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# Typology of neighborhood public open spaces: case study of Pristina

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**Abstract.** Neighborhoods are an integral part of the city and their planning plays an important role in quality of life. They are composed of several elements that directly impacts on society, one of these components are public spaces.

This seminar will treat public spaces as part of neighborhood that impact on sustainability of them. Case study of this research are two neighborhoods, Ulpiana and Mati 1 in Pristina, which city has had a rapid construction after the last war. In this research is made a comparison between two neighborhoods planned in different periods, Ulpiana is one of the neighborhoods in Pristina planned before the war (modern city) and Mati 1 a neighborhood planned after 2000 (new neighborhood). The paper aim is to analyze public spaces in terms of: structure, typology and public spaces contents.

Referred on literature, public spaces take a place on sustainable criteria of neighborhoods. The goal is that through comparing public spaces of these neighborhoods, to show differences between the “old” and the “new” and the impact of public spaces on sustainable community requirements.

**Keywords:** Public spaces, sustainability, neighborhood, Ulpiana, Mati 1

## 1 Introduction

It is on responsibility of architects, urbanist and planners that in the frame of housing buildings, neighborhoods and cities to offer residents better living conditions. Housing is oriented through sustainability, to increase the quality of life we must create sustainable housing and make a connection between building, neighborhood and city. *Sustainable cities must provide clean water, toxin-free air, renewable energy, mass transit, environmentally sound solid waste management, and public space*<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Cohen, Steven (2018) *Public Space and the Sustainable City*, earth institute “State of the planet”, New York, 2018.

*Public spaces are a key contributor to quality of urban life in cities. Cities that provide higher quality public space have been found to have improved indicators for the health, wellbeing and social lives of their residents*<sup>2</sup>.

Public open spaces have dual role on the structure of neighborhoods, *social* and *ecological*. The aim of the first is to secure suitable open spaces, where citizens can be socialized with each other and from the other side, green spaces play a vital role on promoting the sustainability of cities and well-being of citizens, respectively, in the connection between human and nature.

Pristina as capital city of Kosovo, according to UN HABITAT<sup>3</sup> has 46 public spaces and we can separate them into six typologies: squares, city parks, neighborhood parks, markets, playgrounds and sports fields. Neighborhood that has been taken for case study are Ulpiana, it was planned during modern period, that is the main urban period of the city and Mati 1 is planned after the last conflict in Kosovo. Mati 1 had a big expansion with numerous informal constructions within the urban area and uncontrolled spread on all directions. The purpose of the seminar is to compare these neighborhoods and to see the differences between typology and structure of public open spaces.

## **1. Research question**

This research is based on the question that which is the difference between neighborhood built on modern city period and the new neighborhood in Prishtina, typology of public spaces and which of this neighborhood is more appropriate for citizens. Such a research can help to increase attention of citizens for public spaces.

## **2. The impact of public spaces on sustainable neighborhood**

Dwell is an elementary unit for housing, but well-being of resident cannot be secure only with a well-built dwell and according to sustainable criteria. Genuine housing has a narrow connection with neighborhood, which means that in order to increase the quality of life, the constituent elements of neighborhood must function as a whole. *A sustainable or 'green' neighborhood as "a neighborhood that is planned to be integrated with priority to the protection and use of natural resources, application of green technology, green practices and recycling, with the aim of preserving the environment, improving public health, safety, and general welfare of city residents"*<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> UN HABITAT (2018) Public spaces in Prishtina, Kosovo

<sup>3</sup> UN HABITAT - United Nations Human Settlements Programme

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.propertyguru.com.my/property-guides/8-characteristics-to-look-for-in-a-sustainable-green-neighbourhood-34170>

This definition describes the importance that all the components of a neighborhood, starting from building, public spaces and infrastructure, must be planned on a holistic way taking into consideration sustainability. Meanwhile, according to agenda 2030 of UN<sup>5</sup> for sustainable cities, public spaces and green spaces took an important place on promoting quality of life.

The way that a neighborhood breath, we can say that depends from public spaces, which play a vital role on sustainable neighborhood design. They include public open spaces for residents, that are in exploitation for all inhabitants indiscriminately. Between young people and old one, reach and poor, race and gender, which mean they are opportunity for socialize between people. Green spaces and parks on other side, have a high impact on environment, trees can affect the mitigation of the climate, and in addition to humans these places can also be exploited by animals.

Cost of construction and maintenance of public spaces are high, but in addition to being usable they can increase the price of housing, for example a park view dwell can be sold more expensively. Nowadays because of dynamic life, residents frequently don't have the opportunity to visit these places, but the belief that they exist creates urban memory of citizens. The opportunity of using these spaces and memories that they create are part of the structure of a satisfying urban lifestyle.

### **3. Public spaces in Pristina – research examples**

The Municipality of Pristina is the administrative and educational center of Kosovo, which has a diverse institutional concentration. Its landscape is developed by different political and cultural influences. With the migration of inhabitants from rural areas, the city had a rapid urban development, which affected the degradation and quality of the environment. For twenty years Pristina has increased by 1000ha. The rapid expansion of the city has negatively affected the construction of public spaces. The new neighborhoods built after 2000, were built by private investors and mainly on private land. Taking into account that public spaces do not bring economic benefits, it has made the private sector not to invest in that direction, because many constructions are informal, which have ruined the planning of neighborhoods as a whole. On the other hand, the old residential neighborhoods (built before the war) are rich in public

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<sup>5</sup>UN - United Nations

spaces although their maintenance is not continuous



*Fig. 1. Position of Ulpiana and Mati 1, Pristina*

The urban area consists of 20 neighborhoods, which are categorized into three general urban models, determined depending on the construction period: the historic center, the modern city and the informal expansion of the city<sup>6</sup>. Within the urban border of Pristina there are a variety of public spaces, such as: parks, markets, sports fields, children's fields, squares, etc. Although there is a variety of public spaces, a considerable number of residents only move to these areas and do not want to spend time in them, due to the condition of these spaces. As for the public spaces of the typologies of the above-mentioned neighborhoods, there is a variety of content of these spaces, which we can say is visually visible. To classify the typologies and structure of public spaces in Pristina, two examples of case study neighborhoods were researched: Ulpiana neighborhood which is planned in the modern period of the city and Mati 1 neighborhood which lies in the extended area of the city, planned after 2000. (Fig. 1)

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<sup>6</sup> UN Habitat

### **3.1. Neighborhood of modern city, Ulpiana**

The city of Pristina is famous for the neighborhoods built in the period of the so-called “modern city”, they constitute the main urban area of Pristina. Ulpiana is one of these neighborhoods, it was developed in the mid-1950s and was completed in the late 1990s, its construction has intervened in the historic area of the city, which is bordered on the north by the university center, on the west by the neighborhood Dardania, is bordered on the east by the hill of the sun and on the south by the university clinical center. This residential area consists mainly of multi-apartment buildings with medium and high floors where there are a total of 19000 residential units, as well as about 300 individual residential houses. In cases where the buildings are located along the main roads, they are combined with business premises and housing. This neighborhood is categorized by the pronounced greenery within the neighborhood. There is an abundance of public open spaces, mainly roads, parking lots and open green spaces. (Fig. 2)



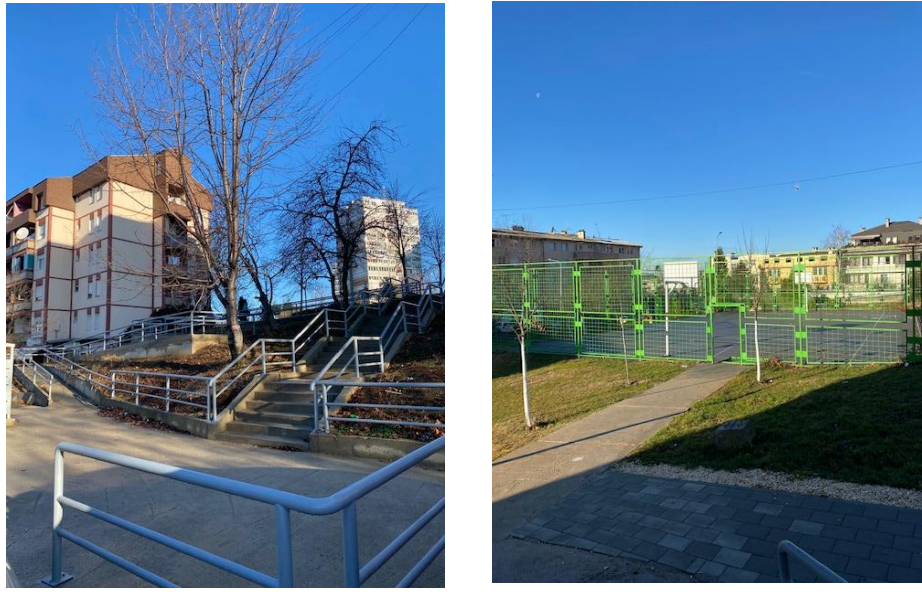
*Fig. 2. Top view of Ulpiana*

#### **3.1.1. Typology of public open spaces in Ulpiana**

Considering that this neighborhood contains a variety of public spaces, as well as its central position within the city, it is quite visited by residents of other neighborhoods.



This neighborhood has a significant percentage of green space. The structure of its public spaces includes: neighborhood park, playgrounds for children, sports fields, market, passages, public stairs, boulevards, other green spaces. (fig.3)



*Fig.3. Public spaces in Ulpiana*

### **3.2. “Informal” neighborhood Mati 1**

After the end of the war in 1999, there was a significant increase in population in Pristina. This influenced the urban area of Pristina to expand mainly in the direction of its peripheral part. Such a rapid urban development affected the degradation of public spaces in these areas, because the expansion was done mainly on private property and by private investors.

Mati 1 is one of several neighborhoods that was built mainly after 2000, previously containing individual residential houses. Today, this area is mainly composed of the construction of multi-apartment buildings combined with business, the largest construction has been developed along the main road, road B, road C and secondary road “Muharrem Fejza”. The biggest degradation in this neighborhood is emphasized in the period from 2000 to 2012, when there were continuous illegal constructions, which had a negative impact on the structure of the neighborhood. This degradation is also observed in the construction of public spaces.

Unlike the modern neighborhoods of the city which were very rich in greenery and public spaces, we do not encounter this phenomenon in informal neighborhoods, we

encounter this structuring mainly due to the difference between public and private investment.

### **3.2.1. Typology of public open spaces in Ulpiana**

The planning of Mati 1 neighborhood is not realized based on the detailed urban plan, but referring to the municipal regulatory plans, urban solutions are planned under the blocks, creating "internal" public spaces within the blocks. This way of planning has influenced inadequate solutions of public spaces. Although it has been 20 years since this neighborhood has started to be inhabited with great intensity, there is no public space realized by state institutions. All public spaces, excluding roads, are designed and invested by the private investor. Based on the regulatory plan Mati 1, several typologies of public spaces are planned, such as: green spaces, parks, sport fields and playgrounds for children. But in the existing condition of Mat 1, based on research, the structure of public spaces consists of: children's toy corners, other green spaces, promenades, cycling paths, boulevards, etc.

From Canada in the West to Japan in the east, and from Australia in the south to Scandinavia to the north, street side cafes are increasingly more numerous in the city scene<sup>7</sup>. Referring to this quote, we can say that such a phenomenon is also encountered on street B, which is one of the main roads not only in the neighborhood, but also in the city. Along this road, such gastronomic businesses have been developed, these bars contain terraces located in public spaces, which regardless of the season are always visited, and in a way oblige the citizens paying to stay in public spaces.

## **4. Comparing public spaces structure of Ulpiana and Mati 1**

As is known public spaces change as societies lifestyle changes. During the comparing public open spaces in Pristina in two different periods of city extension a change has occurred. In these neighborhoods is seen a big difference between the structure and typology of public spaces. Until, Ulpiana it was planned and built from state investment, Mati 1 in other side was built from private sector. This is not the only reason that this phenom happened, there are a lot of factors that had impact on this change as social aspect, political changes, the economic situation of the country and many other reasons that changed during that period.

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1. <sup>7</sup> GEHL, Jan (2011) *Life between buildings: using public spaces*, Washington DC





*Fig. 4. Caffé's along road B, Mati 1*

Changes among Ulpiana and Mati 1 are numerous. The modern neighborhood has a park, a market and some sport fields, until the new neighborhood doesn't have neither of this typology. Meanwhile, Ulpiana also has playgrounds and Mati 1 has only some corner toys for kids. In Ulpiana there are also public stair and passage that are a good opportunity for residents to share their time in different places of their neighborhood. Nowadays on new neighborhoods there are not such opportunities of public open spaces, Mati 1 is rich with caffè's and restaurants along the main road B, which use public spaces for terraces (fig. 4). As well, what characterizes this area are pedestrian paths and a promenade.

The biggest difference among these neighborhoods are green spaces, that in Ulpiana we encounter a big area of green space, meanwhile in Mati 1 these areas are very poor and mostly unplanned (Table 1).

	park	market	sport field	playground	greenspace	public stair	pedestrian path	passage	promenade
ULPIANA		•		•	•	•		•	
MATI 1				•	•		•		•

*TABLE 1. Typology of public open spaces of Ulpiana and Mati 1*

## 5. Conclusion

To have a clearer comparison, are taken into consideration twelve quality criteria<sup>8</sup>. Related to these criteria, results that Ulpiana is much more suitable for residents and meets the requirements for public open spaces more than Mati 1 (Table 2). Either of two cases do not meet these criteria.

Public spaces in Ulpiana are extend throughout the neighborhood, mainly on the center of housing, that offer opportunities for use from all residents. Though in poor condition, because of the variety of public spaces, opportunities to walk, to stay, to sit, to play and lots of green spaces they are used and visited from all generations. In terms of safe in Ulpiana, during the day the zone is safe, meanwhile at night the lighting is not sufficiently established and this gives the possibility that this area is considered dangerous.

While Ulpiana is rich in the whole area with public spaces, in Mati 1 these areas are concentrated along road B and road C. Here does not seems a variety of public spaces, but only some caffè's, a pedestrian path and a promenade. Despite Ulpiana, these areas are more enlivened and it is more visited from young generation, but residents in this part of neighborhood are not safe, because drivers drive very fast and thefts and crime often occur.

Based on the comparison made, the new zone of Pristina doesn't have comfortable public spaces, although all new they are not maintained. In the old neighborhood Ulpiana there are variety of public spaces and much more visitable from all citizens of Pristina.

	Quality criteria by Jan Gehl	Ulpiana	Mati 1
protection	Protection against traffic and accidents – feeling safe	✓	x
	Protection against violence and crime-feeling secure	+/-	x
	Protection against unpleasant sensory experiences	+/-	+/-
comfort	Opportunities to	+/-	✓

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<sup>8</sup> Gehl, J. *Twelve quality criteria*.

	walk/cycle		
	Opportunities to stop and stay	✓	+/-
	Opportunities to sit	✓	+/-
	Opportunities to see	✓	+/-
	Opportunities to talk and listen	✓	x
	Opportunities for play and exercise	✓	+/-
enjoyment	Dimensioned at human scale	✓	+/-
	Opportunities to enjoy the positive aspects of climate	+/-	+/-
	Aesthetic qualities + positive sensory experience	+/-	x
symbol ✓ - yes, symbol +/- partly, symbol x - no			

Table 2. *Quality criteria of neighborhood Ulpiana and Mati 1*

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#### Internet resources

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<https://www.propertyguru.com.my/property-guides/8-characteristics-to-look-for-in-a-sustainable-green-neighbourhood-34170>

#### Source of illustration

1. Fig. 1. Position of Ulpiana and Mati 1, Prishtina (author)
2. Fig. 2. Top view of Ulpiana  
<https://www.dreamstime.com/stock-photo-prishtina-ulpiana-districts-one-big-district-city-image55469210>
3. Fig. 3. *Public spaces in Ulpiana* (author)
4. Fig. 4. *Caffe's along road B, Mati 1* (author)
5. Table 1. Typology of public open spaces (author)
6. Table 2. Quality criteria of neighborhood Ulpiana and Mati 1 (author)

