



## THE FUTURE IS RESILIENT

TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE THROUGH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT



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URBAN PLAN-NING FOR SOCIAL RESIL-IENCE IN URBAN NEIGHBOR-HOODS. TRANS-FORMATIVE CHANGE THROUGH CIVIC FNGAGEMENT.

The aim of the Urban Planning for Social Resilience in Urban Neighborhoods. Transformative Change through civic engagement (UPRUN) research project is to provide future planners and other built environment professionals with a more sophisticated understanding of neighbourhood resilience. For this, UPRUN will identify strategies to strengthen social participation, resilience and sustainability in urban communities and neighbourhoods.

In many European cities, we can observe that civil society actors increasingly appropriate public spaces and contribute to the co-production of neighborhoods. As consequence, numerous 'experimental spaces' exist in cities, where 'city makers' develop social innovations and test new structures or new practices. Social innovations that emerge from organized citizenship have the potential to make a valuable contribution in addressing social and cultural issues in the neighborhoods of European cities, and can contribute to the development of resilient communities. These transformative processes have the potential to confront fragmentation and exclusion in neighbourhoods, and are thought to provide the groundwork for an educational mission of architects, urban planners and designers and other built environment professionals. However, these developments are not reflected in higher education curricula to date. The aim of UPRUN is thus to provide future planners and other built environment professionals with a more sophisticated understanding of neighbourhood resilience. For this, UPRUN will identify strategies to strengthen social participation, resilience and sustainability in urban communities and neighbourhoods. The findings are used to develop hybrid teaching modules enabling students to make urban neighbourhoods more resilient via planning, collective action, innovation and learning.

Therefore, UPRUN will – in a comparative perspective – (i) analyse to what extent civil society actors can take responsibility for 'their' neighbourhoods or communities; (ii) identify the potentials and risks associated with civic engagement concerning social resilience and democratic development; (iii) analyse how sustainable transitions and urban neighbourhoods can be implemented successfully; (iv) examine the role of urban and regional planning in achieving social resilience and sustainability; (v) identify strategies for both civil society initiatives and urban planners to strengthen social participation, social resilience, democratic development and urban sustainability; and (vi) to contribute to a comprehensive understanding of resilient urban neighbourhoods.

UPRUN consists of several modules that build on and complement each other in the development of a digital, interactive knowledge and learning platform. The different modules include theoretical-conceptual approaches, quantitative and qualitative research methods as well as online studios, workshops, etc. to derive potential planning and design approaches for a more resilient development of urban neighbourhoods in European cities. The aim of the online-survey is to include the knowledge of civil society actors and municipal representatives. The focus here is on the challenges faced by community-based initiatives in realising their ideas and goals, but also on the experiences of local planners in dealing with those initiatives in different contexts across Europe. Therefore, the online-survey intend to generate extensive and robust empirical findings on potentials and barriers on social participation, social resilience, democratic development and urban sustainability in urban communities, based on the experiences of local stakeholders in Europe.

The intention of the case study analysis is to learn more about (i) the motivation of civic actors to take on responsibility for (former) public tasks and the resulting changes in the division of tasks between civil society and urban planning, (ii) the role of the built environment and historical or cultural heritage as important pre-condition for local identity and civic engagement and (iii) constraining and facilitating factors for planning resilient neighbourhoods. These goals are achieved with the comparative case study analysis as we are convinced that case-based learning contributes to a better understanding of the nature of difference, and can generate ideas and propositions that can more adequately inform practice on the development of resilient neighbourhoods. In this regard, it is the objective of the case study analysis (i) to deepen our knowledge from the online-survey and (ii) to generate a data base consisting of various case studies that can be used for different teaching and learning purposes. In this module, we summarise the results from the first two modules and derive requirements for the teaching of future planners, architects, civil engineers and other built environmental professionals. We will develop innovative and activating teaching and learning formats and make them available on the knowledge and learning platform. This encompasses the development of the content and the materials for a 12-week course on 'planning resilient neighbourhoods', including e-learning components using innovative participatory tools and utilizing digital pedagogies to provide an online learning platform that fosters a collaborative and participatory experience.

Each partner takes the 12-week course with all the materials and test it at his/her respective institution. In order to evaluate the experiences with the digital and hybrid teaching formats, a monitoring system will be set up, evaluating the experiences of different user groups (teachers, students, external actors such as civil society actors, etc.) and identifying potentials for optimisation of the knowledge and learning platform. These can be technical, conceptual or pedagogical improvement options. On this basis, appropriate improvements to the knowledge and learning platform will be carried out. The aim is to have a robust digital learning environment, that enables interested lecturers and university teachers, but also students, to actively and interactively engage with the planning of resilient urban neighbourhoods from a holistic perspective.



This track emphasizes theoretical perspectives or conceptual approaches on urban planning, sustainable development and community resilience. Potential papers might focus on strategies enhancing (social) resilience and the sustainable development of urban neighborhoods (e.g. resilient urban design, sustainable development practices, climate adaptation strategies, green infrastructure) or might address strategies fostering cultural and social diversity in urban areas (e.g. inclusive urban design, inclusive public spaces for marginalized communities, multicultural neighborhoods, preserving cultural heritage, social cohesion). Additionally, papers can examine the role of public spaces for creating vibrant, accessible, and functional urban areas (e.g. design and management of public spaces, public art and placemaking, reinvent streets and public spaces as enablers of multimodality and car-free mobility). Finally, papers can explore how urban planning can promote community health and well-being, and address health disparities in urban neighborhoods (e.g. health-oriented urban design, access to green spaces, urban health equity).

# DIGITAL PLACEMAKING OF MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES: THE CASE OF PUBLIC SPACES IN NAZARETH. ACRE. TIRA. AND TAYBEH

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### **ABSTRACT**

Public spaces are essential in sustaining the public realm and affecting the quality of people's lives. Moreover, the recent extended development and impact of digital culture, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, led to a growing reliance on ICTs and promoted bottom-up initiatives through "smart communities"; locals use digital tools to improve their lives. This research aspires to contribute to understanding the intersection of public spaces and smart communities while focusing on marginalized communities' engagement in the process of digital placemaking.

Public spaces of the Palestinian Arab towns in Israel have not been extensively studied, and academic resources are even more limited in relation to the digital context. Therefore, the research aims to explore the affinity and interconnections of three core elements at play in the process of digital placemaking of marginalized communities: public spaces; virtual space and ICT uses; and co-design processes. By connecting these three, it aspires to understand the process, prospects, and challenges of digital placemaking in marginalized communities. The study focuses on public space placemaking processes in four Palestinian Arab towns and neighborhoods in Israel, through the project of Qalb Al-Balad [The city's heart in Arabic]: Nazareth, Acre, Tira, and Taybeh, and identifies the roles of digital participation, communication, and design tools.

Utilizing a qualitative approach to examine four case studies of the Qalb Al-Balad placemaking project, it portrays the dynamics of digital placemaking in physical and virtual spaces in marginalized communities. Data is driven from documents, such as reports, appendices, newspaper articles, media interviews, and meeting minutes produced by the project coordinator. In addition, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with 17 administrative staff, advisory committee members, the project coordinator, activists, and architects for each site. The analysis focused on encoding the digital data platforms, mainly the ICT usage through all stages of the project.

The findings suggest leading scenarios for the process of digital placemaking in Palestinian Arab towns in Israel suffering from lacking and neglecting public spaces, such as the middle-out engagement approach and offer a model for digital placemaking based on emerging topologies related to civil society organizations' partnership, local authority collaboration, public participation, and limited budgets as part of placemaking in a marginalized community. Additionally, it singles out major challenges that placemaking practitioners might encounter in such projects as well as opportunities to empower a marginalized community. Finally, a set of guidelines to inform the design process of digital placemaking initiatives in marginalized communities is proposed.

## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND SOCIAL RESILIENCE THROUGH THE PRISM OF SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

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### **ABSTRACT**

Klinenberg (2018) defines 'social infrastructure' as "the physical places and organizations that shape the way people interact" (p. 4). He argues that these places and the interactions they facilitate are crucial components in promoting civic engagement. In addition, his study found that neighborhoods with more 'social infrastructure' are more resilient, and as a result, leading to lower death rates following a natural disaster. The contributions of 'social infrastructure' and interactions to civic engagement and social resilience are discussed in various studies. Yet, a more comprehensive framework of the aspects influencing people's opportunities to interact in the urban 'social infrastructure', that will account for distribution, access, exclusion, inequalities, design, management, maintenance, and more is needed to promote civic engagement and social resilience.

This paper presents a scoping review of studies using the term 'social infrastructure'. The scoping review aims to advance our understanding of the term and its implications for social resilience and people's ability to participate in civic engagement opportunities. An initial sample of studies focusing on 'social infrastructure' was analyzed to formulate a query. The formulated query includes three groups of phrases alongside the term 'social infrastructure' itself. The first group consists of words such as 'interactions' that represent the role of the social infrastructure. The second group consists of words describing the social infrastructure's potential impact on people and communities. The third group is the names of two writers, Klinenberg and Oldenburg, whom researchers often rely on when defining the term 'social infrastructure'. The query runs against two databases – ProQuest and Scopus focusing on the years 2014-2024. After removing duplicates and manual filtering for excluded items in which 'social infrastructure' is not at the core of the research or does not refer to urbanism, 67 items remain. Research method, variables, research field, population, countries, etc., were then used to classify these items.

This review indicates the broad scope of studies engaging with 'social infrastructure', examines various practices to enhance interactions in spaces, and observations on distribution, access, and inequality aspects. The analysis revealed, however, that to promote policy and urban planning that encourages civic engagement and social resilience, it is necessary to broaden the understanding of access to 'social infrastructure'. The review implies a two-layer observation on 'social infrastructure'. First is access to 'social infrastructure' and its distribution. On top of that, the second layer discusses the opportunities for interactions the spaces enable proactively. The intersections between the two layers allow us to gain new insights on the role of 'social infrastructure' and shed light on gaps in the field of knowledge.

Keywords: : social infrastructure, civic engagement, social resilience, interactions, scoping review

# THE URBAN DESIGN OF RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBOURHOODS AS A TOOL OF PROMOTING THE FORMATION OF STRONG AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES AN EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE FROM NOVI SAD. SERBIA

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### **ABSTRACT**

Collective city living is the dominant form of co-habitation in today's ever-growing cities, with the majority of residential buildings erected today usually taking up their entire intended building lots and are designed to enable the maximisation of profitable square meters. However, despite the residential density that is gained from housing a vast number of people in the same building, nowadays we rarely encounter strong communities stemming from these housing forms. This comes from the fact that although residential density is a prerequisite for the formation of communities, in order for communities to be organically formed and strengthened, there is a need for frequent and meaningful social encounters of residents. Therefore, if an urban residential complex is envisioned in a way that reaches beyond the building itself and a neighbourhood is created with the integration of green spaces, urban furniture and specific spaces meant for various communal activities, then there is potential for the formation of strong communities. This paper aims to apply criteria derived from social, psychological and spatial theories and research regarding the creation of communities to a real and existing urban block in Novi Sad, Serbia, in order to evaluate it and showcase what kind of urban neighbourhood design has the ability to promote the creation and development of long-lasting, healthy and resilient communities. The aforementioned criteria stem from the basis of the formation of communities - derived from Steven Brint's classification of communities, as well as other studies which highlight the importance of relationships between residents in a neighbourhood community and their correlation with urban space. Since encounters of residents are facilitated by the spatial frame of their housing block, it is possible to analyse an existing urban block in Novi Sad in regards to its urban infrastructure and programmes which may aid in the facilitation of encounters, communal activities and shared experiences vital to the strengthening of communities.

### **PUBLIC SPACES FOR ALL**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Public spaces are of great importance for the sustainability urban neighbourhoods, ones that serve as platforms for civic engagement, cultural exchange and community driven interactions. As Jan Gehl highlights, life between buildings in public spaces is both more relevant and interesting to look at in the long run, therefore these defining features of urban vitality can be viewed as an essential tool for connecting and creating diverse communities and cultures. This paper will examine the potential and possibilities of said public spaces in driving civic engagement, emphasising their role in enhancing social cohesion and coexistence, as well as the suitable development of urban areas.

The research will take Skopje as a case study, a city with a complex socio-political and cultural history, in which the reciprocity between public space morphology and civic life will be explored. The public spaces in Skopje are shaped by various historical and cultural changes and evolution stages, providing a unique field to analyse how design, function and accessibility impact civic engagement and community interaction. By studying these spaces, this paper will uncover and suggest possible strategies to creating environments that are inclusive, vibrant and adaptable to the everchanging needs of the urban neighbourhoods.

The study will take on a qualitative synthesis approach, integrating a review of existing literature with typo-morphological analysis of the public spaces of Skopje. This methodology will enable an exploration of the spatial characteristics of these areas as well as their socio-cultural aspects. The main question to guide this paper is related to how can the design and organisation of public spaces foster civic engagement, aid in strengthening community resilience and contribute to the sustainable development of the urban neighbourhoods? By researching the typologies and morphologies of these spaces alongside their social and cultural significance, this paper will identify possible practical strategies for creating inclusive urban environments which will bridge together social segregation while serving as sites for interaction. Public spaces will be explored as more than just physical environments in which different synergies can be created, they are dynamic spaces with diverse activities and rhythms, creating a sense of belonging. They can act as catalysts for civic participation, encouraging the involvement of different communities and merging the social fragmentation as well as the declined community engagement.

Using Skopje as a case study, this paper will demonstrate how experiences from its public space development can be used to broaden strategies for urban sustainability. By emphasising the importance of public spaces as both social and cultural catalysts, this study will contribute to the discourse of transformative urban design and it will offer insight for architects, urban planners and the public into the potential of public spaces in relation to creating adaptable, inclusive and contemporary neighbourhoods faced with different urban challenges.

This research will emphasise the view towards public spaces as not only morphological features of the urban development, but as integral components of the city life that shape and area shaped by the communities that use and engage with them.

Keywords: Urban development, public spaces, communities, diverse neighbourhoods, civic engagement

### BUILDING RESILIENT COMMUNITIES THROUGH DEMOCRATIC URBAN PLANNING THE MINISTRY OF SPACE APPROACH

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### **ABSTRACT**

In the context of a democratic deficit that often marginalises citizens from the processes that shape their cities, building resilient neighbourhoods requires innovative approaches to community engagement and urban planning. The Ministry of Space, a Belgrade-based non-profit collective, has pioneered initiatives that empower citizens to actively challenge the exclusionary urban planning practices, promoting democratic values and fostering a deeper sense of ownership over their immediate surroundings. This paper explores how the Ministry's approach addresses the democratic deficit in urban planning by educating, informing, and engaging local communities to create more inclusive, participatory, and resilient neighbourhoods.

The primary aim of this work is to demonstrate how community-driven initiatives in urban planning can disrupt the democratic deficit and promote more equitable and sustainable urban development. Rather than merely offering citizens a platform, the Ministry focuses on mobilising communities to actively push for their inclusion, ensuring that local needs and voices are not sidelined by decision-makers. These efforts focus on shifting the power dynamics in urban planning, creating pressure to address the needs of different communities in urban design processes.

The Ministry of Space employs a multifaceted approach that includes informing the public, organising workshops, holding citizens' assemblies, facilitating exchange and mutual learning. These initiatives provide communities with the knowledge and tools to understand urban policies, advocate for their needs, and influence planning decisions. Through case studies from Belgrade, this paper illustrates how informed, mobilised citizen engagement can challenge entrenched power structures and influence local urban development, especially in a context where public voices are routinely overlooked.

The Ministry has supported dozens of citizen initiatives across Belgrade, resulting in increased civic participation in urban planning processes. These initiatives demonstrate that when communities are empowered with the right knowledge and resources, they can assert themselves in shaping their urban environments and demand more responsive and responsible development practices.

By fostering civic participation and mobilising collective action, cities can become more resilient, inclusive, and attuned to the needs of their residents. The Ministry of Space's work exemplifies how grassroots engagement and pressure can transform urban planning from a top-down, exclusionary process into one that is more socially and democratically inclusive, creating more just and resilient urban environments for all.

Keywords: democratic deficit, urban planning, resilient neighbourhoods, community engagement, citizens initiatives, democratic urban development

### CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN URBAN MARKETPLACES: LABOR UNIONS AS DRIVERS OF RESILIENT URBAN PLANNING IN HAIFA'S TALPIOT MARKET

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### **ABSTRACT**

Urban markets are inherently multifaceted, contributing to urban resilience by fostering economic and social mobility, facilitating meaningful interactions among diverse communities, holding significant cultural and historical importance for local identity, as well as ensuring food security. Though markets may seem to operate independently or even counter to other urban systems, they are both physical and social constructs that influence spatial experiences. Even those that appear unregulated possess underlying social infrastructures that impact their surroundings.

The regeneration of markets cannot be separated from the broader regeneration of urban spaces. The dialectical and dynamic relationship between markets and the city presents a unique opportunity: markets can be utilized as policy tools to drive comprehensive renewal of both physical and social infrastructure.

Examining the regeneration process of Talpiot Market in Haifa, we focus on the interactions between the vendors' union and local governance and provide insights on how labor unions, through community-based activism and organizational capacity, participate and shape the urban sphere. We seek to illuminate how labor unions, using a bottom-up approach, can influence city planning alongside formal, top-down efforts. This collaborative model aims to bridge grassroots insights with institutional strategies, demonstrating the potential of combining these approaches to create more inclusive, responsive urban spaces, amid widespread crises.

Talpiot Market, established in 1940 (during the British Mandate era) to strengthen Haifa's local economy, remains significant both culturally and architecturally within Haifa's diverse ethnic landscape, where it serves both Palestinian and Jewish communities. While the market's historical importance endures, it has faced continuous neglect over the years. This neglect is reflected in shifts in urban consumption, the rise of shopping malls, and limited infrastructural support for its surrounding neighborhood. Consequently, the market has become increasingly marginalized, with socio-economic challenges exacerbating its decline.

Currently, the market is undergoing an extensive urban renewal process, which positions it as a distinct case for studying the intersection of self-organized labor groups, urban policy, and participatory planning. The renewal process involves multiple, often conflicting dynamics: negotiations and occasional cooperation between the vendors' union and the municipality, internal disputes among vendors and limited involvement of vendors in the process by union leaders, external tensions with municipal authorities, and significant delays in the execution of the program. Simultaneously, gentrification has brought more affluent populations to the neighborhood, transforming it into a tourist destination and revitalizing local businesses.

Within this framework, the vendors' union as an embodiment of the "urban commons" offers an added layer of insight—one that delves into the negotiation over the city through the negotiation over the market.

Our research aims to investigate how labor unions influence urban planning and resilience through their interactions with local governance at Haifa's Talpiot Market. Using a qualitative case study approach, data will be collected from semi-structured interviews, municipal documents, and archival records to analyze the dynamics between labor organizations and municipal authorities in shaping urban spaces.

From this analysis we outline a potential framework for planners and policymakers, positioning marketplaces like Talpiot Market as proposed models of social resilience generators.

Keywords: urban markets, social resilience, inclusive urban governance, market revitalization

## GOOD PRACTICES OF CIVIC ACTIVISM IN BUILDING RESILIENCE FOR SUSTAINABLE URBAN FUTURES: LEARNING FROM SKOPJE

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### **ABSTRACT**

The Industrial Revolution, which began in the nineteenth century, marked a significant turning point in human urban history. It led to the replacement of agriculture and handicrafts with factories and mechanized production. These processes of industrialization, which started over two hundred years ago and continue today, are significantly increasing pressure on both natural ecosystems and urban environments. The concentration of heavy industry in economically prosperous cities caused many displaced peasants to migrate to urban areas unprepared for such rapid population growth. This influx resulted in poor living conditions, socioeconomic inequality, and environmental degradation.

Among the first to address these negative urban conditions were social reformers such as William and Catherine Booth in London and Jane Addams in Chicago, who laid the groundwork for urban missions. This legacy of social reform that began with pioneers advocating for social justice has evolved into contemporary movements. For instance, Jane Jacobs inspired citizen-led urbanism, while grassroots movements have emerged to advocate for mobility justice, such as Amsterdam's Stop de Kindermoord and Detroit's Slow Roll. Additionally, advocates for environmental justice have initiated projects like Guerrilla Gardening, Portland's Depaving, and Medellin's Green Corridors.

In the development of resilient and sustainable urban ecosystems, civic participation has emerged as a powerful force that often fills the gaps left by institutions and governments. One notable example is Skopje's ongoing efforts to promote city greening and citizen-led urbanism. These initiatives illustrate how urban activism can energize and improve the effectiveness of existing institutions in the quest for a better city. Ultimately, it is clear that civic action has transformed urban spaces by promoting social justice, green infrastructure, equitable mobility, and participatory urbanism. This paper examines effective practices from these movements and key figures, analyzing their impact on sustainable urban resilience and drawing lessons for the future of cities.

# SPATIAL (IN)JUSTICE AND EX/INCLUSION IN URBAN DEVELOPMENT THE CASE STUDY OF SHUTO ORIZARI. SKOPJE

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### **ABSTRACT**

The 21st century is characterized by a rapid intellectual, technological and economic development, which reflects a continuous emergence of new social and cultural currents and trends. The city, seen as a state of constant formation, is directly shaped by those mentioned socio-economic and socio-political relations. As such, it is based on a continuous urban transformation, which causes its constant growth, often uncontrolled. As a consequence, more than half of the world's population now resides in cities, a proportion expected to rise to 70% by 2050. But on the contrary, instead of a positive development, it is assumed that this rapid urbanization will be accompanied by significant challenges, including the proliferation of informal settlements and slums, where many people will be forced to live in substandard conditions with limited access to basic services and resources. Consequently, through a multidisciplinary approach that integrates theories of spatial justice and inclusive urban planning, this research explores the dynamics of spatial (in)justice within urban transformation processes, using the city of Skopje and the municipality of Shuto Orizari as focal points. The paper argues that urban change should not be seen merely as an inevitable phenomenon but as a right and responsibility to create urban environments that grow purposefully and inclusively, addressing the needs of both current and future generations. Additionally, the research uses the space syntax method to explore how urban planning and redevelopment processes either reinforce or mitigate spatial injustices. It highlights the ways in which factors such as economic status, racial and ethnic identity, and historical neglect contribute to the exclusion of marginalized communities, particularly in low-income neighbourhoods, resulting in gentrification and displacement.

The case study - Shuto Orizari, predominantly inhabited by the Roma community, serves as a poignant illustration. Despite its status as one of the most densely populated areas in the city, Shuto Orizari has historically been marginalized in urban planning initiatives and infrastructural development. The district is plagued by significant deficiencies in essential services, with numerous residents residing in informal settlements or inadequately constructed housing that lacks consistent access to clean water, sanitation, and electricity. Additionally, public services such as healthcare and education are markedly insufficient, resulting in elevated dropout rates, restricted access to medical facilities, and limited employment opportunities. These compounded factors contribute to the ongoing deterioration of Shuto Orizari, reinforcing a cycle of inequality, exclusion, and deprivation that undermines the neighbourhood's overall conditions and hinders socio-economic progress.

By exploring the interconnection of egalitarianism and inclusion, the study aims to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the definition of resilient societies and to serve as a foundation for advocating policies and practices that prioritize social equity, civic engagement of marginalized groups, alongside their active involvement, ensuring that the benefits of urban redevelopment are accessible to all.

# ENHANCING URBAN SUSTAINABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY A GIS APPROACH TO WALKABILITY IN THE 15-MINUTE CITY MODEL

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### **ABSTRACT**

Accessibility to essential urban functions is critical for creating sustainable, resilient, and liveable neighbour-hoods. This study focuses on Tirana, Albania, analysing how the "15-minute city" concept can improve urban sustainability and social resilience by promoting equitable access to essential amenities. Using GIS tools, we assess pedestrian accessibility by examining walking distances, travel times, and identifying gaps in essential services.

The findings reveal that Tirana faces significant challenges in accessibility, with notable gaps in the distribution of essential services. This uneven distribution limits residents' ability to meet their daily needs locally, especially for those relying on walking as their primary mode of transport. The lack of proximity to critical services increases vulnerability and hinders social resilience, particularly for economically or physically disadvantaged groups.

This GIS-based approach provides a robust, data-driven framework for urban planners to assess current accessibility levels and design targeted interventions to address identified service gaps. By promoting the redistribution of essential services and enhancing pedestrian access, the study demonstrates how the 15-minute city model can foster social resilience, equitable mobility, and improved quality of life for residents.

In conclusion, the 15-minute city model serves as a powerful tool for shaping public priorities and urban planning strategies, integrating walkability and accessibility as foundational principles. By linking urban sustainability with social resilience, this study highlights how GIS-based methods can contribute to creating safer, more inclusive, and adaptive urban environments.

# INCREASING URBAN RESILIENCE BY INVOLVING CHILDREN IN PLANNING THROUGH CULTURAL EVENTS: THE CASE OF KAUNAS CITY

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### **ABSTRACT**

Introduction. Many researchers highlight how well-designed and child-friendly urban environments can enhance urban resilience. A favorable environment for children is increasingly considered as a foundation of sustainable and resilient cities, therefore the well-being of children is increasingly prioritized when planning urban spaces, emphasizing not only the creation of an environment adapted to them but also their active participation in the very process of planning and the creation of their environment. Research also indicates that individuals who actively participate in culture are more civic-minded and feel empowered to influence political decisions. This approach ensures that cities are not only functional but also inclusive, responsive to the needs of urban residents, and fostering community resilience.

The aim of the article is to show a causal relationship between the design of resilient cities and the role of children in design processes through cultural events. It focuses on the importance of involving children in urban planning processes through cultural events and argues that engaging children not only encourages their critical thinking and creativity but also strengthens their environmental awareness, ultimately contributing to the growth of civic engagement.

The approach is mainly based on quantitative literature analysis and qualitative cases studies. The paper explores various cultural events in the city of Kaunas that involved children of different age groups, such as the Architecture Festival for children what already was organized twice, two events for children where they were invited to create their ideal courtyard of block of flats buildings, and the like. The methods, goals and results of involving children in these events were analyzed, as well as what worked and what did not.

The analysis reveals how these cultural events and experiential learning opportunities integrate children's citizenship within urban planning processes. The knowledge gained about their environment helps children develop flexible thinking and the ability to evaluate their surroundings through social and civic processes. Overall, research demonstrates that this engagement contributes to the creation of healthier, greener, and more resilient urban environments.

# THE ROLE OF CEMETERIES AS EXCLUDED SPACES IN THE URBAN CONTEXT OF BALKAN CITIES AND THEIR POTENTIAL AS INCLUSIVE SPACES

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### **ABSTRACT**

Cemeteries are unique urban spaces and differ qualitatively from other types of areas in the urban landscape. As a result, they function as intermediary zones with a distinctive role in society. Such spaces exist outside societal norms and at the same time, they carry a symbolic significance to the public, reflecting the respective societal beliefs and norms. They exist between the boundary of two realms, the world of the living and the world of the afterlife, thus, these spaces challenge the meaning of time and space, resonate insights of the cultural and societal norms of different communities, functioning as heterotopic spaces. Due to this, the cemeteries are often positioned as isolated and discrete areas within the urban layout, usually occupying the peripheral parts of the city. While the cities expand and new urban strategies develop, the cemeteries are marginalized. Their boundaries or relation to the urban pattern become blurred, often excluded and seen as spaces only dedicated to the deceased. This leads to a physical disconnection of these spaces from the surrounding communities.

The research aims to primarily understand the character of cemeteries as threshold spaces by applying a theoretical framework based on the concept of "heterotopia" of Michel Foucault and Lefebvre's theories of social space. This research provides insights into how these spaces are positioned within the urban fabric of Balkan cities, using the context of Albania and similar urban landscapes; analysing the relationship of these areas with the urban structure as a reflection of societal and cultural norms, and its effect on the expansion of the city. The study aims to explore through spatial and comparative analysis, how the cemeteries interact with the surrounding community as excluded parts of the urban layout and consider whether they provide the potential to function as inclusive public spaces, compared to the Western experience which has increasingly integrated these spaces as recreational areas within the urban context. In addition, through these observations, the paper aims to identify potential community engagement strategies for reintegrating these heterotopic spaces as integrated areas, serving as public spaces within the urban landscape, exploring their role in community engagement, and fostering cultural reflection.

Keywords: cemeteries, heterotopic spaces, urban exclusion, urban boundary, inclusive spaces, community engagement, social resilience

## A STUDY ON SOCIAL ASPECTS OF URBAN NEIGHBOURHOODS IN SERBIA

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### **ABSTRACT**

Measuring citizens' satisfaction with social attributes in urban neighbourhoods is important for further (sustainable) development, for community resilience, as well as for improving the quality of urban life. In Serbia, no systematic place-based research has been conducted on this topic until now, and one of the reasons is that the national law doesn't recognize neighbourhood as a relevant spatial entity. The goal of this study is to research and potentially identify a common community stand regarding social aspects of urban neighbourhoods in the cities in Serbia. The identification of a common ground would help researchers, stakeholders and decision-makers to establish priorities in their actions towards neighbourhood development, and sustainability and resilience achievement.

Encompassed study area comprises three centrally positioned urban neighbourhoods in three medium-sized Serbian cities with a population between 50000 – 100000 inhabitants: Kraljevo, Valjevo and Kruševac. Central neighbourhoods in medium-sized cities were intentionally selected, as these are the most developed socio-spatial units nested in the most common size-based type of urban environment in Serbia. The size of the neighbourhood adopted for the purpose of this research refers to a radial physical distance of 400 meters from the place of residence of the respondents.

The survey was conducted in the period from November 2023 - March 2024, using a combination of online questionnaires and the face-to-face interviews, to ensure the inclusion of respondents without access to a computer and the Internet. The respondents from all three neighbourhoods were selected using a random sampling method securing high internal validity. The size of respondents' sample was determined based on adopted number of variables including the neighbourhood size, resulting in 50 respondents per a neighbourhood. The responders from all three studied neighbourhoods and three cities provided the similar answers, thus allowing to define a common ground. Namely, the results reveal that the residents were the least satisfied, i.e., the most dissatisfied with the involvement in decision-making processes as regards interventions in infrastructure, and design and planning of their neighbourhoods. Next, most responders were also dissatisfied with the potential for involvement in joint activities within the neighbourhood. This is followed by the sense of belonging to the neighbourhood, and the security. On the other hand, the relations with neighbours were evaluated as the greatest social strength in studied neighbourhoods. Overall, the social component was perceived important by most residents from studied neighbourhoods, regardless of gender, age, work status, and the level of education. A particularly relevant finding from this research concerns the high observed contrast between measured satisfaction with interpersonal relationships and the sense of belonging to the community (which can be explained by the wider cultural context), on the one hand, and the dissatisfaction with possibilities for participation in neighbourhood planning and development processes, on the other hand. Next to that, results indicate that citizens are aware of the shortcomings in their neighbourhoods. Bearing in mind the said, the course of future actions of researchers, stakeholders and decision-makers should be straightforwardly directed towards exploring the optimal models for citizen engagement in neighbourhood planning and design.

Keywords: urban neighbourhood, residents' satisfaction, social attributes, participation, planning and development

## QUANTIFYING THE IMPACT OF GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE-RELATED COMMUNITY ACTIONS IN URBAN NEIGHBOURHOODS

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### **ABSTRACT**

Manifested climate changes and problems with urban densification and the pollution raise citizens' awareness of green infrastructure and its role, as visible from growing number of community efforts. However, the motivation and outcomes of green infrastructure-related community actions are rarely supported by quantified indicators. In general, the citizens lack a deeper knowledge about the impact of green infrastructure on neighbourhood sustainability and resilience. Expressing the effects of community actions through climate and environmental indicators is important for a deeper understanding of final result and the encouragement for new actions.

Taking an example of massive citizen action concerning green infrastructure, the goal of this study is to examine the scope of positive effects not foreseen when the collective endeavour was initiated, to quantify those effects and, thus, to point out the need for expanding the conventional approaches to formulating the space-based community actions. Namely, at the very beginning of 2024, about 1,300 citizens from the Blok 19a in New Belgrade, in capital city of Serbia, joined to prevent a potential construction on a free green lot within the neighbourhood. The main citizens' motives for action were to preserve architectural values and the place for socialisation and playing, i.e., to keep a pollution buffer zone from an adjacent busy road. This study complements citizens' reasons by investigating the impact of community action on thermal conditions in the Blok 19a. Using software QGIS and ENVI-met for Science, two 3-dimensional models of Blok 19a were created, the first with subject green area in its original state, and the second with a hypothetical building positioned in that green area. Both conditions were simulated for the date 16.07.2024 – the day with the highest measured day and night temperature overall.

The comparison of obtained results indicate that the construction of new building on the account of free green space would raise air temperature in whole neighbourhood Blok 19a, although not significantly. The greatest thermal impact is made on the first adjacent existing multi-residential building, as follows: during the night and in morning hours, the new building produces a notable heat load; after the noon, the new building reduces otherwise present thermal load on existing building and the interspace between new and existing building, due to high air temperature. The increase of thermal load during the night was larger than decrease during the day. Therefore, the citizens' action, next to initially recognised reasons, prevented the occurrence of additional heat during the night, that is the increase in the demand for cooling energy. The obtained findings add new climate, environmental and economic benefits to successful community action, however these contributions were not anticipated when the action started, nor in any of its further phases.

The study is an example how appropriate methods and tools can be used not only to measure success of organised civic actions, but also to enable their planning. The co-creation partnerships between citizens and scientists can play an important role in enlarging the positive impact of green infrastructure on urban resilience and sustainability.

Keywords: green infrastructure, citizens' action, indicator, resilience, sustainability

# ACHIEVING URBAN RESILIENCE: AN INTEGRAL APPROACH TO SOCIAL AND ECOLOGICAL SUSTAINABILITY IN RNM'S BORDER TOWNS

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### **ABSTRACT**

The resilience of urban environments has become a critical area of inquiry, particularly in regions characterized by socio-political complexities, ecological vulnerabilities, and planning challenges, such as the eastern border towns in the Republic of North Macedonia (RNM). This paper investigates urban resilience in three specific border cities—Kriva Palanka, Delcevo, and Dojran—each facing distinct challenges on spatial, social, economic, demographic, and ecological levels, making resilience-building essential for their sustainable development and stability.

To analyze resilience, the study employs Integral Theory, using the "All Quadrants All Levels" (AQAL) framework as a comprehensive analytical tool. This framework examines resilience across four interconnected dimensions: individual experiences, social dynamics and cultural perspectives, physical and ecological systems, and institutional and systemic structures. The AQAL method is adapted to explore the alignment between these dimensions, particularly focusing on pathways to achieve social and ecological sustainability. In this context, the study identifies how subjective and collective perceptions of urban challenges influence objective environmental and systemic outcomes.

This paper emphasizes the significance of citizen engagement in fostering social cohesion and sustainable urban transformation. By promoting participatory approaches and considering the active role of local communities in shaping their urban environments, the research highlights how collaborative initiatives can strengthen resilience. The paper contributes to the discourse on resilience by presenting a framework tailored to the specific challenges and opportunities in RNM's eastern border towns. The findings underscore the importance of combining theoretical models like 'AQAL' with actionable policies that incorporate citizen-driven strategies to advance resilient and sustainable urban systems.

# CITY QUARTERS AS A MECHANISM FOR URBAN REGENERATION CASE STUDY OF CITY OUARTER J14-RASADNIK SKOPJE

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### **ABSTRACT**

Urban planning is a long and complex process that requires careful consideration of various social, economic, and environmental factors and undertaking a series of activities for their improvement to ensure long-term success in the city where the intervention is implemented. To begin the planning process, it is essential to gather relevant and comprehensive information on the city in question, including demographic, economic, social, and environmental aspects of the area that is targeted for intervention. This data enables detailed analysis and evaluation, which helps with setting clear urban planning goals and strategies consider the existing transport infrastructure, housing, and green spaces.

This article discusses the background, necessity, goals, methods, and results of the urban renovation of the city quarter J14-Rasadnik, Municipality of Kisela Voda in Skopje. Moreover, it largely raises the question of finding the most appropriate proposals for the renewal of the existing city quarter as a case study of this research, because the area is currently facing numerous challenges due to its rapid and insufficiently planned urbanization.

The purpose of this research is to propose solutions for the urban renewal of the existing city quarter, by applying international design standards in correlation with general city standards and local standards, taking into account the local characteristics of the area and the demands and needs of the residents as primary users of the space. The applied research methods in this paper are both theoretical and practical. They focus on the current situation in which a dysfunctional neighbourhood is located and the possibilities for its improvement.

The theoretical methods are firmly supported by a clear follow-up of defined project guidelines for the analyzed city district J14-Rasadnik, Municipality of Kisela Voda in Skopje, precisely specified in the publicly announced International competition for a conceptual solution for Rasadnik, published in 2023. The project guidelines for this city district were prepared by experts from relevant public and governmental institutions with an active involvement of the residents of the city of Skopje, more specifically the residents of the municipality of Kisela Voda as an integral part of the participatory body. On the other hand, the practical methods aim to show how scientific knowledge about the city district in question, following the defined guidelines, can be implemented in practice, thereby creating a new, high-quality, modern architectural-urban solution for the existing city district, developed by the authors of the paper.

Taking into account the spatial and memory qualities of the area, we appreciate that with proper planning it has the potential to offer numerous residential, physical, socio-economic, and ecological perspectives. It is precisely the new proposed solutions for the renewal of the settlement presented in this paper that follow the principles of sustainability for balanced economic, social, and environmental development of the area and beyond. Thus, it is expected that they should become a relevant basis for further development of urban and project documentation. Furthermore, the methodology applied in this paper in the development of an architectural-urban solution for the existing city quarter is expected to lead to the creation of new policies in urban planning and the introduction of new programs for urban regeneration that are expected to be applicable in any other city/district that faces with the problem of inefficiency and dysfunctionality.

Keywords: urban planning, urban renovation, urban renewal, architectural-urban solution, sustainability

# GOING BEYOND THE BRONX. COLLABORATIVE MAPPING AS A TOOL TO OVERCOME INEQUALITIES IN HOUSING RIGHTS IN EAST NAPLES

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### **ABSTRACT**

The ongoing regeneration of the Taverna del Ferro housing estate in East Naples, known as the Bronx, marks the beginning of a significant urban transformation in a neighbourhood historically burdened by social and urban decay. The blue fences surrounding the site serve as a symbol of the ongoing change.

The project was promoted under the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP) funding and followed a strict timeline. During the project, various challenges emerged, leading to temporary halts in the works. Once these difficulties were overcome, the project resumed its progress.

Environmental and energy transitions are key components of the NRPP project, and citizen involvement is a priority in the administration's political agenda. The town council is striving to develop innovative regulatory approaches, particularly by creating new forms of social agreements that ensure the active participation of community members in the ongoing transformations.

This paper presents the results of a mapping activity carried out with the "Ex Taverna del Ferro" fight committee and inhabitants. In anticipation of the opening of the construction site and the related changes, the primary objective of the survey was to capture an overview of the formal and informal uses of the ground-floor spaces in the Taverna del Ferro residential buildings and the surrounding garages. The mapping was complemented by interviews with key local witnesses from the community and associations.

The case study prompts reflection on the role of collaborative mapping and interviews as tools for actively involving residents in the housing estate regeneration according to their requests and experience in the neighbourhood. This approach serves as a lens for analysing the relationships between local stakeholders, uncovering inequalities and power relationships, thus treating potential conflicts during the housing transformation.

The paper explores how expectations and perceptions emerging from the collaborative mapping and interviews can be translated into actionable project strategies. It highlights the importance of integrating issues such as valorising the informal local economy, improving the quality of public spaces, and preserving the cultural identity of the neighbourhood into regeneration plans. This integration is essential to ensure that transformation does not lead to displacement or social exclusion. In this context, the relationship capabilities between the actors involved - administrations, planners and inhabitants - play a central role through participatory governance tools.

Such an approach makes it possible to adapt and revise the project as it is being implemented, but also results in consolidating mutual trust among actors, resulting in an 'open' transformation process. Continuous monitoring of the implementation phases allows the consistency between community expectations and actual project implementation.

### COMMUNITY-CENTRED APPROACH TO SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE IN SIRINIĆKA ŽUPA

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### **ABSTRACT**

The architectural heritage of Sirinićka Župa, located on Šar Mountain, represents a significant element of the region's cultural heritage, with traditional family houses from the second half of the 19th century being its most prominent feature. These houses are architecturally valuable due to their specific structural solutions and use of local materials, closely tied to the traditional way of life and natural surroundings. Particularly notable are two architectural elements ajat and čardak-porches-that enrich the houses' volume, adding elegance, purity, and visual harmony while reinforcing the region's cultural identity. However, most of these structures are now abandoned and deteriorating, presenting a significant challenge for their preservation and revitalization. This level of neglect threatens sustainable local development, the preservation of cultural identity, and the strengthening of community resilience. The issue is further complicated by a lack of awareness regarding the cultural and historical importance of these structures, which diminishes initiatives for their preservation and adaptation. This research proposes a community-centered approach to managing the architectural heritage of Sirinićka Župa, emphasizing the active involvement of local actors in the process of revitalizing and preserving traditional houses. By analysing comparative examples from North Macedonia, Albania, and Greece, the study identifies innovative strategies that enabled the successful revitalization of historical buildings while creating new economic opportunities. The findings highlight the crucial role of an engaged and organized community, supported by local authorities, in ensuring sustainable management of cultural heritage.

The methodological framework of the research includes qualitative methods such as field studies, interviews with local residents and experts, and an analysis of relevant literature. A comparative analysis of successful examples from other regions allows for an evaluation of the applicability of similar strategies in Sirinićka Župa. The aim is to determine the causes of the abandonment of traditional houses and to develop action strategies that would stimulate their revitalization while preserving cultural identity and enhancing the local economy. Key strategies include raising awareness of the value of traditional houses and their potential for regional development, as well as actively engaging various social groups in the revitalization process. Economic incentives, such as tax breaks and subsidies, are identified as important mechanisms for encouraging owners to invest in restoring their houses. Additionally, the development of heritage-based tourism could significantly contribute to the local economy by generating new income streams and fostering the growth of small businesses, such as producers of authentic local products like raspberries, honey, and Šar cheese.

The results of the research underline the importance of integrating the local community into the processes of revitalization and preservation of architectural heritage. This approach not only contributes to heritage protection but also promotes sustainable economic development and strengthens social resilience in the region. The active role of the community in maintaining and restoring traditional houses can serve as an inspiring model for other regions facing similar challenges in managing cultural heritage.

Keywords: strategy, architectural heritage, reactivation, benefits, tourism

# INTERRELATIONSHIP OF REGISTERED AND INVENTORIED CULTURAL HERITAGE IN THE COGNITIVE SPACE OF THE COMMUNITY: KAUNAS CASE

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### **ABSTRACT**

Over the last two decades, the public's attitude towards historic buildings in Lithuania has changed considerably and has become more positive and active. More and more people recognise that the historic buildings in their environment are not just old, decaying structures, but an integral part of the cultural identity of the city, region and country. They bear witness to the way of life, aesthetics, engineering solutions and specific historical periods of past generations. This is important not only from an architectural or urban planning point of view, but also as a means of preserving social and cultural memory.

One of the main reasons for this change is the increasing involvement and participation of the community in the management and protection of the local environment. Increasingly, residents recognise that the preservation of historic buildings is not only the responsibility of the authorities, but also their own. Involving the population in the preservation of cultural heritage has become an integral part of public policy. This includes the development of heritage protection schemes, as well as their promotion and adaptation to the public.

Despite their importance, these sites can present challenges for local communities, especially when discussing renovations or alterations. Legal restrictions applied to heritage sites often mean that owners cannot freely change the appearance or purpose of buildings without special permits and consultations with heritage protection authorities. These requirements can complicate the renovation process and increase costs, as strict restoration standards must be adhered to. At times, these processes create tension between heritage conservation specialists and local communities, who wish to modernize or adapt the sites to contemporary needs but face complex bureaucratic procedures. Therefore, it becomes crucial to find a balance between heritage preservation and contemporary needs, ensuring that historical buildings can be not only protected but also adapted for new uses.

The methods used in this research relate to:

- 1.Detailed analysis of immovable cultural heritage objects: the assessment of the current state of heritage objects and areas was carried out by analysing the physical condition, cultural value and functional use of the selected sites.
- 2.Urban legibility studies, what shows how the changing of heritage objects assets affect their identification and meaning.
- 3.A sociological survey of Kaunas city residents, demonstrating the inhabitants' connection to the historic environment, their affection for the place they live and their desire to preserve cultural heritage.

The aim of this presentation is to discuss the relationship between communities and historic urban areas and their importance in the context of preserving the environment and shaping cultural identity. It also seeks to analyse how heritage sites can become part of long-term and sustainable development when communities are actively involved in their conservation, renovation and restoration, and to what extent these activities contribute to urban development.

# EXPLORING IDENTITY FORMATION THROUGH RESILIENCE A CASE STUDY OF THE DODONA NEIGHBOURHOOD

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### **ABSTRACT**

This paper addresses the unique and complex challenges faced by the Dodona neighborhood in its efforts to reclaim its deprived identity, striving to adopt resilience as its unifying element. Situated within a city characterized by bipolar urban development and identity, Dodona represents a typical example of a neighborhood in a city under continuous occupation. This research analyzes the neighborhood's historical evolution and development, focusing on post-war developments. The changes in the urban fabric, wrought by rapid constructions in the post-war period, under the concept of "A city built on greed, not community," the constructions over the Vellusha riverbed, the damage to the urban silhouette, and the rigorous changes in the architectural style of construction - all this taking advantage of post-war developments under the pretext of construction as a 'necessity.' In the absence of regulatory plans, the concept of a bipolar city is further compounded by heteroclite urbanism, which worsens the urban condition, thus reflecting its highly complex and multidimensional nature. Dodona remains one of the testimonies of an urbicide in a city in acute transition. This study encompasses a multidisciplinary approach, integrating empirical data gathered through interviews with residents and stakeholders, alongside conceptual proposals that outline actionable resilience strategies. These include mechanisms to prevent urban flooding, promote ecological housing aimed at reducing carbon emissions, and create socially resilient spaces that embrace diversity and sustainability. By combining insights from both lived experiences and forward-looking design concepts, the research offers a comprehensive framework for the resilient development of the neighborhood. The importance of collective memory in urban planning cannot be overstated, as it serves as a guidepost for the future.

The need for updated regulatory plans and changes in policy development is not just important; it is urgent. They are critical factors in ensuring structured urban development and addressing the complex and multidimensional nature of Dodona's urban condition. Ultimately, this paper highlights Dodona as a case study to understand how neighborhoods in post-conflict and transitional urban contexts can reshape themselves toward an adaptable future.

Keywords: urban resilience, social resilience, urban flooding, resilience and identity

### SPONTANEOUS URBAN TRANSFORMATION AND ITS IMPACT ON PLANNING A CASE STUDY OF KOSOVSKA MITROVICA

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### **ABSTRACT**

The spontaneous transformation of urban space represents a powerful expression of common identity and a decisive collective response to specific, often difficult socio-economic circumstances. This paper explores the emergence and evolution of spontaneous spatial interventions in the northern part of Kosovska Mitrovica, as well as their impact on urban planning solutions developed subsequently.

Following the armed conflict in 1999, Kosovska Mitrovica became ethnically divided into a southern and a northern part. In the northern part, the loss of jobs and the hindered functioning of public services and the authorities were accompanied by a significant influx of new residents. These new social circumstances arose in an urban space lacking a central zone (which remained in the southern part of the town) i.e., in a space with very limited capacity for territorial expansion. The urban fabric constrained by shrinking physical boundaries, was unable to meet the emerging needs of the citizens, and the call for spatial adaptation became urgent. At the same time, the response from urban planning departments to the new situation was fragmented and insufficient. As a result, citizens took informal control over the space and initiated a spontaneous urban development which continued until the public services started functioning in full capacity again, in 2011.

To analyse urban dynamics and the transformations from 1999-2011, this study employed field research, reviews of archival documents, plans and photo materials, and interviews with citizens. The results show that spontaneous spatial interventions in the northern part of Kosovska Mitrovica aimed at providing additional residential or working space, citizens' services (such as trade and hospitality) and, sporadically, places for socialization, sports, and recreation. With the exception of spatial actions to obtain new housing space—mainly through the reconstruction, extension, or superstructure of existing residential buildings—most other citizen-led adaptations took place at the expense of already limited public space. Street sidewalks and small urban pockets were overtaken by clusters of improvised shops, cafés, restaurants, even banks and other administrative and office spaces, and an informal centre emerged. On the one hand, the introduction of informal spatial order helped to build social resilience under unfavourable circumstances, but on the other hand, it created new problems.

A substantial and planned spatial reorganisation of northern Kosovska Mitrovica began in 2011 to solve problems regarding mobility and traffic, and the lack of common open areas. In this action, the development routes set earlier by citizens' spontaneous adaptation were largely preserved. Hence, an informal transformation of urban space is not merely beneficial for daily life; it could also be considered a valuable contribution to the long-term urban development. The research shows that citizen-led urban transformation, although radical and often contrary to formal planning, represents a significant input for institutions and professionals. Spontaneous changes in an urban environment take place outside conventional urban planning frameworks, but when properly integrated into formal strategies they could result in plans that genuinely meet the community needs.



Contributions in this track will, first, explore and share methods for increasing social participation and civic engagement in urban planning processes (e.g. strategies to enhance civic engagement, capacities and capabilities for social participation and civic engagement). Second, papers might also discuss the role of policy and governance modes in fostering resilient urban neighborhoods (e.g. enabling structures for civic engagement in urban development or regeneration, regulatory approaches and policy frameworks, community-based governance models, participatory policy-making processes). The intention further is to explore the role of communities in the decision-making and policy-making processes, highlighting the importance of civic engagement and participatory governance in urban development (e.g. methods for community involvement, benefits of participatory governance, strategies for enhancing civic engagement, challenges and solutions in community participation). Finally, papers can also discuss how collaboration and co-production can improve policy implementation and community resilience.

# COPRODUCTION AS A POTENTIAL FOR URBAN RESILIENCE A CASE STUDY ABOUT THE (RE)ACTIVATION OF THE CITY CENTER IN HAMBURG, GERMANY

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### **ABSTRACT**

While the concept of co-production is not standardized and is used in a variety of definitions, this paper provides a theoretical and qualitative analysis of co-production in participatory urban development and thus contributes to a better understanding of the term itself and its applications. This is particularly important in the context of European city centers, which have been confronted with structural change at least since the effects of the global COVID-19 pandemic. Considering the increasing urban density and the urgency of climate-friendly space efficiency, this paper underlines the importance of creating resilient city centers and designing spaces according to actual local needs. As co-production is becoming increasingly popular as an innovation for civic engagement in this context, its potential for developing urban resilience is analyzed.

In view of these complex challenges, the focus is on the question of how urban citizens can be more involved in the governance process of place-making and the creation of social spaces. The case study of a temporary federal funding program in Hamburg (2021-2025), based on qualitative research, provides an example of how co-production is translated from theory into practice. The Hamburg government has set itself the goal of making the city center more resilient in terms of its functions, spaces and services by promoting public participation in governance processes. To achieve this goal, a new working structure between civil society and public partners has been introduced to find socio-spatial solutions based on local needs. The municipality offers a variety of formats and engagement methods to actively involve civil society actors such as citizens' initiatives, associations, social movements and local businesses. In addition, a mediation office has been set up as an interface for communication and mediation between the broad spectrum of interest groups. Against this background, the analysis focuses on differences and conflicts between the expectations, practices and communication of state and non-state actors that have emerged.

The results of the study, which are based on interviews with various stakeholder groups, show on the one hand the potential of the funding program for experimenting with innovative practices of place-making that can go beyond regular participation processes. On the other hand, it raises questions about the limits and paradoxes of the framework of a time-limited program aimed at long-term solutions. It also discusses how emerging risks such as the political control of outcomes, the reproduction of power relations, social exclusion, the management of social and economic resources or bureaucratic demands can be addressed.

All in all, this paper aims to provide insights into the opportunities and challenges of participatory urban development for socio-spatial urban resilience through the lens of co-production. The qualitative approach, which looks at situated practices and the dynamics of co-productive place-making in specific political contexts, enriches the academic discussion on civic engagement. By presenting the empirical results, the article contributes to a deeper understanding of urban governance processes in terms of an institutionalized form of co-production.

Keywords: urban resilience, co-production, participation, urban development, co-creation

# URBAN PLANNING IN SKOPJE AND THE INCLUSION OF THE COMMUNITY IN THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS CASE STUDIES: MUNICIPALITIES OF CAIR, BUTEL AND KARPOSH

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#### **ABSTRACT**

To achieve the goals of sustainable and resilient urban development, beside the top-down governance the inclusion of bottom-up approach is also required in the decision-making process in urban planning. While sustainability aims at achieving a higher quality of life standards, resilience represents the ability to recover from an adverse event. Due to the dynamic nature of the urban environments, it is required to have continuous tracking of the aspects which need improvement. The neighbourhood as the smallest segment of the urban tissue should be taken as the starting point of the bottom-up approach. The residents of a neighbourhood can give the most relevant information about the existing conditions and problems in each urban settlement. Inclusion of the opinions of the local level community in the decision-making process of urban planning can help in creation of more sustainable and resilient urban environments.

This research paper focuses on the municipality level urban planning with respect to concepts of sustainability and resilience. The urban planning system of North Macedonia is briefly reviewed with main accent on the Detailed Urban Plans which are prepared at municipality level. As case studies are analysed three different municipalities in the City of Skopje: Cair, Butel and Karposh. To understand the actual status of the bottom-up approach in the urban planning in the case study municipalities the representatives from municipality urban planning sector, local community representatives and urban planners from the private sector engaged in the preparation of the urban plans for municipalities are interviewed. The information obtained from all the entities related to urban planning process is based on quantitative methodology. In this way the collected data is sorted according to the different categories (community representatives, local authority and urban planners) and compared between the different municipalities which are selected as case studies.

Based on the obtained results from the analysis of the status of bottom-up approach in the case study municipalities three aspects are observed that need improvement. First, the awareness about the importance of creating sustainable and resilient urban environments should be increased at the general population and the decision-makers whose scope is regulating the physical aspects of the urban space. Second, communicating the information and needs between the community and local authority should be improved. Third, the community members should be motivated and encouraged to take part in the process of urban planning.

Keywords: bottom-up approach, resilience, sustainability

# COLLECTIVE INVOLVEMENT AND INCREMENTAL INTERVENTIONS IN URBAN DEVELOPMENT CULTIVATING CIVIC RESILIENCE THROUGH COMMUNITY-BASED SPATIAL TRANSFORMATIONS

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#### **ABSTRACT**

In today's rapidly evolving cities, building community resilience and promoting sustainable growth are pressing challenges. This study explores how tactical urbanism and urban prototyping can address these issues by using small, low-cost interventions to transform neglected spaces into vibrant community hubs. Drawing on diverse local and international case studies, it highlights the impact of these strategies on both urban spaces and the social fabric of communities.

Incremental interventions, such as converting vacant lots into community gardens, repurposing underutilized buildings or reviving public spaces, offer significant opportunities for urban revitalization. A notable example is the intervention in 2019 when the Macedonian team of the European Architecture Students Assembly rehabilitated an abandoned elementary school in Trpejca for a community event. Prior to the initiative, the school's main hall was unused, with only a single room remaining functional. The students cleaned and refurbished the hall, equipping it with seating arrangements, and utilities for leisure and educational activities. Post-event, the local population adopted this revitalized space as a community center for hosting gatherings, exhibitions, and cultural

In contrast to conventional top-down urban planning approaches that frequently overlook specific local needs, this bottom-up methodology prioritizes participatory collaboration and community involvement. Another example that was analyzed was an experimental traffic regulation initiative on Paupio Street in Vilnius, organized by residents and an urban planning studio, which restricted vehicular access during designated hours. This project not only enhanced the area's tranquility but also catalyzed broader municipal efforts to establish pedestrian-only zones, contributing to the gradual realization of a car-free city center.

By testing and refining these small-scale projects, communities and planners gain valuable insights, aligning immediate local needs with long-term urban development goals. These findings demonstrate how modest interventions can serve as practical models for building resilient cities, particularly in resource-constrained settings, while fostering inclusivity and adaptability in urban design.

# COMMUNITY AS A CO-PRODUCER OF A CITY PPGIS METHOD OF PARTICIPATORY MAPPING OF PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE

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#### **ABSTRACT**

The processes of urban planning throughout history have often been vertically organized, determined, and represented by governing centers of power as the primary protagonists. This top-down approach frequently fails to integrate the granular, everyday needs and capabilities of the communities it aims to serve. Consequently, urban planning should not be viewed as an authoritarian practice that creates spaces disconnected from their users, who are, in fact, experts in their own living environments. Rather than being passive consumers, residents should actively participate in the creation and management of the built spaces where they live. Each individual serves as a vital source of local information and collective knowledge essential for addressing spatial challenges. When communities are excluded and their voices supressed, decisions fail to reflect the needs of all city residents, perpetuating new forms of discrimination.

This paper aims to explore social participation and civic engagement as crucial elements for transforming these power dynamics by involving diverse actors in co-producing the city. It advocates for a collaborative approach where institutions and experts bring pragmatic and rational perspectives, while communities contribute the social component vital to holistic urban development. The outcomes of such collaboration include reduced social tensions, segregation, urban sprawl and poverty; improved health and quality of life for citizens; and increased trust in the planning system.

Traditionally, public participation has relied on public hearings and written feedback during the planning process. However, past practices reveal that traditional methods of participatory planning face challenges in effectively gathering and utilizing collective knowledge. The complexities of contemporary urban crises necessitate new theories, innovative practices, and alternative ways of knowing and doing. This paper presents novel approaches and methods for engaging a broader demographic of small-scale actors, harnessing their spatial wisdom.

In particular, this paper discusses the application of PPGIS (Public Participation Geographical Information System) as a method for participatory mapping of experiences and patterns of daily movement and space use. Through PPGIS, various types of spatial information can be collected, analyzed, and visually presented as maps. This method directly highlights civic engagement by mapping out the needs of residents, enabling planners to better align urban development with the lived realities of the community. Civic engagement plays a pivotal role, fostering active community involvement in co-creating urban spaces. This method is illustrated through several case studies showcasing its effectiveness in bridging the gap between residents' informal knowledge and the formal, rigid data of planners and architects.

The finding demonstrate that this method fosters greater representativeness, equal participation, and enhanced quality and quantity of public knowledge. Ultimately, it promotes a more inclusive and collective approach to city-making, integrating the principles of social participation and civic engagement as central to addressing the divide between large-scale planning logics and the lived realities of everyday practices.

Keywords: participatory planning, collective knowledge, PPGIS, social participation, civic engagement

#### MATRIX OF RESILIENCE

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#### **ABSTRACT**

This study examines various methods for collecting data on urban challenges, resilience in urban neighbourhoods, and citizen participation initiatives at an urban scale. Numerous methodologies can be employed for such data collection, including online surveys, interviews, focus groups, community workshops, and case study research, among others. The UPRUN Project initiated a series of interviews with thirty-two (32) diverse stakeholders, including architects, urban planners, municipal planners, researchers, and NGO members, with the objective of investigating local initiatives and urban planning strategies in Albania, Cyprus, Greece, Kosovo, Lithuania, Skopje, and Switzerland. Stakeholders were presented with a central question: "What is needed from a local stakeholder perspective to achieve social resilience?" The interviews, conducted both in-person and virtually, were organized around seven key pillars as follows: Definition of Resilient Neighbourhoods, Role of Social Participation, Built Environment and Local Identity, Cultural Factors and Resilience, Citizen Involvement and Neighbourhood Design, Addressing Conflicts in Resilience Building, and Integration of Resilient Neighbourhoods in Urban Planning.

Following each data collection phase, it is essential to establish the most effective method for organizing the data to derive significant results. In this instance, we proceeded with the preparation of a comprehensive report. The subsequent step involved identifying common themes that stakeholders concurred upon, based on the seven pillar topics introduced during the interviews. We then identified key terms and concepts articulated by stakeholders and developed a "Common Aspects Matrix." While numerous keywords and concepts emerged from the interviews, we structured a matrix with two axes: the Y-axis represented the acronyms and backgrounds of the stakeholders categorized by country, and the X-axis encompassed the various aspects categorized into 15 coding dimensions, which were incorporated into the matrix according to the specific questions posed. The extensive array of keywords was organized into the following 15 coding aspects: 1) Safety, 2) Infrastructure – Mobility – Micromobility, 3) Affordability, 4) Sense of Belonging – Social Bonds, 5) Sustainable Practices, 6) Quality & Diversity, 7) Open Communication, 8) Local Identity, 9) Citizen Involvement, 10) Urban Resilience, 11) Cultural Factors, 12) Public-Private Partnership, 13) Community Participation, 14) Conflict Resolution, and 15) Local Economy.

In conclusion, the matrix proved to be an effective tool for presenting the research findings, offering a clear visual representation of the common aspects and perspectives across different countries, contexts, and stakeholder backgrounds. This approach provided a more dynamic and accessible alternative to a traditional report, enabling a direct comparison of shared insights without the need for extensive textual analysis.

Keywords: urban resilience, social participation, urban planning, common aspects matrix

# TRANSFORMATIVE ENGAGEMENT RETHINKING PUBLIC SPACE AS A COLLABORATIVE PLATFORM FOR COMMUNITY INTERACTION

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#### **ABSTRACT**

This study explores the transformative potential of public spaces as evolving platforms for civic engagement, moving beyond prescriptive frameworks that often control and predispose urban design. Questioning approaches to spatial design, which impose univocal, discipline-defined uses upon the community, this research proposes a dynamic understanding of public spaces that fosters creative and catalytic engagements inspired by how inhabitants inherently reinterpret and reshape their environments.

Drawing on McDonnell's (2010) assertion that the potential of spaces and objects materializes only through the interactions and capabilities of individual users, the project conceptualizes public space as a collaborative canvas, open to multiple interpretations and evolving functions. Löw and Knoblauch's (2019) insights into spatial knowledge as shaped by individual experiences, emotions, memories, and imaginative associations further ground the research, emphasizing the active role of communities in constructing and redefining public spaces over time.

At its core, this research focuses on the role of minimally intrusive mobile installations in enhancing community participation. These interventions encourage residents to interact, rearrange, and adapt urban elements to reflect their unique needs, strengthening social resilience through inclusive participation. This study employs a mixed-method, design-based research approach grounded in theoretical frameworks such as self-organization. temporal dynamics, and cognitive engagement. Case studies are analyzed based on criteria such as minimal infrastructural intervention, mobility, and citizen adaptability. Currently in its initial phase, the project focuses on building a robust theoretical foundation and studying real-world case studies before implementing its own interventions. Relevant examples include projects by organizations such as Neue Auftraggeber, which empowers communities to commission contemporary art addressing local issues, and Die Urbanisten, a Dortmund-based initiative fostering sustainable urban spaces through community-driven projects. While the research draws valuable insights from the above-mentioned examples, it distinguishes itself by prioritizing abstraction and intentionally minimizing prescriptive design cues to encourage user-driven engagement. This reduction in interpretive teleology fosters greater flexibility, inclusivity, and fluidity in spatial planning, enabling communities to shape their environments without being constrained by predefined intentions. The envisioned interventions will consist of mobile, modular, and simple objects-easy to manipulate-allowing citizens to freely interact with them, rearrange their layout, and adapt them to their needs in creative and diverse ways. Implementation in Germany's Ruhr region will span approximately seven months, encompassing fabrication, installation, continuous observation, and iterative feedback cycles. Empirical data will be collected through field surveys, behavioral mapping, and photo/video documentation to monitor and refine the installations, ensuring they align with community needs.

Through these processes, the research highlights how minimally intrusive interventions catalyze participatory urban transformation by empowering communities to adapt spaces dynamically. This iterative, bottom-up framework fosters engagement and resilience. It calls for attention to the potential of participatory and adaptive urban spaces, advocating for an experimental, inclusive design approach that complements existing urban planning methodologies. By transforming public spaces into platforms for creativity and negotiation, it underscores how dynamic urban environments can strengthen social connections, support resilience, and reflect the lived realities of their inhabitants.

Keywords: participatory urban transformation, minimally intrusive interventions, dynamic public spaces

## THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY SELF-ORGANISATION IN PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT OF URBAN NEIGHBOURHOODS

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#### **ABSTRACT**

emphasizing its impact on contemporary urban districts facing various challenges of modern society. Given the complexity of these issues, it is important to continuously adapt self-organization methods in line with scientific, technological, social, and ecological changes. Effective communication among community members, along with the use of digital tools and technologies, enables better alignment of resources and services with the needs of all stakeholders. Based on an overview of international research literature and global examples, the paper systematizes the concept of self-organization, considering the motives, goals, and outcomes of community engagement, whether spontaneous or through organized initiatives involving various stakeholders. The paper also examines comparative research in urban regeneration, where local actors such as commercial partners, non-profit organizations, and residents actively redevelop urban areas. Citizens engage in two key ways: first, through empowerment, which helps them articulate their views and desires, and second, through stimulating responsibility for improving the spatial environment, thus enhancing living, working, and social connectivity. The motives for community self-organization are diverse and numerous. Communities often organize in response to natural disasters, climate change, and pandemics, managing housing communities in crisis situations, such as irrigation efforts in the Atacama Desert in Peru, the restoration of food systems in Odisha, India, and the formation of communal kitchens for socially vulnerable citizens. Additionally, citizens spontaneously come together to address economic and political challenges and to create and manage public spaces like parks and playgrounds, contributing to better health and living conditions (examples: Perumnas Park in Mojosong, Indonesia, or Fifth Park in Belgrade). Furthermore, energy initiatives such as renewable energy projects or carbon dioxide reduction often spur self-organization. Communities also organize to protect their identity and prevent the negative effects of gentrification, as seen in the BWF project resulting from the urban regeneration of the Savamala neighborhood in Belgrade. In addition to the previously mentioned examples of citizen engagement without government support, there are many instances where local authorities actively provide support by organizing and funding various projects initiated by residents of urban neighborhoods. These examples are particularly common in the Netherlands, Finland, and German-speaking countries, where local governments actively support and finance such initiatives. Self-organization methods include effective communication among community members, the use of digital platforms for connectivity, and feedback mechanisms that encourage greater participation. Spontaneous action, in response to urgent needs, also plays a significant role. The involvement of external sectors, such as government, commercial actors, and civil organizations, is key to making important decisions and improving the self-organization process. The outcomes of self-organization in urban environments are reflected in increased community resilience, improved quality of life, and ecological and social sustainability. Through their engagement, citizens contribute to sustainable development by creating initiatives such as organized gardens, the preservation of parks and playgrounds, and strengthening relationships with local authorities. The conclusion highlights that self-organization plays a key role in addressing the challenges of modern cities, creating more resilient and sustainable communities. By connecting citizens, applying new technologies, and collaborating with external actors, self-organization contributes to sustainable development and the creation of new identities in neighborhoods, thereby ensuring a long-term prosperous future.

This paper explores the crucial role of community self-organization in the development of urban neighborhoods,

Keywords: civic initiative, neighborhood resilience, sustainable urban design, socio-physical relations

## COLLABORATION OF FOUNDATIONS WITH PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN CROSS-BORDER TERRITORIES

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#### **ABSTRACT**

Background: Place leadership theory concentrates primarily on the role of leadership of public authorities in places. Nevertheless, leadership in other stakeholders like nonprofit organizations also exists and contributes to fulfilling of the needs of local populations. This study specifically examines local foundations committed to enhancing the quality of life in their operational areas. We do so from the theoretical assumption that nonprofit organizations provide their services where markets and governments fail.

Data: Based on the data from interviews with foundations and other stakeholders in cross-border region of the Upper-Rhine, encompassing France, Germany, and Switzerland, we investigated the role of foundations in increasing quality of life in places. To triangulate our findings, we also interviewed stakeholders from the public sector, target groups, and other civil society organizations. Altogether, we conducted 16 interviews.

Results: Considering the four core principles of successful place-based leadership—sharing power, resources, dialogue, and strategic networks—we focus on the strategic networks established by the foundations as showing necessity of variability of the networks for a successful implementation of visions. The research proved that there are wide networks built by the foundations. In the Swiss and French case studies, the foundations are relatively new (three years old), but they recognized the importance of networks and organized an even where other stakeholders could share their experience. German foundation has a long-term experience and built strong networks. Some of their members are also active in other sectors, including public administration.

Moreover, we concentrate on relationships between the foundations and the public sector as the core of relationships at the places. In some cases, the foundations have strong ties to local political representatives (Germany and Switzerland). In Switzerland, the foundation is a specific case as it has strong ties to regional public bank and the canton, but very limited to the municipalities. In cases that there are connections, they are indirect through the nonprofit organizations as beneficiaries of both the foundation and the place of their activities (municipalities). The French foundation still struggles in building networks with the public sector.

We found, in compliance with the place leadership theory, that resources play a crucial role. Money provided to local stakeholders by all three foundations is the most important resource provided to the community and helping them in variability of funding of projects.

## CIVIC INITIATIVE AND BUILDING MORATORIA FOR URBAN RESILIENCE

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#### ABSTRACT

In Skopje, the civic initiative A Defence for Debar Maalo demonstrates the transformative role civic engagement can play in urban policy, particularly in counteracting unregulated and unwanted urban growth. Comprised of local residents, activists, and experts in urban planning and environmental protection, this civic movement emerged to address widespread concerns about unchecked construction and public space degradation in Centar Municipality. Through their advocacy, A Defence for Debar Maalo successfully influenced the government to implement a building moratorium in 2018—a temporary halt on new construction. This pause provided space for community priorities to be better representedd in the process of urban planning and in collaboration with experts, the local government was also able to strengthen institutional capacity aiming for long-term urban resilience.

This paper adopts a qualitative methodology, analysing the data trough analytical approaches including stakeholder and discourse analysis at the time. The study focuses on (1) relevant research on civic engagement and urban resilience, (2) moratorium as a tool for sustainable city planning, and (3) showcasing the method that was established to evaluate the urban plans in connection with building codes and master planning rules.

The findings show that the building moratorium, driven by civic advocacy, demonstrates the potential of local engagement to guide sustainable urban development. Building moratoria can offer a platform for stakeholders—from residents and community leaders to policymakers—to participate in defining growth objectives and preserving urban resilience. Skopje's experience suggests that when residents, community leaders, and policymakers collaborate, they can create an urban future that reflects shared values. However, challenges such as politicization and economic impacts highlight the need for transparent, inclusive processes that genuinely reflect community interests.

In conclusion, this paper argues that civic engagement initiatives like A Defence for Debar Maalo can empower communities and local governments to advance resilient, sustainable urban growth. The case provides valuable insights into how grassroots efforts, combined with expert collaboration, can foster institutional capacity and community-driven urban planning, offering a model for addressing urban challenges in other contexts.

## ACTIVISM WITHIN BOUNDARIES: CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN INSTITUTIONALIZED CONTEXTS

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#### **ABSTRACT**

Over the years, the Macedonian socio-political context has undergone significant changes, which heavily influenced the overall scope and presence of civic engagement, ultimately affecting the existent social capital and public discourse. A particular shift has been noticed with the transition of civic engagement from grassroots activism to formalised, institutionalized structures. These transitions raise critical questions about the applicability of established frameworks of activism—contact, constructive, and hostile—in environments where civic initiatives are absorbed into institutional processes.

Drawing on findings from longitudinal studies on civic engagement and social capital, this research explores the interplay between institutionalisation and the persistence of activist frameworks in shaping citizen participation; it examines the current dynamics and agents of change, that have affected the local social cohesion and resilience of the communities. Using a mixed-method approach that integrates quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, the study examines the motivations, challenges, and spatial implications of this transformation. Special emphasis is placed on how institutionalized structures impact inclusivity, autonomy, and the dynamics of socio-political change, particularly in the Macedonian context where socio-economic inequalities and limited trust in governance persist.

Preliminary analysis suggests that while institutionalization often enhances resource access and legitimacy, it can dilute the grassroots ethos and transformative potential of civic initiatives. The research revisits the frameworks of activism to assess their relevance and adaptability in this new paradigm, highlighting shifts in civic motivation and engagement patterns. Key findings underline the importance of fostering transparent, inclusive, and responsive institutional mechanisms to sustain civic resilience and mitigate potential alienation among citizens. Patterns emphasize the importance of inclusive participation, transparent decision-making, and technological integration, while personal motivation—characterized by self-autonomy and freedom—emerges as a critical variable, aligning with the concept of the "calculative citizen". Ultimately, the paper examines how and why geography also matters, especially when combined with economic, social and educational background of the citizens.

This study contributes to broader debates on the institutionalization of activism, offering practical insights into sustaining the democratic ethos of civic engagement within formal structures. By bridging theoretical frameworks with empirical data, it presents actionable recommendations for policymakers and civil society actors aiming to navigate the complex interplay between institutionalization and grassroots activism in fostering sustainable civic participation and urban development.

# COMMUNITY RESILIENCE AS A CATALYST FOR URBAN AWARENESS GRASSROOTING IN THE FACE OF DEVELOPMENT PRESSURES IN SKOPJE'S TAFTALIDZE NEIGHBORHOOD

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#### **ABSTRACT**

Community resilience through innovative grassroots methods has increasingly played a pivotal role in urban planning, particularly in recent years. This is especially evident in neighborhoods facing potential threats from development projects that prioritize private investors' capital and profitability over the assessment and enhancement of communal needs on both macro and micro levels.

This paper explores the Taftalidze neighborhood in Skopje, North Macedonia, highlighting two significant instances of community engagement: the children's playground located in the center of the neighborhood and the communal center known as Domche. These cases have not only preserved locally valuable resources but have also initiated essential dialogue prioritizing public interest with the local governing body.

These examples compare, contrast, and analyze the different approaches undertaken by activists committed to protecting local heritage. Methodologically, it employs a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative interviews with comparative analysis. Data collection includes in-depth interviews with direct participants, locals, and grassroots experts, providing multiple perspectives on both cases. The study also takes similar movements across Europe into account and examines legislative frameworks to contextualize these local initiatives within broader urban planning practices. This methodological framework enables a rigorous comparison of both approaches while evaluating their effectiveness in promoting community interests and their potential representation in such contexts.

On one hand, the local children's playground, initially slated for demolition to accommodate a new building, is a notable example of community resilience. It illustrates the locals' determination to preserve their shared spaces, demonstrating the efficacy of collective action in influencing urban planning decisions and outcomes. On the other hand, the Domche communal center faced imminent demolition due to urban development pressures and political influences. Community members and local activists rallied to emphasize the center's architectural significance and historical value. Their effort involved multidisciplinary researchers and performers, culminating in site-specific performance pieces that underscored the communal center's significance.

The study also aims to highlight the broader implications of community-driven input in urban planning by contrasting these two distinct approaches—the preservation of the playground through vigilant community oversight and the saving of Domche through a combination of activism, academic engagement, and performative advocacy. The analysis reveals how, despite differing methods and scales, both efforts converge in their dedication to safeguarding communal spaces. It emphasizes a shared belief in the intrinsic value of public spaces over profit-oriented development.

Furthermore, it examines how these initiatives align with legislative advocacy and explore the potential extent of such civic engagements. This analysis aims to provide insights into how grassroots movements can bridge the gap between community needs and official urban planning agendas, often acting as a counterbalance to private interests and promoting public dialogue about the importance of shared heritage and collective identity within urban environments.

Keywords: grassrooting, public interest, communal heritage, activism, mobilization

#### DECIDING ON THE MEASURES IMPLEMENTATION FOR RIVERFRONT FLOOD RESILIENCE ACTOR MAPPING AND NETWORK ANALYSIS

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#### **ABSTRACT**

Riverfront redevelopments pose significant challenges in achieving effective flood resilience. The success of riverfront design relies on a strategic combination of measures. Levees, floodwalls, and drainage systems are known as structural measures and help mitigate immediate flood risks, while non-structural approaches — such as land-use planning, policy frameworks, and community engagement focus on offering long-term, adaptive strategies. Over the past two decades, developments in Germany have integrated both structural and non-structural measures into their flood management strategies. Even though there are exemplary models of effective riverfront design in Germany, there is a lack of research regarding the specific design decisions that contribute to their success. Additionally, the roles and influences of human and non-human actors in shaping flood-resilient designs are insufficiently researched.

This paper investigates the actors involved in the process of implementation of either structural or non-structural interventions for flood resilience in riverfront redevelopments in Germany. Using actor mapping and visual network analysis, the research identifies key human and non-human actors involved in the process. Furthermore, the mapping examined their influence on decision-making in the redevelopment of riverfronts. Actor mapping and visual network analysis provide valuable insights into the strength and type of relationships that shape the development and implementation of flood resilience strategies. Data from interviews with key stakeholders, planning documents, project documentation, and regulatory frameworks, were used to construct an actor-network map.

The analysis points to several findings: The real estate market emerges as one of the key actors in redevelopment along rivers; new directives (including EU directives) continually shape riverfront strategies and impact the decision-making process; and public-private partnerships are important in deciding structural and non-structural measures for flood resilience. This paper provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the interplay of actors that influence the use of structural or non-structural measures for flood resilience in riverfront redevelopments in the German context.

# DIGITAL CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN THE ERA OF MISINFORMATION: LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY FOR RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

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The main challenges we are facing recently is having misinformation in different processes of community participation, which has become a concern in different aspects. As digital platforms increasingly shape public discourse, misinformation has emerged as an inescapable challenge, undermining trust, and weakening civic engagement. This contributes to several problematic issues in the civic engagement process, while fragmenting it. Through an analysis of the mechanisms by which misinformation spreads online and its effects on public trust and community engagement, this study highlights the need for innovative approaches that promote digital literacy, transparent communication, and inclusive dialogue. This approach is needed to be reflected on different policies in local level. Some key strategies within these policies, will emerge the development of community-centric digital platforms, the integration of fact-checking tools, and the role of Al-driven algorithms in promoting credible information. Drawing from global case studies and policy frameworks, the paper outlines practical recommendations for designing digital civic engagement initiatives that reinforce community resilience, enhance public trust, and empower citizens to engage meaningfully in local decision-making processes. By establishing a more accurate and ethical digital public communication, communities can not only conflict the impacts of misinformation but also strengthen and highlight more the foundations of democratic participation in the digital and communication age. This research contributes to the understanding of how digital engagement, supported by responsible technology use, can be completed to build resilient, informed, and actively engaged communities. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study integrates quantitative analysis of online engagement patterns with qualitative case studies from community-led initiatives in Albania. In this case study will be explored two stages of digital and civic evolution, such as emerging, chaotic and advanced. Therefore, through an integration of empirical data and interdisciplinary analysis, this research offers a roadmap of civic engagement in the era of misinformation, contributing novel insights to the advancement of knowledge in digital democracy and community resilience.

Keywords: digital civic engagement, misinformation era, resilient community, technology

## RESILIENT CITIES: CIVIL ENGAGEMENT AND SOCIAL INNOVATIONS IN PUBLIC URBAN SPACES

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#### **ABSTRACT**

Background: The three pillars of the New European Bauhaus approach (NEB) to construction of buildings – sustainability, inclusiveness, and beauty (aesthetics) are a continuation of EU policy based on the Green Deal and partnership principle across various policies. The previous approach shows that implementation of EU policies is often framed by power relations and does not enable intense participation of stakeholders. Thus, we aim to answer the research question whether the NEB is capable of changing relationships in localities and regions, especially those between the public sector and other stakeholders.

Methods: We base our research on interviews with various stakeholders in 14 projects from various European countries claiming application of the NEB's principles. The cases were selected to represent different urban and regional planning systems in Europe. Although we concentrate on the application of the principle of inclusiveness between the public sector and civil society, also implementing of sustainability and aesthetics as two remaining pillars of the NEB concept are taken into account at the same time.

Results: The preliminary results show that the individual activity of the local stakeholders is the key aspect to apply the principles of NEB. It underlines the importance of sharing visions, knowledge, and skills; networking (especially between the public sector and other stakeholders), and resources to implement the visions of inclusiveness as defining pillars of successful place making. It relates also to the fact that many initiatives are bottom-up-lead, but the NEB comes as top-down initiative of the EU.

However, projects do not always succeed in applying all three NEB principles simultaneously to their full extent, depending on who initiated the projects. It concerns inclusiveness, especially in cases when the construction is done by private entities, or the political culture is not open for such open ways of shaping public and private spaces for use by public.

## UNFOLDING TRANSFORMATIVE POTENTIAL OF URBAN DIGITAL TWINS FOR RESILIENT NEIGHBOURHOODS

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#### **ABSTRACT**

The effects of climate change have significantly impacted cities, which are home to more than half of the world's population. At the same time, cities contribute substantially to global carbon emissions. However, cities also serve as hubs for future opportunities and developments, particularly in digital technologies. One notable advancement is the rapid development and application of urban digital twins in numerous cities worldwide, which are expected to help address various urban challenges. Despite this fast-paced progress, research on urban digital twins remains in its infancy, leaving many questions to unfold. This study employs a two-step analytical approach to examine the transformative potential of urban digital twins for resilient neighbourhoods against the effects of climate change. First, urban planning measures for climate change adaptation at the neighbourhood level are explored and identified from literature analysis. Second, a case study from the German city of Munich is combined with literature analysis to examine the features, functionalities, and capabilities of urban digital twins. Munich is deemed very pertinent for this purpose for several reasons that align with the goals of this study. It aims to use digitalisation as an opportunity to address its urban problems and is also already renowned as a relatively advanced "smart city". Importantly, Munich has not only developed and piloted urban digital twin technology through multiple projects in recent years but has also institutionalised the Digital Twin Munich as a permanent project. Following these two steps, the results are further contextualised and examined from the standpoint of urban planning processes. The paper concludes by highlighting the transformative potential of urban digital twins in fostering resilient neighbourhoods.

Keywords: urban digital twins, climate change, resilient neighbourhood, urban planning, digitalisation

## INFORMAL NETWORKS AND SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP THE CASE OF MUNICIPAL MARKET OF KYPSELI

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#### **ABSTRACT**

In the Mediterranean cultural context, public markets have traditionally served as local landmarks, social condensers, and prominent urban infrastructure, allowing informal networks to interact with institutionally established approaches.

The Kypseli Municipal Market (KMM) in Athens, Greece, is an intriguing case study for studying various governance models and how they affect public space management and operation. Governance models play an important role in shaping the organization, functionality, and outcomes of evolving marketplaces because they specify the parameters within which different actors must operate, dictate the quality and quantity of the end product, and control the process and timing of production.

The Kypseli municipal market, which had been steadily declining since the early twentieth century, was revived in 2006 by a group of local residents, and a decade later, it was reclaimed by municipal authorities in collaboration with civil society and private actors as part of the local administration's Athens resilience strategy. Throughout these two stages, distinct interpretations of concepts such as cooperation, civic engagement, citizenship, and the commons emerge, each expressed vividly by vastly different governance and local resource management models.

This paper aims to document and assess the impact of the KMM on urban policy implementation in the areas of participation, civic engagement, urban infrastructure, and local identity formation concerning practices emerging from citizen groups and initiatives. Furthermore, it intends to investigate the relationships of opposition, tension, and contestation, as well as resemblance, complementarity, and agreement, between these two paradigms of social participation and civic engagement. Methodological tools draw from fieldwork (interviews, stakeholders' documentation material) as well as context analysis and urban policies' review.

In an environment of urban challenges, models of public urban infrastructure revitalization are relevant to broader questions of urban resource management. Following patterns of citizen participation as a tool for generating social value through urban regeneration, which is a global trend, the KMM serves as a mature pilot case study that appears to prefigure risks and opportunities, as well as a genre of potential urban interventions applicable in Athens and elsewhere.

# HOW INVESTORS CAN CONTRIBUTE TO SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE THROUGH TRANSFORMATIONS INSPIRED BY CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AND ADAPTIVE PLANNING

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#### **ABSTRACT**

Sofia, Bulgaria's capital, has undergone profound changes since the end of socialism. Intensive private investment often outpaces public infrastructure development, primarily supported by EU financial instruments. This lag stems from restitution-driven loss of public property, imprecise public-private partnership mechanisms, corruption, and ineffective planning tools. These issues are most acute in Sofia's southern districts, where investor and buyer demands are highest, creating so-called "elite" neighbourhoods.

The entry of large investors, who consolidate the property structure, creates precedents in the local urban context by planning vast territories dominated by private property. Providing public services and infrastructure faces challenges, including regulatory complexity, multiple owners, lack of institutional coordination, weak civic engagement, and inertia from the centralised management system. In these new developments, the formation of communities that feel unity and belonging faces serious challenges – the territory is fragmented, many new structures are closed and segregated, and there is a lack of public facilities and spaces for community development. Unity among residents typically arises when they feel collectively deceived and seek solutions to their problems together.

Nevertheless, the role of investors is evolving, turning them into key coordinators of civic participation. This evolution happens despite their historically negative image in society, which is associated with a desire for quick profit at the expense of the created environment. In Bulgaria's fragmented and institutionally challenging planning process, projects and investors bring together stakeholders, such as residents, businesses, institutions, and previous property owners. To achieve resilience, flexibility, sustainability, and continuity in developing large multifunctional territories, investors must take the slow but engaging path of a holistic, integrated planning approach, where engagement starts early.

Depending on the case and the investor's bravery, several tools and combinations can ensure socially, environmentally, and economically sustainable and resilient spaces. Urban mediation provides a neutral platform to resolve disputes, prevent escalation, and build stakeholder trust. Fostering dialogue mitigates tensions and avoids costly legal battles while maintaining relationships. Public discussions and forums for joint decision-making lower pressures caused by investments, address common problems and seek mutually acceptable solutions. Interactive maps and platforms stimulate transparency and dialogue, including at community events and territory management. Social mapping helps to understand the local context, especially in areas with strong communities and attitudes toward newcomers. And placemaking as a powerful tool for community building, co-creation, and strengthening ownership and responsibility toward the territory.

The article examines examples from applied mapping of social deficits in Sofia's southern regions, planned placemaking initiatives in southern neighbourhoods, and ongoing approaches to inclusive and sustainable planning in the Hladilnika Industrial Park, Sofia.

Keywords: urban mediation, placemaking, Sofia, inclusive planning, sustainability





The papers in this track are dedicated to educational innovations that equip future planners with the necessary skills and knowledge for resilient urban development. This might encompass (critical) reflections on hybrid teaching methods, experiential learning in urban studies, and collaborations with local communities in planning education and similar issues that might contribute to increase the recognition of civic engagement and citizens' activities in the education of planners. Furthermore, papers are invited to address the role of technological innovations in enhancing social resilience and sustainability (e.g. IoT in urban planning, data-driven decision-making, smart infrastructure, citizen science in urban planning, virtual reality in urban planning).

# INNOVATIVE METHODOLOGIES IN URBAN DESIGN STUDIES: TRANSGRESSING BOUNDARIES BETWEEN BUILT ENVIRONMENTS AND URBAN SCENOGRAPHY

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#### **ABSTRACT**

This study introduces the concept of urban scenography as an innovative pedagogical approach for teaching urban planning, specifically targeting civic engagement and the recognition of social activities within urban environments. The research addresses a gap in current urban design education by expanding beyond traditional functional and spatial analyses to include a scenographic perspective. This perspective treats the urban environment as a performative space where social, cultural, and environmental narratives are expressed and codified. Unlike conventional methods, which often treat the built and natural environments as separate, static entities, this approach views urban spaces as dynamic and interdependent, encouraging students to approach urban planning with a focus on the fluid relationships between architecture, landscape, and human activity.

The study was conducted within the Basics of Urbanism course at the School of Architecture and Design, University American College Skopje. Students engaged in a multi-semester exploration of Chair, a dense and fragmented neighborhood in Skopje, North Macedonia. Using an experiential methodology, students documented urban scenes, analyzed them through the lens of scenography, and proposed hypothetical interventions aimed at improving the spatial and social vitality of the area. This hands-on approach, grounded in both sensory exploration and visual composition theories, enabled students to "read" urban spaces as layers of socio-cultural codes, thus encouraging a deeper understanding of how urban environments reflect and shape societal values.

Key findings reveal that urban scenography as a teaching tool fosters critical thinking, creativity, and civic consciousness among students. This interdisciplinary approach allows students to interpret the city as an evolving narrative, equipping them to address complex urban issues through socially inclusive and resilient designs. The study's implications suggest that incorporating urban scenography into planning education could enhance future planners' ability to create urban spaces that are adaptable, community-centered, and reflective of diverse civic identities. By challenging the boundary between the built environment and scenography, this approach situates urban design within a broader cultural and ecological framework, preparing students to address the multifaceted challenges of contemporary urban life.

This approach thus offers a transformative model for urban design education, expanding students' skills to foster resilient, community-oriented urban spaces that prioritize civic engagement and social inclusivity.

#### MULTI-LEVEL INTERACTIVE PLATFORM

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#### **ABSTRACT**

Urban planning is a complex discipline that requires a large amount of data and collaboration among different areas of expertise. Learning urban planning is often challenging due to difficulties integrating information, limited collaborative experiences, inaccessibility for individuals from diverse backgrounds, a short-term focus, and constraints in funding and resources. Considering the increase in digital transformation, this paper proposes an innovative collaborative method that leverages developed technologies. This methodology encompasses collaborations in collecting and visualizing map data from fieldwork, utilizing web-based tools for presenting urban studies. By employing the powerful application of MapGL, the tool illustrates interactive visualizations and simulations, making urban data more accessible to a broader audience and helping convey complex information intuitively, especially to non-experts. Furthermore, the platform allows users to edit their own scenarios and share them with others. In general, this innovation creates a shared platform where users can view, analyze, and input data, significantly streamlining planning processes compared to static maps. Subsequently, we collect participants' feedback to assess the platform's impact on the planning and design process and identify which design stages participants use the most. The results indicate that the rapid transformation of these settlements is hindered by a lack of reliable spatial data and outdated records. Hence, the proposed platform, which connects urban planners with local citizens, helps overcome the lack of updated information. We widely distribute the platform to citizens, allowing them to easily access it and update the current status of the region through its web-based interface. The presented platform, developed to understand the formal and informal activities related to building functions and land use layers, contributes to increasing recognition of civic engagement and citizen activities in education and research.

# LEVERAGING INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE TO DECOLONISE PLANNING THEORY, CURRICULA, AND PRACTICE FOR EMPOWERING FUTURE PLANNERS

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#### **ABSTRACT**

Planning theories seek to tackle planning issues and yield successful results; nonetheless, these planning theories are primarily Western-centric. Western planning theories are incorporated into the curricula of urban and regional planning programmes at South African higher education institutions. Research indicated that future Global South planners are mainly educated in Western-centric planning theories, whereas planners render these theories irrelevant in practice and that indigenous knowledge can facilitate transformation.

Indigenous knowledge is known as local knowledge unique to a certain community, and it is important to understand the knowledge as it is inherited from generations of trial and error for perfection. During the colonisation era, Indigenous knowledge was undermined, while Western knowledge was imposed. Nevertheless, Indigenous knowledge is intergenerational, and colonisation did not entirely alter this knowledge, as recognised in the process of decolonising knowledge. The objective was to seek the truth and knowledge inherent in the global wisdom of various Indigenous tribes. This paper then asks one research question: How can Indigenous knowledge be used to decolonise the planning theory curricula to empower future planners?

This study utilised a qualitative research design centred on content, making qualitative content analysis (QCA) the most appropriate method for this research. Part of the QCA method is the preparation phase, which consists of sampling and data collection for the research population. The purposive sampling method was utilised to sample three populations: 1) planning theories study guides from six of the eleven urban and regional planning higher education institutions in South Africa; 2) seven academics of the eleven urban and regional planning higher education institutions in South Africa were interviewed; and 3) 49 urban and regional planners completed a qualitative survey. The collected data from the three populations were then organised by coding, grouping and categorising the content into theme-related categories to report on the results.

The planning theories taught are the main category that represents the different planning theories that are taught to the Global South planning students and if these theories are relevant in practice. The results indicated that some of the urban and regional planning programmes had already included more South African-orientated theories, such as Ubuntu, into their planning theory curricula. Nevertheless, the results also pointed out that planners who had been trained in Western theories do not see its relevance in practice, and it disadvantages the communities.

To foster resilient communities in South Africa, it is imperative to commence with the education of planners and to decolonise the planning theories that inform their problem-solving approaches. Consequently, Indigenous knowledge can inform the formulation of enhanced planning theories for the Global South, and the curricula should prioritise community-based training. This encompasses further practical instances of the student lives being included in the curricula to comprehend the issue and devise solutions for the planning dilemma.

Keywords: planning theories, curricula, practice, indigenous knowledge, planning education

# DEVELOPING AN INNOVATIVE COURSE ON INTEGRATED APPROACHES IN THE PLANNING OF INCLUSIVE. PEOPLE-CENTRIC AND CLIMATE-RESILIENT CITIES

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#### ABSTRACT

Integrated planning approaches for analysing and planning urban space are not only useful but a prerequisite for tackling the contemporary challenges of climate change while creating functional, human-oriented, and inclusive places. However, most planning courses are usually monothematic, focusing on specific attributes of each field. For instance, urban planning is usually taught differently and separately from transport planning, while participatory planning and evidence-based planning approaches are often entirely neglected. Therefore, the presence of these four complementary approaches in the curriculum of planning-related schools is inadequate, especially under a collaborative, intercultural educational structure.

In this context, an MSc-level collaborative, online, international course (COIL) titled "Integrated Approaches in the Planning of Inclusive, People-centric and Climate-resilient Cities" has been developed as part of the Erasmus+ project "InPlanEd". The developed COIL course is implemented synchronously in the National Technical University of Athens (NTUA) and the University of Cyprus (UCY) with the hybrid participation of 28 students from the two universities and followed online by 1-5 practitioners per session. The educational structure of the course is organised into two parts: the theoretical component and the practical component. The course starts with an introduction to the literature focused on the overarching concept of sustainable cities, focusing on four thematic areas: climate resilience, people-centric urban design, inclusive cities and systems thinking. Subsequently, key methodologies for integrated urban planning are introduced, including evidence-based design and planning, sustainable mobility, and participatory planning. The course incorporates a practical workshop on participatory methods, a more technical session on data-driven planning and a guided field trip to engage in collaborative group work centred around the two universities' campuses. The assessment criteria for the students' final submissions include the final presentation of their group work project and an individual essay delineating the site analysis conducted within the selected thematic area and spatial scale. Students will also be evaluated based on their participation in lectures, fieldwork, workshops, and group work.

Initial findings from the implementation of this innovative COIL course confirm the difficulties of running a hybrid international course, which involves the matching of academic calendars of different universities and the facilitation of meaningful collaboration of participants in a hybrid format. These findings will be considerably enhanced with quantitative and qualitative evidence derived by the participants' assessment of the course (to be concluded by end of January 2025). Nevertheless, the piloting of the InPlanEd course highlighted the growing interest in integrated planning in Cyprus, Greece, and internationally. Following completion of the pilot course, a comprehensive guide on creating an intercultural, innovative course in COIL format that is tailor-made for the specific needs and requirements of integrated planning will be developed.

Keywords: integrated planning, mobility planning, evidence-based design planning, participatory planning



In this track, we especially invite practitioners (urban planners, citizen initiatives, community organizations etc.) to present their initiatives, actions and approaches, either as a presentation or a poster, to highlight the outcomes but also the success factors and pitfalls in building resilient urban communities. We are particularly interested in the following questions: What can be learned from your initiatives? How can citizen-led initiatives become part of co-productive urban planning or regeneration projects and private-public partnerships?

## SUSTAINABLE TRANSFORMATIONS OF PUBLIC SPACES THROUGH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

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#### **ABSTRACT**

The urban environment can be studied as a network of public and private spaces. Private spaces primarily consist of individual buildings and their adjacent properties where owners are solely responsible for their usage and aesthetic. In contrast, public spaces are intentionally designed to foster social interaction offering all citizens equal rights of access and use.

This research specifically addresses public spaces which form the foundational structure of a city through elements such as streets, pedestrian areas, squares, parks, riverbanks and more. These spaces represent shared values while they carry collective responsibilities. Public spaces are typically managed by municipalities, government entities or other institutions though citizens can actively contribute to their design and development.

The paper focuses on transformation of marginalised or neglected public spaces. In this context, marginalisation refers to a phenomenon where spaces lose their social purpose, becoming a source of collective dissatisfaction. This occurs when the delicate balance between the material and social elements of the urban environment is disrupted. A transformation is considered sustainable when it effectively restores this equilibrium while remaining sensitive to the economic and political context of the country in which it resides.

This study explores two primary approaches: "top-down" and "bottom-up". Top-down approach involves initiatives led by institutions and authorities while bottom-up is driven by activism initiated from formal or informal civic organisations. These approaches frequently overlap and may include the advancement of urban development strategies at national, regional or municipal level, as well as the engagement of other institutions, businesses, investors and non-governmental organisations in the process. Additionally, they advocate for the integration of urban environment issues into the educational system and encourage the active participation of local communities in decision-making and development processes.

Transformation of public spaces carries risks of historical, cultural, ecological, social and material nature, including gentrification, commercialisation, unification, loss of identity and social dissatisfaction. Civic engagement plays an important role in reducing many of these risks making it an essential element of decision-making processes. Public spaces should be designed to ensure accessibility and inclusivity providing conditions for universal use.

The paper concludes with an analysis of successful case studies of social engagement in the transformation of public spaces. Key initiatives include those led by "Na otkrito" Foundation and "The Collective" Foundation, based in Bulgaria, in which the author actively participated. These projects highlight how the active involvement of institutions, students and citizens has contributed to the design and implementation of creative ideas for public space transformations.

Keywords: urban environment, public space, transformation, sustainability, civic engagement

## ENGAGING CITIZENS INTO GREENING THE BUILDINGS IN SERBIAN CITIES

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#### **ABSTRACT**

Greening the building envelope is the only way to increase greenery in densely build urban areas. The concepts of green roofs and vertical greening systems introduce numerous environmental benefits into urban space, from the reduction of urban heat island effect, to air purification, to flood risk mitigation, to biodiversity increment, etc. The amplitude of positive achieved effects, however, depends on the type of applied greening system. Likewise, in social terms, green envelopes can positively contribute to citizens' health and wellbeing, improve experience and aesthetics, and provide place for socialization, recreation, or food production. When applied on a larger scale, e.g., throughout a whole neighbourhood, green envelopes can improve the quality of urban life notably.

Building integrated greenery systems in Serbian cities are not common; when present, they are by rule installed on commercial buildings, although this too is a rare case. With intensification of climate change manifestations, deterioration of the ecological quality of urban environment, and the introduction of new regulations, guidelines and initiatives accelerating green transition, such as the New European Bauhaus, the shift in current practice will inevitably occur. Citizens can have a direct, key role in managing integrated greenery systems, as the largest part of built stock in Serbian cities are multi-residential buildings.

Involving citizens into greening the envelopes of multi-residential buildings in Serbian cities is an intricate task from different reasons, including novelty of the action, and the lack of awareness and the knowledge about greening technology and its benefits. Furthermore, there exist the economic obstacles reflected in a reverse proportionality between socio-ecological gains and initial economic investment; intensive green systems provide more benefits, but their initial cost is higher. Finally, envelope greening is not supported by law; there are no prescribed facilitations nor tax exemptions for residents.

Considering listed challenges, an optimal scale to engage citizens in envelope greening would be at the level of the municipalities, by following up-down approach. The municipalities should organise various promotional and educational campaigns to raise citizens' awareness and help to build their knowledge about technologies and benefits of green envelope concept. This would be the first phase of greening the buildings in Serbian cities. Only when citizens are sufficiently informed, they will be capable of participating in greening actions. The second phase, therefore, would be related to engaging citizens into development of greening design solutions. The third phase, which may overlap in time with the second, is finding funds for the realisation of projects, primarily through public, private and third sector organisations partnerships, and donations. The presumption is that self-financing can be expected only when all long-term economic and socio-ecological benefits become obvious to citizens. The maintenance of greenery systems, which is the final phase of greening strategy implementation, should be assigned to citizens from the start. Citizens' behaviour in the maintenance phase will be pivotal for future strategy revisions. The scope of pilot projects should be large enough and implemented in different cities in Serbia, to secure relevance of the derived success indicators.

Keywords: Integrated greenery systems, multi-residential buildings, benefits, installation and maintenance, strategy

## FROM AFFIRMATION TO TRANSFORMATION: DILEMMAS OF JUSTICE IN MARGINALIZED GROUPS

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#### **ABSTRACT**

The Druze are a small Arab minority in Israel, characterized as, a traditional and patriarchal society where women suffer from oppression, discrimination, and an inferior status compared to men. Furthermore, Druze women encounter double discrimination, one within their community and the other as Arabs in Israel. The Arabs in Israel are subjected to institutional discrimination in resource allocation, spatial planning, and public policy. This article analyzes the limitations and barriers in the public sphere as a consequence of the double discrimination, and the spatial practice of Druze women in coping with unequal accessibility to public spaces. Based on Fraser's framework of redressing injustices, we argue that women's practices to improve their position in everyday public spaces can be understood on the continuum from affirmation to transformation. This approach to the practices of minority women of traditional communities transcends the established approach of 'bargaining with the patriarch' in adding agency, creativity, and achievements to subjects of double discrimination and allows for depicting changes, even subtle, in the social structure. Hence, this study identifies and characterizes spatial limitations and barriers, and practices for dealing with them among groups excluded from space, thereby shedding light on misrecognition in planning and strategies for remedying spatial injustices.

Data collection was based on in-depth semi-structured interviews with 24 Druze women from Israel. The interviews were analyzed to identify spatial planning features that Druze women identified as limitations and barriers, and, to identify women's bargaining practices in dealing with such limitations and barriers. The analysis was based on two main theories, the urban space of recognition, and bargaining with the patriarch. Then, women's practices were examined using Fraser's theoretical framework of recognition to identify practices as either affirmative or transformative. For this identification, guiding and directed questions were defined to clarify the characteristics of the strategy.

The findings indicate a variety of limitations and barriers, that Druze women identify in the urban space. Furthermore, it shows that women develop spatial practices against deprivation and exclusion to enable their participation in and use of existing or new spaces. Such practices facilitate the creation of more inclusive public spaces for Druze women. It suggests that Druze women develop spatial practices aiming to contribute to their resilience in their communities and to bring about more fundamental changes in power relations.

Most importantly, the study shows that these practices have been identified as having different levels of affirmative or transformative character. Therefore, this study offers new theoretical insights regarding women's social and spatial strategies in dealing with gender inequality and socio-economic injustice. Also, this study offers an expansion of the remedies for correcting injustice in space, to the spectrum that extends between affirmation and transformation. Moreover, women's coping strategies with spatial exclusion are an important foundation for rethinking planning of more inclusive spaces, especially in the case of spaces of minority groups which tend to be the subject of planning rather than its driving force.

Keywords: marginalized women, public space, spatial practices, recognition, affirmation-transformation

## FROM REACTIVE TO PROACTIVE CITIZENSHIP: DATA-DRIVEN APPROACH FOR RE-EVALUATINGPUBLIC SPACE DESIGN IN SKOPJE

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#### **ABSTRACT**

Inclusive urban planning processes have the potential to foster stronger connections between residents and their surroundings, thereby contributing to neighbourhood social resilience. Building on this premise, the research highlights the essential role of civic engagement in shaping public spaces. It emphasises data as a fundamental medium for articulating the needs of neighbourhood communities more effectively, positioning it as a powerful tool for influencing public policies.

This paper presents a two-year research process (2022–2024) conducted in three phases, involving ordinary citizens, students, and professionals. The first phase focused on evaluating civic involvement in urban planning processes through both official and unofficial modes of participation.

The second phase centred on workshops where citizens were encouraged to observe, interpret, and share diverse perspectives on how public spaces are perceived and utilised in everyday life. The third phase adopted a more academic approach, which included testing a variety of tools for mapping and assessing public spaces. The investigations were conducted within the boundaries of the city of Skopje, observing a five-year period (2018–2023) of public works and structuring the analysis according to public space typology, programme complexity, and disposition. Additionally, students, acting as observers, gathered insights that were systematically used to evaluate the condition, usage, and design of selected case studies. This phase included structured evaluations of a broader range of data inputs, establishing a foundation for understanding how well current public spaces align with community needs.

The analysis reveals distinct relationships between the availability and quality of public spaces, on one hand, and their modes of usage, on the other. Additionally, findings from the first two phases of the study emphasise the absence of structured civic participation in urban planning processes, as well as the lack of tools to enhance such participation. In this context, the research offers valuable insights that could foster well-informed and proactive civic perceptions, ultimately encouraging greater engagement in spatial planning processes. The study's key contribution lies in recognising the needs of the community and offering a well-structured, easy-to-understand, open-access methodology for assessing public spaces—fostering proactive citizenship and resilient neighbourhoods.

# EXPERIMENT SUPERBLOCKS IN EAST LEIPZIG EXPERIENCES FROM LOCAL CO-PRODUCTION BETWEEN CIVIL SOCIETY, LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND SCIENCE FOR MOBILITY TRANSFORMATION AT THE NEIGHBOURHOOD LEVEL

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#### **ABSTRACT**

The Leipzig project 'Neue Nähen - Superblocks Leipzig', inspired by the Superblock concept from Barcelona, put local resilience and sustainability at the heart of neighbourhood-level traffic calming measures. Unlike the Barcelona model, the concept was not simply applied in Leipzig but carefully adapted to the specific local context through a comprehensive co-production process involving civil society, the municipality, and academia. This approach ensured that the interventions were contextually appropriate and addressed the unique challenges of the densely populated and multicultural east of Leipzig, which became particularly evident during the coronavirus pandemic.

The project responded to the lack of open space and traffic-calmed zones in the neighbourhood by redesigning public space in a sustainable way, aiming to improve the quality of life and social resilience of the area. It sought to create a more equitable use of space for recreation, play, communication, and car-free mobility, tailored to the needs of the local community. The implementation was achieved through a wide range of participatory and co-productive methods, including:

Single-day traffic trials as action days, allowing residents to experience and assess potential interventions directly, A year-long traffic trial in a side street, which tested the long-term impact of traffic-calming measures, A mobile engagement unit ('Wunschbüro'), bringing participatory processes directly to residents to gather ideas and feedback.

Mitmachforen (participatory forums) and street-stammtische (neighbourhood discussions) to foster dialogue and collaboration between stakeholders.

Straßenschule (street school), an educational program organized with local partners from the fields of culture, mobility, and environmental protection,

Integration with official participatory processes of the City of Leipzig, ensuring alignment with municipal strategies and institutional support.

The project's success lay in its bottom-up approach, initiated by residents and coordinated by an association, which enabled broad participation and strong local support. Funding from the National Urban Development Policy program 'Post-Corona City' secured three years of financing, facilitating both implementation and the long-term sustainability of the project and its coordinating association.

The temporary redesign of street spaces through traffic trials allowed different measures and interventions to be tested, adjusted, and scientifically monitored. Regular reflection on the process highlighted key learning effects, particularly with regard to the balance between bottom-up and top-down approaches and the importance of inclusive communication strategies. Despite administrative and legal hurdles, as well as resistance from certain interest groups, the project fostered a dynamic learning environment, strengthened the local community's sense of responsibility, and opened up democratic discussion spaces in the neighbourhood.

The successful collaboration between the project team, the city administration, and the project advisory board, supported by the mayor and city council, helped to position the Superblock model as a regional and national role model for resilient and sustainable urban development. The 'Neue Nähen - Superblocks Leipzig' project provides a practical example of how global urban models can be adapted to local contexts. It highlights success factors, challenges, and learning effects in implementing a resilient transport transition and participatory urban development, offering valuable insights for creating more liveable, inclusive, and resilient cities.

Keywords: Superblocks, experiment, co-production, mobility transformation, neighbourhood level





# SPOTLIGHTING SUCCESSFUL BEST PRACTICES IN URBAN RESILIENCE AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

#### CULTIVATING RESILIENCE IN THE COMMUNITY GARDEN OF BOSTANIE

#### **Dimitar Samardjiev**

ing ecological stewardship.

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initiatives. These issues, coupled with realistic concerns about food sustainability, stinging biodiversity loss, and sparks of climate change challenges, exacerbated the need for citizen-led projects that promote urban resilience. In response, Bostanie (Eng. Croprising), Skopje's first community garden, was initiated on the verge of a grassroots effort to reclaim urban space for "autonomous" food production, environmental education, and social cohesion. The aim of the project is to proactively engage urban residents, in order to foster a regenerative culture of shared responsibility for green public spaces and peer to peer exchange of knowledge. The establishment of Bostanie was a collaborative effort driven by a diverse network of stakeholders. The initiative was spearheaded by The Green Ark, an environmental civic organization committed to applying permaculture design in (peri)urban environments for the benefit of local communities since 2007. Recognizing the pressing need for urban resilience, in 2019 the City of Skopje approved the financing of the project titled "Development of the First Urban Garden in the City of Skopje," that was proposed by The Green Ark, aiming to foster community engagement and promote sustainable urban agriculture. With financial support from the City of Skopje, and in coordination with the public enterprise "Parks and Greenery," as well as the Municipality of Aerodrom, the project secured a location in the park of Novo Lisiche. Volunteers from the local community played a crucial role in shaping and maintaining the garden, inspiring a donation of a well and a water pump by the company Civil Engineering Institute Macedonia - CEIM. Through a participatory approach coordinated by the permaculture designers team of The Green Ark, citizens worked together to design and develop an inclusive educational gardening space, demonstrating the power of collective action in fostering urban resilience. Since its official launch in August 2021, Bostanie has had an evident impact on both the local environment and community dynamics, acting as a vibrant hub for over fifty active gardeners and a venue for open-air cultural and artistic events. The garden has served as a microclimatic refuge, mitigating urban heat effects and promoting local biodiversity in Skopje. It has also provided hands-on learning opportunities for children and adults, reinforc-

For at least forty years, Skopje has been facing grave environmental and social challenges, including alarmingly increasing levels of air pollution, constant degradation of green spaces, and a chronic lack of community-driven

Beyond its environmental benefits, Bostanie has strengthened civic ties by bringing together a diverse group of people, including families, students, and retirees, who engage in shared gardening activities. The initiative has fostered a sense of belonging and collective ownership, demonstrating the importance of community-driven urban resilience. Furthermore, it is inspiring similar green initiatives in other parts of the city, proving that small-scale urban agriculture projects can serve as catalysts for broader environmental and social change.

ing knowledge about regenerative agricultural practices, food sovereignty and food security, as well as common-

#### **URBAN PRACTICE**

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Urban practice arises where citizens, non-profit organisations and initiatives recognise unused urban spaces and buildings as potential and activate and develop them through their commitment and artistic activities into cultural open spaces oriented towards the common good. This is about actively shaping one's own city and standing up for common interests.

Urban practice takes place at the interface between art, culture, urban development, architecture, education, youth, the environment, social issues and sport. Through experimental and creative design of publicly accessible spaces and buildings, solutions to urban challenges such as climate adaptation measures, integration or the scarcity of affordable spaces are tested. Places are created that focus on the common good - places for the neighbourhood, for artists and cultural workers, for young people, children, newcomers, etc. The aim of Urban Practice is to put people's needs and wishes at the heart of urban development. It promotes the creation of inclusive, sustainable and socially just spaces.

Urbane Praxis e.V. is an association of various civic and creative actors based in Berlin. It is a platform for knowledge exchange. The association facilitates the continuous exchange between practitioners,

administration and politics and thus promotes the sustainable civicbased transformation in urban development. Urbane Praxis e.V. is an association that represents and supports the interests of urban practitioners, gathers and shares knowledge in order to make interdisciplinary urban issues visible. The Urban Practice Network Office creates networks, supports and advises Berlin initiatives and projects that are active in the

field of urban practice. It organises public discourse and networking events and develops information material and support for urban practitioners.

#### THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT AS A TESTING GROUND FOR DEMOCRACY

#### Ljubo Georgiev

Team Sofia, Sofia, Bulgaria

Ljubo Georgiev's presentation focuses on the value of citizen participation in analysing, describing and solving urban problems. It talks about the direct link between the level of citizen involvement in tackling urban issues and the maturity of a democracy. And it builds upon the experience of "Team Sofia" - a group of more than 70 experts with diverse professional and personal backgrounds who actively work for making Sofia a better place. Motivated by the need for change of values in city governance and guided by the principles of dialogue and inclusion, the Team proposes solutions, founded on knowledge and with a concrete plan for their implementation. Based on the experience of its members with successful urban projects and initiatives such as Vision Sofia 2050, Sofiaplan, Toplocentrala, Laboratory for Urban Development, OneTree, and through a wide network of people and organisations, the Team collects and analyses data in depth, formulates realistic strategies and effective solutions for the improvement of the urban environment.

"Team Sofia" is an NGO formed at the beginning of 2022. It was founded upon more than 5 years of cooperation between its members, as well as an extensive multidisciplinary network of experts from Sofia and beyond. Its existence was provoked by a long-lasting series of inconsistent and counterproductive actions of Sofia Municipality.

The Team works in a public context characterised by polarisation, lack of coherent and integrated behaviour of public bodies, as well as lack of well founded and well explained knowledge, available in the public domain.

In the course of the 3 years of its existence Team Sofia managed to establish itself as one of the main references for urban expertise in Sofia. Its members are often consulted by the media, politicians, NGOs and entrepreneurs and the Team actively formulates and communicates positions and proposals on a variety of issues. Its activities have resulted in increased and more easily accessible knowledge that empowers neighbourhood activists. In cooperation with local activists the Team has produced guidelines for the local administrations in Sofia. The Team's actions have become an example of a productive dialogue as opposed to continuous confrontation. Last but not least the Team's expertise and reputation were widely used during the last local elections in Sofia (Nov 2023) and had an influence on the elections' outcome.

## ARHRID: A PLATFORM FOR ARCHITECTURAL DISCOURSE AND URBAN ENGAGEMENT IN OHRID

#### Ivo Lazaroski

Arhrid, Ohrid, North Macedonia

#### Stefan Zhupan

Arhrid, Ohrid, North Macedonia

The formation of the organization was driven by a complex array of challenges that necessitated a formal response. Ohrid, a UNESCO World Heritage site, has lacked a dedicated platform for architectural discourse or comprehensive research on urban development. Unregulated and rapid urbanization has taken place with little regard for the city's sensitive natural environment and cultural heritage. Significant gap existed in recognizing the importance of post-war modernist architectural inheritance that is yet to be recognized as cultural heritage. This movement had not yet been fully acknowledged or promoted as a valuable part of the city's identity, creating a pressing need for both civic engagement and urban resilience.

In 2020, a modernist gem - Restaurant Park was being destroyed. This event sparkled an initial debate about what is going on in the city and whether we as citizens have any control over what is happening with the urban realm, be it the public space or the built heritage. Paralelly to that, group of friends with a shared interest in architecture were discussing on these topics about the city they grew up in. One of the reasons how the initiative came to existence was also the need of the local architects to gain a voice not only as individuals, but as a collective and a formal body, which in their sense, would be of higher relevance for participation in decision-making and a foundation on which their expectations would grow. Through personal and professional connections a circle was formed sharing the same values, motives and urgency to take action.

The initial initative we worked on looked at the newly opened public space in Ohrid - the ex-Barracks (Kasarna), was an event of public presentation and exhibition on the topic but also included a publication. This formed an interest and later partnership with UACS- Faculty of Architecture - "Kasarna" was chosen as the site in interest for several smeestral architectural studio courses by the faculty. This partnership later proceeded with further collaboration on the 12th edition of the Summer School of Architecture in Ohrid.

One example of grassroot initiative is an intervention on unused space and celebration of a local notable artist, Vangel Naumovski, a partneship was formed with other local NGO's and lions club, ending up in a large facade mural on a square next to his house and aterlier. This has led to an initiative to name the square by the name of Vangel Naumovski and last year the city major publicly promised to do so.

Another take on the topic of "Kasarna" continued to be in our focus with the intervention in front of Young Cultural Centre in Ohrid. The project was a trial to articulate and make available for usage the front yard, from a proposal formed together with UNDP and the Municipulaty of Ohrid. This led to engagement with the youngest population of Ohrid and added an aditional value to the space.

Currently we are preparing an exhibition for the work of Boris Chipan that at the time of this publication should already have happened and we hope for it to be the largest event we organized. To date, we have enagaged with numerous organizations, private, state-owned and international, that gave relevance to the initial idea and we are excited to see the outcome.

The impacts might be something that has to been looked at again after a longer period of time, considering the slow nature of these fields.

We can see the community moving around "Kasarna", the institutions that exhist there and citizens starting to recognize the space as theirs. Our actions perhaps helped to demistify and present the space to the public.

The mural on the other hand influenced further actions to arrange the space in front of the it - a new pavement with places to sit.

In our 2 years of existence speaking on the topics of public space an architectural values sparked up a discussion about the exposed challenges the city faces. Arhrid anyway remains a platform to keep the discusson of the built environment in Ohrid going.

# THE ROLE OF INDEPENDENT AND GRASSROOTS MOVEMENTS IN CITY PLANNING AND POLITICS IN SKOPJE CENTRAL MUNICIPALITY

#### Jana Belceva Andreevska

Chance for Center Skopje, North Macedonia

Activists and citizen-led initiatives are becoming a powerful force in shaping urban policies and protecting public interest against the profit-driven development. Initiative "Defending Debar Maalo" emerged as a grassroots movement in Skopje neighborhood in 2015 as a response to a proposed urban plan that threatened sustainable urban development. The plan aimed to increase motor traffic, reduce green and public spaces, compromise traffic safety, and add excessive density beyond regulated limits. By mobilizing residents and public figures, the initiative successfully pressured the municipality to withdraw the plan, marking a pivotal moment in local activism.

This movement highlighted systemic concerns such as poor policy decisions, lack of evidence-based planning, and political involvement in non-transparent practices. As support grew, citizens from other neighborhoods joined, leading to entry into the municipal council in 2017. This shift from activism to political participation enabled engagement directly with decision-making processes, identifying institutional shortcomings, need for innovative and digital practices, support from academia and promotion of transparency and citizen participation.

Brave and successful steps taken led to expanded political impact in the 2021 Municipal Elections when now registered independent political entity Chance for Center has secured three council seats, further strengthening the ability to influence policy. Through direct engagement, public transparency initiatives, and participatory planning and budgeting, group has fostered citizen empowerment in city governance. Recognized by both local and international organizations, our experience demonstrates how grassroots movements can transition into institutional political actors while maintaining their core values of integrity, accountability and community-driven planning.

This abstract is only a fragment from the presentation that will presents our journey, strategies, and lessons learned, offering a model for integrating grassroots activism into formal political structures.

## KOMSHILOOK FESTIVAL: REVITALIZING COMMUNITY THROUGH ART AND COLLABORATION

#### Stefan Aleksandar Jovanovski

Komshilook Skopje, North Macedonia

KomshiLOOK festival took place on June 1, 2024, in Zhelezara, a Skopje neighborhood defined by its distinctive 1980s cascading architecture and lack of formal cultural spaces. Although the existing building complex had been designed with communal infrastructure—including shared spaces intended for cultural and social activities—these areas had remained underutilized and largely inactive, failing to serve their original purpose. Instead of becoming dynamic social hubs, they had turned into neutral, overlooked areas, used mainly for transit rather than interaction KomshiLOOK had been created as a response to this need, aiming to bring cultural life into the neighborhood by activating these underused spaces. By transforming familiar and overlooked areas into cultural platforms, the festival had provided an opportunity for residents to reclaim their surroundings as sites of creativity and community-building. More than just an event, it had served as a tool for empowerment, proving that culture was not exclusive to institutions but could thrive anywhere, especially when integrated into everyday environments.

KomshiLOOK invited residents to become co-creators of cultural experiences rather than passive observers, demonstrating that art can flourish anywhere people gather. Recognizing the pre-existing void, the goal for KomshiLOOK was to catalyze cultural transformation from the grassroot level upwards. The program included short theatrical pieces, dance and music performances, open-air art installations, and activities inside the apartments. These events blurred the line between public and private, proving that a neighborhood's structural design can function as a built stage when activated by creative collaboration. Neighbors who rarely ventured beyond their everyday routines discovered a new sense of connection to their surroundings and to one another. The concept drew inspiration from the Balkan tradition of neighborly support, or komshi. Neighbors in Zhelezara hosted visiting artists, opened their homes for dinner gatherings, and offered terraces for site-specific performances. The sense of community extended well beyond the festival's official program. By working together to plan and produce these events, local residents cultivated stronger networks, reinforcing the idea that a committed group can breathe life into underused architectural spaces.

The impact of KomshiLOOK was felt across several levels. It brought together more than 1,500 attendees from various social backgrounds, revealing both the desire for decentralized cultural events and the festival's success in making them accessible. Media coverage and recognition positioned KomshiLOOK as a model for cultural decentralization in Skopje, underscoring the transformative power of art when it is woven into everyday environments

By revitalizing shared courtyards, balconies, and parking lots, KomshiLOOK turned overlooked urban features into cultural stages, highlighting architecture's role in community-building. Neighbors did not simply observe performances, they guided them, participated in them, and, in the process, discovered a collective strength. This experience left a foundation for further cultural initiatives, not only in Zhelezara but also in other neighborhoods seeking to reclaim public spaces and spark social cohesion. Through art, conversation, and collaboration, the festival helped redefine what it means to be a neighbor—not just someone who lives nearby, but someone who shares, supports, and builds alongside others. More than anything, KomshiLOOK stands as a testament to the power of neighbors, proving that when we open our doors—to art, to conversation, and to each other—we create a world that feels more like home. And in that shared space of creativity and connection, communities don't just witness change they become the change.



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