

# Challenges, threats and opportunities in post-conflict urban development in Kosovo

Kobe Boussauw

Geography Department, Ghent University, Krijgslaan 281/S8, 9000 Gent, Belgium

Tel.: +32 9 264 45 55 - Fax.: +32 9 264 49 85

E-mail: kobe.boussauw@ugent.be; kobe.boussauw@gmail.com

## Abstract

This paper reports on a special case of restoration of municipal urban planning practice in a post-conflict context. In Kosovo, the administrative environment in which the practice of urban planning and mobility management is embedded is characterized by a high degree of instability. The main reason for this is the transition from a rather centralized form of urban planning, a typical aspect of the Yugoslav planned economy, into a markedly free form of development, characterized by loose control by the authorities. Although this trend can be observed to some extent in many former socialist countries, the Kosovo war in 1999 has dramatically accelerated this process. Given the very European-oriented historic settlement structure, based on a hierarchy of relatively small and compact cities, this trend entails many problems in the areas of environment, infrastructure, mobility, landscape, and property rights.

This paper gives an overview of the reasons for this evolution and assesses possible solutions based on field experience from two support programmes (MuSPP by UN-Habitat, and MobKos by the Flemish Government (Belgium)) that are operating in the regional city of Peja/Peć.

## Keywords

post-conflict urban planning

informal urban development

Kosovo

## Note

For readability of the paper, typically only one name is used to refer to towns, i.e. an Albanian variant. For the capital, the international designation Pristina is used. However, the most neutral term is a combination of the Albanian and the Serbian version: Prishtinë/Priština, Pejë/Peć, Deçan/Dečani, Junik/Junik, Prizren/Prizren, Gjakovë/Đakovica, Ferizaj/Uroševac, Gjilan/Gnjilane, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, and Zahaq/Zahać.

## Introduction

In the Balkans, the melting pot of cultures and the intensity with which history played out in recent centuries has left some very visible scars. Especially in Kosovo, the succession of highly divergent ideological regimes, each with their own planning logic, caused a number of manifest changes in development trends in cities and landscapes.

The genesis of some of the Kosovar cities, such as Peja, Deçan en Prizren, goes back to the establishment of several Serbian Orthodox monasteries that were seeking out the idyllic landscape at the foot of the majestic mountain ranges (Vickers, 1998, p. xii). Under the Ottoman Empire these settlements grew, based on trading activities and crafts. The towns developed around the bazaar, which to this day consists of shops, workshops, alleys and water channels. The architecture of the urban dwellings often followed rural-Albanian patterns, and the Orthodox churches were supplemented with (mainly Ottoman-style) mosques (Petersen, 1996, p. 9). During the Second World War, in western Kosovo the Italian occupying forces introduced a strict, almost Haussmannian, urban development framework that showed little respect for the historic structures. And the post-war socialist regime was characterized by visionary planning based on large industrial and social projects that had to embody progress and prosperity (Pogačnik, 1987).

The conflict between Albanians and Serbs, which culminated sadly in the 1999 Kosovo war and a NATO-led intervention, appears to have abolished any tradition of urban planning. Since then, a barely controlled and uncorrected liberalism seems to have grasped the development of the built environment. In this paper, an overview of some major urban development problems will be presented and illustrated with

examples from the region of Peja, a regional city in western Kosovo. Then, possible solutions will be discussed, based on experience from two support programmes (MuSPP by UN-Habitat (2005-2008), and MobKos by the Flemish Government (Belgium) (2009-2011)).

## Political context

With a population of no more than two million inhabitants and a per capita GDP that is only 8% of that of nearby Greece (CIA, 2011), it may appear as if this small former Yugoslav province has received disproportionate attention from the international community over the past decade. So far, much ink has been spilled on the preamble to and the consequences of the Kosovo conflict, of which the germs can be found throughout the history of the twentieth century. This article will confine itself to an outline of the most essential political context, while for a thorough discussion of Kosovo's history reference is made to the relevant literature (e.g. Bieber and Daskalovski, 2003).

Kosovo is situated on the Balkan Peninsula, and was in 1999 the subject of the last one in a series of conflicts in the last decade of the twentieth century that has led to the systematic disintegration of Yugoslavia. Since the unilateral declaration of independence by the ethnic Albanian majority of the Kosovar population (17 February 2008), the former Yugoslav province has become a de facto independent state. At the time of writing this paper, the independence of Kosovo was recognized by 75 countries (including the U.S., and most Western and Central European countries, but not including Russia, China, Spain, Greece, Romania and of course Serbia, that is still considering Kosovo as one of its autonomous provinces).

Kosovo lies in between the former federal Yugoslav states of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, and is bordering Albania to the southwest. Although available data are often biased and are therefore relatively unreliable, it could be assumed that the proportion of ethnic Albanians (who are traditionally Muslim in Kosovo, apart from a few ten thousand Roman Catholics) in the total population increased from approximately 88% before the conflict, up to 92% after the conflict (ESK, 2008). Roughly half of the rest of the population are Serbs (who are

traditionally Orthodox Christian), supplemented by smaller ethnic groups such as Bosniaks, Gorani, Roma and Turks. The Kosovo conflict of 1999 was associated with significant population displacements, leading to a physical segregation of Serbs and Albanians. In most cases the Serb population fled from the cities and settled in Serbia proper, or in a Serbian enclave in Kosovo (Cordial and Røsandhaug, 2009, p. 207). Another interesting demographic aspect is the significant ethnic Albanian diaspora. Non-official data estimates that since 1980 several hundred thousand Kosovar Albanians emigrated from the former province, in most cases to Western Europe (with Germany and Switzerland as major destinations) and the U.S. (Blumi, 2010). The flow of money from the diaspora towards Kosovo is an important supplement to the weak internal economy, and constitutes together with official foreign aid the main explanation for the many investments that seem at first sight incompatible with the deplorable economic situation of the region.

## Spatial development in the pre-conflict period

The Yugoslav post-war period between 1945 and the death of Marshal Tito in 1980, was characterized by a centrally driven process of industrialization and urbanization that enabled rapid economic growth. While the economic structure was originally based on a communist framework, the situation evolved in different phases from a Soviet-oriented system to a relatively open and rather decentralized system where small scale economic activities were left to private initiative (Pogačnik, 1987). In Kosovo, this process of rapid industrialization, which occurred primarily in the seven medium-sized cities (including the capital Pristina), yielded two parallel tracks of development. The official development track was marked by visionary urban plans for major industrial, commercial and social housing projects, which were centrally funded and shaped by an often very expressive form of social-realist architecture that was intended to embody economic progress (Fig. 1). Especially during the seventies, there was a rapid succession of construction projects in the centres and the industrial estates of the Kosovar cities. Hotels, sports facilities, cultural palaces, offices, schools and colleges, libraries, malls and industrial complexes contributed to the flourishing of the cities as economic and cultural centres. Housing was planned in the form of large scale residential blocks (Fig. 2), a

type of dwelling that was set as a new standard in Kosovo, although it was very different from the traditional habitat of Albanian families which is a rural detached clan home (Fig. 3).

Between 1965 and 1983, the growth of cities continued almost uninterrupted (at a rate of about 3% annually), while it was only partially absorbed by the planned public developments. For 1971, Pleskovic (1988) indicates a deficit of 507,000 homes in the Yugoslav urban areas.

Private initiative was the second development track followed by the growing cities. In the period 1956-1975 the share of private dwellings in overall housing developments in Yugoslavia rose from 54% to 65%. Although private construction was also a subject of the official urban development plans, proper implementation or enforcement of these planning instruments often appeared not feasible. Pleskovic (1988) reports that 36.3% of all private dwellings that were built in Pristina in the period 1961-1967 were illegal. However, this problem can not be regarded as typically Kosovar, witness the much higher figures that are reported for e.g. Belgrade, Serbia (52.1%), or Tuzla, Bosnia (58.9%).

Today, the often completely uncontrolled and purely privately initiated urban expansions (which are referred to by the term "informal settlements"), have determined the image of many towns in Kosovo (Fig. 4). Although these informal settlements assume only in exceptional cases the appearance of outright slums, the combination of an official and an unofficial development track resulted in many cases in a very heterogeneous urban structure. It is important to note that morphological structures often represented social structures in which the formal, state-built houses were mainly inhabited by citizens whose professional and social life also took place in formal organizations, while informal settlements were inhabited largely by recent immigrants from the rural area. The largely Albanian former rural population which migrated to the cities during the post-Second World War period built their own homes in the traditional way of the clan society. This usually means that a small group of similar dwellings is built at the same time, after which a wall is put up around the parcel (Fig. 5). One house is the parental home, while the other houses are destined for the respective sons and their (future) family. In the inner cities, where land is scarce, a variation on this theme has been developed

in the form of small private apartment buildings, where each floor is intended for a son and his family. The degree of informality in this type of uncontrolled development varies widely, and will typically increase as the construction is located further away from the city centre. Informal developments in the urban periphery are characterized by inappropriate cadastral allotments (the houses are usually located in the middle of an agricultural plot), often in combination with an uncertain ownership status, lack of a decent road structure, unpaved access roads, and lack of a sewerage connection, while the houses are often also not connected to networks of power and water supply, waste collection and public transport.

The first problem, the lack of security of tenure, could basically be solved by regularization. This is also the case with regard to power and water supply, a problem for which technical solutions can be found. Nevertheless, it is clear that the networks have difficulties to anticipate unplanned construction, often leading to insufficient capacity to supply all additional housing. With respect to the use of the land, the road network and access to public transport, however, the situation is often irreversible, and therefore more problematic. The achievement of urban development goals, such as pursuing residential density thresholds in terms of efficient land use, or the provision of adequate public open space, parking and public facilities, is severely counteracted by illegal construction. The road network is particularly vulnerable to illegal buildings: houses are constructed on unofficial roads with the same ease as they are being built on a piece of land which is not in use, bringing the (informal) access of the neighbourhood at risk.

Although the development of informal and illegal construction was a known problem throughout the former Yugoslavia, the practice was largely limited to alleviating housing shortages in, or immediately adjacent to, the urban areas. In the less prosperous regions and Kosovo in particular, illegal housing development does not seem to have led that much to sprawl, but, on the contrary, may have contributed to strengthening the compactness of the existing cities. The reasons for this are perhaps to be found in the fact that both transport and the connection to public utilities like water and electricity supply, or sewerage, have been relatively expensive in Kosovo compared to the average income. The only limited availability of transport means has made Kosovar cities continue to develop as pedestrian-oriented settlements well

into the twentieth century. Although we have little quantitative indicators to underpin this observation, the available figures show that significant regional differences existed (and still exist today) regarding the importance of the automobile in society. Dawson (1987, p. 286) reports that in the year 1984 there were only 34 private cars per 1000 inhabitants in Kosovo, which is only one third of the car ownership rate in Serbia as a whole, one quarter of the rate in Croatia and even only one seventh of the number cars per capita in Slovenia. Although the situation in Kosovo dramatically altered after the recent conflict, reported problems of sprawl in former Yugoslavia usually point to the richer states Slovenia (Pogačnik, 1997) and Croatia (Cavrić and Nedović-Budić, 2006). A report from MobKos (Boussauw et al., 2010) shows that in the city of Peja in 2010 still 60% of employed residents walk to their jobs, while even 92% of pupils and students is going to school on foot.

### **Institutional changes after the conflict**

In June 1999, immediately after the conflict, Kosovo was placed under a temporary UN interim administration (UN Mission in Kosovo, or UNMIK), while KFOR (a NATO-led peacekeeping force) became responsible for security. In the period 1999 to 2008, UNMIK put the emphasis on administrative matters that were essential for security and stability, such as police, customs, justice, reconstruction, and registration of persons and vehicles. Land use planning was basically not part of this package, which in practice meant that this competence was placed under the Provisional Institutions of Self Government (PISG). PISG, both at the central and at the municipal level, was charged with governance issues that were perceived as less critical.

Nevertheless, the UN (both UNMIK and the various agencies such as UNHCR and UN-Habitat) had still a role to play in damage assessment, reconstruction, and ensuring living and property rights. The physical losses of the war were enormous. Minervini (2002) reports for the hard-hit Peja region (in the west of Kosovo) 14,000 destroyed homes, together with another 14,000 damaged homes. In the city of Peja itself, 80% of the housing stock was destroyed or badly damaged. Throughout Kosovo, some 800,000 Albanians fled their homes. Upon return, empty houses owned by Serbs were squatted by Albanian refugees, after these had found their own

houses in uninhabitable conditions. Refugees who did not immediately return (often with a Roma background) had difficulties in proving their housing rights or ownership. In addition, over the period 1991-1999 a very restrictive real estate transaction policy had been in effect. As a consequence, many real estate transactions between 1991 and 1999 were done informally and were thus not registered at all (Cordial and Røsandhaug, 2009, p. 25), exacerbating the problem of proving property rights.

One of the first tasks that UNMIK undertook in 1999 was the founding of the Municipal Housing Committees, intended to assign emergency aid for reconstruction of houses in a democratic and fair way to the entitled victims (Minervini, 2002). Furthermore, the Housing and Property Directorate was established by UN-Habitat, aiming to reconstitute living and property rights to rightful claimants (Cordial and Røsandhaug, 2009, p. 27). In 2000, the Kosovo Cadastre Agency was established, with the competence of restoring the property register and computerizing the cadastre, although results were achieved only slowly (Cordial and Røsandhaug, 2009, p. 217).

Formally, environmental and spatial policies were considered as non-reserved powers and consequently came under the central and municipal services of the PISG, which promulgated in 2003, under the supervision of UNMIK, a new "law on spatial planning". This law set the framework for the organization of the central and municipal planning authorities, and defined what spatial and land use plans should be drawn at both administrative levels. The law was one of the first items of the newly devised legislation that was drafted by Kosovar experts, and reviewed by many local and international professionals, before it was passed by the Kosovo Assembly.

In 2002, UN-Habitat initiated the Urban Planning and Management Programme (UPMP), financed by the Dutch international cooperation budget. This programme led to capacity building within the Ministry for Environment and Spatial Planning, and to the establishment of a central Institute for Spatial Planning, and also included a training programme for municipal officials. UPMP was followed by the Governance and Development Planning Programme (GDPP), also funded by The Netherlands, which ran until 2005. In 2006, the first Municipal Spatial Planning Support Programme (MuSPP) was launched, funded by the Swedish government,



which provided on-the-job assistance in the urbanism departments of the six regional cities (Peja, Prizren, Ferizaj, Gjilan, Mitrovica and Gjakova). The main goal of MuSPP was the preparation of a Municipal Development Plan and an Urban Development Plan (MDP and UDP), in fulfilment of the law on spatial planning (D'Hondt, 2007). Following the mentioned initiatives, also a few smaller-scale support programmes were launched, such as the MobKos project (2009-2011) on urban mobility in Kosovo, which selected Peja as a pilot city. It is important to understand that the sequence of these programmes (UN-Habitat Kosovo, 2011) formed the necessary substrate in which local expertise could be developed. Besides the capacity that was developed within the ministry and the municipalities, but also within the university and consultancy business, these programmes provided continuing support in the development of legislation too.

The overview of current spatial developments, which will be presented in the following sections, is based on the experiences of the author in the first MuSPP programme (2006-2007) and the MobKos project (MobKos, 2010).

## Spatial development in the post-conflict period

The overview of the extensive institutional reforms and consecutive support programmes that was presented in the previous section is veiling somehow the rather anarchistic situation in the field. Apart from the preparation of a development perspective for municipalities and urban areas (MDP and UDP), the municipality is also responsible for the issuing of building permits ("urban consents" and "urban permits"), construction inspection, and updating of zoning plans (urban regulatory plans or URP's ). In practice, these activities are proceeding with great difficulties. It may be said that the specific volatile political situation that is typical of a post-war period of stabilization, has at the municipal policy level led to a system in which political arbitrariness, corruption, lack of enforcement and poor communication with the higher level authorities have significantly eroded the historical Yugoslav urban planning system. Below I give some examples of events and common practices that clearly left their mark on the urban development in the city of Peja over the period 2006-2010:

- The issuing of construction permits was done on an ad hoc basis. In some cases, outdated Yugoslav urban development plans (dated 1983) were taken into account, while in other cases these plans were entirely ignored. The adoption of the UDP in May 2007 brought little change: in most cases, the UDP is not sufficiently detailed to serve as a framework for the issuing of permits. Since compilation and approval of detailed URP's is pending (Garstka, 2010), ad hoc judging of permit requests remains common practice.
- A pilot project to draft an URP (for the small informal settlement Zatra) (Garstka, 2010) was initiated by the local MuSPP team in March 2007. The process took no less than four years to be completed before it was finally approved by the municipal assembly. In the mean time, also for the city centre area a planning process was started. This means that four years after the adoption of the UDP, there was still no planning process for zoning plans for the rest (the biggest part) of the urban area.
- For buildings outside the historical city centre, usually no permit is requested, since the municipal inspectors seem to limit their activities to the city centre. Since there are no recent examples of new illegal structures being demolished by order of the municipality, or of imposed major penalties due to not having a construction permit, it is often more attractive for owners not to apply for any permit. Their risk seems limited to the possible payment of the required fees afterwards.
- In 2007, only one paper copy of the updated cadastral maps existed, which was kept in the office of the competent municipal department. Changes were not systematically implemented in the digital cadastre that was drawn up by the Kosovo Cadastre Agency. Needless to say that such a system is not only highly susceptible to fraud by municipal officials, but it is also particularly vulnerable to damage, whether intentional or not, by e.g. fire or burglary. This danger is not imaginary, witness the outbreak of a fire in the municipal cadastre department of the city of Prizren in 2008 (KCA, 2008, p. 12).
- In 2009, at least one illegal construction site on the central boulevard of Peja was sealed by the municipal inspection, after which construction workers just

continued their work. Two weeks later, the building (a restaurant and wedding room) was completely finished and opened its doors.

- The ban on high rise buildings in the historically and scenically valuable city centre, as is stipulated in the UDP, is systematically violated by the construction of new apartment blocks (Fig. 6). In some cases, these projects got a construction permit for low-rise applications, which was obviously violated and subsequently regularized by the municipality after the payment of an additional fee.
- In 2007, formerly socially-owned agricultural land in the municipality of Zahaq, next to Peja, was sold to a private investor by the competent Kosovo Trust Agency under the restriction that the land should remain in agricultural use. A few months later, a distribution centre was erected in this place, although according to the UDP this kind of industrial activities should be located on the industrial estate near the urban area.
- In the period 2008-2010, the position of director of the urbanism department was held by four different persons, which was pernicious to the continuity, integrity and vision of this department.
- Because of the low wages, some staff members of the planning department worked themselves as an architect after hours, which added to the risk of conflicting interests.
- A survey by the MuSPP team in 2007 made clear that along the new ring road around the city of Peja, which was built in 2004 as a military bypass road, on average one informal (often illegal) construction per month was erected. These buildings (houses, storages, gas stations and even light industrial activities) prevent the structured development of the land behind, and interfere with the traffic flow on the road. One of the new businesses constructed even an access road that crossed the railway Peja-Pristina, which was (and is) in operation (Boussauw et al., 2007) (Fig. 7).
- Although we have no statistics to underpin this observation, in the period 2006-2010 numerous constructions popped up along the Peja-Pristina main road. Besides houses, which often appeared in small groups, also gas stations, supermarkets and restaurants were continuously growing in number. These

structures were often built in places where widening of the road or some other infrastructure works were already planned (Fig. 8).

A significant proportion of these problems can be attributed to the lack of a vigorous public administration. This is not surprising: in an environment where most people involved in real estate business have ample budgets, in most cases from diaspora capital, civil servants do not only envisage difficulties to carry out their job, but may even run personal risks by acting in a conscientious way. On September 11, 2000 the director of the urban planning department in Pristina was killed, shortly after he had ordered to demolish several illegal buildings (O'Neill, 2002, p. 16).

Three main reasons could provide an explanation for this lopsided situation. Besides the existing imbalance between the power of the municipal administration and that of the real estate industry (1), it is also important to highlight the lack of expertise available in civil administration, in politics and in commercial consultancy firms (2), and the possibly insufficient societal support for the current planning and permitting system (3).

The first of these causes has its origin in the difference between the financial strength of diaspora investors, and the tiny tax revenue that the Kosovo government earns from the extremely weak domestic economy. The second reason is partly due to the relatively low level of higher education, but also to a double brain drain. Before the Kosovo war, public administrations were mainly populated with Serbian experts. The Albanian officials who currently replace these Serbs often lack the necessary training and expertise. In addition, Albanians who are trained abroad do often not intend to return to Kosovo. It are precisely these aspects that explain a large part of the difference with the situation in Yugoslavia during the eighties and the nineties. The third reason mentioned is probably the least important, witness the fact that illegal construction is an issue that apparently cannot be dragged away from the press, politics and daily conversations. This can be illustrated by the results of a search on the online archive of the Zëri newspaper (period March 2010 to February 2011), which yielded no less than 30 articles that explicitly deal with illegal constructions (in Albanian: "ndërtimeve pa leje") or regularization of these ("legalizimi") (Zëri, 2011).

## Opportunities for the future

Although within a long series of support programmes, including MuSPP and MobKos, serious efforts have been made to address the identified problems, there is still a long way to go. The rebuilding of a planning system in which participation and the provision of transparency and legal certainty are considered operational objectives, should be seen as an important element in the restructuring of the municipal administration and politics based on the principles of good governance. This is the main reason why UN-Habitat has developed a series of support programmes for spatial planning in Kosovo.

Given the popularity of the issue of illegal constructions in the press and in political debates, it would be too easy to claim that there is no societal basis for more planning and regulation. Kosovo clearly looks in the direction of Western Europe, and focuses especially on countries like Switzerland and Germany where the majority of the diaspora lives.

Although awareness campaigns may contribute to a solution, the main challenge is perhaps to build expertise in policy makers. Below we give an overview of methods that were applied in the city of Peja by the programmes MuSPP and MobKos, and what was accomplished in terms of capacity building. Following results were achieved within MuSPP:

- Regarding the process of drafting the MDP and UDP, MuSPP granted assistance to the municipality in elaborating the procurement procedure. Eventually, the contract was awarded to a Dutch consultancy company. Within the municipal administration, a planning cell was set up that was assisted by the MuSPP team regarding the process management, which included an intensive series of public consultation meetings. As an outcome of this approach, in 2007, Peja was the first regional city with an adopted MDP and UDP.
- Immediately after the adoption of the UDP and MDP, a number of initiatives were taken in order to implement these strategic plans. The MuSPP team drafted an action plan, while the process management was again as much as possible left to the municipal planning team. As many stakeholders as possible were involved in the process, including a local NGO, an urban planning consultant from

Pristina, and some local businesses. Following sub-projects were initiated (Boussauw et al., 2007):

- A pilot project for drafting the Zatra URP, a planning process which is described into detail by Garstka (2010). A survey was commissioned from a local NGO.
  - The compilation of a traffic circulation plan and a city bus network.
  - Developing a vision for the implementation of an industrial estate at the desired location, and the redevelopment of the former military area.
  - Setting up a GIS system with the intention of integrating all available maps and aerial photographs in one dataset and making these easily accessible to the municipal staff.
  - The mapping of recent tourism developments in the national park next to the urban area, with the intention to counter sprawl of facilities.
- The capacity building that was realized by the MuSPP team in Peja is the most obvious when we consider the evolution of the involved professional staff more into detail:
    - The head of the planning unit and a local employee of the MuSPP team got the chance to participate in several international workshops.
    - A local employee of the MuSPP team, who was originally hired as a technical assistant (despite his bachelor's degree in architecture) left in 2010 to the U.S. in order to obtain a master's degree in urban planning (which is a very rare qualification in Kosovo). The U.S. programme under which his study was funded states that the beneficiary is obliged to work at least a few years in Kosovo after achieving his master's.
    - In 2009, the MuSPP team was reinforced with a Kosovar employee with an academic and professional background in Western Europe, who was willing to return to Kosovo. Also the consultancy company from Pristina that was appointed to draft the URP for the city centre hired an employee with a Western European master's degree in planning.

Within the MobKos project in Peja (2009-2011), the following activities contributed to capacity building in planning:

- The organization of a household survey on travel behaviour, traffic countings and a parking survey. These activities were subcontracted to a local consultant and a local NGO, who were assisted by a team of municipal civil servants and MobKos experts.
- The organization of a series of workshops on urban design with regard to urban mobility, the role of parking policy, public transport and cycling in an urban environment, and the importance of road safety and traffic livability.
- Delivering a series of lectures to architecture and geography students at the University of Pristina.

While it may be too early to assess the impact of the listed support programmes in the field, public concerns about problems related to the environment, mobility and urban planning are slowly but surely increasing. Therefore, the principal role of the support programmes in this process is to convert this emerging societal momentum into policy.

## Conclusions

In Kosovo, since 1999, problems on property rights have been demonstrating that land and property management are critical issues in a post-conflict situation. But property is only one facet emerging from the at that time present administrative vacuum. Although Kosovo's spatial-economic history is very European-style, today the region is faced with urban development problems that strongly remind of the situation in developing countries. Given the financial imbalance between private investors and the regulating authorities, the former are clearly more powerful than the latter. Moreover, public administrations lack a strong vision and qualified personnel. The fact that informal settlements and illegal constructions appear almost weekly in the press or on a political agenda, does not alter this problem.

Since 2000, various training and support programmes have contributed to the redevelopment of an institutional framework within which a more sustainable form of development can be pursued. Not only on-the-job training of civil servants is important in this, but also the enhancement of the level of planning education, investments in capacity building in NGO's and consultants, and encouraging repatriation of Kosovar experts that were trained abroad should be considered as

promising strategies. Ultimately, this approach should lead to a situation where planning becomes an instrument to develop a sustainable, democratic and equal society.

## References

Bieber, F. and Ž. Daskalovski (2003) *Understanding the war in Kosovo*. London: Frank Cass.

Blumi, I. (2003) "Defining social spaces by way of deletion: the untold story of Albanian migration in the postwar period." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. 29(6), pp. 949-965.

Boussauw, K., A. Sallova, S. Daci, M. Gashi, G. Lagerqvist and J. Bergerhoff (2007) *Preparatory works for implementation of MDP and UDP Pejë/Peć: Compilation*. Peja/Peć: UN-Habitat MuSPP.

Boussauw, K., J. Zuallaert and V. Perani (2010) *How do people travel in Peja? Results from the Household Travel Survey, 2010*. Peja: MobKos.

Cavrić, B. I. and Z. Nedović-Budić (2006) "Urban development, legislation, and planning in post-socialist Zagreb". In: S. Tsenkova and Z. Nedović-Budić (Eds.) *The Urban Mosaic of Post-Socialist Europe: Space, Institutions and Policy*. Heidelberg: Physica-Verlag.

CIA (2011) *The World Factbook* from <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>.

Cordial, M. and K. Røsandhaug (2009) *Post-Conflict Property Restitution: The Approach in Kosovo and Lessons Learned for Future International Practice*. Leiden: Brill.



Dawson, A. H. (1987) "Yugoslavia". In: A. H. Dawson (Eds.) *Planning in Eastern Europe*. Beckenham: Croom Helm.

D'hondt, F. (2006) *Re-creating Kosovo cities*. 42nd ISoCaRP Congress. Istanbul.

ESK (2008) *Ndryshimet demografike të popullsisë së Kosovës në periudhën 1948-2006*. Pristina: PISG - Ministry of Public Services.

Garstka, G. J. (2010) "Post-conflict urban planning: The regularization process of an informal neighborhood in Kosova/o." *Habitat International*. 34(1), pp. 86-95.

KCA (2008) *The Kosovo Cadastral Agency and The Cadastral Sector in Kosovo Business Plan 2009 - 2014*. Pristina: Republic of Kosovo - Government.

Minervini, C. (2002) "Housing reconstruction in Kosovo." *Habitat International*. 26(4), pp. 571–590.

MobKos (2010) *Building Urban Mobility Together in Kosovo*. from <http://www.mobkos.eu>.

O'Neill, W. G. (2002) *Kosovo: An Unfinished Peace*. London: Lynne Rienner.

Petersen, A. (1996) *Dictionary of Islamic Architecture*. London: Routledge.

Pleskovic, B. (1988) "Squatter housing in Yugoslavia". In: C. V. Patton (Eds.) *Spontaneous Shelter: International Perspectives and Prospects*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Pogačnik, A. (1987) "Yugoslav experience in the decentralisation of urban and regional planning systems." *Landscape and Urban Planning*. 14(1), pp. 441-443.

Pogačnik, A. (1997) "Urban design of Slovenian towns: protection and future development." DISP Dokumente und Informationen zur Schweizerischen Orts-, Regional- und Landesplanung (130), pp. 30-34.

UN-Habitat Kosovo (2011) Programmes. from <http://www.unhabitat-kosovo.org/?cid=2,256>

Vickers, M. (1998) *Between Serb and Albanian: A History of Kosovo*. London: Hurst.

Zëri (2011) Zëri.Info from <http://www.zeri.info/>.

## Figures

Fig. 1: An example of social-realist architecture: the university library, Pristina

Fig. 2: Formerly socially owned housing project, Peja

Fig. 3: Rural Albanian clan-style house, village of Junik

Fig. 4: Informal urban expansion, Dardania neighbourhood, Peja

Fig. 5: Similar new urban dwellings belonging to a family compound, Gjilan

Fig. 6: Highrise building violating the directive of the UDP, Peja

Fig. 7: Illegally constructed building with access on the rail track, Peja

Fig. 8: Informal ribbon development along the highway, Peja



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4



Fig. 5



Fig. 6



Fig. 7



Fig. 8