

Urban efflorescences of the global and the local: An analysis of the territory of Gipuzkoa (Spain)

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Abstract. *The present study deals with the changes generated in the last decades by the increasing globalization in order to discern its influence on the urban structure of Gipuzkoa. The incidence of globalization in the processes of urban transformation is perceived, on the one hand, in the tendency towards the concentration of economic activities and, on the other, in the stimulus received by the local level and by the specialization, as generators of urban concentration. The urban forms that have arisen in this territory as a result of the global exposure present a varied typology as a consequence of the multiple scopes and scales in which they have been developed. Far from pretending to cover them all, the present study analyses a sample of urban processes and effects that have taken place in the territory of Gipuzkoa in the last decades, such as: science and technology parks, specialized networks around local products, processes of museification of industrial and rural environments, or expansion of the tourism services network. The study of these processes will attend both to their particular urban manifestation and to their territorial incidence, through the use of diverse sources and techniques to obtain a map in which they can be studied together. The resulting map of the sum of the different indicators will reveal characteristic spatial patterns of this centrality associated to the effect exercised by the sphere of the global over the local.*

Keywords: urban centrality, global exposure, territory of Gipuzkoa, spatial patterns

The centrality of local phenomena of global scale

This article addresses the changes produced in recent decades by increasing globalization, with the aim of discerning how far they have impacted the urban structure of Gipuzkoa, and tests an approach method meant to ascertain the spatial qualities distilled from their urban manifestation.

While discussion of globalization phenomena is a subject that has been discussed at length from multiple standpoints, this reading's objective is to study the centrality caused by that phenomenon by means of new urban events and to identify the characteristics

specific to it in the particular situation of the territory of Gipuzkoa. Because if something does seem evident in the extensive literature around this question, it is the growing importance acquired by the differentiation of urban settings and territories in the context of increasing homogenization taking place on the world stage.

The theoretical framework in which the research is situated draws from some of the globalization characteristics indicated owing to their effects on the spatial geography, resorting for that purpose to authors such as Sassen (1991), Castells & Hall (1994) or Hall (1997), who among other aspects discuss questions associated to the high urban concentration

of economic activities, higher even than what took place during the industrial stage. Among other questions, the implications of technological development and the economy of services based on ICTs (information and communication technologies) on territorial concentration phenomena are analyzed.

On the other hand, reflections around local development in recent decades have shown the importance of the territorial aspect within the development processes and policies that drive them. Various authors (Dematteis, 1990, 1995, 2003; Camagni, 2006; Magnaghi, 2000) have underscored the new centrality granted to the local and the place as a result of changes brought on by globalization processes. From this standpoint, global networks do not operate solely in a de-territorialized flow space but are rather supported on particular places and nodes so that they interact with the specific advantages and resources of each place. Hence, global processes can not only create de-territorializing and fragmentation phenomena but also stimulate new territorial connections able to produce advantages or provoke resistances that strengthen local identity (Castells, 1997).

Aims and Methodology

The investigation presented here derives from a doctoral thesis of broader scope addressing the approach to the complex urban reality of the territory of Gipuzkoa, from the perspective of urban centralities and their relevance in the urban construction of this territory as a whole. Given the various approaches that the centrality paradigm has had, the investigation interprets the motives of centrality as a convergence of interests that generate urbanity and modify preceding occupation and urbanization patterns, contributing to gradual construction of the territory. The study thus aims to ascertain the urban characteristics and spatial qualities of the motives of centrality which have shaped and shape the current urban reality of a territory as intensely urbanized as the one analyzed.

Among the more recent motives of centrality is the effect exerted by global exposure and its economic impact on the urban areas of Gipuzkoa. Its study is approached on two scales:

on the one hand its urban effects are analyzed via different graphic and analytical resources and the gathering of significant examples of its distinct urban manifestation, and on the other, for the purpose of building a centrality map that reflects the different intensities that each of those manifestations have had, the territorial reach of that centrality throughout the region of Gipuzkoa is studied, based on statistical and analytical sources of diverse nature.

Global specialization scenarios

Economic activities in the global network: science and technology parks

The first of the urban manifestations studied was linked to urban concentration processes that originated in the framework of the service economy, with high technological content. Even though this kind of concentration tends to locate in metropolitan centers, the Guipuzkoan context presents certain particularities derived from its preexisting industrial fabric, whereby its industrial base is broadly distributed along the length of its valleys.

First of all, the San Sebastian Technology Park was established in 1994 in the area of Miramón. However, besides the San Sebastian park, in 2000 the Garaia Innovation Pole was established in Mondragón in the Alto Deba district, associated to Mondragón University (MU). Furthermore, as most available ground at the Miramón campus in San Sebastian is developed, in recent years it has expanded southward in the municipality of Hernani, in the area known as Galarreta. On the other hand, in an evident trend toward a network configuration in the R&D&I (Research, Development and Innovation) sphere, the original San Sebastian Technology Park changed its name to Gipuzkoa Science and Technology Park after incorporating the Eibar and Galarreta campuses. The recently founded Goierri Innovation Pole in Ordizia, on a notably smaller scale, was built around the Goierri Vocational School following the arrival of Mondragón University and a high-level technological entity.

Due to its age, the Miramón campus is the high-tech space presenting the highest level of



Figure 1. Gipuzkoa Science and Technology Park, Miramon Campus, San Sebastian

urban development. Situated on a territory of hills and dales south of the San Sebastian bypass highway, its operational area encompasses more than 130 hectares, for the most part developed. It was set up as a business park conceived as an area for mixed installation of company offices, high-tech economic activities and various public facilities, with the support of commercial and recreational services and infrastructures, a low-density residential area and a large park. The different uses are spread along three hills that run north-south and join at the south end, so that the technology park is surrounded by an extensive and lush urban park in close contact with nature.

The attached plan (fig. 1) shows the diverse building typology comprising the park, with buildings of different sizes and forms, despite complying with the mandatory current planning limit of three floors above ground (maximum reference height of 13.5 m). Plans calling for four floors underground and the sloped site of most buildings given the uneven topography have led to different urban configurations, and therefore many of the buildings are partially buried and face the valley bottoms.

Some of the park's buildings host one single large company, while others were conceived to house various companies or technology centers. The limits between public and private domain are in turn marked either by garden spaces, with a vague boundary between the two, or by fencing and controlled accesses for the closed premises. The highest degree of definition of the limit between public and private ambit occurs in some cases with the presence of a single company with high technological focus that for security reasons opts to restrict access to its property. Such is the case of the four plots situated in the southwest end of the park, three of which belong to one single large technology corporation. On the contrary, most of the buildings located along the central hill host various technology centers and companies and their developed surroundings comprise garden areas and surface parking, with open pedestrian access. As for the urbanized public domain space, it is characterized by a substantial presence of garden areas and surface parking which combined with the openness of most of the plots endows this urban setting with environmental attributes. However, despite the relative closeness to the city and the availability of public transport service, this is a space with a very high incidence of private transport.

Boosting the local and specialization as generators of urban concentration

Beyond the cited phenomena of concentration of urban activities, the new global exposure which territories are subject to generates new urban dynamics as a result of the specialization phenomenon. As Ascher (2001) describes, a double process of homogenization and differentiation occurs: homogenization, because the same economic players are present with the same rationales in all countries and cities; differentiation, because interurban competition is higher and more far-reaching, exacerbating the differences. While the possible choices do increase, the local territories' contact with the global makes the differences manifest and encourages their exploitation. The global thus stimulates the local, due to the comparisons established; its existence is due to this. That

diversity of territories is precisely what makes people, assets, capital and information shift locations.

Specialized networks around localized products

The new global exposure that territories are subject to has generated new urban dynamics owing to the specialization phenomenon, and the field of localized products is one of the ambits on which it has had the most impact. Some of the dynamics that have arisen around them have specific characteristics and are associated to certain territories, projecting them globally in a heretofore unprecedented manner.

One of the products that has witnessed a notable boom in recent decades is txakoli wine, whose production had fallen to historic minimums in the early 1980s. Efforts to revive this production activity have impacted the characterization of this coastal region's rural landscape, marked by steep slopes geometrically patterned with its distinctive vineyards (figs. 2 and 3).

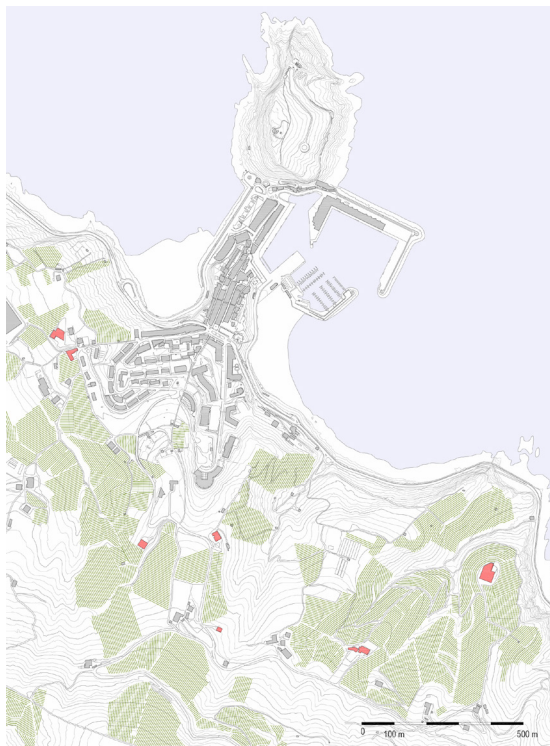


Figure 2. Txakoli vineyards and wineries around Getaria)



Figure 3. Txakoli vineyards in mountainous landscapes around Getaria

Another local product that has notably revived in recent decades is cider, around which some consumption habits have been generated with particular territorial incidence. At present, even though apple cultivation remains relatively low, a new activity has strongly emerged around cider houses, associated to cider tasting as a social and gastronomic event. Its origin lies in the ritual of txotx, a custom which began as a private tasting among wholesale purchasers who visited cider houses to taste and choose ciders at the beginning of each season. In recent years such events have gradually opened to the public, becoming a notable gastronomic happening. Thus, beyond the consumption of bottled cider per se, cider houses nowadays offer a traditional menu that includes tasting cider that is consumed directly from the storage casks.

The enclaves where such events take place have different typologies that have evolved from the original farmhouse, specialised in the cultivation and production of natural cider. The gradual increase of visitors who from January to April make pilgrimages to gather around tasting the cider menu has in the last two decades led to a proliferation of cider houses, especially in the area of Astigarraga and Hernani, along with expansion of some of the traditional cider houses (fig. 4). The typological diversification of the cider houses

has resulted in establishments that vary depending on their closeness or distance from urban environments and with respect to their size and architectural character, which runs from isolated farmhouse able to host a hundred diners to large establishments resulting from

successive expansions, such as Petritegi, with capacity for 400 diners, or Iretza, an industrial building converted into a restaurant/cider house, which evokes the rural world through the display of out-of-context rural items (fig. 5).

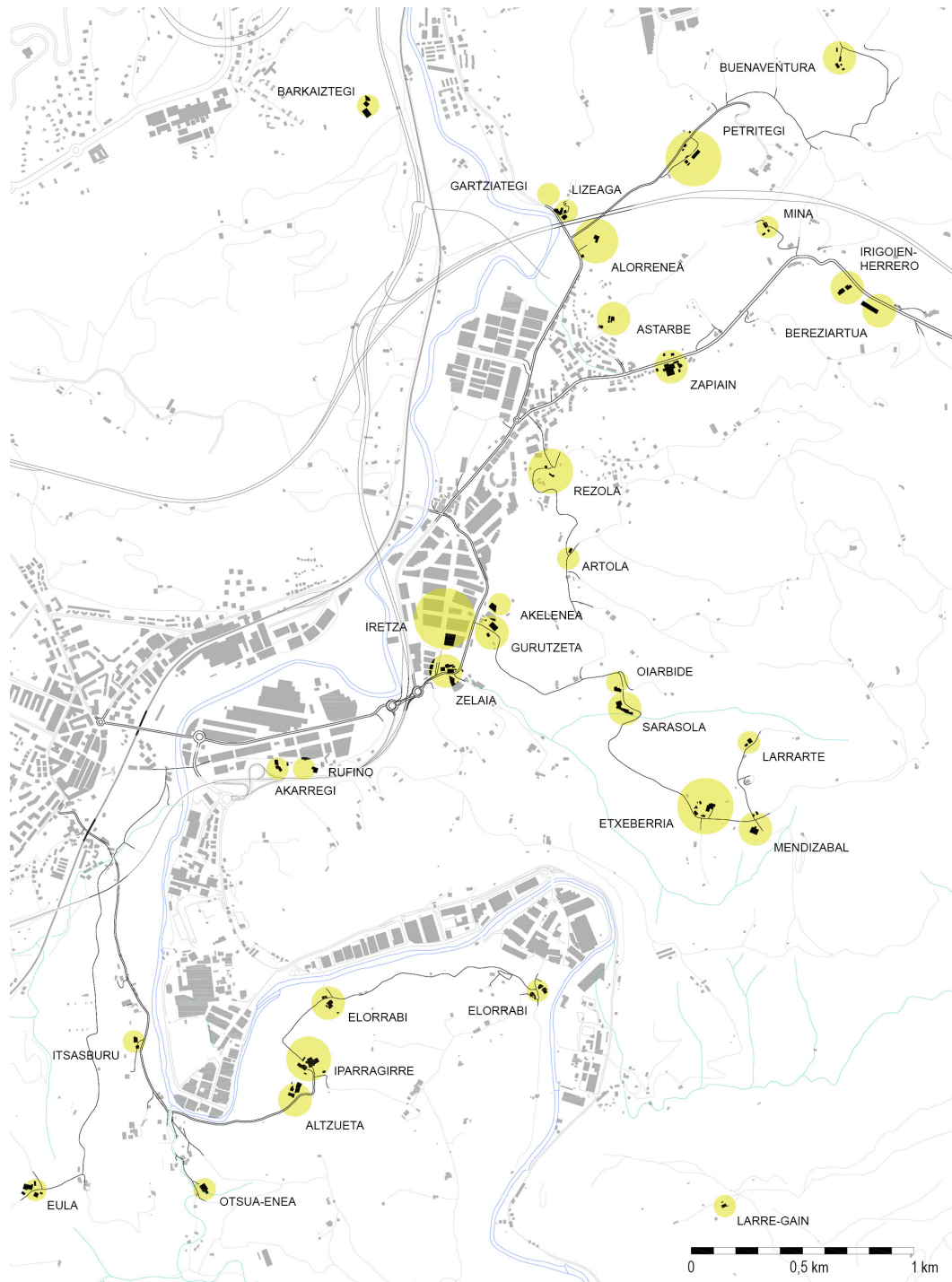


Figure 4. Cider house network around Astigarraga and Hernani



Figure 5. Cider houses in Astigarraga

Museification of industrial and rural environments

Demand for alternative forms of tourism has led to expansion of the heritage concept via the discovery and enhancement of the value of the legacy associated to economic activities that have disappeared or are in decline. Such initiatives are meant to generate new economic activities linked to cultural tourism and, because they are well-entrenched, they can contribute to the territorial development of the areas where they occur. One of the strategies used in that revaluation has sought to implement adaptive reuse of mining resources by opening museums and creating greenways along old mining railroad lines. This category includes the Arditurri Mining Reserve in Oiartzun and the Leintz Gatzaga Salt Museum.

Besides mining activities, since the second half of the 19th century the industrial milieu has been the object of concern regarding the use and safeguarding of installations inherited from earlier periods, a task encompassed in the scope of industrial archaeology (Valenzuela, 2003). But this only significantly expanded

from the middle decades of the 20th century on, coinciding precisely with the departure point of the major crisis affecting the industry. The strategy of occasional adaptive reuse of old industrial buildings does not therefore engender new urban elements. Rather, what is new is the use made of them, creating dynamics and flows entirely different from the preceding ones. Examples of such establishments include the Arms Industry Museum in Eibar, the Agorregi ironworks and mill complex in Aia, the Machine Tool Museum in Elgoibar, the Bentalejua Museum in Mutriku (fishing and traditional port activity) and the Albaola Basque Maritime Factory in Pasaia (traditional shipbuilding). One more contemporary-oriented strategy of this type was the opening of the sculptor Eduardo Chillida's studio in Legazpia as a museum-workshop.

The legacy of the agrarian production space also forms part of the cultural heritage, in so far as the organization of space by and for rural life is the result of a long historical process, resulting in territorial formations that entirely deserve the status of inherited cultural asset and hence deserve in themselves the condition of culturally-rooted historical heritage (Ortega, 1998; cited by Valenzuela, 2003). That heritage includes the rural areas' means of communication, such as roads, trails or pathways, which have huge potential for the practice of alternative forms of tourism, along with the various built elements that were used for farming activities, meant to house farm-workers or animals and tools, including buildings meant for artisanal or industrial manufacturing activities and those serving the population (schools, wash-houses, shops, etc.). In the context of a subsistence economy and prior to the appearance of the food industry, the transformation of certain agricultural products in situ and their provisioning also led to very inventive solutions for mills, fulling installations and wineries. In Gipuzkoa this category includes the Rincón del Pan in Legazpi, the Gorrotxategi Confectionery Museum in Tolosa, the Basque Cider Museum in Astigarraga and the Aikur Bee Museum in Urretxu. This kind of museum, despite its small size and occasional distance from major urban centers, has an undeniable ability to mobilize tourist flows.

Expansion of the tourism services network

The tendency toward specialization and diversification observed in areas such as gastronomy or museums has also been reflected in the overall web of tourism services as a network needed to accompany new flows associated to different territorial uses deriving from globalization. Among others, those services include the hotel accommodation network, whose study can cast light on whether the hotel infrastructure in its different variants is accompanying the different global dynamics identified. In this regard, the extensive network of rural residences and agro-tourism facilities that have recently proliferated in Gipuzkoa seems to sustain the necessary complementariness the new tourism trends would require.

In the culinary field, the 'new Basque cuisine' label and its international standing have brought global renown to the San Sebastian area for its restaurants, with two of them among the world's ten best (in 2012). It is significant that despite all of them being close to San Sebastian, the gravitational hub of reference, many deny at the same time any allusion of closeness to the urban, rather emphasizing references to the rural. This image contrasts with the new headquarters of the Basque Culinary Center, whose aim is to train and focus on research, innovation and the transfer of knowledge and technology in different areas of the culinary sciences. It is located in the heart of the Miramón business park, thereby asserting its link to the world of innovation.

Territorial extent of global effects: building the map

The varied urban manifestation that has arisen as a result of the Gipuzkoan territory's global exposure has shown the different ambits wherein the global incidence has been reflected. The study of its incidence on the current urban structure will therefore require observation

of a broad range of indicators that can render account of its territorial extent. Given the obvious difficulty of gathering in this study all facets and spheres impacted by the global phenomenon, the detection and examination undertaken aim to provide a sufficient sampling so that some of its main characteristics can be ascertained.

The objective pursued has been to seek quantifiable data which, duly dimensioned, could be used to representatively map that centrality. The diverse nature of the phenomena grouped under the umbrella of the global/local dialectic brought with it the need to quantify urban elements of very different kinds, whereby the techniques used and the data processed have been varied. As a result, besides the fact that in each case the precise location and number of each element analyzed (museum, technology center, hotel accommodation, cider house, etc.) has been compiled, a decision was made to dimension each of them, using different criteria for that purpose. That distinction resulted from the specific characteristics of the phenomena analyzed in each case, so that in the study of hotel accommodation the option chosen was to quantify the number of places offered by each hotel (number of beds), while in the case of cider houses reference was made to their capacity (diners). However, in the case of urban elements of a certain size, such as museums, technology or university centers or convention centers, the option was to use the built roof surface corresponding to each building or place destined for those uses. Contrariwise, in cases such as cheese production centers, rural residences or haute cuisine restaurants, the option was to analyze only their location, as their dimensioning was insignificant due to their very similar sizes.

The sum of the different urban manifestations linked to the global phenomenon required various techniques and sources that resulted in the mapping whereby they could be jointly studied. The consequent map (fig. 6) enabled analysis and cross-referencing of very different aspects of this new centrality which have manifested in recent times in Gipuzkoa.

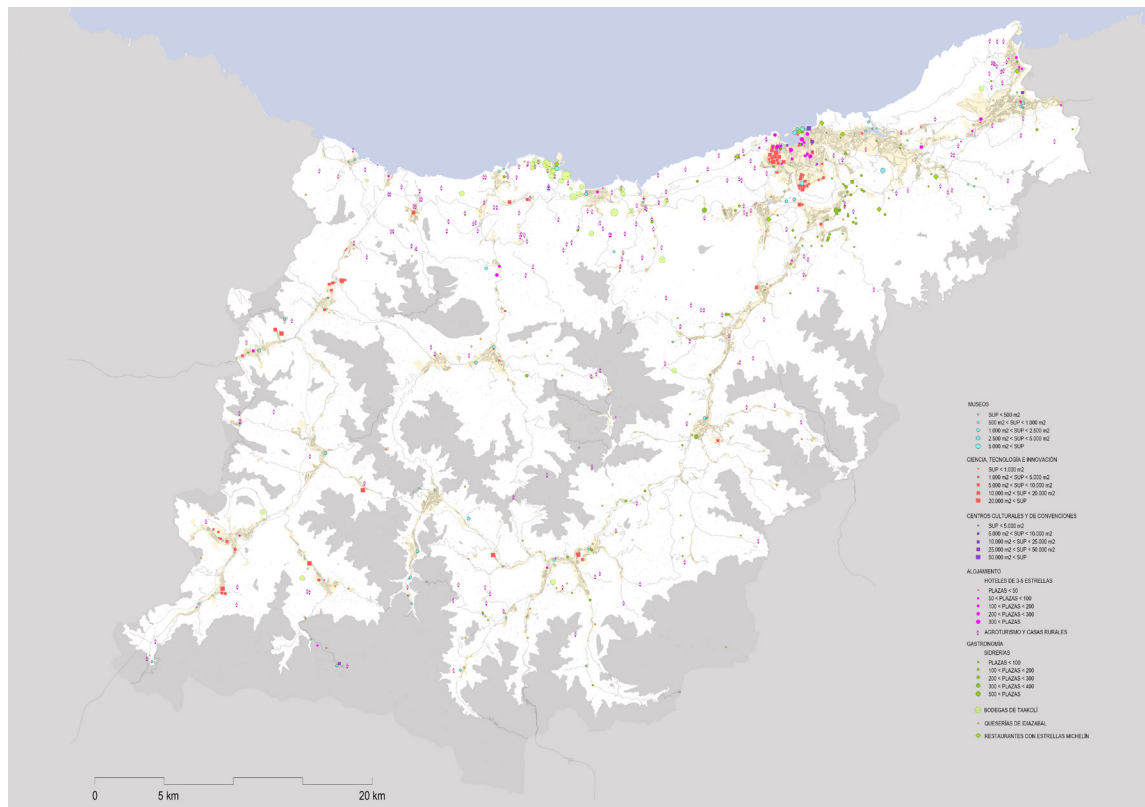


Figure 6. The centrality map of the urban efflorescences of the global and the local in Gipuzkoa

Urban efflorescences of the global: Conclusions

The patterns of territorial distribution presented by the different urban manifestations studied refer to the revival of a Gipuzkoa that is the result of a phenomenon of crystallization, a sort of efflorescence that has taken place in the interaction of the global with the local. It seems that that crystallization has been produced over the specificity of accumulated and entrenched assets, such as activities that pertain to daily life or economic activities of past eras, gaining new significance owing to the galvanizing effect of global exposure. Their manifestation has taken place discontinuously, with tensions toward certain areas, which although not physically communicating with each other are indeed doing so via global networks.

In some cases, such as in the technological nodes, the manifestation of a unique architecture becomes hugely relevant, such as the ‘O’

shaped headquarters of Orona in Galarreta or the head office of the Garaia Innovation Pole in Mondragón. Conversely, on other occasions, the urban expression of that centrality is less obvious, as it results in the generation of high intensity flows in eminently rural contexts by users foreign to those contexts. This diversity recalls the heterogeneity presented by the spatial manifestation of this centrality, in both the scopes it encompasses and its urban effects and territorial distribution.

The heterogeneity that its territorial distribution presents results from the fact that most cases concern urban efflorescences linked to past prestige, so that the respective manifestation is produced where there was an urban nerve, albeit minor. As shown by the study conducted, the centers are occasionally nourished by the proximity of an urban fabric, such as in Mondragón, Oñati or Eibar. In other cases, such as in the San Sebastian area, they tend to distance themselves from more

consolidated areas, supported by accessibility guaranteed by the road network. And in many other cases, such as in the scope of localized products, specialized museums or rural accommodation, they are associated to the recovery of previous activities, regaining and highlighting centralities and urbanities that were weak or had disappeared. The diverse nature of such manifestations is indicative of the complexity that characterizes this centrality, which presents a different degree of dispersion as a result of its distinct catalyzing basis.

Another question where the global context has become evident is the Atlantic condition of Gipuzkoa, manifested via the acquired relevance of the coastal setting. It should be noted that the coastal condition had not been so forthrightly expressed since the creation of the first ports in the context of building the pre-modern Gipuzkoa. However, while that first manifestation led to urban settlements concentrated in specific locations along the rugged coast, the global phenomenon is not limited to the coastline and has greater depth and extent toward the interior. The very intense revaluation of the coastal zone is thus characterized by exploiting the singularity offered by the proximity of the coastal and the rural. A widening of that fringe has therefore occurred, penetrating around 10 km into the territory, as the proximity of beaches, although very few, becomes relatively important, while conversely the establishment in rural surroundings of high landscape value is exploited.

Although urban efflorescences derived from global exposure occasionally emerge in places close to each other and relatively concentrated, their nature is sporadic and fragmented. In most cases this involves a non-focused urbanity, where high accessibility is becoming less significant than other attributes such as environmental quality. That sporadic nature entails the opening of a new field of possibilities in a territory like Gipuzkoa, where the distribution of inherited urban entities is amply present. What is significant about this new urbanity in that context is that it reinforces the idea that the current territory of Gipuzkoa is formed by a sum of accumulated centralities which with the right stimuli can help revive

debilitated environments and thereby promote territorial balance.

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