this data says so, this other so, what does this mean etc [Ada]

The data are an essential component of any rational decision-making event and, as such, the rigor of collecting, analysing, and inference processes should be transparent and in compliance with the professional methods. The decision makers, therefore, need to not only make clear the quantitative and qualitative basis of his strategic choices, but to also prove the rigor of the applied approach. They should base their decisions on the scientifically and professionally obtained data, as well as represent and defend them publicly.

Words Tell, Tools Compel

Aside from the data and “exceptionally beautiful images to give this idea” [Ada], there emerged a rapport between the words and the technical tools to convey the story of Tirana 2030. A freelance expert stressed that they “had a host of tables” when “presenting” the projections. “I believe it may have been the examples we presented of how we had incurred the development costs of one of the pilot areas of polycentrism” [Margarita].

Practically speaking, instruments of urban planning played a role in pushing audiences imagine the existing problems of urban space being solved. Nothing else could marshal more support than a solution to a tangible problem. Therefore, tools are a major component of city projecting:

In fact, tools, i.e., mechanisms are necessary. They, too, are particularly important for an example of cities. That especially in Tirana which is so dense and is possible in an informal way, there is no other option other than tools [Ada].

The real debate rests on the interests that are served by the adopted tools. As the MoT enhanced both in territory and resources, it increased in power and control. Under these conditions, what was mandatory was not the autonomous use of the planning tools by the MoT but the accommodation of bifurcated interests by the adopted solutions. More politics was necessary to counterbalance the extra-large MoT and its storytelling, performative and naked power, in order to establish a high public approval rate to the outcome of TR030 planning process. Instead of pluralistic debate for the common future, MoT embraced the monist approach, and, thus, rendered the tools subservient to susceptible interests.

A typical tool that was adopted by the strategy-makers was the Transfer of Development Rights (ToDR). The following thick description from an interviewee of the present study offers more details to what it is:

... we discussed these more widely with Francesca and Andreas, with UNLAB – technically: what was required in Tirana was a transfer of development rights. And this was a very controversial planning tool because it relies heavily on land value. The idea is that, if you give away your rights to develop 5 floors in exchange of developing 10 floors somewhere else, I will give you even with a coefficient, to develop something else. Yes, that sounds pretty crap to me, looks like is not for me either. If I have the chance to develop 10 floors in the centre of Tirana, you give me the opportunity to develop 25 floors in Bathore [the very slum suburbs of the city]. I do not want it, thank you! Because it does not work that way. They do not have the same value [Margarita].

Again, the central idea in ToDR is construction. The premise of MoT and the strategy-makers is that people want to build, therefore they must think out the compensation strategy for depriving their building rights in appropriated areas. Looking for resources in the city itself and local communities sounds a familiar strategy, repeatedly mentioned, and meant by Veliaj, Boeri and Mazniku. Also dedicating exclusive tools to the solutions of landowners and developers' problems instead of looking for solutions to wider audiences, as well as looking for alternatives that spring out of strategy-making team rather than for representative alternatives added to the conviction that the entire urban planning process omitted the majority at the benefit of a handful.

4.3.5 Conclusions to the Narrative Rationality of the Strategic Storytellers

Following the mayor and deputy mayor's presentations, the grand strategists, from time to time, borrowed from them small narratives and employed them as metaphors to marshal legitimacy to shape and design the public realm in verisimilitude to what citizens do to their private estates, toilets or making the dormitory-like city into a 5-stars hotel-like one.

Combined with the restrictions to public participation in the public hearing sessions, agenda setting and other active and deliberate efforts by the MoT representatives, it is legitimate to conclude that the public at large was stripped of reasoning capacity, what projected strategy-practitioners as the only rational actors of the process. This exclusivist view of rationality in urban planning, supported by the implicit and naked power relation practices, established a narrative inequality that bolstered official proposals and downplayed the variation proposals by the powerless audiences.

Official narratives were rarely contested. Participants could only mention a couple of cases when individual voices objected either the content of the master plan or its application. However, these were only cases of individual counterreaction that did not either manage to establish a competitive rationality or were only critical to the way

the strategic text was handled by the MoT representatives and the grand architects. Eventually, the MoT representatives and strategy-makers were able to address or suppress those objections through targeted communications or individual bargaining. “The communication, the real attempt to communication only happens to those middle groups. General citizens internally are slightly interested, slightly concerned” Paris told the present researcher.

The MoT and the grand architects who projected massive influence on the national and international media were able to shape the narrative of and about TR030, while the opponents, critics and citizens in general were rendered incapable of having their say and telling their story. The power-knowledge relation in the practice of strategizing in the framework of TR030 is easily condensed in the Kantian maxim of “I think, therefore, I am”, in this case, “I tell, therefore, I plan”.

Thus, the influence of expertise and knowledge on the process was enormous as it eventually served to not only advance the officially sponsored strategic choices, but also demarcated the knowledge geography by excluding local expertise from the agency of options evaluation as well as from influencing the decision-making process. This agency was acknowledged as an exclusive faculty of the international pool of experts, or the grand architects.

Thus, the rationality advanced through the strategy-makers' stories full of data and statistics, was typically an instrumental rationality. For MoT representatives and grand architects, increasing the urban density, constructing new skyscrapers, limiting the vehicle-based transport, and expanding the pedestrian areas would make the city better and the projections told that unapologetically. In their view, they were undeniably the “knowers.” Supporting their imaginations and projections on data, statistics, and analytics, they assumed objectivity and representation of the public. The various audiences of TR030 were reckoned as monolithic and their interests as uniform although construction industry would barely share interests with the common citizens, and environmentalists disproved the rights of landowners to independently determine the way they would develop their land plots according to their individual preferences.

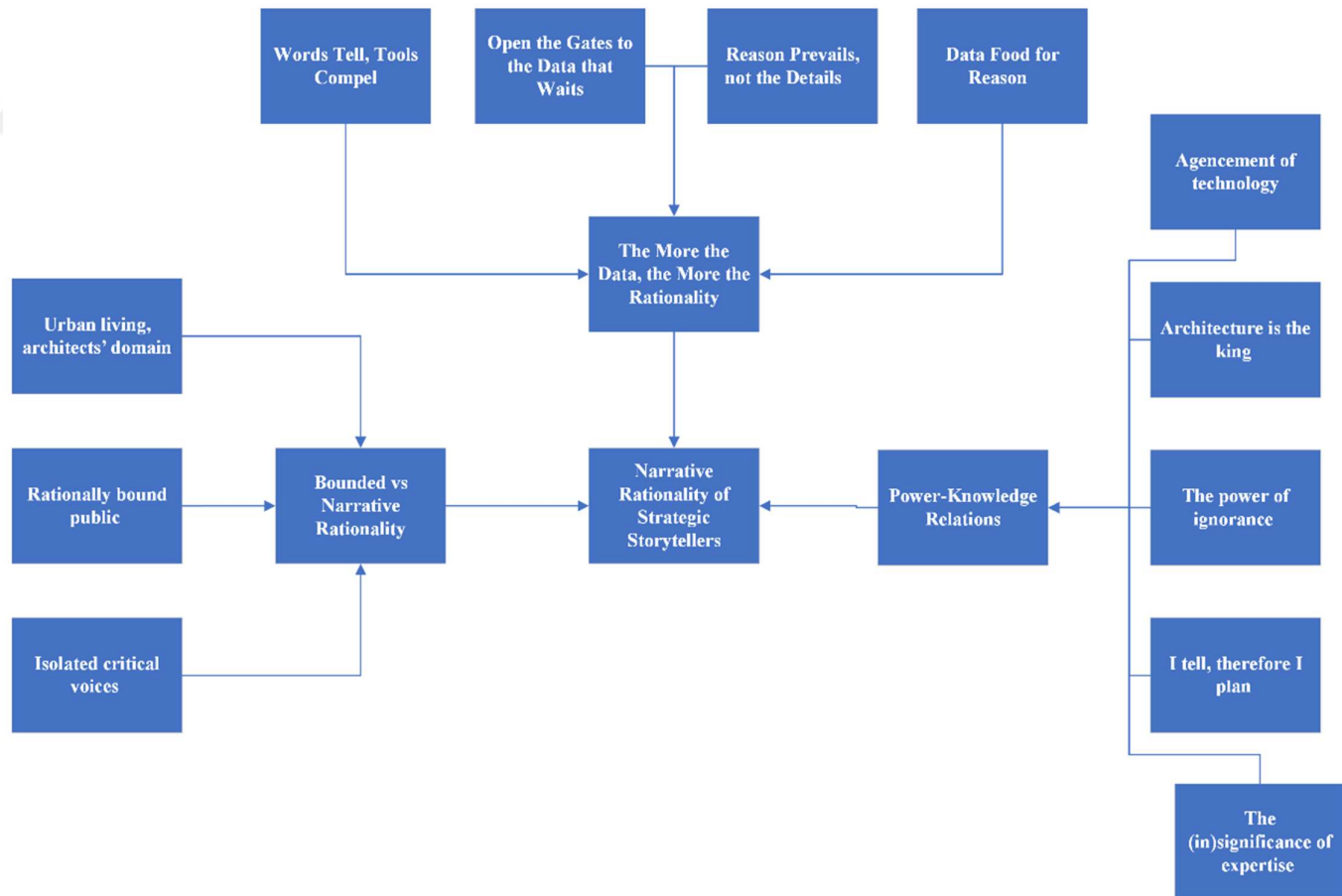
This rationality assumed the MoT a benevolent agent, an abstract elder that cares for the interests of all stakeholders indiscriminately finally. The MoT hardly

considered the opinions of the communities, conducted an extremely limited number of public consultations, restricted the number and the rights of the participants to contribute to the planning process, and disguised the real beneficiaries of this master plan. Employed technology, knowledge and storytelling rights privileged the MoT representatives and grand architects at the expense of less objective stances on the adopted strategic priorities and orientations. The entire process of TR030 compilation worked, therefore, in favour of the predefined interests of the construction industry and their funders.

The strategy-makers failed to base their planning decisions on rigorous and reliable data, both quantitative and qualitative. Research procedures were neither professional nor defensible. The participatory democracy that legal frameworks encouraged could only be allowed through clear statement of the rational underpinnings of decision-making, transparency over the values of the strategy-makers, and warrants of fair representation of diverse groups of interest. Without such reliable and valid operations of information generation and lack of transparency over MoT representatives' values, the latter failed to engage seriously and genuinely with the citizens, activists, and community representatives in the political field of Tirana. In so doing, MoT representatives and grand architects as urban planners failed to represent the interests of substantial segments of the population, especially those who approached to offer policy decisions about Tirana of 2030.

Based on these findings, the conceptual framework of the narrative rationality employed by the strategic storytellers during the public consultation process was developed as presented in Figure 4.7 below:

Figure 4-7 The conceptual framework of the narrative rationality employed in city strategizing



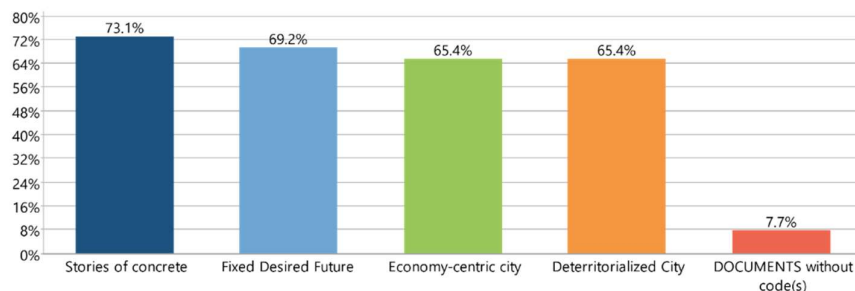
4.4 The Narrative Reality of TR030

As already discussed, the narrative ecosystem laid down by the strategy-makers by means of their bureaucratic power, coupled with the narrative rationality of the strategic storytellers to allow the development and mobility of an officially hand-picked set of stories about the future city. This narrative context proved acidic to the contending stories and rationalities, emerging mainly from the powerless lay citizens, CSO-s and political opponents of the municipal administration. The staged process of telling the future city advocated a variant of urban reality that served the interests of the construction industry and their financiers while branding it in green, prosperous, and liveable place. This section presents and interprets the story-dreams narrated by the MoT representatives and grand architects and their practical implications for the future of urban living in Tirana.

4.4.1 Storied City

As opposed to the tales of the cities from the past, stories of Tirana were cherry-picked from the past, the present and the future. The stories from the past and, particularly, those from the future of this city were employed to narrate an urban living that poorly linked the audiences with the present city and invited them to assign global roles to one of the poorest capital cities of Europe. Similarly, the desired future was narrated through the lenses of construction industry instrumental rationality. What follows is a discussion of the central stories of a de-territorialized, economy-centric, and overconstructed city. It is a city with a determined physiognomy and a unified story.

Figure 4-8 Storied City subcodes' weights and distribution



De-territorialized city

A narrative strategy employed to avoid a deep navigation into the problems of the urban planning of a metropolis is the deterritorialization of Tirana from Albania. In framing the future of Tirana in terms of universal values such as biodiversity, cultural diversity, religious tolerance, the inclusive metropolis of all Albanian cities and cultures across the Balkans, global city, mayor Veliaj and his strategizing team are inviting the audiences to create a new city from scratch, thus employing a strategic practice that exerts power to facilitate the acceptance of the imposed future (Foucault, 1982; Knights & Morgan, 1991). Thus, a de-territorialized city was projected as a value of future city making.

4.4.1.1.1 *De-territorialization of Tirana from Albania*

The use of Ambrogio Lorenzetti's fresco of the allegory of Effects of Good and Bad Governance enhances the strategic imagination, giving way to justifications for a new city strategy (Giraudeau, 2008). The upper hand of the strategy-making team leaders and the political leadership of the MoT in framing audience's way Tirana was to be seen at (Kaplan, 2008), engages them in a strategic power game: only what projects Tirana as an entity beyond its geographic and urban locativity is deemed significant while the rest is omitted as irrelevant to city strategy-making. As one of the urbanists comments this strategic game “[w]hat is missing from this vision is Tirana itself” (Bendo, 2016).

Another narrative practice applied by the strategy-makers to de-territorialize Tirana during the consultation stage is that of assigning to Tirana tasks that are at least loosely, if not at all, connected to the actual challenges of the city. Public administrations are among the organized anarchies (Cohen et al., 1972) characterized by their adoption of solutions looking for problems to address. A typical solution adopted by the strategy practitioners in the framework of TR030 is assigning to Tirana the role of an East-West bridge, though this is not a common challenge to the practice of urban planning and to present city's problems.

I am sorry, but is this question (of how to make Tirana an inclusive metropolis between Europe, the Mediterranean, and the 'Islamic world' (what exactly do you mean by this phrase?)) Serious? This way of framing the Balkans - as a 'bridge' between East and West - is already widespread (Isto, 2016).

What the city administration and the strategy-making team are doing is employing a strategy narrative that selects and prioritizes (Fenton & Langley, 2011) certain social constructs, i.e., Albania's religious tolerance and religious plurality, and 'produce[s] power structures and organization roles' (Mumby, 1987), i.e., assigning to Tirana a political and cultural role it has never played. Also, pursuing this narrative practice might draw on the self-evidence of the social constructs of religious tolerance and cohabitation in Albania to persuade the audiences and recruit their support.

But this is a very historical moment. It is a very important day that I have been looking forward from one year, not only for because it is an historical moment for Tirana, but because it is the beginning of a new era of governance of the European city (Baroncelli, 2016).

Beyond its geographical and subcultural boundaries, here Tirana is assigned a civilizational role, that of a European city, whereby it should be more concerned with the principles and values that direct the future development than just practical issues.

4.4.1.1.2 *Capital of the Balkans*

Another storytelling strategy that helped create a false narrative about Tirana of 2030 was implemented by claiming regional leadership by then. The following story related by an interviewee shows the extent to which realistic thinking was missing by the part of the strategy-makers:

I asked that while with them, with the working group and we talked about what ideas do you have strategically, where do you want to be? Which [city] do you see as your competitor? They said we want to be a leader in the region. Who do you see as a leader in the region? Croatia, Zagreb. I was told that we want to compete with Zagreb, which even then was a capital of the European Union, because they had become part of the EU. I would understand if they said, 'we want to compete with Skopje, we want to compete with Podgorica, maybe even

with Belgrade.’ But directly, we want to compete with Zagreb. Look, the stairs are climbed one by one. Isn’t Zagreb a bit like a lot? This is a conversation that occurred there with the experts of the municipality [Margarita].

Dreaming about a desired future is, thus, boosted by MoT representatives shallow understanding of urban planning and urban development. They could barely grasp city planning as a multifaceted approach beyond the covert interest of the construction industry and their funders in high rise constructions. More than seriously engaging with the resolution of city’s deep problems of over-construction, quality of life, quality of air, quality of utilities and overcrowding, the MoT representatives and grand architects are concerned with narrating the story of a would-be-city, a postmodern urban way of life that accommodates pluralism, cultural diversity and serves as an arena for inter-civilizational dialogue. Hereby, the narrated Tirana is positioned among the metropolitan cities of Europe and the region.

He [Veliaj] began his speech while mentally strolling through several European cities. First, he spoke about an Italian city demolished by an earthquake and expressed his solidarity to his colleague. Then he travelled to Barcelona, the famous Spanish city, that is mostly known in Albania by its soccer team. He said that it had been a chaotic and ugly city, but that in a brief period had become extraordinary (Rama, 2016).

Whereas Veliaj was cherry-picking stories of urban development from one European city to another to legitimise his stubbornness to go on with the monist decision-making process and to constantly ignore the voices of the citizens, the online presentation of the planning principles on Google docs (Baboçi, 2016) ironically asked the question “can we imagine Tirana as the inclusive metropolis of all European and Mediterranean cultures and religions?” The irony behind this question is the MoT’s policy choice to demolish and erase the local historical and cultural legacy to make room for postmodern skyscrapers with fragmented infrastructure at the historic downtown.

Beyond its geographic location amid the communist East and democratic West, or Muslim East and Christian West, Tirana was not found by immigrants of diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds and never played the role of a regional metropolis. It

is a typical Albanian city, dominantly populated by Albanians and, for the most part of its life as a capital city, isolated from the rest of the world. It does not share the cosmopolitan and pluralist history of Sarajevo, for instance. Overall, the adopted rhetoric is just an element of the propaganda approach to the city making, a defining feature of this process.

4.4.1.1.3 *The Mayor, the Bad and the Evil*

By projecting the master plan discussion as a moral polemic, the MoT representatives played to blame the critics as spokespersons to regressive interests that tried to hinder the city's development. Frequently, the politicians at the MoT assume the role of the sages, the wise men who think from a wider, uncompromised perspective, and therefore increase in legitimacy to speak about the public matters. Veliaj's speech during the TR030 presentation event clearly manifests these claims:

For everything there are two possibilities: either raise your hands and say 'oh how bad and curse those who were against' or say 'we need to find something creative, to think outside the box' as they say, that we cope with this influx of the need for social infrastructure in a city that is overloaded with service or residential infrastructure as urbanization has been in recent years in Tirana (Veliaj, 2016).

Instead of constructing the story of TR030 as a dialogue between the equal citizens and stakeholders, including the MoT, Veliaj projects this process as a conflict, a struggle between the forces of light and the forces of darkness, surely indicating he is the hero of the earlier. According to his discourse, city making is not about pondering on concerning issues to identify technical solutions that satisfy the expectations and interests of all, consensually. On contrary, he approaches city making as a political struggle between the interests of contending groups. The strategic planning is, therefore, narrated as a non-participatory, non-democratic event. On contrary, it is narrated as a moral event to grant the story the necessary "moral tension" (Sandercock, 2003) that made his story acceptable.

The tone of the MoT representatives and grand architects' narratives is dramatically revolutionary. The language used both in spoken and written presentations

left the impression of “creating a new country from scratch” (Bendo, 2016). It barely relates the audience to an existing capital city of 800,000 citizens. In so doing, the strategy makers not only ignore the forces that shape Tirana, but they also neglected the job of the urban planners which is to define the ways urban space is produced and utilized (Sandercock, 1998).

4.4.1.1.4 *Tirana, a Garbage-can Model City Making*

A major distinct element of the garbage can model of decision making (Cohen, *et al*, 1972) is the adoption of solutions for resolving problems that do not exist in the organization or a setting. The theatre-shaped presentation stages were transformed into bed-time storytelling context with the strategy-practioners assuming the role of grandma’s, bringing a dozen of stories from around the world.

And this was the era or Sergio Fajardo, who was the mayor of Medellin during the 90s that was, in some way, trying to solve all the question about the problems of a narco-traffic and all the Colombian problems. ... this is something that I just experimented in Mantua (Baroncelli, 2016).

Stories from Barcelona, Milano, Medellin, etc were deployed to serve as a foundation for the MoT’s official story of Tirana 2030. Flipping from the role of a reporter that tells the story of a far-fetched city, to a politician that identifies the frenemies of the master plan, to that of a sage that tells the participants what is important and what is possible, Veliaj managed to melt major dimensions of entire social networks, urban settings, and legal context in which he told those stories:

Only after 150-200 years does his name return to the epicentre and some of the foundations that were laid at that moment today make Barcelona from the dirtiest city in Europe to one of the most exemplary cities in Europe. We are talking about a city that when you read it seems like you are reading parts of the alleys of Tirana, where a narrow street was almost 1 meter and a wide street was called something that was 3 meters in Barcelona at that time, which in fact resembles many of roads or informal areas of Albania that we have ... or Tirana that we have inherited today and for which we will have to make decisions (Veliaj, 2016).

Urban planning was, therefore, performed through storytelling (Sandercock, 2003). The frequent implication of time in Veliaj's storytelling practice put pressure on the plot and push audience hurry up along the storyline imposed by the borrowed best practice. He also makes clear efforts to transform Tirana into a universal tale of urban planning rather than have urbanism work for the Albanian capital of the future.

It is a particularly clever idea to set goals, but these targets should be realistic. I believe that it is in the capacity of Tirana to compete with Belgrade, Skopje, and Podgorica, but not with Zagreb. Especially in the framework of what this plan offers. I do not believe that this plan brings Tirana to the stage where it can compete with Zagreb [Margarita].

Borrowing 'best practices' or experiences to tell and show to the participating experts is a top-down approach to urban planning. It is imposing solutions applied to different contexts and urban spaces, without understanding & researching the local setting. The tension between the present Tirana and the heavenly city that the MoT representatives and grand architects struggle to make participants dream of remains in the disregard for the citizens quest to take their city back. Through stories of Tirana of 2030 as a house of every universal good and foe to everything uncomfortable, experts and citizens, activists and journalists, community leaders and politicians encounter the clear possibility of being expelled from the city they remember and seek after.

4.4.1.1.5 *Projecting Western Anxieties onto Tirana*

Tirana was de-territorialized by the strategy-makers by projecting onto it the western anxieties of war on terror, impact of climate change, religious intolerance, immigrants from the East, and drug trafficking. Earlier in this study, it has been shown that “most of the discourse around this territorial reform was not aimed at Albania but aimed at EU, it was aimed at the internationals” [Paris]. Therefore, once again the MoT representatives and grand architects are speaking at the western audience, not to the citizens.

So, first, urban planning was rendered instrumental to developing a discourse about asylum-seekers from Albania, a growing concern in the EU countries. Whereas immigration and the so-called economic asylum-seekers issue has mostly affected the

poor rural areas of the country, it is not yet clear how would the development of the capital city in a certain direction alleviate this social and economic phenomenon. It sounds like strategy practitioners were making “a master plan for Tirana in Europe” (Piro, 2016), not a master plan for the city itself.

Second, Tirana was projected as a host for “all European and Mediterranean cultures and religions ... a bridge between European, Mediterranean and the Islamic world” (Baboçi, 2016) as though Albania has never been a by-pass between the East and West, between the western and eastern Roman Empires, between the Ottoman Empire and Europe, as well as between Muslim World and the West. As citizens and public opinion are clear about the place of their country historically and culturally, the power of these stories to cause any social or mental changes among the local audiences is questionable. The narrative effect of the story is only to be found in persuading western audiences that the MoT political leadership shares the same concerns and is employing the most strategic event to address these concerns.

Third, challenges caused by climate change such as floods in Germany or Italy, emerge as an issue in Tirana also. Though climate does not comply to political borders and the air can pass the customs without a passport or a visa, borrowing the concerns of climate change in Tirana urban planning goes beyond “lessons learned” practice, addressed through stories of city making across Europe. The narrative function of these western stories in TR030 public hearings and experts’ tables is to keep alive the latest trends of the European dominant green discourse to use them as a communication port with the international audiences.

Fourth, stories of terrorist attacks across Europe associated with pictures of European leaders marching hand in hand to condemn the Charlie Hebdo terrorist attack convey to the audience the message that Tirana can play a role in reducing that anxiety of the West.

So, if you look at the results of the European building regulation, we may look for example at what is happening and what happened in Belgium a few days ago or what happened in Paris a few months ago, we may realize how we are letting people live in our cities or new life begin in Europe (Baroncelli, 2016).

As a country of Muslim majority population, Albania can play that card at the national level. However, the significance of that issue to urban planning and the local communities and stakeholders is, at least, questionable. Albania has never faced such threats and has not been a major source of terrorism to the West. In this context, Tirana is a less significant player in this global matter. Also, there are no reasonable expectations that the MoT or the Mayor deals with the issues of the narco-traffic. As it was shown later by Global Initiative Report, bringing these examples might have unconsciously been a self-fulfilling prophecy for the contrary.

Economy-Centric City

Approaching cities as political fields has been scrutinised by the previous research (Kornberger & Clegg, 2011). However, the reason behind the competition between the city making stakeholders is rooted in the economic potentials of the urban space. In the framework of public consultations for TR030 master plan the strategic storytellers narrated the city as a factory of material interests and rationalized their strategic proposals through the translation of these interests into immediate tangible benefits to all. This section presents and explains the framing of Tirana of the future as an economic field and rendering it imaginable in economic terms.

4.4.1.1.6 *City as an Economic Field*

While the city was rendered narratable to the western audiences through the mediation of several western anxieties and grand narratives, the role economy played in convincing the local audiences to accept the MoT's draft is no less central. The economic benefits of the new plan were projected to every single strategic orientation under planning. The narrative superiority of mayor Veliaj and his team was unapologetically used to advocate the economic interests of certain audiences owing to the storied benefits of TR030 they distributed generously to the various stakeholders:

I am glad I finally heard about cultural heritage issues. We will do part of them as public projects, part of them as private ones. As you have noticed, the New Bazaar has begun to take shape. We want it to be not only a commercial space, but to create a mini community in the New Bazaar, where many of the old

buildings are restored, where from the added value, we have communication with real estate agencies, the unfinished The New Bazaar has boosted by 30% the prices or value of houses and properties in that area. It means that the impact that a public investment has on the regeneration of that area translates into economic value in the apartments, houses or service points of all citizens living in that area (Veliaj, 2016).

The promise between the lines of this story is that TR030 master plan will surely be a megaproject of regeneration of the cultural heritage, community areas and household enrichment. The project Veliaj is referring to is all about the renovation of the soc-realist block apartments' facades and reconstruction of an open market that used to serve as city's central green market for decades. Even funds to the renovation of this area were provided by Albanian American Development Fund. However, mayor Veliaj sold it as a success of his own administration, less than one year in office.

In projecting an economic bonus to every audience and stakeholder, TR030 planning process approached the realm of political campaigning, mediating the communication of economic interests of certain stakeholders with the entire society. Thus, planners' identity intersected with the politicians and brokers to the extent they brokered the interests of construction industry to the civil society and political actors through the promise of "some strategies useful for the achievement of environmental social and economic sustainability of the new Tirana" (Gatti, 2016).

This relocation of the planners' professional identity is manifest even in their self-positioning in the planning milieu of ideas about public service provision. One of them recalls that "there is no traffic director in the Swedish Road Agency. There is a client director" [Lukas]. Even the classical municipal services such as the public transportation are to be approached through the lenses of the market forces. Thus, planning ceases to be a typical centralized function of the government, but it is permeated by the entrepreneurial thinking, a less standardized endeavour.

As for the high-rise constructions, planners are clearly positioned in favour of allowing them as both the market logic and environmental sustainability necessitates them. For some of them:

It is much better to develop vertically, than to develop horizontally, considering transport costs and in-kind costs from carbon dioxide emissions, etc. I personally support it, but there is one thing that with the idea of vertical development in absolute terms that up to 50 floors makes sense economically. Everything you build after that makes no economic sense, but you do it for your own prestige [Margarita].

Cultural heritage, communities' lifestyles, and historical values of the city are, therefore, subservient to the economic justification of skyscrapers and construction industry overall. The major concern strategy-makers obviously share is the concern about the city as an economic field (Kornberger & Clegg, 2011) in terms of enabling the urban development through funds dedicated to construction. Hence, the story of TR030 master plan is reducible to the story of the economic interests behind it covered by a poorly designed and implemented participatory democracy.

4.4.1.1.7 *Construction Drives, the Urban Economy Thrives*

Once the city is established as an economic field, construction and urbanization of the informal zones is approached in the light of its economic agency. The need for architectural and engineering expertise emerges as an enabling factor to the economic development of the city. Apart from construction, Tirana of 2030 offers little to the young entrepreneurs, innovation, tourism, health services, education, and cultural heritage. In a lump sum, the plan lacks programs of social and economic infrastructure that enables economic development.

Then, why construction was chosen as a shortcut to dealing with the economic concerns of the city? Two reasons underlie this choice. First, funding of construction through the non-formal sources is easier owing to its very nature of operations. Second, landowners usually possess an amortized old home that cannot address the sheltering needs of the coming generations. Therefore, they are offering their parcels as construction sites for skyscrapers or apartment blocks. The following interviewee makes this point:

Being an unregulated market, all the money is sent there. The whole economy is concentrated there. Given that the whole economy is concentrated there, it is

difficult to make a plan that has to do with the territory. The main problem here is that it is the economic reality in which we live that is imposing. So, the economic reality in which people live, since it is poverty, one owns an old house, one wants to build [Lukas].

These are the main “forces of urban economy” [Margarita] that set this direction of strategic planning for the future of Tirana. On the other hand, if MoT representatives’ statements are scrutinized, it is obvious that the issue is the lack of development vision beyond construction. Mayor Veliaj openly states that not only construction able of generating economic volumes, but it also is the way to alleviate poverty and unemployment:

Many of our urbanization initiatives also bring employment. Only in the “Scanderbeg” square on average 950-1000 citizens of Tirana will be employed, who come from the sector of construction. I believe that some of the interventions that you have preponed also affect the economy of the city, both by employing and by regenerating some industries that have lagged a bit since the two-year moratorium (Veliaj, 2016).

Though Veliaj is saying that construction industry must be constrained, and employment diversified through urbanization projects, what he offers as a substitute to construction is public works. Interventions in this sense stands for the MoT’s infrastructural projects.

Grand architects do not lag the MoT in adhering to the construction based economic idea. The best practices and success stories they narrate to the audience present the building permit as the magic stick to the urban economy. The following is the reasoning presented by one of the experts of urban planning of TR030 master plan:

The city has been built through the building permits ... uh ... and the public administration was uh ... had enough money to solve ... uh ... to solve all the problems of the city. In this ... this means that the public administration was from the side of the offer [supply]. So, there was a demand from the civil society of problems or request of some of changes and the public administration was able to give solutions. And this was paid by building permits and from the expansions of the cities (Baroncelli, 2016).

City's economic perspective, supply-demand relations and socio-economic issues addressing is pursued and explained through residential construction and construction permits as the main instrument of transformation and urban development. Therefore, the planners re-demarcated their role beyond their technical realm by invading urban economists' domain and cherry-picking construction as the catalyst of the whole urban economy. It is interesting to notice how MoT representatives and grand architects failed to offer a moral economy of the city that would only be achieved through a participatory democracy, uncensored dialogue with the civil society and expertise and mutual trust between the citizens and the planners.

4.4.1.1.8 *Money is Everywhere*

The city future was rendered knowable by means of monetizing everything. This process of monetary conversion followed arbitrary and non-disclosed laws that MoT representatives and grand architects in the role of planners pursued. In this context, every impressive statistic was used to make sense of MoT's expectations and projections to Tirana's urban life in 2030. For instance, education was assessed as a significant driver of urban economy, as most of Albanian students are pursuing their higher education in Tirana's universities:

I remember Oxford and Cambridge brought as models of cities with education as their main economic asset, therefore Tirana could follow their steps. Tirana is hosting, according to them, many universities, 50 or 60, I am not sure about the exact figure, as well as most of the students from across the country. To him, this represented an opportunity for economic development of Tirana [Ardit].

According to this shallow understanding of both education and urban economy, students bring money to Tirana since they must pay their tuition fees, accommodation, and daily meals. Thus, these income flows will impact the city's economic development. Once again, planners' establishment of such difficult-to-prove causalities discloses the will to ignorance that sometimes worked as an anti-democratic pattern of behaviour, while at times it downplayed knowledge imperative to professional work.

Leading this caravan of will to ignorance is the mayor Veliaj who is quick to overlook the substantial matter of culture and reduce it to mere consumption and

entertainment. Such a reasoning makes of citizens into multiplied Pinocchios and renders the city a Pleasure Island. The real aesthetic and experiential participation of citizens in the cultural phenomenon is, therefore, ungraspable for the strategy-makers:

So, I hope that in addition to the Cloud, in April in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture we will open what is called the Villa of Enver Hoxha in Bllok.¹ So, we will open all the ground there for the public. There we can have some other activities. And I believe we are exploiting some spaces that may have been taboo, either government or limited services, by opening them up to the public and creating these kinds of cells throughout the city that can flow from both economic and cultural life (Veliaj, 2016).

Even when the listener is finally paying heed to certain cultural projects, Veliaj discloses food fairs, gastronomy and parties, whence interpreting culture in economic terms. Besides instrumentalizing culture as a function of economy, Veliaj recruits a rationality that is political in nature to project a cultural and artistic experience. It is a persistence of a logic of false transparency of the offices, but not the processes.

4.4.1.1.9 Raise the bar to the far Periphery

Another way how Tirana of 2030 was narrated was through a story of equal development of both urban and rural areas. In principle, this implied a moral approach to city planning as it shared the same focus to constituencies with lesser political power. Practically, however, it totally meant something else. On the one hand, what the planners meant with periphery was the suburban informal areas of the urban Tirana. This implied an automatic exclusion of the traditional rural areas that share the cultural substrate with the city. On the other hand, periphery was addressed from an actual-city perspective, concerned with the ways this suburban part of the enhanced city can serve the interests of formalized urban areas. These two patterns of urban policy are manifest in the very words of Boeri himself:

This is a very delicate topic because when intervening in informal areas the risk is always that one can include services or forms of housing that have greater values and thus residents are forced to take refuge in suburban areas (Boeri, 2016).

MoT's equality approach to the periphery was only obvious in the fiscal policy. At least, the master plan did not address the citizens logical concerns about the fiscal treatment of the rural areas, while a unified fiscal regime would be less complicated for the MoT to implement. TR030 master plan failed to propose any incentivization policy for the development of the suburbs, so that economic differences between the urban and rural areas. However, it never failed to present a marketization approach to everything under MoT's jurisprudence. In so doing, strategy-makers were disregarding the rural economy from the city's economy:

I find something entirely problematic in this artificial [marketization] of urban, agricultural, and natural spheres. They are overlapping and especially in the Albanian context one can hardly separate the urban from the agricultural and the natural. The concern of agrotourism seems entirely removed from the city (Piro, 2016).

It should be noted that MoT and grand architects made such policy choices, not based on a consensual decision-making or a thorough dialogue with all major stakeholders and community groups. On contrary, they arbitrarily prescribed the course of future action, by assigning to themselves authority and representation, corroding the foundations of urban democracy. Therefore, a non-participatory approach to urban planning brought about a non-inclusive city planning results.

The discourse on periphery, present in most of the MoT representatives and grand architects, left the impression that the territory was being urbanized from scratch. Often, the assumed urbanizing projects, such as polycentricity, intended to only harvest the crops planted by others. A rebranding of these urban areas had the echoes of a proposal for public relations services:

It is particularly important that for the first time we translate all this conversation about polycentrism into the five urban poles of Tirana, as was the initial proposal in the conversations we had with our urban plan colleagues, and from that we start focusing the investments around these five poles to slightly relax the pressure that the only centre of Tirana has of 1 million inhabitants, of a Tirana that is no longer 40 square kilometres today, but is 1200 square kilometres. In this sense, I believe that our project for the five poles of rural

development and urban development must breathe and take its course (Veliaj, 2016).

Some of the new centres, or poles, mentioned by Veliaj have since the communist era been part of the city, though not centres in themselves. Meanwhile, the voice of these communities was not heard, and, in the best case, the strategy-makers only performed a propagandistic tour of several information meetings that did not cover hot issues of the plan. The communication established during these events was mono-directional, allowing no significant feedback to flow from the citizens to the MoT and grand architects. Planning, therefore, remained a political tool under the tight control of the politicians and politically connected planners.

Fixed Desired Future

Strategy-makers repeatedly told the same stories to the audience. Often, they referred to each-other, borrowing episodes from the stories they had heard from the mayor, deputy mayor or colleagues, thus standardising the unified picture of the future city. The following stories show the ways MoT representatives imposed their views of the city planning and disregarded the proposed variations emerging from the expert tables and stakeholders.

4.4.1.1.10 *Top-down Strategic Vision*

The way this study underscores strategic vision is how it was constructed by the stories the participants, or the strategy makers told during the strategic narration process or retrospectively. Sometimes, informants use strategy and vision interchangeably to mean the strategic orientation of the urban planning. The framing of the new master plan, according to the participants, took place at the very top level of the hierarchy. One way to describe this process would be that of the activist and journalist Rama (2016): “[w]hile strategies for drafting the plan were dealt with by the foreign architects, the tactics for its approval were assumed by the municipality.”

The strategic role of TR030 master plan was to match the political needs of the MoT leadership, thus less attention was paid to the practical findings and recommendations by the experts. The strategy-makers among MoT representatives and

grand architects were aware of the limited practical implications of the document they were drafting. As for the substantial issues, those would be addressed at a later stage, through the DLP-s when public consultation is not legally required. The following testimony confirms the overall finding from several informants:

If you look at it, it contains many elements that if the Municipality representatives read it, they will understand that the targets were extremely ambitious and difficult to achieve. But they did not pay attention to the content. Because they prioritized the plan as a document that suited them philosophically and practically. The rest were also documents for show [Flavio].

The feedback that the MoT received from an online test of the strategic vision was very derogatory. In reality, the content of the presentation was tragically poor, unedited, and poorly translated to English. The strategy-makers had listed in the presentation tens of questions to an audience that is supposed to speak Albanian. Thus, the only people who would reflectively read the content were the professionals of urban planning and architecture. This backfiring experience might have taught the MoT representatives the bitterest lessons for this was last time the access was not censored. English language, the first layer of filtering audience was later reenforced with preselection and agenda setting procedures. The following account sheds light on the role of different stakeholders in demarcating the strategic vision of TR030 master plan:

People were never asked about the vision. They were simply asked about the technical expertise they had. While the vision was defined. [Decisions regarding the overall vision are] of the municipality and the studio. Experts? Not so much. Which means no, I do not think Albanians are involved too much. This was more left to Boeri, Boeri's staff in cooperation with the Municipality. It was the rule that it should be a foreign studio and an Albanian studio. It was a condition, so you as a foreign studio had to find an Albanian studio. I remember it always was that way. Foreign studio brought vision, Albanian studio did backup, support but not to give much vision. That is, they did not even give much space to foreign studios and because of the expertise. Albanian studios still think I do not have it ... and Albanian experts still do not have the experience. [Ada].

Neither the tactics applied to project the supremacy of the MoT representatives and grand architects in the process of strategy development, nor their language cover the power relations manifest in the adapted strategic choices. The confession of a grand architect testifies to the overt proclamation of this supremacy:

And of course, we kind of had to establish a vision. I really share what Lorenza said earlier about the time of urban planning changing and our idea was to establish a vision for a very long period for this area, so, but design a system, not a design, not an architectural proposition, but a system that would allow us to pursue this vision and take into consideration all the changes that that may happen (Vimercati, 2016).

Similar views are echoed by every MoT representative or grand architect. The power relations are omnipresent in these events. Complete exclusion of underground infrastructure and total lack of deliberation of the substantial challenges of education and health infrastructure, along with the tough censorship on the community voices have coined every outcome of the process: construction density, high-rise constructions, the cosmetic interventions in issues of mobility, lack of focus on economy and tourism, downplaying the cultural heritage and so on. The list is much longer, but for the economy of the analysis only a bunch of elements are mentioned.

4.4.1.1.11 Inflexible Strategic Objectives

TR030 strategic objectives did not emerge from any urban democratic process. On the contrary, the objectives were set in advance and presented to the audiences as a given list of desires. What was left to the audiences was only the voluntary space of commenting, complementing, and filling in, whenever allowed by the MoT representatives and grand architects. Structural, organizational and, frequently, personal forces made it impossible for the lay citizens, activists, community leaders and experts to shape the framework of strategic objectives of the master plan. A few examples of this practice are offered in the following discussion.

Cultural heritage was covered in a prescriptive tone. The strategy makers introduced a wish-list of several minor cultural projects such as the Cloud installation (MoT, 2016), universal commitments for restoration, renovation, and preservation of

the existing cultural portfolio of the city, as well as the desire to build theatres, libraries, and cinemas across the city. Strategy-makers understanding of the urban cultural heritage proved to be reductionist by nature, as they quickly substituted the built legacy with “a rich calendar” of activities:

I heard about the temporary nature of some facilities to offer cultural activities. I am glad we are close to the completion of the Cloud. Cloud is another project of our colleagues. We already have a rich calendar. Many of you, many organizations, many artists, many embassies, many different agencies have already started booking reindeer. The cloud, in addition to being an installation as a work of art, is also a gathering space (Veliaj, 2016).

Thus, cultural assets and values were replaced by events of entertainment and culture was reduced to no more than consumption. Facing little to no resistance from the cultural and artistic community, mayor Veliaj maintained his powerful stance in front of the critiques and political opposition. Not only from the legal point of view, but also from the operational perspective, planning for urban cultural heritage remained under the strict control of the political leadership of the MoT.

Green city was another narrative that permeated the discourse of strategy-makers about city planning. Though the MoT has pronounced its strategic goal of increasing construction density within the existing perimeter of the urban space, the strategy practitioners offered a series of green linguistic devices to paint TR030 story-world green and blue. Blue corridor, green corridor, green infrastructures, dowry of oxygen, green crown, the forest of the world, and a myriad of environmentally friendly terms were engaged to get away with the reasonable concerns about the stated objectives of intensifying construction. In addition to linguistic devices, visual practices were employed to substitute for the lack of convincing power of the strategic language of the MoT representatives and grand architects. “What I was saying about green city has been very fictitious” [Ada].

Urban mobility was another a top-down objective. The mayor was straightforward to prove MoT’s full agency on this goal:

We did some experiments that worked perfectly well: the car-free days we organized proved that despite the predictions, this was not the end of the world, the tragedy did not happen in Tirana, people went to their destination, even went healthier, to a city that in fact, officially, according to the WHO, by the age of 5, 1 in 5 children, i.e., 20%, is clinically ill or suffering from obesity (Veliaj, 2016).

The rationalization strategy of deploying some health risks statistics to justify some minor tactics of relieving the traffic load of Tirana discovered the strategy-makers poor understanding of the challenge of urban mobility. The understanding emerging in Veliaj's speech is not transferring people from one location to another, but that of human physical activity. What he was proposing was the very opposite of mobility, a slowdown in the city's vigour and speed.

Benefiting from the ambiguity of his discourse and combining the censorship and participation control techniques, the mayor critically reduces the chances of resistance and opposition to his claims and elaborations. Certain experts mentioned bicycle lanes and electric buses as potential ways of diversifying the transport options, but no actual plans for the modernization of the transport grid or the introduction of new mobility choices such as tram or metro were presented. Veliaj's will to ignorance is projected to cost the city a due process of deliberating and addressing one of the fundamental concerns of a modern city.

Polycentrism was extensively publicised as a major strategic goal of TR030. Though polycentrism, as one participant noticed, is a self-developing project, major Veliaj introduced it as a first in the city planning:

I am glad that for the first time we went from theory to practice when it comes to polycentric Tirana, and I am glad that I heard some of the centres in urban regeneration. We cannot be Tirana of Scanderbeg square, although the square will remain the epicentre with both the reconstruction and the redevelopment that will take place. We should have a centre in Laprake, we should have a centre in Kombinat, we should have a centre in Kinostudio, with the demographic pressure that will not change in Tirana (Veliaj, 2016).

It is to be noticed that some centres have been developing recently without a municipal incentive or project. Focusing on it sounds more as an advocacy strategy for construction industry. Participants were convinced that MoT was disguising here:

A plan that we see today being implemented: the transformation of the historic centre into a pedestrian zone. This, in fact makes me think more that the historic city centre was being reserved for a new business area that is now being created with high-rise buildings” [Juliana].

However, the strategy-makers did not consider the public opinion on polycentricity, did not introduce any feasibility study that justified this strategic objective and did no more than reshuffle the extant non-expert rhetoric about it. Meantime, they failed to argument how polycentricity would not clash with the other strategic objective of green city while it extended the philosophy increased construction density from the centre to the periphery. Thus, polycentricity remained a “political priority” rather than a realistic measurable objective.

Other strategic objectives are the completion of the New Boulevard and the World Park, Tirana a regional hub, an environmentally sustainable city, etc, that have been covered by the present study. The major shared characteristic of these goals from the perspective of the participatory democracy was the top-down approach of selecting in and out stories in accordance with the MoT’s interest to advance its chosen options. Tirana of the future was exclusively narrated by the MoT representatives and the grand architects whereas the citizens were made into passive listeners. It will be the first time the city is planning its future through stories.

4.4.1.1.12 Deselecting Proposed Variations

The non-democratic nature of the urban planning process was manifest in many ways in the case of TR030. Particularly shocking was the practice of adjusting the public hearings and expert tables’ feedback and results. Not only did MoT representatives mend the outcomes of the consultation process, but they also edited the technical content of the final reports individually issued by the freelance experts hired by the strategy-making team. A fuller story of these unfortunate phenomena is presented below:

The Municipality of Tirana has worked with more than 20 people internally all the time, making radical changes, the plan has been changed and something else has been signed. In the end, something else was signed. Namely, the structured group that was part of the plan Joni Baboçi, Devis Agaraj, Stefano Boeri, together with other experts of the municipality, as it were, had previously agreed on the goal and their focus was not comprehensive. The only case that escaped them was when infrastructure expert Edmond Alite saw that his report was different from the one, he had submitted. And he says, look, it seems, we are part of a scheme that I cannot fabricate on what I have written [Artur].

Several participants confirmed to the present inquirer the impression that “the goal was not to get a lot of feedback because things were set” [Zamira]. The political and operational autonomy of the MoT representatives and grand architects marked the entire process of city planning. Furthermore, no reporting responsibilities or transparency mechanisms were set in advance to grant public access to the decision-making approaches and practices. Besides being complicated and time-consuming, such mechanisms would have constrained the MoT’s freedom to shape the future of the city in accordance with its leading interests.

This non-transparent and non-accountable approach was combined with the political and narrative inequalities established between the international and local experts, as well as with the hierarchical nature of the entire process. The technical self-confidence of the grand architects, manifest in diverse ways and multiple cases during the public hearings and expert tables, emanated from the political endorsement that assigned to the international experts “certain skills of looking at things that in different ways with a certain detachment that may help us to define new ways to move forward” (Vimercati, 2016). In so doing, they vicariously warned the experts, and the lay citizens present in the consultation sessions that the strategy-makers had the final say in projecting Tirana of 2030. This was both a strategy of reducing dialogue and muting differences, but also discouraged the effective participation of the stakeholders in the consultation process and pushed them refrain from providing uncensored feedback and recommendations.

The power relations that sprung out of two differentiated forms of contributions by grand MoT representatives and grand architects from the one side, and the freelance experts and lay citizens from the other, prove that the former held an omnipotent position thanks to the legal and financial resources, and the latter occupied only a weak advisory role that mostly failed to affect the process outcomes. Participants that confronted the “particularly rigid terms of what was going to happen from the beginning” [Ada] “had fierce debates” with the MoT representatives but they could say their opinions and leave: “then what the company did, is not my business” [Lukas].

Stories of Concrete

Who narrated the stories of Tirana of the year 2030, which stories were narrated by the narrators, and the consequences of cherry-picking those very stories while bracketing out other ones, tells a lot about the narrative outcomes of the public consultation process. Those were the stories of an over-constructed city, with less green spaces and insufficient social infrastructure. The next set of stories is about the narrated future of covering Tirana with the grey of concrete and the vested interests therein.

4.4.1.1.13 *Vested Interest*

On the outset of TR030 implementation, it became clear that involved parties had vested interests in the adoption of that spirit of the plan. From the corporate agencies that designed the master plan to the freelance experts hired for disciplinary work, most of them had benefited construction permits, public works and expertise contracts from the MoT. According to most of the participants in the present study, this was the price of their self-censorship, conformity, and cooperation with the MoT during the public consultation stage of the planning and afterwards. One of the testimonies bears witness to Boeri’s conflict of interest:

He [Boeri] did little, he got paid some money but then of course the real payments are building permits for, you know, there is several buildings he is building now in Tirana. So, across King House in Block, a shiny gold building. And this large building in Kavaja’s Street, he has a permit. That is where the

money is, I mean, that is how he gets paid. This is of course completely unacceptable but ... [Paris].

However, not only the companies that were assigned the contract of preparing the master plan, but also the subcontractors and freelance experts felt blackmailed by the potential reaction from the MoT in case of critical or negative comments and feedback to the official draft. For them, TR030 was only an opportunity to receive the sympathy of the MoT political and technical representatives and get contracts in exchange for the full compliance. A detailed account of this phenomena taking place amid the city planning setting is offered by the following interviewee:

I noticed that even those who were there, stakeholders, especially in the case of the Tirana plan, many of the stakeholders had their interest and did not give any opinion. They had very hardened that set of their ideas. Those who are independent of power are freer to speak. While others have the problem. Because it depends on what the director says. Then it depends on many people what culture they have, because it was about the development of Tirana. Even some of them bluntly told me. I said, why don't you ask questions? We have trouble getting any money, we do not need the plan at all. Some of them were in conflict of interest, but in conflict of interest are even those who made the plan. How is a conflict of interest? First, these companies are private companies, they are private agents. What interest does the private agent have? They have the interest of grabbing any other works. It is in their interest to grab a project, to build a palace, as Boeri, UNLAB, are doing. What will they do? Everyone walks around and says that they consider the private sector to be impartial, but this is not true at all [Lukas].

The nature of conformity and self-censorship was not as passive as these terms imply. The planners were allowed to submit their own partial plan proposals for the new poles of the urban development in the framework of the strategic objective of polycentricity. Once the plan was set for implementation, according to the following report, the planning studios were awarded the construction permits of executing the partial plans, often including both buildings and public works of ground infrastructure:

In the very end, when they made the proposals, they divided them into zones. UNLAB had, ... had to make proposals for new centres, Kombinati, Kinostudio, and UNLAB had 2, it seems to me, and Boeri had more. Now the purpose of these, I have the impression, has been getting [construction permits] projects after that. So, making the regulatory plan for the area, the studio itself got the [construction of the] project of that area. And it happened, I have the impression, that Boeri has taken some buildings [construction permits], after the plan was approved. UNLAB as well [Ada].

The MoT's business was not only to award the construction permits and public works contracts to its clients, but also to carry out the public relations campaigns of these projects, especially the skyscrapers that are spreading from the downtown area to the most populated neighbourhoods of the city. Due to such collusion between the MoT and its corporate consultants, the participation of the public was avoided, and the critiques and opposition was censored effectively. Narratively and politically unequal activists were stripped of any opportunity to discredit and refrain the MoT's appetite for a rapid and clientelist master plan. In summary, the story of the future city was narrated by those who got the cream of its implementation.

4.4.1.1.14 Construction-Centric City

As it has been seen so far, what has been implemented from TR030 master plan is just the construction part, the skyscrapers at the downtown and the millions of square feet of residential construction in every existing neighbourhood of the city. Citizens have not seen the expansion of the city towards free zones beyond existing borders. This experience is widely shared in Tirana, as one of the interviewees confirms to the present study:

This was a clear alert to me that Veliaj was planning to launch a construction boom, contrary to his electoral promise not to build in Tirana anymore. I doubted that the new constructions would take place exactly in the densest area, within the current urbanized areas. Now I see I did not have this suspicion completely unfounded. Just think about it. Any extension of Tirana's construction beyond these urban boundaries today would require large

investments in infrastructure. Beyond the current scope, Tirana is completely unurbanized, it is unprepared in terms of transport infrastructure, without water and energy supply, drainage, and sewage grid, with a poor education, and health infrastructure to cope with such a rapid expansion [Juliana].

The focus on the business and residential constructions is out of control, even during the public consultation process. Several experts notice a rush among the strategy-makers to adopt the draft without too much consideration, a plan that lacked the fundamental addressing of the underground infrastructure. Approaching urban planning from a public relations perspective had, to a certain extent, impaired the MoT's representatives and grand architects' ability to think about the city in a holistic way. The 3D and videos 'from the future' of the city did not display the real consequences of these strategic urban choices. These communication products were not broken down to detailed implementation plans. This part of the job was transferred to a later period and to another set of stakeholders, I.e., the stage of developing the DLP-s and the beneficiary of the construction permits. A testimony from one of the freelancers involved in the planning process grasps some of these findings:

If we were to have a development of all dimensions, we would have to have a hierarchy of things, meaning that without doing this this is not done. But nothing like that was ever said to them. Because we had to have a hierarchy of principles. The hierarchy should have been such that the proposal for a 30-storey building in the centre of Tirana will require a minimum of 30 liters of water per second, but if the draft general plan is considered, it will develop an area with high-intensity buildings, I must bring quantities of water to that area that match that demand, for that number of residents I anticipate going there [Artur].

Mayor's and deputy mayor's discourse is filled to the brim with arguments why this plan should be a tool of control and restrictions of additional construction. One year ago, during the election campaign mayor Veliaj had committed to stop building within the existing perimeter of the urban area. The arguments he still used during urban planning were the same: Tirana is over-constructed and what it needs more is green spaces and community infrastructure. In reality, the opposite takes place, and the plan turns out to be the booster of new, additional, dense, and high-rise constructions. The

controversiality of discursive and practical positions is emphasised even in the narration of one of the participants:

There was not much discussion as far as I remember about construction intensity ... mostly about towers and but not for anything practical. There was not much discussion about it more than the issue of the environment, the air, natural monuments. The implementation of the plan has started but it has happened according to the interest in construction. Wherever there has been interest in building, it has been built [Flavio].

Veliag struggled to centralize the new urban plan around other interests and aims, dethroning the construction permits and construction industry from their elevated place that it assumes in the minds of the publics. This effort worked well in combination with the strategy of disguised audiences. Those who benefited from this plan were left out of the discourse to defend them from the public critique.

Arguments in favour of increasing the construction density within the existing perimeter of the city, posed by the grand architects, are of the economic nature. An extended city is difficult to serve, incurs high infrastructure costs and is less effective. The costs of a dense, suffocated city are not considered. The negative impact on the environment, the quality of the air and the quality of life are not quantified. On the contrary, they are bracketed out of the story of TR030 whenever they emerge from discussions or public opponency in the mass media. Who else, if not Boeri, would defend this view publicly:

This is a worldwide challenge. The biggest challenge of the coming years is to think of cities that increase population density even for an economic reason. A low-density city is a city that has more costs: infrastructure costs and transportation costs. So, we should also count Tirana as a city that grows, for example, with the doubling of the boulevard, but grows by staying within the current boundaries by increasing the density of inhabitants in areas where today is not such a thing (Boeri, 2016).

Though he does not offer an analysis of the urban forces behind such decision and manages to rationalize his strategic choice through a logic of cost-benefit, he manages to get away with it thanks to the reduced dialogue, muted differences,

controlled participation, and restricted storytelling rights. The narrative inequality established by the events' organisers works effectively to project the power relations that help the strategy-makers avoid potential resistance episodes.

And that is what happens when you mix these things, the old plane changes still delivering the same number of built areas, which is a big important thing, we are making this happen because you need the money to stack (Vimercati, 2016).

It takes not much to hear from the grand architects that the strategic view generated by manipulating data on the software does not influence at all the stakes of construction industry. The built area is a constant: be it a vertical or a horizontal exploitation of urban space. When talking about the plan, the grand architects focus intensively on construction, buildings, investors, building-green spaces rapport, but never talk about the city as a reservoir of experiences, stories, and symbols. In their discourse, the city is rendered knowable only as a 3D model where people, trees and parks are only represented as spacious objects, far from the natural personification of the urban life.

Other strategies to justify the embrace of high-rise constructions, a key element of the construction-centric city, was that of the need of the landowners to develop their properties. Since the construction in Tirana is quite discredited, and Veliaj's commitment during the election campaign for the Municipality of Tirana was not to allow any construction within the existing boundaries of urban space, the mayor was looking for a moral narrative that undermined his good intentions: the need that many families feel to expand their living spaces. He said that Tirana is full of houses with several couples under the same roof. They urgently need to develop their properties into much more generous houserooms. |As a matter of fact, additional building permits were a moral requisite. However, an already over-constructed city would only allow for more skyscrapers.

4.4.1.1.15 Erasure of Heritage as Regeneration

When Veliaj argued that Tirana does not lack air, but it lacked land, he was not only advocating the construction of tall buildings across the city. He was also sending an implicit message to those who owned or socially and politically defended the historic

and cultural heritage of the city. Villas of the Ottoman era as well as early modern constructions built after the WWI by the commercial and political elite of the country were under real threat of demolition as they occupied key areas at the downtown and most expensive quarters of the city.

There have been discussions to remove the protected area in the historic zone of Tirana, for example. It was removed from the protected cultural heritage objects list. It is another discussion then, whether it should have been removed, or not ... But there has been, I believe, there has been a lot of debate. There has been debate between cultural heritage experts who have been outsourced, not within the team [Ada].

For Veliaj and his team, Tirana has not inherited a remarkable cultural legacy. Compared with the surrounding capital cities, Albanian capital was established later, while most of the valuable tangible cultural heritage of the Ottoman era was erased by the communist regime, while the remaining traces lack effective power instruments to refrain the financial greed of the construction industry. Only after the WWI, Tirana was declared the capital of newly independent state and most of the independence was screwed by the 45 years of Communist dictatorship that disfigured the existing legacy and built instead an ugly layer of soc-realist grey, poor urbanization.

Surely, the first round of demolitions would hit the informal constructions and the suburb neighbourhoods. Rationalizing the mass demolition of thousands of such homes by blaming the owners as occupiers of the private and public land, MoT representatives were advancing their strategic program of replacing the existing buildings with skyscrapers, business centres and luxurious hotels. Since most of the demolished private villas were built two or three decades ago, public opinion has been split into two groups among those who defend their right to own a home and those who defend the right of the MoT to rule the territory. It is obvious the MoT's communication campaign has managed to cause fractions amid the population and avoid the polemics about the morality and legality of the method they are treated by the local government.

The same holds for the people whose houses are destroyed in Astir or wherever. They do not deserve a word. They are not acknowledged as people even. I mean, the moment you have a discourse, the moment you have a narrative about these

people you would acknowledge their existence. The whole point is to not acknowledge their existence. They are completely irrelevant [Paris].

Once a warrior of social justice, democracy, accountability, and transparency in governmental transactions, the newly elected mayor and his team were swiftly transformed into the very authoritarian politicians that they used to fight with. While occupying the sky, these constructions were practically occupying the land too since the set 45% land use coefficient was not being complied with. The business system built upon the high-rise constructions in Tirana could not be sustained without violating every single legal, environmental, and social criterion. Interviewees predicted that this phenomenon would keep on until the last inch of the city is occupied with skyscrapers:

The justification for high-rise construction was to save space. Veliaj said, for example, that the city does not lack air but land. So, let us save the surface of the land and build at height. This is not a bad thing, of course. There Veliaj presented the ceiling of the land use coefficient, 45%. But the reality is, I think, different. Tirana has not saved any green space or recreation from tall buildings. On the contrary, every inch of land is being filled with tall buildings. Those that have not yet been occupied will begin to be covered with the concrete of the foundations of the ten-story towers in the coming months [Juliana].

The meaning the strategy-makers assigned to regeneration is manifest in the transcripts of the expert tables. A close circle of the urban planners, MoT representatives, architects, urban economists, and engineers is deliberating on the possible routes of urban development. Rather than discussing on the accelerated access to education, health, and employment, improved livelihood and sustaining environment, development debriefed in terms of urban growth, explicitly indicating that the existing neighbourhood structures could not uphold the desired growth.

So, when I say urban regeneration, we intend a way to how the city can grow. Now in many other countries cities are not growing yet so they changed the name and refer to it as Urban Regeneration, in the sense of a city changing itself. The planning is not concentrated on expansion, but on the modification of the body. In Tirana, we are in the middle of this process because it started and was

amazingly fast in the past 20 years. So, we need to discuss the regeneration of the city that was built in the last 20 years (Transcripts, 2016).

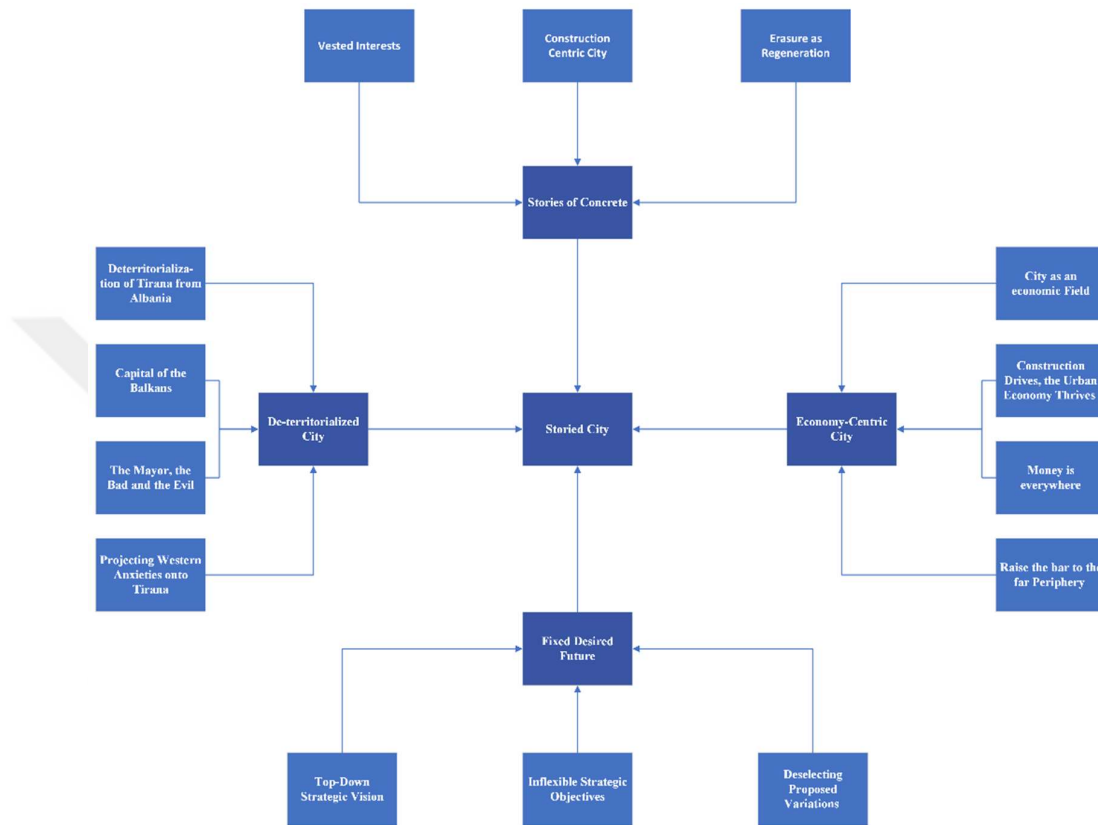
Preserving heritage is found economically unhealthy and unsustainable by most of the strategy-makers. The owners and settlers of the Ottoman era villas need to be financially incentivized for not only maintaining and conserving them, but also giving up plans and chances of replacing them with multi-storey brand-new buildings. Local and central government institutions have failed to do so in the past and are prepared to keep on their negligence of the cultural heritage. Boeri states the time has come for an innovative approach towards such problems and proposes an urban revolution called regeneration:

Because there are some such areas, or empty areas, or there are buildings that need to be demolished or reconstructed. This is then another important topic: cities are regenerated by destroying and reconstructing. So even this issue of regeneration is an essential issue. There is a part of Tirana's heritage built in the second part of the last century that today needs to be rethought. It is not always important to build things outside the city, but it is very important in some cases to replace parts of the city that are degraded today (Boeri, 2016).

All these arguments against preservation and conservation of heritage do not pledge a transformation that will serve the citizens. On the contrary, their concerns represent a matter of understanding the urban space and public realm as marketable goods for exchange. City is, thus, rendered a dormitory the role of which is to create as much 'sheltering' space as possible, stripped off its spiritual and emotional legacy. Due to this economic view of human and social activity, strategy-making moves closer to the domain of crony-capitalism politics and assumes the job of advocacy of certain corporative interests. As a result, strategy-makers are increasingly seen as agents of financial interests of the few at the expense of the wellbeing of the many.

A visual representation of the conceptual framework of the storied city dimension of the narrative reality of the city strategy is shown in the figure below:

Figure 49 A proposed conceptual framework of the Storied City theme



4.4.2 Stories strategizing agency

The stories' strategizing agency was evident in the massive use of stories from the past and the future, from Tirana and from across the world, to accelerate the imagination of the city 15 year later. The agency of non-human actants in social construction has been long acknowledged by the actor network theory (ANT) scholars. The way stories were ignited to carry out the task of strategy-making resonates the role of tools and technologies in the same the domain of strategy as practice. In the present study, stories were found to seduce human actants to be involved in an exercise that actualized in the present the imagined future of a metropolitan city.

Imagined future

Audiences of the public hearing and expert tables session were persistently invited to imagine the future of the city as per the provided urban framework. Boeri, for example, told the present experts and institutional representatives during the presentation of the first draft of the TR030 master plan on May 14, 2016, the imagined future would neither not be so distant as to lose touch with the present, nor too close, to lose the fictional element of the imagination.

So, the first was the opportunity to develop a fresco. When we say a fresco as we are talking about the opportunity to imagine the future of Tirana considering a future which is not too far as not too next. So, the idea was to imagine the future of 2030 as a future that we can control nowadays, so as a future which has a direct relation with our present action (Boeri, 2016).

Invitation to participate in this imagination exercise stripped the audience of the any emerging attitude of critical thinking and doubt casting on the drafted master plan. Once the present and distant audiences would immerse into desired future of Tirana, it would no longer have the mind to seek out the problems of the plan. Such an involvement posed a strategy for recruiting their energies to work in the direction desired by the strategy-makers. What follows is a break-down of the sort of futures participants were attracted to delve into and the narrative devices used to achieve this strategy-making goal.

4.4.2.1.1 *Group-dreaming of the Future*

Even when talking about group activities, grand architects inflationary use the verb "to imagine". It is an unnatural struggle to impose imagination amidst an audience that is supposed to be critical and demanding, on the first place. The strategy-makers offer the imaginative tools for the participants to be resourceful in this exercise. An example of such an instructor-student relationship is shown below:

And uh ... so we use the skills that we built by being traveling around the world for the last few years to look at a place. ... So that is something that we as

designers need you to bring to us. But we have certain skills of looking at things (Vimercati, 2016).

Thus, parties participate in the imagination exercise in different capacities, predetermined by the strategy-making body, establishing power relations based on the assumed knowledge of each party. Therefore, they make contributions that are different in nature. Though they are constantly presenting a chain of project without prior consultations, from time to time they return to the metaphor of participatory decision-making.

While the grand architects can only cautiously establish the power relations in this exercise, mayor Veliaj deepens further his power differential between the strategy-makers and the audience by offering a moral choice between two categorical options:

We have two opportunities: to use this fantastic chance to give Tirana a vision and a platform of where we will go in the next 15 years for which perhaps the children and grandchildren of this city, of this forum will be grateful, or we will make small calculations of the day and avoid strong debates or political clashes to squander a historic chance at hand (Veliaj, 2016).

As it has been shown in previous sections, once again the critique from the political opponent is delegitimated using the rhetorical strategy of the questioning the morality of the intent behind it. He was employing a logical fallacy by excluding the middle and moderate option of simultaneously loving a bright future for the next generation and questioning the official proposition from a position of technical superiority and morality.

During that day, almost nobody from the public participated into the discussions. Only mayor Veliaj, deputy mayor Mazniku, grand architect Boeri, and their experts & subordinates made pre-prepared presentations, only accepting infantile questions from the unprepared audience. However, even questions are pre-aligned with the desired course of imagining the future. According to Boeri, “questions can be used to let me say, start with a kind of collective sort of the future of Tirana” (Boeri, 2016). De facto, schematic questions can only produce controlled answers, responses and results.

4.4.2.1.2 *Conserving the Colourful Diversity*

Not only is the future framed by the strategy-makers seductive, but it is also even misleading. The audience is generously welcomed to imagine a city that is not practically planned nor desired by the political decision makers, as the master plan final report will show, and the reality of its implementation will prove. Such is the future of cultural heritage conservation, the absolute opposite to the erasure that was being warned by the critics of the MoT's initiative to pass a new master plan, just a couple of years the previous one was enacted. Grand architect Boeri (2016) was resourceful to employ a positive thinking fallacy where the participants are warned against thinking the exact impact of TR030 and pushed to think the very opposite of it: "we think that it is particularly important, when we start to develop a master plan, not to imagine erasing, to do a kind of trouble".

4.4.2.1.3 *Commanded Dreaming of the Future*

Beyond all the narrative strategies, rhetorical devices, logical fallacies and power relations inherent in the process of public consultation, what was the desired future of the city that the MoT representatives and grand architects were seducing people to dream about?

First, it was a threatened future: threatened by the climate change, threatened by the demographic expansion, threatened by the dark forces of regress and corruption. This view covered everything from the basic supplies such as water and energy to the abstract concept of the living quality. Certain grand architects rationalized based on a generally spread belief that force majeure threatens the very existence of Tirana: "water in this sense is one of the most difficult challenges that we face because of climate change, because of [the] size [of] our city, because of droughts" (Pastore, 2016).

Second, it was the bright Tirana of the projects and programs that were told through by most of the grand architects and mayor Veliaj. It was described by the fancy, often unclear terms of "connectivity of habitats, green infrastructure multifunctionality, agriculture access recreation and biodiversity to the local situation, extended axis, better axes for everyone, and landscape enhancement" (Gatti, 2016). The talk about strategic

objectives and the respective break-down in technical terms was mobilised to leave the impression of actual projects and programmes, therefore establishing an expectation from the future, while inspiring imagination.

Again, the imaginable future of Tirana 2030 is as bright as Barcelona of nowadays viewed from the position of Ildefons Cerda in the middle of the nineteenth century. Mayor Veliaj falsely applies the analogy to Barcelona and the work of Cerda therein to convince the audience about the deep and through transformation that Tirana is awaiting from this strategic plan:

The reason why I tell his story is to alert each of you in advance. This is not a glorious job. On the contrary, most likely, afterwards there begins the typical Albanian story where everyone is slandered, everyone is insulted, but at the end of the day I believe that we lay the foundations that we will not have their appearance or public appreciation one year, two years, one term, two terms later, we will probably have the fate of Ildefons and after many years it will be said how well they laid some sound foundations to have a general local plan that resists time, beyond the intensity and political commitment that the debate enjoys in general in Albania (Veliaj, 2016).

Further stories allure the participants to visualize the future neighbourhoods of Tirana with newly built schools, nurseries, kindergartens that address these communities' family needs to raise and educate their children. It is a future that belongs to the common citizen. Mentioning major strategic changes that are expected to occur in the coming years, the promised future is easier to imagine. It is the language of a project, more than that of a strategy.

This imagination of Tirana constantly growing serves several political aims of the MoT. First, it superficially rationalizes a project that is not a real concern to MoT: polycentrism. Second, it is used to justify unlimited construction permits. 15 years from now, Veliaj promises, Tirana shall be transformed to the extent that future generations shall be grateful to those who took over the risk of clashing with the dark powers of the past to bring about this transformation.

Now we are in the second public session. Why public session? Because we are all seriously interested to imagine. To develop a master plan doesn't mean to

stay in one room with the technician with the politicians and develop on our own an image or a vision. Now this is not our way to work me to think that in order to develop a serious future for Tirana we must work together. We have to, let me say, imagine having a continuously moment of discussion, of public discussion, of public debate, where we must share, step by step, our thoughts, our considerations, our ideas on the future of Tirana (Boeri, 2016).

It sounds as an invitation to abandon the rational judgement of the proposed principles, rules and values, and start imagining, as though their imaginations shall be reflected in the final Master Plan TR030. De facto, they were staying in a closed conference in a downtown hotel with politicians and technicians, and they talked on their own, allowing very short questions or brief discussion by the invitees. The power relations hidden in this practice are manifest in the exclusive telling rights granted to the strategy-makers and the limited and controlled technical resources available to the audience to participate effectively in the discussion.

4.4.2.1.4 *Stories, the City Made Durable*

The pervasive use of stories in telling the future of the city, in establishing narrative time, and, thus, in laying the foundations of the dominant narrative, made Tirana into a storied city. Strategy-makers employed stories to help the present and distant audiences make sense of the past, interpret the present and imagine the future. Stories from the past, stories from the present, stories from the future: a chronological epistemology of urban living was set up from one expert table to another, from the first public hearing to the last one.

“But what is interesting is how technology is now changing the way in which we govern our city. This is something that they can digitalize also building[s] so we can really start a new era of narration of our city. It is not only about social media, but it is also how we use our buildings to tell new stories about the city” (Baroncelli, 2016).

This is the onset of a presentation by grand architects during an expert table session in the framework of TR030 consultation process. It is a warning that the negotiation between the MoT representatives and grand architects on one side, and the

citizens, activists, CSO-s and community representatives on the other side, had to occur on a narrative level. Even the context of rationality that would define the city's course of development would eventually be the most convincing and powerful stories. To borrow from Latour (1990), the story was the city made durable.

For everything the MoT representatives in cooperation with the corporate urban planners had set up in the new strategy of the city, there exists a success story in the past, an urban challenge in the present and a dream in the future. The overarching story was, conceivably, handpicked for the mayor. It is a long account that emerges from the far past and develops along a century and a half to reveal itself under the famous brand of Barcelona:

I do not know how many of you have been to Barcelona. I have not been so often but the last time I was with the mayor, I had the opportunity to understand a little about urban planning in Barcelona. I am certainly profane, I am completely lacking in knowledge in the field of urban planning, especially compared to some of you who have created the Albanian school of urban planning. But there I met a character whose name I had heard but did not know much about. Ildefons Cerva [Cerdà, Veliaj mispronounces his surname], Cerdà [autocorrects his mispronunciation], who in the mid-nineteenth century took the unimaginable challenge to turn one of the cities that in the literature of the time was considered one of the dirtiest cities in Europe - that was Barcelona in the 1800s. And Ildefons, an engineer, undertook to set up this kind of process. In fact, the word urbanization, urbanization in Spanish, and then in all the languages of the world was born from this architect. As I became more curious to read the practice, I recalled today's Albania, how much this process was attacked, this was declared almost heretical by the institutions but also by the political establishment of the time. There were extraordinary political defeats. Only after 150-200 years does his name return to the epicenter and some of the foundations that were laid at that moment today make Barcelona from the dirtiest city in Europe to one of the most exemplary cities in Europe. We are talking about a city that when you read it seems like you are reading parts of the alleys of Tirana, where a narrow street was almost 1 meter and a wide street was

called something that was 3 meters in Barcelona at that time, which in fact resembles many of roads or informal areas of Albania that we have ... or Tirana that we have inherited today and for which we will have to make decisions. The reason why I tell his story is to alert each of you in advance. This is not a glorious job. On the contrary, most likely, afterwards there begins the typical Albanian story where everyone is slandered, everyone is insulted, but at the end of the day I believe that we lay the foundations that we will not have their appearance or public appreciation one year, two years, one term, two terms later, we will probably have the fate of Ildefons and after many years it will be said how well they laid some sound foundations to have a general local plan that resists time, beyond the intensity and political commitment that the debate enjoys in general in Albania (Velaj, 2016).

By borrowing the story of Barcelona, Velaj deployed a narrative of inevitability (Vaara & Tienari, 2008) of the proposed future of the city. In so doing, he projects an unrivalled course of action, thus disregarding variations and alternatives, delegitimizing critique and morally classifying resistance on the dark side of the story. Tirana as a storied city was to be built by the morally upright people like him, who fully resembled the forward looking and determined Ildefons Cerda.

Another story was that of the development of cultural life in Tirana throughout the twentieth century. 1920's was presented as the years of a basic development in the fields of movie making, photography and small artistic groups. Later, during the 1940s Tirana, according to the strategy-makers, had advanced towards a substantial network of seven cinemas and a theatre. The communist legacy in the cultural development was summed up with the unitarian development trajectory that was then called socialist realism. The institutional grid of cultural centres was extended to almost every neighbourhood and village. And finally, 1990's were mentioned for the chaotic development of fragmented cultural and artistic groups, generally self-initiatives, a metaphor of what was happening in the entire social, political and economic life of the country. The cultural activity is, now, concentrated in the downtown, leaving villages and suburbs as cultural deserts. Even the existing cultural institutions such as cinemas,

libraries, cultural centres, theatres and museums are not functional or only partially function as such:

If I stick to this story it goes on visualizing a future cultural life in Tirana that spread across both its rural and urban areas. It is part of the polycentric metropolis grand narrative, but it is extended even further to the suburban and rural areas. In this framed future, participants were encountered with renders and 3D pictures of the proposed projects of cultural centres, cinemas, theatres, museums, galleries etc. This was the imagination about the new urban areas [Adam].

As for the same story extending to the future, the existing cultural sites, traditional neighbourhoods and constructions would be preserved with strict rules and regulations. There was a concern expressed about the negative impact of the informal urban development on the cultural heritage of Tirana. Stories told by the strategy-makers projected TR030 master plan as an instrument of preservation and conservation, the most effective keywords to establishing a strong link between the past, the present and the future.

The stories begin with the difficult times of poverty, underdeveloped and backward urban life and end up in a happy finalization in 2030 with the non-anthropocentric, sustainable and green city. Surely, narration was always accompanied and assisted by the images, statistics, 3D models and technical language to assign the episodes a tone of the well-thought and authoritative solutions. Thus, narrative time played a major role in awarding improved consistency and probability in front of the audiences.

4.4.2.1.5 *Narrative Time*

While in space the city was rendered knowable as a nexus of multiple urban planning stories from across the world, in time it was projected as a connection of episodic dots from its past, its present and its future. Thus, the plot of TR030 was both chronotopically and chronologically created by the stories of the planners, fully out of

the reach of the powerless citizens, activists, and CSO-s. It was a matrix, more than a linear structure, that organized the story-telling events of the strategy-makers.

First, narrative time was organized in the past by quickly summarizing the dense bunch of layers inherent in the city as it is today. It differs from the physical time and, furthermore, it serves as a shell to accommodate the episodic flow of events. In this usage, the plot carries out a typical narrative function by connecting the episodes to the complete story. Arch-architect Boeri has carefully picked up the events that play a historical role in the development of the city in the past, therefore establishing a sound intra-episodic relation and producing a strong plot:

The extraordinary thing about Tirana is that it is a kind of museum of 1900. Walking in the squares and streets of this city, one sees the influence of the cultures of the entire planet. There are places where there is a strong influence of European, Italian culture. There are places where there is influence from the Soviet period. Countries where there is also influence from Asia - during the time of relations with China - and today the contemporary architecture shows a connection of Albania with the world. For this reason, I find this international dimension that Tirana has today very interesting, and I think it is a very important value (Boeri, 2016).

In differing with the sufficient focus on the past, the narration about the present is shallow. The poor and unreliable statistics, material practices, stories, and analyses of the data lean toward a set up agenda, i.e., the strategic orientations provided by the MoT. Urban regeneration, mobility, polycentricity, green infrastructure, orbital forest, just to mention a few, are boosted by a rationalization that is always based on the selective and non-rigorously collected statistics and stories. Even the expert tables meetings are vulnerable to this dreadful disease:

In many other countries cities are not growing yet so they changed the name and refer to it as Urban Regeneration, in the sense of a city changing itself. The planning is not concentrated on expansion, but on the modification of the body. In Tirana, we are in the middle of this process because it started and was very fast in the past 20 years. So, we need to discuss the regeneration of the city that was built in the last 20 years (Transcripts, 2016).

Although the evocation of the idea of “regeneration” inspires growth and development expectations, Tirana is currently facing much more basic challenges, such as informal constructions, environmental crisis, lack of a modern public transport service, poor education and health services infrastructure. Another obstacle to the MoT’s appetite for a more intense inner city is that considerable parts of its symbolic capital is enshrined in the built cultural heritage. The overemphasis on the future at the expense of a real understanding of the present does not go without criticism by the experts:

Everything is directed towards the future, which is totally fine, but if we cannot identify and highlight historical context, heritage, crown jewels, then how can we know we're still in Tirana and not anywhere else in the world. Context studies are important (and they probably will come later, or are already done, just not included) as are comparative studies of successful models (things that have worked or are working and so forth). I would caution asking 'can Tirana' do this or become this, because yes it can if we wanted to, but do we really (Bedo, 2016).

However, it is this non-chronological nature of the narrative time established by the events and episodes that make up the plot of strategy-makers during the public hearings and expert tables that constitute narrative time. This unbalanced weight of the past, present and future in the storytelling assigns the episodic quality to the plot (Ricoeur, 1980) that projects the story as composed of events, rather than of physical time. Owing to this episodic nature of the plot, the future of the urban reality occupies a focal place in the strategic storytelling of the MoT representatives and grand architects:

After the phase of communist regime, in which the urban governance was centralized in few hands and after the phase of liberalization in which the urban expansion was not controlled, we are now starting a new phase: a phase of the first urban plan as a negotiation between ... as a collaboration between politicians, international experts, stakeholders, citizens, universities, thinkers, artists, NGOs and so on. But this is a very historical moment. It is a very important day that I've been looking forward to for one year, not only because

it is an historical moment for Tirana, but because it's the beginning of a new era of governance of the European city (Pastore, 2016).

Ambivalent as it is, this discourse emphasizes the participatory trend in urban planning, a linguistic device to designate TR030 a democratic and rational plan. However, the participatory nature of a plan would require alternative rationalities to challenge each other by means of unbiased data and information. In this case, CSO-s and experts, community representatives and activists would have been allowed to supply the process with their alternative social perspectives. The non-meticulous exercise of data collection and analysis, strictly led and controlled by the MoT representatives and grand architects, stripped the citizens of their narrative powers, thus impoverishing the storyworld of city making in the TR030 consultation process.

4.4.2.1.6 *Nuances of the Wording*

In addition to using English as an esoteric language, the strategy-makers employed highly nuanced forms of wording that aimed at overcoming adversities and marshalling support around the official draft of TR030 master plan. Metaphors, hyperboles, allusions, and similes were so abundantly applied that indicated the perceived difficulty and expected resistance (River et al, 2016) in justifying and legitimizing the city planning proposals advanced by the MoT representatives and grand architects. Thus, the city was talked into existence by means of linguistic devices and populist nuances of the applied wording, as the following interviewee's reflection confirms:

It was a populist language. He promised that things would change. Orbital forest would be created. Veliaj spoke with a high expectation. The language was very curated and very optimistic to make people believe that the city will change, the situation will get better. As the city expanded considerably, the centre's deficiencies were offset by the orbital forest on the outskirts. It was alienated and camouflaged ... all the attention was focused on these units, the orbital forest, the energy corridors, the blue corridors, the green corridors. There was a lot of talk about the poles, about the polycentric city. The city was perceived as an urban factory where the aspects of energy, transport, economy, employment,

agricultural production, etc. are combined. These were apparently borrowed from foreign architectural jargon that have their own terminology. [Flavio]

Motivation-like speeches of mayor Veliaj, commit to leave a glorious legacy of green, sustainable, and human-centred governance, that would include, but not limit to, a “dowry of oxygen,” a “green crown,” “urban factory,” and “the forest of the worlds”. Grand architects talk on the other hand, is imbued with language games, metaphors and allegories that fed a poetical imagination of the city fifteen years in the future. Particularly, “[i]n English, Tirana sounds like a real European city” (Rama, 2016). Consequently, power was not only exerted in a naked and direct form, but also through language of the powerful actors in the strategy-making operation.

Furthermore, the language games were employed in strategy-making activities, i.e., speeches, presentations, and hearings, to grant durability to the dominance by the MoT representatives and grand architects by projecting the participants as cognitively deprived objects, rather than venerated subjects with reasoning and decision-making faculties. The generalizing jargon, the diluted explanations of the real urban possibilities embedded in the long-term decisions of the strategy-practitioners, and the ambiguity of most of the terms created an effect of belittling the technical audiences present in the experts’ tables. Summarily, the MoT representatives and grand architects’ language was frequently a public relations operation rather than a disciplinary presentation of the master plan:

... because it was just a specific PR to the audience, and there have always been phrases that are digestible by the audience, to remain in their minds and have been very efficient in terms of a wide audience. So, I think it is more the way it goes on and talked about than it really was [Zamira].

From time to time, the strategy storytellers simplify and rebrand the public space in household terms to make sure the urban elements make sense to the addressees in ways that enable the latter to find a sympathetic meaning in the process of city planning. The public squares are evoked as living-rooms of the communities, or backyards of the city, as the following statement by a strategy-makers shows:

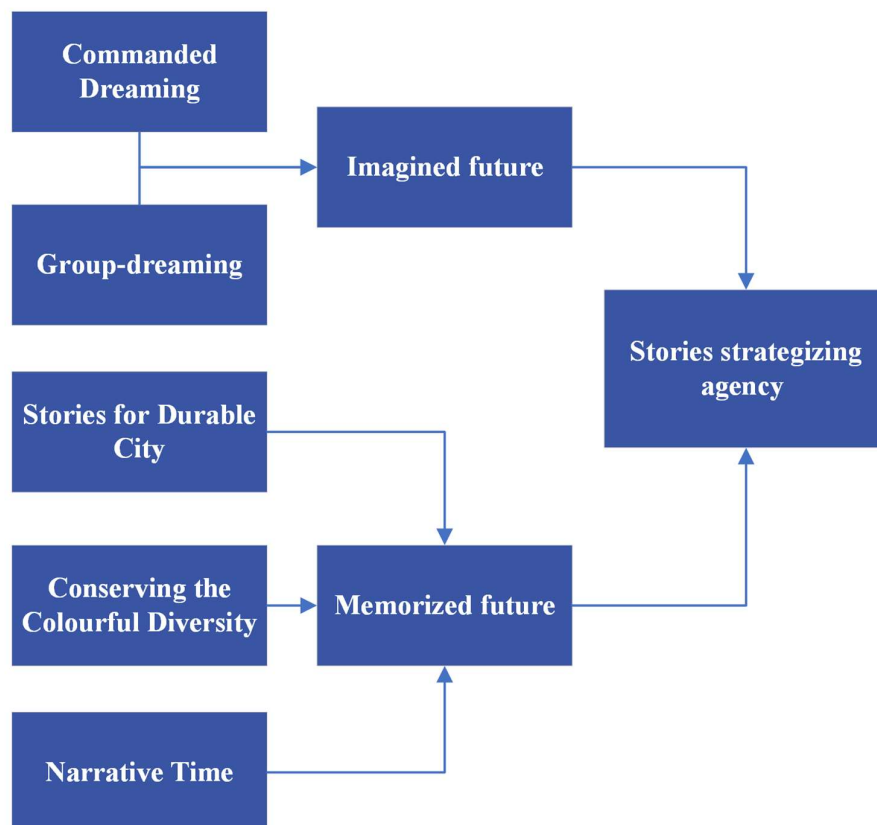
We analysed what green there is in Tirana and we took all the green we planned and put it together and created ... found the space to fit it onto a side and created

a new version of the master plan that responded to this idea of there is a square as a living room, now we're building everybody's backyard (Vimercati, 2016).

The generous use of the past, present and future tense chain in the strategic storytelling implied a clear will by the MoT representatives and grand architects for urban change and transformation. They tried to construct a strategic narrative that was intended to mediate the way the participants in the public hearings and expert tables experienced and digested the strategy-making episodes. In the words of an interviewee, the language used by the strategic narrators echoed that of “a manifesto” [Ada], the narrative effect of which is making things clearer more than making them sound true.

The conceptual framework of how stories gained and exerted strategizing agency in the process of city planning is presented in the figure below:

Figure 410 A proposed conceptual framework of the Stories strategizing agency theme



4.5 Conclusions to the Narrative Reality of the Strategic Stories of TR030

The power effects of these narrative devices are manifest in the strategy-makers' claim to represent the voice of the citizens and speak on their behalf. Other authors, such as McCabe (2010) have previously scrutinized 'manifestations of managerial claims to power' (172). In doing so, strategy-makers rely on their symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1977; 1989) as elected officials and city administrators. The type of symbolic capital that they make use of might be classified as bureaucratic (Bourdieu, 2005) as it is related to the authority and the delegated responsibilities of managing the city.

As stories tell a lot about the planners themselves, these Western anxieties in the urban planning process of Tirana have two direct causes of emergence. First, the MoT political staff comes mostly from a background of civil society organizations (CSO's) and poorly qualifies them to public administration. CSO's job is to impart the ideas and worldviews of the donors to the local communities rather than the other way out. In so doing, MoT political staff determined the policy through stories (Marris, 1997) of the western anxieties. Secondly, most of the grand architects were of foreign origin, experts of urban planning, architecture, engineering and social sciences working with, or hired by Stefano Boeri Architetti. Naturally, they would bring to the TR030 process their human concerns from their background societies. In so doing, the grand architects did not translate the stories of the local communities into a plan but processed their own stories to make out of them an urban plan for Tirana. Instead of saying "this is how we converted your stories into a plan. Did we understand you correctly?" (Sandercock, 2011), they told the audience 'This is how we translated our own stories into a plan. Did you understand us correctly?'

Tirana of the future was also narrated as an economic field. Economic development was projected as one of the core values this master plan intended to address. The strategic storytellers bypassed the nature of the city as a political field (Kornberger & Clegg, 2011) to emphasize the good reason the contending stakeholders of city making compete with each-other: scarce economic resources. Thus, the city was rendered knowable as large market of suppliers and customers where everybody

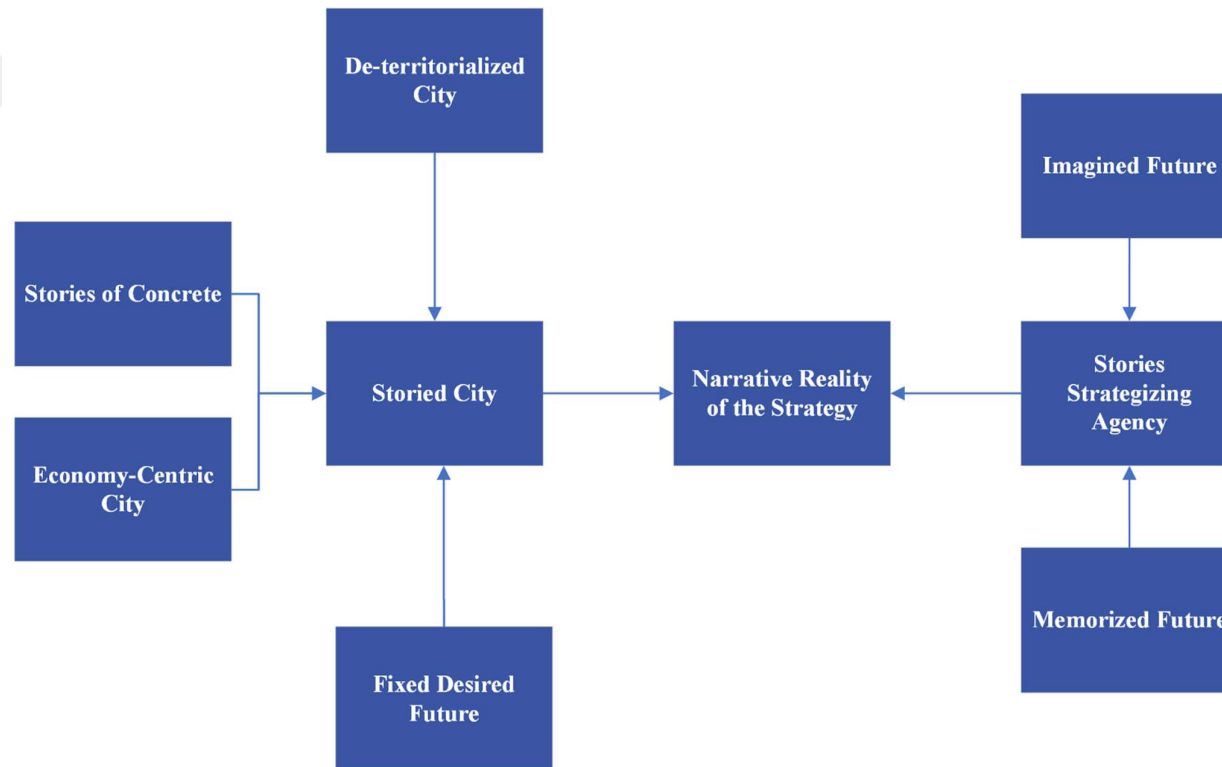
exchanges the assets in possession with the desired assets. According to this reasoning, money, wealth, estates and market value comprise the key good reasons people participate in discourse about the future of the city.

Stories that were borrowed or even made up, confessed and gained narrative mobility in the framework of TR030 public consultation process, turned into the reality of urban strategy and, therefore, gave birth to an emerging city people are witnessing day by day. On the other hand, the projected city ignited among the citizens multiple ways of telling its story, supporting and condemning it. Those stories employed by the strategy-makers clearly advocated an imagination of an overbuilt, densely constructed city within the existing perimeter of the urban area. Whenever the rigid nature of the existing city did not match the stakes served by the dominant narrative of the MoT representatives and grand architects, the strategic storytellers used narratives to tear them down, first in the public imagination and later, after an earthquake, in real life.

The storytellers, also, struggled to put the rest of the strategy-makers in a difficult challenge with the time. They calculated the historical time against the narrative time the strategy-making actors are struggling with. Therefore, the private time, i.e., the private one year of waiting of the storyteller, gains value owing to the public time that is used as a measure. In so doing, they immersed their stories into the communal story of the participants, who were co-witnessing and co-constructing an historical event. Coupling the narrative “now” with the narrative “here”, the stories managed to establish the centrality of the present in constructing the future in the city planning.

Visually, the above relationships between the values adopted as central to the storytelling of the strategy-makers about the future of the city are represented in Figure 12 below:

Figure 4-11 A proposed conceptual framework of the Narrative Reality of the Strategy dimension



CHAPTER 5

Conclusions and Recommendations

In this chapter, the summary, contributions made by this study, limitations and recommendations for further inquiry with respect to the of strategy as practice research are discussed conclusively. The conceptual framework of the narrative practice of strategy, grounded on the collected and analysed data, along with the final comments of the inquirer, are presented in the section of Summary of the Inquiry.

5.1 Summary of the Inquiry

The present study's findings, grounded in data from narrative interviews and analysed on MAXQDA 2020, produced a conceptual framework for the narrative practice of strategy in the context of urban planning for a metropolitan city in Europe. The said conceptual framework taps the relationship between the narrative ecosystem deliberately constructed by strategy-makers, the narrative rationality applied to push forward the official proposal of urban strategy and the narrative reality of the city as prophesied in the stories of the strategic narrators. What follows is a condensed presentation of the theoretical output of this study.

5.1.1 Narration and the Political Context

The questions that may justly arise in the context of the present research is: why did the MoT representatives chose to create a friendly ecosystem to their storytelling when they would nakedly and openly apply power relations to silence the opposition, shun the critiques and censor the alternative proposals and variations from the professional community?

The first reason behind this procedural choice is the strategy makers' incapability to convince an adversary or opponent audience. Especially the political opponents, professional bodies, CSO-s, and informed citizens, who can produce their

alternative discourse and, thus, create an antagonistic story-world, are not fit to the definition of the collaborative group of addressees.

Secondly, MoT representatives arranged the entire public consultation process to formally reflect the legal requirements. The present research findings support the conclusion that they were not willing to organise a democratic, participatory process, nor did they feel any need to draw on the opinions and to consider the expectations of the lay citizens from the new urban plan. In first place, they arbitrarily kicked off the process of urban planning once they assumed power, 3 years after the existing comprehensive urban plan, the first after the regime change in Albania, was approved by the previous administration. This decision was not consulted nor was its support tested by any independent study or evaluation. It was a political decision of the MoT new administration.

Thus, MoT relied on its power differentials over the lay citizens, community representatives and civil society, a strategy for establishing a supportive setting for the dominant narrative that justified the decision to launch urban planning process and advanced the official urban choices while subordinating resistance and alternative voices. Strategy makers pursued this venture by constructing an exclusive narrative ecosystem.

The MoT representatives designed and implemented a process of ecological selection that proved welcoming to the stories told by the representatives of MoT and the grand architects while serving as an acid setting to the alternative narrations of the future of the urban living in the 2030 Tirana. Via such a design, it was the MoT itself that (1) set the agenda for the public consultation events, (2) classified and filtered the proposed variations, (3) defined and ordered the audiences in the meetings and, thereupon, (4) granted an advantageous representation of the construction industry interests in the city making by a covert communication strategy that either did not made mention of them or condemned them to assure MoT's reputation as an independent decision-maker.

Under such conditions, and with the help of certain material practices, such as the preferential use of statistics, images, videos, 3D models, and PowerPoint presentations, only the officially desired narrative species made it to the stage. Tales of

sustainability, green infrastructures, biodiversity, non-anthropocentricity, mobility, and climate change dominated the discourse of the MoT representatives and grand architects on the urban strategy. The alternative stories of construction density, urban underground infrastructure, education and health services facilities, as well as community life were bracketed out by the selection mechanism.

On the other hand, once the consultation process was launched, another selective set of operations was switched on by the MoT representatives and grand architects: directional selection. Via directional selection, the strategy makers were able to select in and out data according to their compliance with the strategy-makers' storytelling needs, use English as an esoteric language of city future telling, and block the horizontal communication pathways among the stakeholders. Consequently, the narrative effect of these operations was the drastic reduction of dialogue potentials between the strategy-makers and wide audiences and within the audiences themselves.

One more directional selection mechanism employed by the strategy-makers in the framework of TR030 urban planning was muting the differences between the MoT representatives and grand architects' tales and the alternative or adversary stories from the lay citizens, political opponents and expertise. To serve this purpose, the MoT representatives organised a few public hearings and expert tables, denied the public opinion, opposition Municipal Assembly members and experts' access to the detailed information and documents of the new master plan during most of the time, diminishing their ability to rationally analyse the reports' content and, when necessary, propose variations accordingly.

5.1.2 The Exclusive Nature of Narrative Rationality

There exist enough reasons to believe that the application of the rational world paradigm was deliberately excluded by the political leadership of MoT and that narrative rationality was a perfect substitute for this. Firstly, stories, metaphors, visual practices, and performance are the most efficacious tools of conveying the meaning of contemporary universal values embraced by the strategy-makers to provide the good reasons (Fisher, 1978, 1984, 1985; Warnick, 1987) for their strategic choices.

Particularly, inspiring and making manifest a specific imagination of the future of the city is a fiction venture rather than a rational enterprise.

Second, in employing the narrative rationality through stories of city making across the world, mayor Veliaj intends to establish an analogy of universal urban planning. According to this analogy, urban planning is always and everywhere the same, with the same dreams and morality, with the same enemies and threats, with the same amazing results for all. Thus, Tirana under his leadership is going through the same pathways Barcelona went through under the leadership of Ildefons Cerda. And if citizens want to dream Tirana of the future, they can freely borrow the fame and beauty of Barcelona as a dream-model.

From a Habermasian (1984, pp.392) perspective, the MoT representatives, and grand architects, who oversaw organizing and moderating the public consultation process, should have granted the “ideal speech” conditions to each of the participants without the need to resort to political or social power instruments. What they did in practice was more in line with the Fisherian (1985) argument that such conditions do not warrant a rational and reasonable contribution to the consultations process.

On the other hand, they arbitrarily and exclusively assigned to themselves, a Heideggerian role of the “thinking” and “mediating beings” (1966, p.47) whose narrative function is to dilute for the public audiences the understanding of the past and imagination of the future of the urban living. The MoT representatives and grand architects discriminately apply a narrative rationality to their stories while projecting the bounded rationality view on the stories told by the citizens. As such, these stories need not be considered in the process of deliberating, imagining, and constructing the future of the city, since they fail to holistically grasp and analyse the challenges and opportunities of city making.

The discourse of both technical and non-technical storytellers was indiscriminately filled with made up or modified stories, original or adopted metaphors, projections and promises for the future and a claim to strategic urban thinking. Experts and strategists alike told stories that were linked to the stories of their colleagues and, similarly, the respective narrative effect of each of the stories was interdependently established in concert reaction with each-other. The narrative function of the stories,

metaphors, material practices and selection devices can be summarised in justifying the generic talk about the strategy and to mystify the job of strategy-makers, urban planners and political leadership of MoT, rendering it unmeasurable, thus, unjudgeable.

The same rationalization procedures disabled the contribution by the opposition members of the Municipal Assembly while the media were denied the presence in the meetings or, in other cases, were stripped of the opportunity to ask questions. The entire process of the so-called public consultation proved a normative principle that the strategy-makers had imposed, i.e., the less the power of the participants, the less the rationality they were assigned to. It was the real political power that the MoT representatives possessed and exercised that defined the dominant rationality, i.e., the narrative rationality of the official tales of the city future.

The will to power manifest in the power differential enforced by the MoT representatives is not in and of itself capable of constituting the monolithic storyline of TR030 city planning. MoT's intention to deliver, undisturbed, its own tale of the future of Tirana is not undefeatable. It is the marriage of the will to power with the exclusive claim to rationality, i.e., narrative rationality, that enabled the official strategic storytellers classify their critics and opponents' efforts as morally corrupt and unintelligent acts of division and adversity.

The official draft of TR030 master plan was defended not by technical arguments, naked statistics, and urban planning professionals. On contrary it was presented and defended by a storytelling practice of those who were granted the telling rights with an exclusive claim to truth and beauty. The MoT representatives and grand architects desired outcome was, obviously, not just to win the public debate about the future of the city but to establish that it was the only valid, moral and technical redemption of Tirana's current state of issues.

5.1.3

Narrativity and Strategy in TR030

Since Plato (1990) told the story of Socrates not only as an apology to his teacher but also as an apology to himself, narration has always been a travelogue to the credible and acceptable, rather than a journey to the empirical truth. It is a story deeply

established on the universal values rather than measurable and quantifiable procedures. Since then, all stories must comply with the accepted and dominant set of values to serve as argumentative mechanisms in human communication.

The present study does not take sides in this struggle between interests, rationalities and power devices but it is only concerned with the narrative effect of the contest of the rationalities and the power effects of the ecological and directional selection of narrative niches, species and possibilities in the context of strategy-making activities, i.e., public hearings and expert tables.

In lacking a sound rationality to support the very policy choice of remaking the city plan and the consecutive choices adopted in the framework of TR030, the stories told by the strategic storytellers adhered to a contemporary widespread set of values. It was the values of environmental sustainability, cultural heritage conservation, economic development, religious tolerance, and diversity that the good reasons (Fisher, 1985) of remaking the urban plan were based on.

The good reasons that comprise the strategic stories told by MoT representatives and grand architects during the public hearing or experts' table sessions are the justifications and the legitimations of the officially proposed draft of TR030 master plan focused on the significance and consequences of these values for the future urban living in Tirana. It is interesting to notice that the values of participatory decision-making, urban democracy, and of the quality and efficacy of democratic participation were silently excluded from the strategic discourse of the strategy-makers. Democracy, participation, and participatory decision-making do not serve the interests of MoT to advance and adopt, with almost no variations, the official draft of MoT. On the contrary, emphasising and embracing those values would only bolster the position of the lay citizens and control the powers of the MoT representatives.

Why did TR030 strategizers make use of stories and metaphors, narrative and material practices to win the public argument of that sort of city plan? The main argument is that their official draft was at least as equally valid to remaking the city as any alternative proposal, including the existing plan. The second argument is that their policy choice was not underpinned by an unbeatable rationality. Thus, the strategy-makers paid their maximum efforts to establish a friendly story-world to their tales.

Coupled with the cherry-picked set of values, this setting enabled them to provide the good reasons for the stories they told, the visual and material practices they employed and the metaphors they used.

MoT's good reasons are not problematic in themselves. Environmental sustainability, cities as economic fields, religious coexistence, and diversity are undoubtedly desirable and praiseworthy values of a prospering and just city. They become problematic in being weaponized by the strategy-makers to side-line and, when possible, completely exclude the values of participatory democracy, transparent and supported decision-making, and effective dialogue with the communities and stakeholders, indiscriminately. The citizens of Tirana were deprived of the opportunity to ponder the costs and benefits of alternative visions of the city future due to the acid narrative ecology deliberately created by the MoT representatives.

The narrative effect of the official storytelling in the framework of TR030 was twofold: it served as a justification for the venture of making a new master plan of the city and for the officially proposed draft of TR030, and to set the direction of the discourse about the city ahead. Assisted by the power – knowledge relations embedded in the plenitude of ecological and directional selection mechanisms, the tales of the MoT representatives and grand architects were granted the status of the true and upright stories of the forthcoming city.

The ecological selection through the creation of narrative niches and the selection, therein, of the narrative species coupled with directional selection of the stories through muting differences between stories and reducing the forms of narration to give rise to a narrative ecosystem that proved to be warm and friendly to the official stories of the strategy. However, it was the magnitude of power relations (Foucault, 1982) applied by the political staff of MoT that enabled the above-mentioned ecosystem to develop and be brought to perfection.

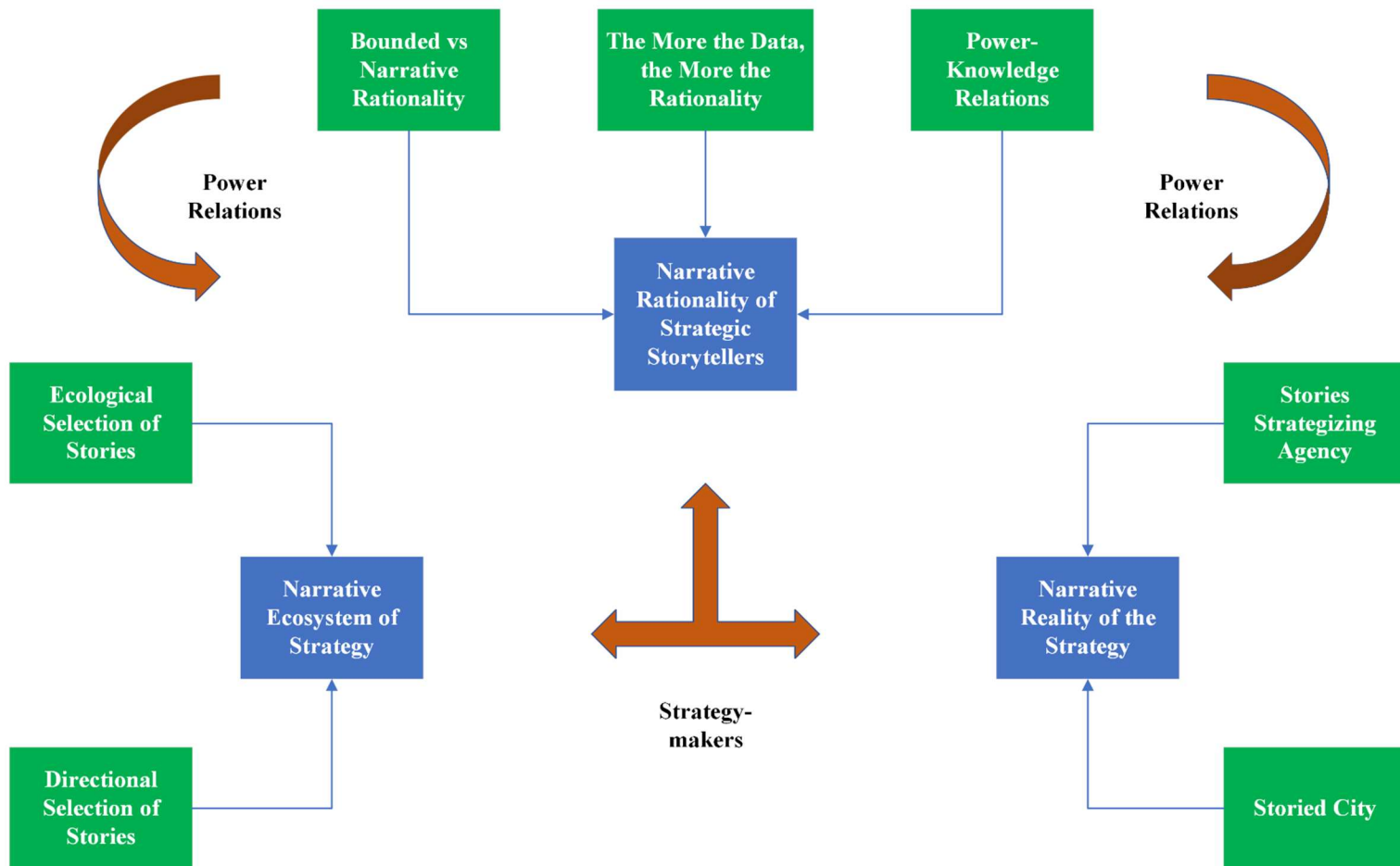
All in all, the narrative practice of the strategic storytelling in the framework of public consultations on TR030 master plan privileged stories over the arguments, selective statistics and material practices over systematic research and the top-down vision of the grand architects over the democratic participation and contribution of all the stakeholders. This process did not conceive city planning as a reconciliation of the

political and economic stakes of the communities and stakeholders with the technical possibilities that the urban space of Tirana offered then. Strategy-makers selectively emphasized and utilised the values that supported their vision of the city and selected out the universal values that questioned the morality and democratic nature of the city narration.

These conclusions are summarised in the following conceptual framework of the narrative practice of strategy in Figure 6.1 below:



Figure 5-1 A proposed conceptual framework of the narrative practice of TR030



5.2 Contributions to the Existing Body of Knowledge

5.2.1 Contributions to the Strategy as Practice

The present study contributes to the existing body of knowledge of strategy-as-practice discipline in enhancing the map of theorizing toward the narrative practices of strategy-making. Essentially, it is an effort to contribute to the tradition initiated by Knights & Morgan (1991), and Barry & Elmes (1997), and further advanced by Whittington (1996; 2002, 2004, 2006, 2007), Jarzabkowski (2004, 2005), Jarzabkowski & Seidl (2008), Jarzabkowski, Balogun, & Seidl (2007), Mantere (2005, 2008), Rouleau (2005), Chia & Mackay (2007), Chia & Holt (2006). Extant research has investigated the Barry & Elmes (1997), Boje (2008), Küpers, Mantere & Statler (2013), Vaara & Sorsa (2009), Vaara & Reff Pederson (2013), Kornberger & Clegg (2011) etc.

Although the recommendations to studying strategy-as-practice, as well as theoretical (Johnson et al., 2007; Fenton & Langley, 2011; Brown & Thompson, 2013; de La Ville & Mounoud, 2015; Rouleau, 2015) and analytical lenses (Vaara & Reff Pedersen, 2013; Bateman & Wildfeuer, 2014; Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008) abound, the role of stories and storytelling in shaping the strategies of organizations and groups is an understudied topic. The present study has been a modest effort to respond to those calls and to use the offered analytical lenses to study strategizing in a public institutional setting. Personal experiences with the city planning (Finnegan, 1998) and from the significance stories pose to planning practices (Sandercock, 2003) have been investigated previously. However, by investigating the narrative effect that the use of stories in city strategy-making practice can have, particularly through the imposition of a dominant narrative rationality and the shaping of the audience's imagination of the city's future, this study offers an original, though specific, perspective to studying strategizing activities through narrative practices.

5.2.2 Contributions to the Narrative Inquiry

To a certain extent, the present inquiry has paid efforts to reactivating the narrative paradigm, as delineated by Fisher (1978, 1984, 1985a, 1985b, 1989, 1994), McIntyre (1981), Warnick (1987), Bruner (1990, 1991, 2004), Ricœur (1981, 1988),

and Spector-Mersel (2010). Beyond the debate within the qualitative research community on the status of narratology in social sciences (Rowland, 1987; 1989; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Clandinin, 2006) throughout this research venture, narrative view of the nature of human beings and their sensemaking and understanding of the world and of themselves, this study adds to the view that narratology is a paradigm, not just a branch of inquiry. It offers the assumptions about the human ontology and derives its epistemological stance from that ontological possibility. As a methodological perspective, narratology showed that it can provide the novice researcher with flexible tools and procedures for studying human experience (Dewey, 1906). The study further strengthened the expectations that narrative turn can project multiple applications in the discipline of strategy-as-practice.

5.3 Limitations of the Inquiry

The present study has only investigated the strategy-making experience of the participants in live events of public hearings and expert tables in the framework of TR030 master planning. Those who could only attend a media-mediated experience with those narrative episodes, I.e., lay citizens who watched and listened to the television and radio programs, or read the news and the interviews of the strategy-makers on the daily press, have not participated. Thus, this study limits itself within the population of MoT representatives, grand architects, freelance experts, journalists and Municipal Assembly members' experiences with the narrative practices of city strategizing.

Another limitation of the present study is the moderate time available to data analysis that would only allow for data saturation in collecting the human experiences of the participants. A more relaxed deadline of thesis defence would have enabled the researcher to conduct another or two additional rounds of interviews that would better match the principle of theoretical saturation. Should the research engage a team of transcribers and translators from Albanian into English, the operation would have proceeded faster and smoother, and the last round of interviews conducted for the sake of theoretical saturation would have been completed.

As in every interpretivist approach, the narrative interview and the consecutive interpretation procedures and protocols are prone to researcher bias. To cope with this

bias potential, the inquirer has paid reasonable attention to the existing literature and theoretical lenses and applied them accordingly. However, the impact of the researcher's paradigmatic positions might have slightly influenced the interpretation and the conclusions of the inquiry. This limitation is to be considered with due caution by the readers of the study.

Finally, the present novice researcher was constrained to rely only on secondary data sources in canvassing the storytelling practices of the strategy-makers from among the MoT representatives and grand architects. Primary data were collected from other participants in the strategy-making episodes, but not from the MoT representatives. The failure of this segment of potential interviewees to participate and share their experiences directly with the inquirer did not allow for a more complete analysis of reflexivity in the strategy-making process.

5.4 Recommendations for Further Research

Investigating narrative turn to urban strategizing is a very recent call (Ameel, 2016, 2021), while the applicability of the narrative paradigm to strategy (Barry & Elmes, 1997; Sandercock, 2003) as well as to the strategy-as-practice research (Fenton & Langley, 2011; Brown & Thompson, 2013; de La Ville & Mounoud, 2015; Rouleau, 2015) is strongly endorsed by the strategy scholarship. However, it is interesting to notice that studying strategizing practices through the analytical and theoretical lenses of narratology is relatively new to the field of strategy research. The role of storytelling in shaping the strategy and in conveying the strategic vision, mission, objectives and programs in a public organization setting is not sufficiently investigated with only a limited number of publications (Finnegan, 1998). Further contributions to how public officials and bureaucrats use stories to shape the audience's imagination and understanding of the strategy practices is crucial to enhancing the body of knowledge about this topic.

Particularly, qualitative research is a proven perspective to unearthing subjectivities and inter-subjectivities, experiences and reflexivity in the strategy-as-practice episodes. The community of researchers is to be encouraged to employ qualitative methods to better explore the unknowns and the half-knowns of the strategy-as-practice. More qualitative studies mean an enhanced map of knowledge and a more

secure terrain for the novice researchers to test their hypotheses and extend their contribution to the domain of strategizing.

5.5 Concluding Remarks

This research investigated the experience of participants in the public hearings and expert tables with the city strategizing activities, with a special focus on the narrative episodes of those events. Through a complex methodological approach such as qualitative grounded theory, narrative interviewing, constant comparison of the data, all in all from a strategy-as-practice perspective, the study concluded with a conceptual framework of strategy-making in city planning grounded in data. As a result, three dimensions of the narrative practice of strategy in the domain of urban planning emerged to explain and describe the ways storytelling has paved for strategy-makers to shape the understanding and imagination of the city by the lay citizens. Narrative ecosystem of strategy-making, narrative rationality of strategic planning and narrative reality of the city emerged appeared as the pillars of a tripartite system.

The study found that powerful strategy practitioners can employ political tools to establish a storytelling ecosystem that supported their stories and proved acid to the stories of the critics and opponents of the official draft of TR030 master plan. Meantime, under such unequal narrative conditions, strategic storytellers were able to cherry-pick those values that informed the intended good reasons that offered the brick and mortar to the narrative rationality privileged by them. Consequently, the official tales of urban planning were granted the framing power of the citizens desired future of the city. Such conclusions, help active citizens, CSO-s, urban planners and politicians better understand and fight their battles for the urban space and living whenever and wherever the issue of remaking the city plan arises.

REFERENCES

- Adam, B. (2006). Time. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 23(2-3), 119–126. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276406063779>
- Adams, B. (2004). Public meetings and the democratic process. *Public Administration Review*, 64(1), 43–54. JSTOR.
- Aliaj, B. (2016, December 24). *Plani rregullues i Bashkisë së Tiranës, “më ka çu nana me la gojën.”* BoldNews.al. <https://boldnews.al/2016/12/24/plani-rregullues-i-bashkise-se-tiranes-me-ka-cu-nana-me-la-gojen/>
- Ameel, L. (2016). Towards a narrative typology of urban planning narratives for, in and of planning in Jätkäsaari, Helsinki. *URBAN DESIGN International*, 22(4), 318–330. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41289-016-0030-8>
- Ameel, L. (2021). *The narrative turn in urban planning plotting the Helsinki waterfront*. Abingdon, Oxon New York Routledge.
- Andersen, S. E., & Høvring, C. M. (2020). CSR stakeholder dialogue in disguise: Hypocrisy in story performances. *Journal of Business Research*, 114, 421–435. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.08.030>
- Arendt, H. (1958). *The Human Condition*. University Of Chicago Press.
- Atkinson, P., & Delamont, S. (2006). Rescuing narrative from qualitative research. *Narrative Inquiry*, 16, 164–172. <https://doi.org/10.1075/ni.16.1.21atk>
- Baboçi, J. (2016, February 24). *Tirana030 - Kick-off Presentation*. Docs.google.com; Municipality of Tirana. <https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1blbKdTe6eeQNkCJJey5i13Zuzhnpi-EWCo1jMJnAD0/edit#slide=id.p30>
- Bacharach, S. B. (1989). Organizational Theories: Some Criteria for Evaluation. *The Academy of Management Review*, 14(4), 496. <https://doi.org/10.2307/258555>
- Bachrach, P., & Baratz, M. S. (1962). Two faces of power. *The American Political Science Review*, 56(4), 947–952. JSTOR. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1952796>

- Backman, K., & Kyngas, H. A. (1999). Challenges of the grounded theory approach to a novice researcher. *Nursing and Health Sciences*, 1(3), 147–153. <https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1442-2018.1999.00019.x>
- Bacon, F. (2015). *The advancement of learning*. Forgotten Books, Cop.
- Bakker, J. I. (Hans). (2019). Grounded Theory Methodology and Grounded Theory Method: Introduction to the Special Issue. *Sociological Focus*, 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00380237.2019.1550592>
- Bamberg, M., & Georgakopoulou, A. (2008). Small stories as a new perspective in narrative and identity analysis. *Text & Talk*, 28(3). <https://doi.org/10.1515/text.2008.018>
- Baroncelli, L. (2016, April 12). *Lorenza Baroncelli - Contemporary Urban Regeneration - Prezantimi 02*. Wwww.youtube.com. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=115IuPgNZDM>
- Barry, D., & Elmes, M. (1997). Strategy Retold: Toward a Narrative View of Strategic Discourse. *The Academy of Management Review*, 22(2), 429. <https://doi.org/10.2307/259329>
- Basha, B. (2016, December 30). *Plani i ri urbanistik, si do të ndryshojë Tirana deri në vitin 2030*. Gazeta Panorama. <http://www.panorama.com.al/plani-i-ri-urbanistik-si-do-te-ndryshoje-tirana-deri-ne-vitin-2030/>
- Bateman, J. A., & Wildfeuer, J. (2014). A multimodal discourse theory of visual narrative. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 74(2014), 180–208. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2014.10.001>
- Berger, P. L., & Luckmann, T. (1967). *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. Anchor Book.
- Berger, R. (2015). Now I see it, now I don't: researcher's position and reflexivity in qualitative research. *Qualitative Research*, 15(2), 219–234. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794112468475>
- Bishop, I., & Lange, E. (Eds.). (2005). *Visualization in Landscape and Environmental Planning*. Taylor & Francis.
- Blaikie, N. (2018). Confounding issues related to determining sample size in qualitative research. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 21(5), 635–641. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2018.1454644>

- Boden, D. (1994). The business of talk: Organizations in action. *Language in Society*, 25(3), 459–463. <https://doi.org/DOI: 10.1017/S004740450001928X>
- Boeije, H. (2002). A Purposeful Approach to the Constant Comparative Method in the Analysis of Qualitative Interviews. *Quality and Quantity*, 36(4), 391–409. <https://doi.org/10.1023/a:1020909529486>
- Boeri, S. (2016, April 12). *Stefano Boeri - Hyrje*. Wwww.youtube.com; Tirana 030. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M6N2P531mSE>
- Böhm, A. (2004). Theoretical Coding: Text Analysis in Grounded Theory. In U. Flick, E. von Kardoff, & I. Steinke (Eds.), *A Companion to Qualitative Research* (pp. 270–275). SAGE Publications.
- Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1989). Social Space and Symbolic Power. *Sociological Theory*, 7(1), 14–25. <https://doi.org/10.2307/202060>
- Bourdieu, P. (1990). *The logic of practice*. Polity Press.
- Bowen, G. A. (2009). Supporting a grounded theory with an audit trail: an illustration. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 12(4), 305–316. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13645570802156196>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2019). To saturate or not to saturate? Questioning data saturation as a useful concept for thematic analysis and sample-size rationales. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 13(2), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2159676x.2019.1704846>
- Brown, A. D., & Thompson, E. R. (2013). A narrative approach to strategy-as-practice. *Business History*, 55(7), 1143–1167. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00076791.2013.838031>
- Bruner, J. (1991). The Narrative Construction of Reality. *Critical Inquiry*, 18(1), 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1086/448619>
- Bruner, J. (2004). Life as narrative. *Social Research: An International Quarterly*, 71(3).
- Bruner, J. S. (1990). *Acts of meaning*. Harvard University Press.
- Bruscaglioni, L. (2015). Theorizing in Grounded Theory and creative abduction. *Quality & Quantity*, 50(5), 2009–2024. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-015-0248-3>

- Bryant, A. (2017). *Grounded theory and grounded theorizing : pragmatism in research practice*. Oxford University Press.
- Bryman, A. (2016). *Social Research Methods* (5th ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Burke, K. (1969). *A grammar of motives*. University of California Press.
- Burrell, G., & Morgan, G. (1979). *Sociological Paradigms and Organisational Analysis: elements of the sociology of corporate life*. Routledge.
- Callon, M. (1986). The Sociology of an ActorNetwork: The Case of the Electric Vehicle. In M. Callon, J. Law, & A. Rip (Eds.), *Mapping the Dynamics of Science and Technology: Sociology of Science in the Real World* (pp. 19–34). Palgrave Macmillan UK. https://doi.org/10.1007/9781349074082_2
- Campbell, G. (1963). *The philosophy of rhetoric*. Southern Illinois University Press.
- Carter, C., Clegg, S. R., & Kornberger, M. (2008). Soapbox: editorial essays: Strategy as practice? *Strategic Organization*, 6(1), 83–99. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1476127007087154>
- Castells, M. (1996). *The rise of the network society*. Wiley-Blackwell, Cop.
- Charmaz, K. (2003). Grounded theory: Objectivist and constructivist methods. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Strategies for Qualitative Inquiry* (pp. 249–291). Sage.
- Charmaz, K. (2014). Grounded Theory in Global Perspective. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 20(9), 1074–1084. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800414545235>
- Charmaz, K. (2016). The Power of Constructivist Grounded Theory for Critical Inquiry. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 23(1), 34–45. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800416657105>
- Charmaz, K. (2017). Constructivist grounded theory. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 12(3), 299–300. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2016.1262612>
- Charmaz, K., & Belgrave, L. L. (2018). Thinking About Data With Grounded Theory. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 25(8), 107780041880945. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800418809455>
- Checkoway, B. (1981). The politics of public hearings. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 17(4), 566–582. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002188638101700411>
- Chenitz, W. C., & Swanson, J. M. (1986). *From practice to grounded theory: qualitative research in nursing*. Addison-Wesley.

- Chia, R. (1995). From Modern to Postmodern Organizational Analysis. *Organization Studies*, 16(4), 579–604. <https://doi.org/10.1177/017084069501600406>
- Chia, R., & Holt, R. (2006). Strategy as Practical Coping: A Heideggerian Perspective. *Organization Studies*, 27(5), 635–655. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840606064102>
- Chia, R., & MacKay, B. (2007). Post-processual challenges for the emerging strategy-as-practice perspective: Discovering strategy in the logic of practice. *Human Relations*, 60(1), 217–242. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726707075291>
- Clandinin, D. J. (2006). Narrative Inquiry: A Methodology for Studying Lived Experience. *Research Studies in Music Education*, 27(1), 44–54. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103x060270010301>
- Clandinin, D. J. (2022). A Reflective Turn on Narrative Inquiry. *Engaging in Narrative Inquiry*, 149–153. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003240143-14>
- Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (2000). *Narrative Inquiry: Experience and Story in Qualitative Research*. Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Clandinin, D. J., & Rosiek, J. (2019). Mapping a Landscape of Narrative Inquiry. *Journeys in Narrative Inquiry*, 228–264. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429273896-15>
- Cleary, M., Horsfall, J., & Hayter, M. (2014). Data collection and sampling in qualitative research: does size matter? *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 70(3), 473–475. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jan.12163>
- Clegg, S., Carter, C., & Kornberger, M. (2004). “Get up, I feel like being a strategy machine.” *European Management Review*, 1(1), 21–28. <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.emr.1500011>
- Clegg, S., & Kornberger, M. (2015). Analytical frames for studying power in strategy as practice and beyond. In D. Golsorkhi, L. Rouleau, D. Seidl, & E. Vaara (Eds.), *Cambridge Handbook of Strategy as Practice* (pp. 389–404). Cambridge University Press.
- Cohen, M. D., March, J. G., & Olsen, J. P. (1972). A Garbage Can Model of Organizational Choice. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 17(1), 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2392088>

- Cole, R. L., & Caputo, D. A. (1984). The Public Hearing as an Effective Citizen Participation Mechanism: A Case Study of the General Revenue Sharing Program. *American Political Science Review*, 78(2), 404–416. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1963372>
- Collingridge, D. S., & Ganttt, E. E. (2008). The Quality of Qualitative Research. *American Journal of Medical Quality*, 23(5), 389–395. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1062860608320646>
- Conlon, C., Timonen, V., Elliott-O'Dare, C., O'Keeffe, S., & Foley, G. (2020). Confused About Theoretical Sampling? Engaging Theoretical Sampling in Diverse Grounded Theory Studies. *Qualitative Health Research*, 30(6), 104973231989913. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732319899139>
- Connelly, M. F., & Clandinin, J. D. (1990). Stories of Experience and Narrative Inquiry. *Educational Researcher*, 19(5), 2–14. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1176100>
- Consoli, S. (2021). Uncovering the hidden face of narrative analysis: A reflexive perspective through MAXQDA. *Pushing the Edge in Narrative Inquiry*, 102, 102611. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2021.102611>
- Corbin, J. (2012). *Going from raw data to theory*. 2nd Global Congress of Qualitative Health.
- Corbin, J. M., & Strauss, A. L. (1998). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory* (4th ed.). Sage.
- Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (1990). Grounded Theory Research: Procedures, Canons and Evaluative Criteria. *Zeitschrift Für Soziologie*, 19(6). <https://doi.org/10.1515/zfsoz-1990-0602>
- Coyne, I. (1997). Sampling in qualitative research. Purposeful and theoretical sampling; merging or clear boundaries? *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 26(3), 623–630. <https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1365-2648.1997.t01-25-00999.x>
- Creswell, J. W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Sage.
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). Editorial: Mapping the Field of Mixed Methods Research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 3(2), 95–108. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1558689808330883>

- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Creswell, J. W., & Miller, D. L. (2000). Determining Validity in Qualitative Inquiry. *Theory into Practice*, 39(3), 124–130. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15430421tip3903_2
- Croce, B. (1992). *The aesthetic as the science of expression and of the linguistic in general*. Cambridge University Press.
- Cronbach, L. J. (1975). Beyond the two disciplines of scientific psychology. *American Psychologist*, 30(2), 116–127. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0076829>
- Crouch, M., & McKenzie, H. (2006). The logic of small samples in interview-based qualitative research. *Social Science Information*, 45(4), 483–499. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0539018406069584>
- Crush, J. (1994). Scripting the Compound: Power and Space in the South African Mining Industry. *Environ Plan D*, 12(3), 301–324. <https://doi.org/10.1068/d120301>
- Curtis, S., Gesler, W., Smith, G., & Washburn, S. (2000). Approaches to sampling and case selection in qualitative research: examples in the geography of health. *Social Science & Medicine*, 50(7-8), 1001–1014. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0277-9536\(99\)00350-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0277-9536(99)00350-0)
- Cutcliffe, J. R., & McKenna, H. P. (2004). Expert qualitative researchers and the use of audit trails. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 45(2), 126–133. <https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1365-2648.2003.02874.x>
- Czarniawska, B. (2013). *Narratives in social science research*. Sage.
- Czarniawska, B. (2002). Narrative, Interviews and Organizations. In J. Grubium & J. Holstein (Eds.), *Handbook of interview research* (pp. 733–750). Sage.
- Daigle, P., & Rouleau, L. (2010). Strategic Plans in Arts Organizations: A Tool of Compromise Between Artistic and Managerial Values. *International Journal of Arts Management*, 12, 13–30. <https://doi.org/10.2307/41065025>
- Dalley, S. (2015). *The mystery of the Hanging Garden of Babylon: an elusive world wonder traced*. Oxford University Press.

- Davidoff, P. (1965). Advocacy and Pluralism in Planning. *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, 31(4), 331–338. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01944366508978187>
- Davis, G. F., & Marquis, C. (2005). Prospects for Organization Theory in the Early Twenty-First Century: Institutional Fields and Mechanisms. *Organization Science*, 16(4), 332–343. <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1050.0137>
- de Certeau, M. (1984). *The practice of everyday life*. Berkeley University of California Press.
- De Fina, A. (2020). Doing narrative analysis from a narratives-as-practices perspective. *Narrative Inquiry*. <https://doi.org/10.1075/ni.20067.def>
- de La Ville, V.-I., & Mounoud, E. (2015). A narrative approach to strategy as practice: strategy-making from texts and narratives. In D. Golsorkhi, L. Rouleau, D. Seidl, & E. Vaara (Eds.), *Cambridge Handbook of Strategy as Practice* (pp. 249–264). Cambridge University Press.
- de Man, P. (1984). Autobiography as de-facement. In *Rhetoric of Romanticism* (pp. 67–81). Columbia University Press.
- Debray R. (1996). *Media manifestos: On the technological transmission of cultural forms*. London: Verso.
- Denis, J., Langley, A., & Rouleau, L. (2009). Rethinking Leadership in Public Organizations. *The Oxford Handbook of Public Management*, 446–467. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199226443.003.0020>
- Denscombe, M. (2010). *The Good Research Guide for small-scale Social Research Projects* (4th ed.). London Open University Press.
- Denscombe, M. (2021). *Good Research Guide: research methods for small-scale social research*. (7th ed.). Open University Press.
- Denzin, N. K. (2001). *Interpretive Interactionism* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications. (Original work published 1989)
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). *Handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Dewey, J. (1906). Reality as Experience. *The Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods*, 3(10), 253–257. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2011250>
- Dewey, J. (1927). *The public and its problems*. Swallow.

- Dewey, J. (1939). *Logic the theory of inquiry*. Alcester, Warwickshire] Read Books Ltd.
- DiMaggio, P. J. (1995). Comments on “What Theory is Not.” *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 40(3), 391. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2393790>
- Domusweb, D. (2017, April 14). *Tirana 2030*. Wwww.domusweb.it. https://www.domusweb.it/en/video/2017/04/14/tirana_2030_boeri.html
- Draucker, C. B., Martsolf, D. S., Ross, R., & Rusk, T. B. (2007). Theoretical Sampling and Category Development in Grounded Theory. *Qualitative Health Research*, 17(8), 1137–1148. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732307308450>
- Dreyfus, H. L., & Taylor, C. (2015). *Retrieving realism*. Harvard University Press.
- Dye, T. (1995). *Understanding Public Policy* (8th ed.). Prentice Hall.
- Edvardsson, K., & Hansson, S. O. (2005). When is a goal rational? *Social Choice and Welfare*, 24(2), 343–361. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00355-003-0309-8>
- Eisenberg, E. M. (1984). Ambiguity as strategy in organizational communication. *Communication Monographs*, 51(3), 227–242. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03637758409390197>
- Feldman, M. S., & Orlikowski, W. J. (2011). Theorizing Practice and Practicing Theory. *Organization Science*, 22(5), 1240–1253. <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1100.0612>
- Fenton, C., & Langley, A. (2011). Strategy as Practice and the Narrative Turn. *Organization Studies*, 32(9), 1171–1196. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840611410838>
- Ferraro, G. (1996). Planning as Creative Interpretation. In S. J. Mandelbaum, L. Mazza, & R. W. Burchell (Eds.), *Explorations in Planning Theory*. Routledge.
- Finnegan, R. (1998). *Tales of the city: a study of narrative and urban life*. Cambridge University Press.
- Fisher, W. R. (1978). Toward a logic of good reasons. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 64(4), 376–384. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00335637809383443>
- Fisher, W. R. (1984). Narration as a human communication paradigm: The case of public moral argument. *Communication Monographs*, 51(1), 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03637758409390180>

- Fisher, W. R. (1985a). The narrative paradigm: An elaboration. *Communication Monographs*, 52(4), 347–367. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03637758509376117>
- Fisher, W. R. (1985b). The Narrative Paradigm: In the Beginning. *Journal of Communication*, 35(4), 74–89. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1985.tb02974.x>
- Fisher, W. R. (1989). Clarifying the narrative paradigm. *Communication Monographs*, 56(1), 55–58. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03637758909390249>
- Fisher, W. R. (1994). Narrative rationality and the logic of scientific discourse. *Argumentation*, 8(1), 21–32. <https://doi.org/10.1007/bf00710701>
- Flyvbjerg, B. (1996). *The Dark Side of Planning: Rationality and “Realrationalität”* (pp. 383–394).
- Flyvbjerg, B. (1998). Rationality and power: Democracy in practice. In *Social Forces* (Vol. 78). <https://doi.org/10.2307/3005579>
- Flyvbjerg, B. (2002). Bringing power to planning research. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 21(4), 353–366. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0739456x0202100401>
- Flyvbjerg, B. (2014). *Making social science matter: why social inquiry fails and how it can succeed again*. Cambridge University Press.
- Flyvbjerg, B., Skamris Holm, M. K., & Buhl, S. L. (2005). How (In)accurate Are Demand Forecasts in Public Works Projects?: The Case of Transportation. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 71(2), 131–146. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01944360508976688>
- Forester, J. (1984). Bounded Rationality and the Politics of Muddling Through. *Public Administration Review*, 44(1), 23. <https://doi.org/10.2307/975658>
- Forester, J. (1988). *Planning in the face of power*. Berkeley University Of California Press.
- Forrester, J. (1993). Learning from Practice Stories: The Priority of Practical Judgment. In F. Fischer & J. Forrester (Eds.), *The Argumentative Turn in Policy Analysis and Planning* (pp. 186–209). University College London Press.
- Foucault, M. (1969). *Archaeology of Knowledge*. Routledge.
- Foucault, M. (1982). The Subject and Power. *Critical Inquiry*, 8(4), 777–795. JSTOR. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1343197>

- Foucault, M. (2011). *Discipline and punish : the birth of the prison* (2nd ed.). Vintage Books.
- Francis, J. J., Johnston, M., Robertson, C., Glidewell, L., Entwistle, V., Eccles, M. P., & Grimshaw, J. M. (2010). What is an adequate sample size? Operationalising data saturation for theory-based interview studies. *Psychology & Health*, 25(10), 1229–1245. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08870440903194015>
- French, J., & Raven, B. (1959). The bases of social power. In *Studies in Social Power* (Vol. 6). University of Michigan.
- Friedmann, J. (1998). Planning theory revisited*. *European Planning Studies*, 6(3), 245–253. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09654319808720459>
- Garfinkel, H. (1967). *Studies in ethnomethodology*. Polity Press.
- Gatti, L. (2016, April 12). *Laura Gatti - Enhancing City Resilience by Green Infrastructure Improvement - Prezantimi 03*. Wwww.youtube.com. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uJiwz1pM3zo>
- Georgakopoulou, A. (2006). The other side of the story: towards a narrative analysis of narratives-in-interaction. *Discourse Studies*, 8(2), 235–257. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461445606061795>
- Giddens, A. (1984). *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*. Polity Press.
- Gioia, D. A., Corley, K. G., & Hamilton, A. L. (2013). Seeking Qualitative Rigor in Inductive Research. *Organizational Research Methods*, 16(1), 15–31. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428112452151>
- Gioia, D. A., & Pitre, E. (1990). Multiparadigm Perspectives on Theory Building. *The Academy of Management Review*, 15(4), 584–602. <https://doi.org/10.2307/258683>
- Giraudeau, M. (2008). The Drafts of Strategy: Opening up Plans and their Uses. *Long Range Planning*, 41(3), 291–308. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lrp.2008.03.001>
- Glaser, B. G. (1978). *Theoretical sensitivity : advances in the methodology of grounded theory*. The Sociology Press.
- Glaser, B. G., & Anselm Strauss. (1967). *The Discovery of grounded theory : Strategies for qualitative research*. Aldine Publishing Co.

- Glaser, B., & Holton, J. (2005). Staying Open: The use of theoretical codes in grounded theory. *The Grounded Theory Review*, 5, 1–20.
- Goffman, E. (1981). Forms of talk. In *Open WorldCat*. University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Goulding, C. (1998). Grounded theory: the missing methodology on the interpretivist agenda. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 1(1), 50–57. <https://doi.org/10.1108/13522759810197587>
- Graham, A. W., & Van. (1983). Central Perspectives and Debates in Organization Theory. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 28(2), 245–273. JSTOR. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2392620>
- Grand, S., von Arx, W., & Rüegg-Stürm, J. (2015). Constructivist paradigms: implications for strategy-as-practice research. In D. Golsorkhi, L. Rouleau, D. Seidl, & E. Vaara (Eds.), *Cambridge Handbook of Strategy as Practice* (pp. 78–94). Cambridge University Press.
- Grodal, S., Anteby, M., & Holm, A. L. (2020). Achieving Rigor in Qualitative Analysis: The Role of Active Categorization in Theory Building. *Academy of Management Review*, 46(3). <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2018.0482>
- Grooms, W., & Frimpong Boamah, E. (2017). Toward a Political Urban Planning: Learning from Growth Machine and Advocacy Planning to “Plannitize” Urban Politics. *Planning Theory*, 17(2), 213–233. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1473095217690934>
- Guest, G., Bunce, A., & Johnson, L. (2006). How Many Interviews Are Enough? An Experiment with Data Saturation and Variability. *Field Methods*, 18(1), 59–82. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1525822x05279903>
- Guest, G., Namey, E. E., & Mitchell, M. L. (2013). *Collecting Qualitative Data: A Field Manual for Applied Research*. SAGE Publications, Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781506374680>
- Guest, G., Namey, E., & Chen, M. (2020). A simple method to assess and report thematic saturation in qualitative research. *PLOS ONE*, 15(5), e0232076. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0232076>
- HabermasJ. (1984). *The theory of communicative action*. Beacon.

- Hans-Georg Gadamer. (2013). *Truth and Method*. Bloomsbury Academic. (Original work published 1960)
- Hasan, H., & Kazlauskas, A. (2014). Activity Theory: who is doing what, why and how. In H. Hasan (Ed.), *Being Practical with Theory: A Window into Business Research* (pp. 9–14). THEORI.
- Heath, H., & Cowley, S. (2004). Developing a grounded theory approach: a comparison of Glaser and Strauss. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, 41(2), 141–150. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0020-7489\(03\)00113-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0020-7489(03)00113-5)
- Hendler, S. (1995). *Planning ethics: a reader in planning theory, practice, and education*. Center For Urban Policy Research.
- Hennink, M. M., Kaiser, B. N., & Marconi, V. C. (2016). Code Saturation Versus Meaning Saturation. *Qualitative Health Research*, 27(4), 591–608. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732316665344>
- Hennink, M. M., Kaiser, B. N., & Weber, M. B. (2019). What Influences Saturation? Estimating Sample Sizes in Focus Group Research. *Qualitative Health Research*, 29(10), 1483–1496. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732318821692>
- Hoare, K. J., Mills, J., & Francis, K. (2012). Dancing with data: An example of acquiring theoretical sensitivity in a grounded theory study. *International Journal of Nursing Practice*, 18(3), 240–245. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1440-172x.2012.02038.x>
- Hoch, C. J. (1984). Pragmatism, Planning, and Power. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 4(2), 86–95. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0739456x8400400203>
- Horace Porter Abbott. (2011). *The Cambridge introduction to narrative*. Cambridge University Press.
- Hume, D. (1969). *A treatise of human nature*. Clarendon Press. (Original work published 1896)
- Hume, D. (2007). *An enquiry concerning human understanding*. Cambridge University Press.
- Hurtado, P. (2010). Assessing the use of Bourdieu's key concepts in the strategyaspractice field. *Competitiveness Review: An International Business Journal Incorporating Journal of Global Competitiveness*, 20, 52–61. <https://doi.org/10.1108/10595421011019975>

- Hymes, D. (1996). *Ethnography, Linguistics, Narrative Inequality* (1st ed.). Taylor & Francis.
- Idris, A. (2007). Cultural barriers to improved organizational performance in Saudi Arabia. *SAM Advanced Management Journal*, 72(2), 36–53.
- James, W. (1907). *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking*. New York Longmans, Green And Co.
- Jarzabkowski, P. (2003). Strategic Practices: An Activity Theory Perspective on Continuity and Change. *Journal of Management Studies*, 40(1), 23–55. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-6486.t01-1-00003>
- Jarzabkowski, P. (2004). Strategy as Practice: Recursiveness, Adaptation, and Practices-in-Use. *Organization Studies*, 25(4), 529–560. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840604040675>
- Jarzabkowski, P. (2005). *Strategy as practice: an activity-based approach*. Sage.
- Jarzabkowski, P., Balogun, J., & Seidl, D. (2007). Strategizing: The challenges of a practice perspective. *Human Relations*, 60(1), 5–27. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726707075703>
- Jarzabkowski, P., & Fenton, E. (2006). Strategizing and Organizing in Pluralistic Contexts. *Long Range Planning*, 39(6), 631–648. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lrp.2006.11.002>
- Jarzabkowski, P., & Kaplan, S. (2014). Strategy tools-in-use: A framework for understanding “technologies of rationality” in practice. *Strategic Management Journal*, 36(4), 537–558. <https://doi.org/10.1002/smj.2270>
- Jarzabkowski, P., & Paul Spee, A. (2009). Strategy-as-practice: A review and future directions for the field. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 11(1), 69–95. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2370.2008.00250.x>
- Jarzabkowski, P., & Seidl, D. (2008). The Role of Meetings in the Social Practice of Strategy. *Organization Studies*, 29(11). <https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840608096388>
- Johnson, G., Langley, A., Melin, L., & Whittington, R. (2007). *Strategy as practice: research directions and resources*. Cambridge University Press.

- Jones, M., & Alony, I. (2011). Guiding the Use of Grounded Theory in Doctoral Studies – An Example from the Australian Film Industry. *International Journal of Doctoral Studies*, 6, 095-114. <https://doi.org/10.28945/1429>
- Jones, R. (2005). Sites of engagement as sites of attention: Time, space and culture in electronic discourse. In R. Jones & S. Norris (Eds.), *Discourse in Action: Introducing Mediated Discourse Analysis* (pp. 144–154). Routledge.
- José Ortega Y Gasset. (1957). *The revolt of the masses*. W.W. Norton.
- Jurgen Habermas. (1983). *The Theory of Communicative Action: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*. Beacon Press.
- Kaplan, S. (2008). Framing Contests: Strategy Making Under Uncertainty. *Organization Science*, 19(5), 729–752. <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1070.0340>
- Kaplan, S. (2011). Strategy and PowerPoint: An Inquiry into the Epistemic Culture and Machinery of Strategy Making. *Organization Science*, 22(2), 320–346. <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1100.0531>
- Kemmis, D. (1990). *Community and the Politics of Place*. University of Oklahoma Press.
- King, C., Feltey, K., & Susel, B. (2008). The Question of Participation: Toward Authentic Public Participation in Public Administration. *Public Administration Review*, 58(4). <https://doi.org/10.2307/977561>
- Knight, E., Paroutis, S., & Heracleous, L. (2018). The power of PowerPoint: A visual perspective on meaning making in strategy. *Strategic Management Journal*, 39(3), 894–921. <https://doi.org/10.1002/smj.2727>
- Knights, D., & Morgan, G. (1991). Corporate Strategy, Organizations, and Subjectivity: A Critique. *Organization Studies*, 12(2), 251–273. <https://doi.org/10.1177/017084069101200205>
- Knorr-Cetina, K. (1999). *Epistemic Cultures: How the Sciences Make Knowledge*. Harvard University Press.
- Knowles, S. (2018). *Narrative by numbers: How to tell powerful & purposeful stories with data*. Routledge.
- Kolb, S. (2012). Grounded theory and the constant comparative method: Valid research strategies for educators. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies*, 3, 83–86.

- Kornberger, M., & Clegg, S. (2011). Strategy as performative practice. *Strategic Organization*, 9(2), 136–162. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1476127011407758>
- Kroes, P., Franssen, M., & Bucciarelli, L. (2009). Rationality in Design. *Philosophy of Technology and Engineering Sciences*, 565–600. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B9780444516671.500252>
- Kuhn, T. S. (1962). *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. University of Chicago Press.
- Kuzel, A. J. (1992). Sampling in qualitative inquiry. In *Doing qualitative research*. (pp. 31–44). Sage Publications, Inc.
- Kvale, S. (1996). *Interviews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing*. Sage Publications.
- Lamsal, M. (2012). The Structuration Approach of Anthony Giddens. *Himalayan Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, 5, 111–122. <https://doi.org/10.3126/hjsa.v5i0.7043>
- Latour, B. (1990). Technology is Society Made Durable. *The Sociological Review*, 38(1_suppl), 103–131. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954x.1990.tb03350.x>
- Latour, B. (1996). On actornetwork theory: A few clarifications. *Soziale Welt*, 47(4), 369–381. JSTOR. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40878163>
- Latour, B. (2005). *Reassembling the social: an introduction to actor-network-theory*. Oxford University Press.
- Laudan, L. (1978). *Progress and its problems: toward a theory of scientific growth*. University Of California Press.
- Law, J. (2009). Actor Network Theory and Material Semiotics. In *The New Blackwell Companion to Social Theory* (pp. 141–158). Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Lawson, J. (2011). Chronotope, Story, and Historical Geography: Mikhail Bakhtin and the Space-Time of Narratives. *Antipode*, 43(2), 384–412. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8330.2010.00853.x>
- Lê, J., & Spee, P. (2015). *The role of materiality in the practice of strategy* (pp. 582–597). <https://doi.org/10.1017/CCO9781139681032.034>
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage.
- Locke, J. (1689). *An essay concerning human understanding*. Dent.

- Locke, K. (2002). The grounded theory approach to qualitative research. In F. Drasgow & N. Schmitt (Eds.), *Measuring and analyzing behavior in organizations: Advances in measurement and data analysis* (pp. 17–43). Jossey-Bass.
- Loh, J. (2015). Inquiry into Issues of Trustworthiness and Quality in Narrative Studies: A Perspective. *The Qualitative Report*, 18(65). <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2013.1477>
- Lynch, K. (1960). *The image of the city*. Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press.
- Lyotard, J.-F. (1984). *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. University of Minnesota Press.
- MacIntyre, A. C. (1981). *After virtue: a study in moral theory*. University of Notre Dame Press.
- Maitlis, S., & Lawrence, T. B. (2003). Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark: Understanding Failure in Organizational Strategizing*. *Journal of Management Studies*, 40(1), 109–139. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-6486.t01-2-00006>
- Malterud, K., Siersma, V. D., & Guassora, A. D. (2016). Sample Size in Qualitative Interview Studies. *Qualitative Health Research*, 26(13), 1753–1760. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732315617444>
- Mantere, S. (2005). Strategic practices as enablers and disablers of championing activity. *Strategic Organization*, 3(2), 157–184. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1476127005052208>
- Mantere, S. (2008). On the problem of participation in strategy: a critical discursive perspective. *Strategic Direction*, 25(9). <https://doi.org/10.1108/sd.2009.05625iad.006>
- Marris, P. (1997). *Witnesses, engineers and storytellers: using research for social policy and community action*. University of Maryland at College Park.
- Marshall, M. N. (1996). Sampling for Qualitative Research. *Family Practice*, 13(6), 522–526. <https://doi.org/10.1093/fampra/13.6.522>
- Massey, D. B. (1999). On Space and the City. In D. B. Massey, J. Allen, & S. Pile (Eds.), *City Worlds*. Routledge.
- Mattern, B. (2005). Why 'Soft Power' Isn't So Soft: Representational Force and the Sociolinguistic Construction of Attraction in World Politics. *Millennium*

- Journal of International Studies*, 33(3), 583–612.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/03058298050330031601>
- Maxwell, J. A. (2009). Designing a qualitative study. In L. Brinkman & D. J. Rog (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of applied social research methods*. Sage Publications.
- Maxwell, J. A. (2013). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.
- McCabe, D. (2009). Strategy as Power: Ambiguity, Contradiction and the Exercise of Power in a UK Building Society. *Organization*, 17(2), 151–175.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508409338885>
- McCallin, A. M. (2003). Designing a grounded theory study: some practicalities. *Nursing in Critical Care*, 8(5), 203–208. <https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1362-1017.2003.00033.x>
- McGhee, G., Marland, G. R., & Atkinson, J. (2007). Grounded theory research: literature reviewing and reflexivity. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 60(3), 334–342. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2648.2007.04436.x>
- McShane, K. (2007). Anthropocentrism vs. Nonanthropocentrism: Why Should We Care? *Environmental Values*, 16(2), 169–186.
<https://doi.org/10.3197/096327107780474555>
- Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2015). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (4th ed.). Jossey-Bass, Cop.
- Miller, D. L. (1997). *One Strategy for Assessing the Trustworthiness of Qualitative Research Operationalizing the External Audit*. Distributed by ERIC Clearinghouse.
- Mintzberg, H., Ahlstrand, B. W., & Lampel, J. (1998). *Strategy Safari: A Guided Tour Through The Wilds of Strategic Management*. Free Press.
- Miskimmon, A., O’Loughlin, B., & Roselle, L. (2013). Strategic Narratives: Communication Power and the New World Order. In *Strategic Narratives: Communication Power and the New World Order*. Routledge.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315871264>
- Morse, J. M. (2009). Mixing Qualitative Methods. *Qualitative Health Research*, 19(11), 1523–1524. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732309349360>

- Morse, J. M., Bowers, B. J., Charmaz, K., Clarke, A. E., Corbin, J., Porr, C. J., & Stern, P. N. (2021). *Developing Grounded Theory: The Second Generation Revisited*. Taylor & Francis Group.
- MoT. (2016, May 28). *Bashkia Tiranë - The installation "The Cloud" by Sou Fujimoto*. Tirana.al. <https://tirana.al/en/points-of-interest/itinerary-tirana-the-new-millennium/the-installation-the-cloud-by-sou-fujimoto>
- Mueller, F., Whittle, A., Gilchrist, A., & Lenney, P. (2013). Politics and strategy practice: An ethnomethodologically-informed discourse analysis perspective. *Business History*, 55(7), 1168–1199. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00076791.2013.838037>
- Müller, B., & Olbrich, S. (2012). Developing Theories in Information Systems Research: The Grounded Theory Method Applied. In Y. K. Dwivedi, M. R. Wade, & S. L. Schneberger (Eds.), *Information Systems Theory: Explaining and Predicting Our Digital Society, Vol. 2* (pp. 323–347). Springer New York. https://doi.org/10.1007/9781441997074_16
- Mumby, D. K. (1987). The political function of narrative in organizations. *Communication Monographs*, 54(2), 113–127. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03637758709390221>
- Nelson, J. (2017). Using conceptual depth criteria: addressing the challenge of reaching saturation in qualitative research. *Qualitative Research*, 17(5), 554–570. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794116679873>
- Nietzsche, F. (1967). *Will To Power*. (W. Kaufmann & R. J. Rollingdale, Trans.). Vintage Books.
- Nietzsche, F. (1917). *Beyond good and evil* (H. Zimmern, Trans.). Boni and Liveright.
- Nietzsche, F. (1969). *On the genealogy of morals*. New York Vintage Books.
- Noy, C. (2008). Sampling Knowledge: The Hermeneutics of Snowball Sampling in Qualitative Research. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 11(4), 327–344. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13645570701401305>
- O'Malley, C., Langton, S., Anderson, A., Doherty-Sneddon, G., & Bruce, V. (1996). Comparison of face-to-face and video-mediated interaction. *Interacting with Computers*, 8(2), 177–192. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0953-5438\(96\)01027-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/0953-5438(96)01027-2)

- O'Reilly, K., Paper, D., & Marx, S. (2012). Demystifying Grounded Theory for Business Research. *Organizational Research Methods*, 15(2), 247–262. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428111434559>
- O'Reilly, M., & Parker, N. (2013). “Unsatisfactory Saturation”: A critical exploration of the notion of saturated sample sizes in qualitative research.. *Qualitative Research*, 13(2), 190–197. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794112446106>
- OraNews, O. (2016, December 26). *Plani i ri urbanistik i Tiranës, për një qytet me 1.6 milionë në 2030*. Ora News. <https://www.oranews.tv/article/veliaj-na-duhet-plan-i-ri-urbanistik-smund-ti-veme-tiranes-traun>
- Orlikowski, W. J. (2010). The sociomateriality of organisational life: considering technology in management research. *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, 34(1), 125–141. <https://doi.org/10.1093/cje/bep058>
- Pälli, P., Vaara, E., & Sorsa, V. (2009). Strategy as text and discursive practice: a genre-based approach to strategizing in city administration. *Discourse & Communication*, 3(3), 303–318. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1750481309337206>
- Päsilä, A. H., Oikarinen, T., & Harmaakorpi, V. (2015). Collective voicing as a reflexive practice. *Management Learning*, 46(1), 67–86. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350507613488310>
- Pastore, M. (2016, April 12). *Urban Challenges: The Water Perspective - Prezantimi 09*. Wwww.youtube.com; Tirana 030. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xf5ohjLC48k>
- Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods: Integrating Theory and Practice* (4th ed.). Sage Publications, Inc.
- Pfeffer, J. (1993). Barriers to the Advance of Organizational Science: Paradigm Development as a Dependent Variable. *The Academy of Management Review*, 18(4), 599–620. <https://doi.org/10.2307/258592>
- Pira, E. (2016, April 5). TIRANA030: A DIALOGUE. *Peizazhe*. <https://peizazhe.com/2016/04/05/tirana030-a-dialogue/>
- Plato. (1990). *Gorgias* (E. R. Dodds, Ed.). Clarendon Press.
- Popper, K. R. (1959). *The logic of scientific discovery*. Routledge.

- Poroy, A., Ergun, H. S., & Yener, M. I. (2014). *Networking for Survival: An Ethnographic Study on an Artist's Passion of Existence*. International Conference on Arts, Economics and Management, Dubai.
- Putnam, L., & Pacanowsky, M. E. (1983). *Communication and organizations: An interpretive approach*. Sage Publications.
- Putnam, R. (2000). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Rama, A. (2016, December 29). *Plani sekret "TR030" i kryeqytetit shqiptar*. FaxWeb. <https://www.faxweb.al/plani-sekret-tr030/>
- Rama, A. (2017, January 5). *Tirana Masterplan A, B, C, D, etc*. Exit.al. <https://exit.al/en/2017/01/05/tirana-masterplan-a-b-c/>
- Reckwitz, A. (2002). Toward a Theory of Social Practices. *European Journal of Social Theory*, 5(2), 243–263. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13684310222225432>
- Redick, K., & Underwood, L. (2007). Rationality and Narrative: A Relationship of Priority. *Philosophy & Rhetoric*, 40(4), 394–405. <https://doi.org/10.2307/25655288>
- René Descartes, & Veitch, J. (1953). *A discourse on method*. Dent.
- Ricoeur, P. (1980). Narrative Time. *Critical Inquiry*, 7(1), 169–190. JSTOR. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1343181>
- Ricoeur, P. (1981). The narrative function. In J. B. Thompson (Trans.), *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences: Essays on Language, Action and Interpretation*. Cambridge University Press.
- Riessman, C. K., & Speedy, J. (2006). Narrative inquiry in social work, counseling, and psychotherapy: A critical review. In *Hanbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology* (pp. 426–456). Sage.
- Rivero, J., Teresa, B., & West, J. (2017). Locating rationalities in planning: market thinking and its others in the spaces, institutions, and materials of contemporary urban governance. *Urban Geography*, 38(2), 1–3. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02723638.2016.1206703>
- Robert, D., & Shenhav, S. (2014). Fundamental Assumptions in Narrative Analysis: Mapping the Field. *The Qualitative Report*, 19(38), 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2014.1005>

- Romestant, F. (2020). Sustainability agencing: The involvement of stakeholder networks in megaprojects. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 89, 535–549. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2019.09.005>
- Rorty, R. (1979). *Philosophy and the mirror of nature*. Princeton Princeton University Press.
- Rossi, E., Perito, B. Z., & Lavarda, R. A. B. (2020). Strategizing in pluralistic contexts: a narrative literature review. *Revista Ibero-Americana de Estratégia*, 19(2), 125–142. <https://doi.org/10.5585/riae.v19i2.16985>
- Rouleau, L. (2005). Micro-Practices of Strategic Sensemaking and Sensegiving: How Middle Managers Interpret and Sell Change Every Day*. *Journal of Management Studies*, 42(7), 1413–1441. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6486.2005.00549.x>
- Rouleau, L. (2015). Studying strategizing through biographical methods: narratives of practices and life trajectories of practitioners. In D. Golsorkhi, L. Rouleau, D. Seidl, & E. Vaara (Eds.), *Cambridge Handbook of Strategy as Practice* (pp. 462–476). Cambridge University Press.
- Rouleau, L., & Balogun, J. (2010). Middle Managers, Strategic Sensemaking, and Discursive Competence. *Journal of Management Studies*, 48(5), 953–983. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6486.2010.00941.x>
- Rowland, R. C. (1987). Narrative: Mode of discourse or paradigm? *Communication Monographs*, 54(3), 264–275. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03637758709390232>
- Rowland, R. C. (1989). On limiting the narrative paradigm: Three case studies. *Communication Monographs*, 56(1), 39–54. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03637758909390248>
- Sandercock, L. (2003). Out of the Closet: The Importance of Stories and Storytelling in Planning Practice. *Planning Theory & Practice*, 4(1), 11–28. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1464935032000057209>
- Santos, F. M., & Eisenhardt, K. M. (2005). Organizational Boundaries and Theories of Organization. *Organization Science*, 16(5), 491–508. <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1050.0152>

- Schatzki, T. R. (2001). Practice mind-ed orders. In T. R. Schatzki, K. Knorr-Cetina, & E. V. Savigny (Eds.), *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory* (pp. 51–64). Routledge.
- Schatzki, T. R. (2002). *The Site of the Social: A Philosophical Account of the Constitution of Social Life and Change*. Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Schatzki, T. R. (2005). Peripheral Vision: The Sites of Organizations. *Organization Studies*, 26(3), 465–484. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840605050876>
- Schatzki, T. R., Karin Knorr Cetina, & Eike Von Savigny. (2001). *The practice turn in contemporary theory*. Routledge.
- Schoeneborn, D. (2013). The Pervasive Power of PowerPoint: How a Genre of Professional Communication Permeates Organizational Communication. *Organization Studies*, 34(12), 1777–1801. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840613485843>
- Schwarz, M. (2009). Strategy workshops facilitating and constraining strategy making. *Journal of Strategy and Management*, 2(3), 277–287. <https://doi.org/10.1108/17554250910982507>
- Schweitzer, R., van Wyk, S., & Murray, K. (2015). Therapeutic practice with refugee clients: A qualitative study of therapist experience. *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research*, 15(2), 109–118. <https://doi.org/10.1002/capr.12018>
- Scott, K. W., & Howell, D. (2008). Clarifying Analysis and Interpretation in Grounded Theory: Using a Conditional Relationship Guide and Reflective Coding Matrix. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 7(2), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690800700201>
- Seidl, D., & Guérard, S. (2015). Meetings and workshops as strategy practices. In D. Golsorkhi, L. Rouleau, D. Seidl, & E. Vaara (Eds.), *Cambridge Handbook of Strategy as Practice*. Cambridge University Press.
- Seidl, D., & Hendry, J. (2003). The structure and significance of strategic episodes: Social systems theory and the routine practices of strategic change. *Journal of Management Studies*, 40(1), 175–196. <https://doi.org/10.1111/14676486.00008>
- Shuman, A. (1986). Storytelling Rights: The Uses of Oral and Written Texts by Urban Adolescents. In *Cambridge Studies in Oral and Literate Culture*. Cambridge

- University Press; Cambridge Core. <https://doi.org/DOI:10.1017/CBO9780511983252>
- Shuman, A. (2005). *Other People's Stories Entitlement Claims and the Critique of Empathy*. University of Illinois Press.
- Sim, J., Saunders, B., Waterfield, J., & Kingstone, T. (2018). Can sample size in qualitative research be determined a priori? *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 21(5), 619–634. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2018.1454643>
- Simon, H. A. (1990). Bounded Rationality. *Utility and Probability*, 15–18. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-20568-4_5
- Snyder, B. (2019). The Experience of Time in Organizations. In W. Brekhus & G. Ignatow (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Sociology*. Oxford University Press.
- Søderberg, A.-M. (2006). Narrative interviewing and narrative analysis in a study of a cross-border merger. *Management International Review*, 46(4), 397–416. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11575-006-0098-2>
- Spector-Mersel, G. (2010). Narrative research: Time for a paradigm. *Narrative Inquiry*, 20(1), 204–224. <https://doi.org/10.1075/ni.20.1.10spe>
- Spee, A. P., & Jarzabkowski, P. (2011). Strategic planning as communicative process. *Organization Studies*, 32(9), 1217–1245. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840611411387>
- Steckler, A. B., & Herzog, W. T. (1979). How to keep your mandated citizen board out of your hair and off your back: a guide for executive directors. *American Journal of Public Health*, 69(8), 809–812. <https://doi.org/10.2105/ajph.69.8.809>
- Strübing, J. (2007). Research as pragmatic problem-solving: the pragmatist roots of empirical-grounded theorizing. In *The Sage Handbook of Grounded Theory* (pp. 580–602). Sage.
- Suddaby, R. (2006). From the Editors: What Grounded Theory is Not. *Academy of Management Journal*, 49(4), 633–642. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2006.22083020>

- Suri, H. (2011). Purposeful Sampling in Qualitative Research Synthesis. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 11(2), 63–75. <https://doi.org/10.3316/qj1102063>
- Sustainablecities. (2016). *European Sustainable Cities Platform | Transformative Actions Database*. Sustainablecities.eu. https://sustainablecities.eu/transformative-actions-database/?c=search&action_id=eu2ii6rw
- Sutton, R. I., & Staw, B. M. (1995). What Theory is Not. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 40(3), 371. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2393788>
- Tepper, S. J. (2004). Setting agendas and designing alternatives: Policymaking and the strategic role of meetings1. *Review of Policy Research*, 21(4), 523–542. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/j.15411338.2004.00092.x>
- Thierry Groensteen. (2018). *The system of comics*. University Press of Mississippi, Druk.
- Thistoll, T., Hooper, V., & Pauleen, D. J. (2015). Acquiring and developing theoretical sensitivity through undertaking a grounded preliminary literature review. *Quality & Quantity*, 50(2), 619–636. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-015-0167-3>
- Thomas, E., & Magilvy, J. K. (2011). Qualitative Rigor or Research Validity in Qualitative Research. *Journal for Specialists in Pediatric Nursing*, 16(2), 151–155. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6155.2011.00283.x>
- Thornberg, R. (2012). Informed Grounded Theory. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 56(3), 243–259. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00313831.2011.581686>
- Throgmorton, J. A. (2007). Inventing the Greatest: Crafting Louisville’s Future Out of story and Clay. *Planning Theory*, 6(3), 237–262. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1473095207082033>
- Thurmond, V. A. (2001). The Point of Triangulation. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, 33(3), 253–258. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1547-5069.2001.00253.x>
- Tie, Y. C., Birks, M., & Francis, K. (2019). Grounded theory research: A design framework for novice researchers. *SAGE Open Medicine*, 7(1), 205031211882292. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2050312118822927>

- Timmermans, S., & Tavory, I. (2012). Theory Construction in Qualitative Research. *Sociological Theory*, 30(3), 167–186. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0735275112457914>
- Timonen, V., Foley, G., & Conlon, C. (2018). Challenges When Using Grounded Theory. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 17(1), 160940691875808. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406918758086>
- TopChannel, T. (2016, February 23). *Prezantohet plani urbanistik i Tiranës së vitit 2030 - Top Channel*. Top-Channel.tv. <https://top-channel.tv/video/prezantohet-plani-urbanistik-i-tiranes-se-vitit-2030/>
- Toulmin, S. E. (1956). *The uses of argument*. Cambridge University Press.
- Tsoukas, H. (2009). Practice, strategy making and intentionality: A Heideggerian onto-epistemology for strategy-as-practice. In *The Cambridge Handbook of Strategy as Practice*. University of Cambridge Publishing.
- Tuckett, A. G. (2004). Qualitative research sampling: the very real complexities. *Nurse Researcher*, 12(1), 47–61. <https://doi.org/10.7748/nr2004.07.12.1.47.c5930>
- Tufte, E. (2003). *The Cognitive Style of PowerPoint: Pitching Out Corrupts Within* (1st ed.). Graphics Press.
- Vaara, E., & Reff Pedersen, A. (2013). Strategy and chronotopes: a Bakhtinian perspective on the construction of strategy narratives. *M@N@Gement*, 16(5), 593. <https://doi.org/10.3917/mana.165.0593>
- Vaara, E., & Whittington, R. (2012). Strategy-as-Practice: Taking Social Practices Seriously. *Academy of Management Annals*, 6(1), 285–336. <https://doi.org/10.5465/19416520.2012.672039>
- van Gerven Oei, V. (2016, March 15). *Tirana's New Vision from Hell*. Exit.al. <https://exit.al/en/2016/03/15/tiranas-new-vision-from-hell/>
- van Gerven Oei, V. (2017a, January 4). *Tirana Municipality Denies Existence of Law on Public Consultation*. Exit.al. <https://exit.al/en/2017/01/04/tirana-municipality-denies-existence-of-law-on-public-consultation/>
- van Gerven Oei, V. (2017b, January 14). *Pie in the Sky – Charts from the Tirana Masterplan*. Exit.al. <https://exit.al/en/2017/01/14/pie-in-the-sky-charts-from-the-tirana-masterplan/>

- van Hulst, M. (2012). Storytelling, a model of and a model for planning. *Planning Theory*, 11(3), 299–318. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1473095212440425>
- Van Leeuwen, T. (2007). Legitimation in discourse and communication. *Discourse & Communication*, 1(1), 91–112. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1750481307071986>
- Veliaj, E. (2016, April 12). *Erion Veliaj - Summary and Conclusions*. [Www.youtube.com. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W2MUg8S4kuk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W2MUg8S4kuk)
- Vimercati, P. (2016, April 12). *Paolo Vimercati - Tirana Transformation - Prezantimi 07*. [Www.youtube.com. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fd-nDleUx-o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fd-nDleUx-o)
- Vollstedt, M., & Rezat, S. (2019). An Introduction to Grounded Theory with a Special Focus on Axial Coding and the Coding Paradigm. In G. Kaiser & N. Presmeg (Eds.), *Compendium for Early Career Researchers in Mathematics Education* (pp. 81–100). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/9783030156367_4
- Vygotsky, L. (n.d.). Interaction between Learning and Development. In M. Cole, V. John-Steiner, S. Scribner, & E. Soubberman (Eds.), *Mind and Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes* (pp. 79–91). Harvard University Press.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes*. Harvard University Press.
- Wachs, M. (1990). Ethics and Advocacy in Forecasting for Public Policy. *Business and Professional Ethics Journal*, 9(1), 141–157. <https://doi.org/10.5840/bpej199091/215>
- Walsh, D., & Downe, S. (2006). Appraising the quality of qualitative research. *Midwifery*, 22(2), 108–119. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.midw.2005.05.004>
- Walsh, I., Holton, J. A., Bailyn, L., Fernandez, W., Levina, N., & Glaser, B. (2015). What Grounded Theory Is...A Critically Reflective Conversation Among Scholars. *Organizational Research Methods*, 18(4), 581–599. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428114565028>
- Walsh, N. P. (2017, February 16). *Tirana 2030: Watch How Nature and Urbanism Will Co-Exist in the Albanian Capital*. ArchDaily. <https://www.archdaily.com/805105/tirana-2030-watch-how-nature-and-urbanism-will-co-exist-in-the-albanian-capital>

- Walsham, G. (2006). Doing interpretive research. *European Journal of Information Systems*, 15(3), 320–330. <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.ejis.3000589>
- Warnick, B. (1987). The narrative paradigm: Another story. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 73(2), 172–182. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00335638709383801>
- Weick, K. E. (1979). *The social psychology*. New York McGraw-Hill.
- Weick, K. E. (1993). The Collapse of Sensemaking in Organizations: The Mann Gulch Disaster. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 38(4), 628–652. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2393339>
- Weick, K. E. (1995). What Theory is Not, Theorizing Is. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 40(3), 385. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2393789>
- Weick, K. E., Sutcliffe, K. M., & Obstfeld, D. (2005). Organizing and the Process of Sensemaking. *Organization Science*, 16(4), 409–421. <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1050.0133>
- Whetten, D. A. (1989). What Constitutes a Theoretical Contribution? *The Academy of Management Review*, 14(4), 490. <https://doi.org/10.2307/258554>
- Whittington, R. (1996). Strategy as practice. *Long Range Planning*, 29(5), 731–735. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0024-6301\(96\)00068-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/0024-6301(96)00068-4)
- Whittington, R. (2002). Practice perspectives on strategy: Unifying and developing a field. *Academy of Management Proceedings*, 2002(1), C1–C6. <https://doi.org/10.5465/apbpp.2002.7517994>
- Whittington, R. (2003). The Work of Strategizing and Organizing: For a Practice Perspective. *Strategic Organization*, 1(1), 117–125. <https://doi.org/10.1177/147612700311006>
- Whittington, R. (2004). Strategy after modernism: recovering practice. *European Management Review*, 1(1), 62–68. <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.emr.1500006>
- Whittington, R. (2006). Completing the Practice Turn in Strategy Research. *Organization Studies*, 27(5), 613–634. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840606064101>
- Whittington, R. (2007). Strategy Practice and Strategy Process: Family Differences and the Sociological Eye. *Organization Studies*, 28(10), 1575–1586. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840607081557>

- Whittington, R., & Cailluet, L. (2008). The Crafts of Strategy. *Long Range Planning*, 41(3), 241–247. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lrp.2008.03.003>
- Witgenstein, L. (1958). *Philosophical Investigations* (G. E. M. Anscombe, Trans.). Macmillan.
- Wodak, R. (1986). Tales from the Vienna woods. *Poetics*, 15(1-2), 153–182. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0304-422x\(86\)90038-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/0304-422x(86)90038-0)
- Wolfswinkel, J. F., Furtmueller, E., & Wilderom, C. P. M. (2013). Using grounded theory as a method for rigorously reviewing literature. *European Journal of Information Systems*, 22(1), 45–55. <https://doi.org/10.1057/ejis.2011.51>
- Yin, R. K. (2011). *Qualitative Research from Start to Finish*. The Guilford Press.
- Zogheib, D. (2016). *Planting an idea: Tirana's radical, orbital green vision - Arup*. www.arup.com. <https://www.arup.com/perspectives/planting-an-idea-tiranas-radical-orbital-green-vision>

APPENDIX A

Narrative Interview Guide

1. How is the strategy process organized?

- 1.1 How was the strategy narrated in this new space?
- 1.2 How were people and things ‘marshalled’ around promising ideas?
- 1.3 What was the goal of public consultations held in the framework of developing Tirana030 strategic plan?
- 1.4 Did you get any significant input from the public consultation proces that you did not expect in the framework of strategizing activities?
- 1.5 Did the process of public consultations bring about new and innovative ideas or people were happy with the consultants’ proposed ideas?
- 1.6 How did the strategizing team handle concerns about possible negative impact the strategic plan would produce to their lives and economies?
- 1.7 How were the concerns and proposed ideas during the consultation sessions translated into the final report? Do you remember some key disagreements between the proposed ideas and how did the strategizing team reconcile them with each-other?

2. What types of knowledge contributed to the strategy process?

- 2.1 What disciplines of knowledge were combined to help in producing the general draft of the plan?
- 2.2 What did you learn from the process of consultation with the public?
- 2.3 Did the general draft of the plan cover only spatial issues of the city or it offered also a more strategic view of the city? How?

3. How were different types of knowledge translated?

- 3.1 According to you, what level of language was used during the consultations with the communities, to help them imagine something they can relate to?

3.2 How would you evaluate the use of technology and of artistic work to facilitate the imagination, from the part of communities and stakeholders, of city's potential futures?

3.3 What has been, in your assessment, the weight of wordy discussions or technical descriptions in communication strategy propositions?

3.4 Did the strategizing team make use of numbers, statistics, and financial/engineering/demographic projections during the consultation sessions? How did it help to support informing the publics and convincing them?

4. What were the dynamics of different stakeholder interests and priorities in the development of the strategy?

4.1 What was the typical content of the consultation sessions?

4.2 Did you organize consultations with the simultaneous presence of different stakeholders, i.e., developers, corporates, business, and communities?

4.3 What were the fundamental issues the publics were asked to discuss about?

4.4 Can you recall some of the questions that were posed to the public during these consultations?

4.5 What level of decisions were left to experts to define the *what* and the *how to*?

4.6 How do you assess the role played by the mainstream media over the duration of the strategizing project?

APPENDIX B

Reflexivity Process Questions

Questions about interviewees:

- 1) How did they learn what they actually claim about the reality of strategizing in the framework of TR030?
- 2) What premises they take for granted when they enter the interview?
- 3) What is their perception of the inquirer and what are the methods to measure this perception?
- 4) What is inquirer's perception of them?

Questions addressed to the researcher oneself:

- 1) What does the inquirer know?
- 2) What is the epistemological stance of inquirer's accumulated knowledge?
- 3) What are the premises that underlie researcher's worldview?
- 4) In what ways do researcher's biases impact the data collection and analysis process and outcomes?
- 5) What is the inquirer's perception of the participants?
- 6) What is the voice I use to explicate my viewpoint?
- 7) What do I use the present research's outcomes for?

Questions asked about the audiences of the present inquiry:

- 1) What are the strategies they follow to connect with the present study?
- 2) What worldviews to they use to test the current findings?
- 3) What is their view of the inquirer?
- 4) What is the inquirer's view of them?
- 5) How do these subjective views impact this study's findings and the respective presentation in front of them?

APPENDIX C

Codebook Generated from MAXQDA 2020

Code System	Frequency
Code System	1811
Narrative Reality of the Strategy	0
<u>Strategic Story-Teller</u>	0
Power based strategy interpretation	8
The Power of Expertise	15
Claiming Representation	10
The Power of Asking Questions	12
Municipality centralized discourse	14
Telling Rights	10
<u>Stories Strategizing Agency</u>	0
Stories, the city made durable	44
Conserving the colorful diversity	22
Group-dreaming of the future	20
Nuances of Wording	45
Fussy language	15
Effective language	5
Narrative time	37
Commanded dreaming of the future	39
<u>Storied City</u>	0
Fixed Desired Future	69
Deselecting proposed variations	22
Top-down strategic vision	23
Inflexible strategic objectives	24
Polycentric City	2
Cultural Heritage	4
Scanderbeg Square	2
Smart City	5

Green spaces	3
Mobility	8
Deterritorialized City	98
A garbage can model of city making	26
De-territorialization of Tirana	16
Capital of the Balkans	23
The mayor, the bad, and the evil	11
Projecting western anxieties onto Tirana	22
Economy-centric city	85
City as an economic field	30
Construction drive, the urban economy thrives	15
Money is everywhere	26
Raise the bar to the far periphery	14
Stories of concrete	173
Vested interest	42
Erasure of heritage as regeneration	44
Construction-centric city	87
Narrative Rationality	0
Urban space as a justification for a new urban plan	21
Power - Knowledge Relations	135
The power of ignorance	45
Agencement of technology	11
Architecture is the king	26
I tell, therefore I plan	30
The (in)significance of expertise	23
The more the data, the more the rationality	0
Open the gates to the data that waits	17
Reason prevails, not the details	20
Data, food for reasoning	35
Words tell, tools compel	36

Commoners don't think, make sense	0
Urban living, architects domain	24
Rationally bound public	23
Isolated critical voices	11
Strategy's Narrative Ecosystem	0
Ecological Selection	0
Species	297
Sustainable urban development tales	11
Sustainability, tales for durability	27
Biodiversity tale	33
Global warming warms the tale	14
Orbital forest tale	24
Non-anthropocentric city tale	21
Green are the tales	50
Chronotopicity	0
The powerhouse of the PowerPoint	10
The tick-tock of the Renaissance frescos	10
Sreaming screens	17
Statistis for rhetorics	28
3D city	18
One photograph talks one thousand words	17
Vivid videos	8
Let the papers talk	9
Niches	262
Too critic to participate	0
Public access causes distress	28
Preventing media from participating	23
The hidden hand of construction industry	24
Define and rule	41

Agenda Setting Agency 0

Constraining the emergence of variations	22
Disqualifying/rescheduling proposed variations	17
Knowledge as a function of time	18
Municipality controlled hearings	22
The iron fist of hearing sessions	0
Closed meetings as narrative labs	31
Initiation Structures	21
The turbo-democracy of urban strategy	15
Directional Selection	229
Reducing the Dialogue	100
Official means right and just	7
Talk to the hand mode of feedback	8
Two-tier architecture of storytelling	23
English as an esoteric language of strategic storytelling	12
Good data, bad data	13
Broken telephone of MoT	12
I plan, therefore I rule	25
Muting Differences	0
Too much knowledge is dangerous	12
The less the power, the less the rationality	23
Do what you are told to	22
Divesting consultations	25
Real show develops on the backstage	11
Nobody resists the principles	28



APPENDIX D

Consent Letter

Strategy as a Narrative Practice: The Story of Tirana Master Plan TR030

CONSENT TO TAKE PART IN RESEARCH

- I _____ voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.
- I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within two weeks after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.
- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.
- I agree to my interview being audio-recorded.
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
- I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my interview which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.
- I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in dissertation, conference presentation and published papers.
- I understand that if I inform the researcher that myself or someone else is at risk of harm, they may have to report this to the relevant authorities - they will discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without my permission.

- I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained in researcher's personal computer until the dissertation jury confirms the results of his dissertation.
- I understand that a transcript of my interview in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for two years from the date of the dissertation defense.
- I understand that under freedom of information legalization I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.
- I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Signature of research participant

Signature of participant

Date

Signature of researcher

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

Signature of researcher

Date