

Manifesta 14 Prishtina 2022

Public After All

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Manifesta, the European Nomadic Biennial, takes place every two years in a different European city. The biennial rethinks the relationships between culture, society and urbanism, investigating and catalysing positive social change through contemporary culture in continuous dialogue with its Host City and its citizens.

One of the key pillars of Manifesta is its strong focus on urban developments within its Host Cities, a focus that is at the heart of the multiyear pre-biennial process. *Public After All* showcases this pre-biennial research, knowledge production and the Urban Vision commissioned by Manifesta 14 Prishtina to design office CRA-Carlo Ratti Associati. *Public After All* presents an analysis of, and a methodology for, portraying Prishtina in 2022 and beyond. The publication is a tool for the citizens of Kosovo's capital to rethink the potential of their city and envisions different possibilities to revitalise and reclaim Prishtina's public space.

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CRA-Carlo Ratti Associati









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Public After All



Let the People Decide our City's Future

Përparim Rama
Mayor of the Municipality of Prishtina

Prishtina is delighted to host Manifesta 14 this year, thus becoming the first city in the Western Balkans to host the European Nomadic Biennial. This summer, we will be opening our doors to more than 100,000 visitors, art lovers, artists, journalists and explorers, who will experience Prishtina through the biennial. This event, which we are proud to host, is going to place our city as a cultural hub on the global map.

While Manifesta 14 will help Prishtina transform itself, Prishtina will also help Manifesta become a true platform for urban renewal in developing cities such as ours. Cities are becoming ever more important as nodes connecting the global economy. For us, this also means not losing sight of the important meanings our residents associate with their parks, central squares and key urban landmarks. Streets and other public spaces are our common good, and we are honoured that Manifesta will help us reignite their full potential.

The participatory urbanism outlined in this Urban Vision, which is being tested for the first time in our city, opens up new opportunities for us to rethink our use of public space and to reclaim certain areas of Prishtina for the public. The temporary urban interventions made as part of Manifesta 14 Prishtina will serve as a platform for urban change and long-term regeneration, much needed in areas that have been left behind for far too long.

By reactivating public space in Prishtina, we will open a fresh dialogue with our citizens about the importance of regeneration, and different methods of treating, using and sharing common public space. Instead of taking people to see art and experience culture, we will bring culture to the people through a series of transformative projects, which will unlock Prishtina's potential.

Through this year's 14th edition of the European Nomadic Biennial, Prishtina will come to look at urbanism as a deeply embodied experience, as a way of sharing common stories through artistic interventions in public space, including by working collaboratively with both artists and the team of designers and researchers at CRA-Carlo Ratti Associati.

Projects like the Green Corridor will link several parts of the city via the unused railway tracks. This will create a new, green hub, and connect communities along the way, altering how we have thought about this part of the city and affecting how we move as pedestrians from one neighbourhood to another.

My long-term goal for Prishtina is, and will continue to be, the creation of new ways for the city to become accessible to its citizens by foot, creating new pathways and platforms that will better link each of the neighbourhoods, and making the city a true reflection of the spirit of its residents.

However, urban transformations and lasting changes cannot be made without the people who live and interact with those spaces. Hence, through newly made urban interventions, we will initiate discussions with our residents and share ideas about the vision of the city and its future transformation.

Only through common dialogue and agreement can we create and implement beneficial interventions in our communities. Cities are living organisms, animated by the lived experiences of their diverse users.

Manifesta 14 Prishtina: An International Cultural Boost for Kosova

Hajrulla Çeku

Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport of the Republic of Kosova

The Republic of Kosova is delighted to be hosting Manifesta 14 Prishtina, the European Nomadic Biennial, as it is an outstanding opportunity to share with the world our treasured culture, cherished tradition of hospitality and our values as the youngest European state.

For decades, the arts community in Kosova was a strong element of resistance against suppression, their artistic expressions playing a crucial role in keeping alive our nation's hope for peace and a brighter future. Today, art is once more helping the Kosovar people breach the boundaries of isolation, telling a story of tolerance, persistence and growth.

In addition to being an eventful episode of cultural life in Kosova for the 100 days it takes place, Manifesta 14 Prishtina is also a long-term investment in strengthening local capacities in ways that will continue to support cultural documentation and provide new strategies for storytelling. This investment will help build strong and resilient cultural institutions in Kosova, ones that will acquire a robust approach to international cultural dynamics, as well as other global issues, such as environmental protection and social cohesion.

Kosova is the first country in the region to host this prestigious event, and welcome a large number of wonderfully minded artists and their eye-opening installations and events, each possessing a highly refined critical perspective on both local and global challenges.

Furthermore, Manifesta 14 Prishtina will lay the ground for new and strengthened relations between two artistic communities: the local and the international. These efforts align with the ministry's mission to boost cultural development as a driver for social and economic prosperity. Meanwhile, Manifesta 14 Prishtina's quest to activate cultural spaces has also been met by an active pre-existing voice in Kosova that campaigns for the reclamation of public space.

The city of Prishtina and the satellite events in other parts of Kosova, including in Severna Mitrovica/Mitrovicë e Veriut, Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje, will showcase successful approaches to re-thinking and reshaping our cities around art and cultural heritage. This initiative comes at a time when the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport is continually investigating how to use Kosova's industrial and cultural heritage for the good of the cultural community.

In closing, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the Manifesta 14 team for their amazing curation of the 14th edition of the European Nomadic Biennial in Prishtina, which features around 103 individual artists and collectives from over 30 countries from around the globe, as well as for their determination to turn every blueprint into reality.

Manifesta 14 Prishtina: Who Owns the City?

Hedwig Fijen

Director of Manifesta 14 Prishtina

Prishtina, the capital of Kosovo, the youngest sovereign country in Europe, is hosting Manifesta 14. Since its inception in the early 1990s, Manifesta, the European Nomadic Biennial, has examined the cultural topography in Europe and its changing DNA. As a country in transition, Kosovo presented us with a different geopolitical perspective; it is now 23 years after the war, and the Western Balkans and its people have lived through a horrific history. When Yugoslavia disintegrated in the 1990s, it caught the world by surprise, since it seemed that Tito had found a workable formula with his supranational ideology and his implementation of the most liberal model of socialism. From persecution, discrimination, segregation, war and genocide to declaring its independence in 2008, Kosovo has since then been on a challenging journey.

The 14th edition of the European Nomadic Biennial marks the first time it takes place in the Western Balkans. I have come to know Prishtina as a space where blooming cultures and identities are continuously (re)forming, and where communities engage with each other's culture as well as with those from neighbouring Balkan cities, such as Skopje in North Macedonia and Tirana in Albania. Prishtina's urban culture is loved, acclaimed and praised, with happenings, exhibitions and musical influences shaping the character of the city. Both from a European and a regional Balkan perspective, we approached Prishtina from unexpected and heterogeneous perspectives, examining collective histories and complexities that carry through to the present. This fast-changing urban epicentre, at the crossroads between southern and eastern Europe, embraced Manifesta during the last two years and gave us the opportunity to investigate how contemporary culture, community building, collective memory mapping and artistic practices can address the multiple trajectories and idiosyncracies of a city that is as composite as it is polymorphic.

Manifesta 14 Prishtina is happening at a crucial time for both the biennial and the city. Why is this moment so essential for Manifesta as well as for Prishtina? At present, the Russia-Ukraine war marks an

exceptional geopolitical moment in Europe, as we experience another appalling and cruel war on our continent. As murderous brutality has been met with remarkable resilience, Putin's invasion has been condemned globally as the worst violence in Europe since the Second World War. However, we must realise that similar atrocities were committed in Bosnia and Herzegovina thirty years ago, unleashing carnage in Sarajevo, amongst other places. We must comprehend that only 23 years ago, NATO began an air campaign against Serbia to put an end to the atrocities in Kosovo. This present moment is critical in terms of reimagining the stories of the past that are entwined with the future of the Balkans – a creative form of healing to regain meaning and a sense of the now.

As Manifesta, we are committed to speaking out against the unlawful invasion of Ukraine by Russia. Despite the distances between us, the art world is standing united in great solidarity with the Ukrainian people. As an outcome of conversations conducted in the months since the full-scale invasion of their country, we are supporting the Ukrainian artistic communities both in the diaspora as well as in the country, to give those who are desiring it a refuge in Manifesta 14 Prishtina. Focusing on the present in Ukraine means focusing on Kosovo, not least because the echoes of war are loud and traumatically resonant. In Prishtina, soft echoes of the past resonate into a feeling of: "We are with you, not just because we stand with you, but because we have been there, we have experienced that hatred". Hatred is, of course, one of the ugliest emotions. Israeli historian Yuval Noah Harari taught us that hate can be deeply vested in our DNA, and nations are ultimately built on telling stories. Each passing day brings new stories, that the Ukrainians will tell for generations to come. In the long run, we sincerely hope the stories can overpower the weapons. The current war in Ukraine will certainly shape the future of our entire European continent and the world; that is why "*telling stories otherwise*", the concept at the centre of Manifesta 14 Prishtina, is so poignant.

Prishtina has not been selected at random to become the epicentre of Manifesta 14. It is one of the youngest capital cities of Europe and yet it remains isolated in Europe, due to a lack of visa liberalisation for its citizens – a pressing policy matter that must be addressed urgently, so as to empower the young generation, enhance their future prospects and improve connectivity on the continent. When the Municipality of Prishtina invited Manifesta, they stimulated us to develop impact strategies on urban and artistic levels. From a European perspective, Prishtina has been selected specifically in correspondence with recent geopolitical shifts, but also with the intent to open the dynamic

cultural scene of Kosovo to Europe and the rest of the world, and to create long-lasting connections that will have reverberating effects for decades to come. At this very moment, history itself has taken a sprint. Changes that we were imagining to be the work of generations have happened in the days leading up to the biennial.

Rethinking the biennial

Moreover, the model of the biennial was bound to change. As a European biennial, we are critically reflecting on what biennials represent, especially regarding racism, inequality and xenophobia while also considering the impacts of the global pandemic as well as the ecological and neoliberal crises in relation to the limited resources available during these trying times. Our old artistic model as a nomadic biennial producing a series of exhibitions of contemporary art, was no longer sufficient. In response, we have transformed Manifesta, turning the organisation into an interdisciplinary knowledge-and-research-producing platform, focused on participatory practices with local communities. This makes the biennial more responsive to local interests, needs and urgencies.

In a changing and post-pandemic world, Manifesta has re-thought the biennial on several levels: changing our methodology from top-down to bottom-up and participatory; transforming a more economical balance for our Host Cities and creating a more tangible legacy for Prishtina. Over the last two years, to achieve a far more radical approach to diversity and regional solidarity, we have been working collectively and closely with Kosovar urbanists, cultural professionals, artists and thinkers. Focusing on research and knowledge production, Manifesta implemented strategies based on the needs and interests of local communities with an ambition to explore new practices and new ways of learning and unlearning, instead of focussing on the traditional role of the authoritarian curatorial operative.

As in earlier editions (Manifesta 12 Palermo and Manifesta 13 Marseille), our biennial shies away from using the notions of curators and curating, especially since we have transformed from being a monolithic contemporary art-focused event into a participatory, collective and community-based programme including a variety of countercultures, sub-cultures and disciplines. We now work instead with Creative Mediators, who instigate, stimulate, develop and co-produce creativity. This could include multiple approaches, from photography, to poetry, to political activism, ecology and horticulture.

For the urban and architectural part of the Manifesta 14 Prishtina concept development, Manifesta selected Turin-based architectural office CRA-Carlo Ratti Associati as the first Creative Mediator. Carlo Ratti and his team, including partner Daniele Belleri and architect Erzë Dinarama, created an Urban Vision together with the MIT Senseable City Lab, based on field research that produced concrete data in the form of texts, stories, images, maps, statistics and assessments. This Urban Vision resulted in the programme pillar called *Commons Sense*, which negotiates the return of the Commons and supports those who are fighting and advocating in the ongoing struggle for reclaiming public space. The Commons as a whole are a set of shared resources – both spatial, natural and cultural – that are accessible to all members of a society. They constitute a material basis that can be used to promote solidarity, inclusion and a sense of belonging. The city’s public space, we argue, is one of the most important Commons of all. This study functioned also as a preliminary investigation for the selection of venues and public spaces across the city of Prishtina. On the basis of the knowledge production and research, we invited a second Creative Mediator to continue developing the artistic research.

As one of the Creative Mediators of Manifesta 14 Prishtina, Catherine Nichols, a Berlin-based Australian art and literary scholar, curator and writer, conceptualised the artistic programme of the biennial: *It matters what worlds world worlds: how to tell stories otherwise*. Under this title, Manifesta 14 Prishtina took up the challenge of exploring new modes of collective storytelling. The concept positions storytelling as central to how we live as a society; it views the creation of stories as a way of opening our minds to new ways of thinking, so that we can imagine a different future for Kosovo and the city of Prishtina.

Built on the premise that creative mediation always requires direct democracy, we chose to follow the model we introduced in Manifesta 13 Marseille. This meant using several research tools to involve the ideas, stories and engagement of citizens, civil organisations, NGOs and activists from Prishtina. Manifesta and its education team have thoroughly investigated Prishtina prior to the biennial through Citizen Consultations, action research and a Public Survey, as well as the possible use and purpose of different public spaces that could be claimed back for Prishtina’s communities. One of the primary lessons from earlier editions, was to secure the establishment of an alternative model of a permanent institution in the former Hivzi Sulejmani Library as well as creating new spaces for promoting and supporting the well-being of residents, thereby making tangible touchstones for the reimagining of

the city’s future. From both an architectural and artistic perspective, we aim to create sustainable structures for coexistence and a more transversal, relational and effective concept of heterogeneous communities looking for new models of well-being, transparency, diversity and awareness of the fact that “Everything is interconnected”.

To achieve this form of interconnectedness, a cross-section of artists, activists and citizens including Albanian, Serbian, and Roma representatives took part in our Expectation Workshops, where it came to the surface that it matters which stories are told and by whom, in which context and from which perspective. Together with Prishtina’s community-run space Termokiss and an independent research group, our Education and Mediation team researched so-called subculture movements in Prishtina, Tirana and Skopje. This was part of larger series of telling fragmented histories to uncover and expand the origins and processes of various countercultures. Through Citizen Consultations, we invited citizens to analyse the current state of social discourse in a series of workshops, followed by a Public Survey. The workshops included the inhabitants of Prishtina, involving the Serbian community in Gračanica, participants from Roma communities in Fushë Kosova and inhabitants of the neighbourhood around the former Hivzi Sulejmani Library, which has been turned into the Centre for Narrative Practice, and the former Brick Factory. This enabled us to explore the reality of how culture and communities cross-pollinate each other’s existence.

The Manifesta 14 Prishtina programme was also developed to bring much needed international recognition to national talent. Therefore, for the first time, Manifesta has stimulated the inclusion of non-institutional and subcultural activists and activist movements (those who use art as an activist tool) by representing a vast amount of Kosovar talent inside the biennial next to multiple influential institutions that define Prishtina’s rich and dynamic cultural ecosystem. This means that, in the biennial, Kosovar participants are equally represented alongside their international contemporaries, inviting us to develop different modalities of transdisciplinary working in a biennial perspective. Manifesta 14 has also created a regional *parcours*, connecting the Prishtina programme to regional cultural partners through the Manifesta 14 Western Balkans Project and establishing a lasting collaborative network. To support Kosovo in cultural policymaking, Manifesta aims to create an international exchange network by using the Manifesta network from previous and future Manifesta Host Cities and stimulating long-term collaborations.

For the first time in the history of Manifesta, and because of the current geopolitical shift, the moment has come to not only focus on time-based elements, but to establish an enduring multi-functional structure for the local community to enjoy after Manifesta 14 Prishtina is over – the new cultural hub called the Centre for Narrative Practice, whose key elements will be located in the former Hivzi Sulejmani Library. The key elements of the centre will be the telling of stories, co-creation and education, which will be achieved through its urban garden, reference library, making spaces and mediation school. We will secure it for the next five years as a public-private collaboration. Everything we developed involved a model of direct democracy through Citizen Consultations and urban interventions to ensure we transformed the biennial into a participatory and collaborative catalyst for social change.

Four pillars

Our programme is based on the outcomes of these participatory democracy processes, which focused on finding out the role and stakes of culture in Kosovar society, and how education and cultural capacity-building could help nation-building as well as how well-being and transparency could offer new perspectives for Kosovo's young generation. Considering the lack of accessible public space, this edition of the European Nomadic Biennial is creating new public spaces that act as meeting spaces and incubators for transformation. Through a series of eco-urban interventions, Manifesta 14 Prishtina develops new understandings to profoundly help transform our ways of being, feeling and acting in a capital city. Our public interventions concentrate and revolve around four central pillars in Prishtina – the former Brick Factory, Grand Hotel Prishtina, the Centre for Narrative Practice and the Green Corridor – as well as an *urban parcours* of 25 venues across the city.

We composed the *parcours* of these venues in close consultation with our partner CRA-Carlo Ratti Associati as part of reclaiming the city after two years of research and knowledge production. The venues that physically shape our Manifesta 14 Prishtina programme were based on the Urban Vision *Commons Sense* by CRA-Carlo Ratti Associati as part of a long-term objective to transform public space coupled with the artistic programme of the biennial. This demonstrates the significance of the Prishtina communities in reclaiming public spaces as a pivotal determinant of the livelihood of the city. Only their presence provides

the opportunity to recreate a sense of collectivity and to rethink the future of Prishtina as an open-minded metropolis in the heart of the Balkans. Under the title *Commons Sense*, one of the key long-term results of Manifesta 14 Prishtina is helping in the revitalisation and reclamation of public space and negotiating the return of the Commons.

One such alternative urban intervention is the Missing Bridge, part of a proposed Sustainable Mobility Path, which could function as a necessary meeting space in the city and encourage the building of the officially planned bridge between the two terraces of the Palace of Youth and Sports and Grand Hotel Prishtina. CRA-Carlo Ratti Associati proposed to add a pedestrian bridge in the centre of Prishtina, that would not only connect the two underused spaces, but have great potential as a communal living room for the city of Prishtina. This project would test how new locations would generate positive changes in the network of public spaces and navigate better mobility systems in Prishtina. Unfortunately, at the time this introduction was written, the funding for the Missing Bridge was not secured.

Another key project to catalyse social urban change in Prishtina is the development of a Green Corridor on the former Prishtina railway line that opened in 1936, connecting Prishtina to the neighbouring republics of the Yugoslav times. Our main object of this intervention proposed by CRA-Carlo Ratti Associati is to revitalise an abandoned and unsafe space, transforming the currently unused railway tracks into a pedestrian path connecting the Brick Factory with the Palace of Youth and Sports. In close collaboration with the United Nations Habitat Programme (UN Habitat) and the public administration, this Green Corridor will foster long-term change in the city, fostering more sustainable forms of mobility. Proving that these artistic and urban interventions will become the catalyst for urban transformation in the city of Prishtina should be the enduring impact of Manifesta 14.

Zooming out from Prishtina's central area to nearby industrial and more rural areas, Catherine Nichols invited Berlin-based collective raumlaborberlin to develop the Centre for Eco-Urban Learning in the Brick Factory, which can help build bridges from the city to surrounding areas, and act as a platform for alternative ways of investigating and rethinking circular and regenerative economies and alternative ways of urban living, in close co-production with the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Prishtina. In collaboration with the communities and neighbourhoods around the Brick Factory, the cleaning and transformation of the site has been set in motion as part of the Manifesta 14 Prishtina Education and Production process. The initiative stands for

the growth of alternative ecosystems and transparent relationships between Prishtina's citizens and decision-makers.

Manifesta 14 Prishtina will engage the heterotopic space of Grand Hotel Prishtina to launch an associative and long-term enquiry into one of the key questions of the biennial: what role do art and art-thinking play in bringing forth “spaces of appearance”, in other words, the public realm, the site of politics? Several artistic interventions will be located on, in and around the hotel. It will also host a multidisciplinary thematic exhibition entitled *The Grand Scheme of Things*, which extends over seven floors and explores seven themes, one on each floor. The themes include transition, migration, water, love, ecology, capital, and speculation. As the central themes of Manifesta 14 Prishtina, they also govern the programme at the Centre for Narrative Practice.

The Centre for Narrative Practice, our concrete permanent structure situated at the former Hivzi Sulejmani Library, will function within the realm of social and artistic educational practices as the epicentre of our 100-day programme, and build upon the urgent needs articulated by the citizens and communities of Prishtina, such as reclaiming public space, strengthening participatory democracy, extending the cultural infrastructure beyond the boundaries of the inner city, establishing and maintaining spaces for well-being, improving diversity and inclusivity in the cultural fields and making Prishtina greener. In the overall design concept, developed with Kosovar architect Erzë Dinarama, the site favours the multifunctional use of spaces and accessibility. As a long-term community-based project, the Centre is shaped and cared for by the people who use it.

Our urban interventions, social educational practices and artistic co-creation places a collective ambition of narration as the nucleus of Manifesta 14 Prishtina, combining experimental and transversal forms of learning, collective creation and knowledge production – so vital for Manifesta's interdisciplinarity. With this 14th edition, Manifesta has shifted its focus from temporality to permanency, from an ephemeral exhibition event to creating a more sustainable, inclusive practice. This new structural approach is our answer to the last decades of the autocratic manner of curatorial operating in most of the art world. Therefore, our biennial is focused on a participatory, inclusive and collective way of working, where all Kosovar team members have a voice and bring ideas to the conceptual framework created by Manifesta and further developed by CRA-Carlo Ratti Associati and Catherine Nichols as Creative Mediators.

Special Thanks

On the 22nd of July 2022, Manifesta 14 will open in Prishtina as the result of an amazing communal and collective effort. The biennial is built on the incredible engagement and support of all the artists, thinkers, makers, cultural practitioners and citizens from the Kosovo community who welcomed us, our Creative Mediators and everyone from elsewhere, so warmly. A second thank you is due to our Manifesta 14 team, a group of talented, dynamic and professional colleagues from Kosovo and the Western Balkans, for their endless effort to establish this 14th edition and their ambition to harvest its long-term legacy. We thank our Creative Mediators, Carlo Ratti and his team and Catherine Nichols, who helped to transform the biennial model into a more participatory and collaborative catalyst for social change. Manifesta 14 Prishtina is only possible because of the 103 participants in our biennial who created numerous urban and artistic interventions in public spaces across the city; 46 works have been newly conceived for Manifesta 14. We are proud to involve 103 participants from over 30 countries, including 26 collectives, 39 participants from Kosovo and an additional 26 from the Western Balkans. We are equally grateful to our own Manifesta 14 Foundation board members for their guidance and constructive support.

We extend immense gratitude to the Municipality of Prishtina, with special thanks to former Mayor Shpend Ahmeti and current Mayor Përparim Rama and their teams for working together with us for the past four years, and not just facilitating, but building a trusting relationship and rethinking the future of their city with us. Likewise, the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport has provided generous support; Minister Hajrulla Çeku and his team are to be thanked. Developing this complex enterprise was only possible thanks to the sustainable collaborations we have established with the support of all the parties involved: the Hartwig Foundation, European Union Creative Europe Western Balkans, the Government of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, UNDP, UN-Habitat, our main sponsor TEB bank, the Embassy of Sweden in Kosovo, the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Kosovo, Ammodo and the Embassy of Switzerland in Kosovo, alongside many other national and international partners. We thank the members of our Supervisory Board for their valuable support of our endeavours. Together, we are building structures, and not just events. We truly appreciate the genuine trust in us. Thanks to these relationships, we have created this programme across the city of Prishtina, telling a

variety of stories, in different ways, without hierarchies or boundaries and transforming its venues into vibrant spaces for imagination, where other stories are told. Stories about the way we see ourselves or are seen by others.

A Complex Relationship with Public Space: Notes from an Urban History of Prishtina

Dr. Ilir Gjinolli

“Throughout urban history, the extent to which public space permeates the urban fabric has fluctuated, and so has its content. Depending on where the social energies of a particular historical moment are concentrated, the emphasis has shifted among three main functions – the political, the economic, and the social. During times of political instability, public space is charged as a vortex of social discontent, often leading to the dismantling of existing regimes and the unleashing of radical transformative forces.”

Kiril Stanilov, *The Post-Socialist City*

After the Second World War, the Ottoman cities of the Western Balkans underwent a huge transformation, with many cities pressured to rebuild by the dominant new political forces that emerged following the liberation from Nazi occupation. The post-war urbanism of these cities are a direct outcome of these transformations, and it is due to this period that many of the cities in Kosovo still have a modernist character.

The period of so-called “socialist modernism” in what was then Yugoslavia was not only a transformation in terms of the development of architecture and the city, but marks the beginnings of the architectural and urban profession in the region. This new discipline was led by a younger generation of professionals, educated at architectural schools across the Yugoslav republics – including the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Prishtina, which was established in the late 1970s.

However, the decline of the Yugoslav economy saw a rise in unemployment and inflation, and the bankruptcy of many industries. Ethnic tensions grew throughout the 1980s, and in March 1989, Kosovo’s autonomy within Yugoslavia was abrogated. The next 10 years saw

Kosovo Albanians removed from all public employment and denied access to institutions, including schools and hospitals. The institutional, social and cultural life of Kosovo Albanians was therefore transferred to private premises, often residential homes.

The bloody dissolution of Yugoslavia unfolded throughout the 1990s, concluding with the Kosovo War in 1998 and 1999. Following a period of more than eight years under the governance of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) – which established early planning laws – in 2008, Kosovo declared a still-contested independence from Serbia.

In each of these eras, Prishtina's population has developed very different relationships with the city's public spaces, from weaving through the *mahallas* of the Ottoman city to reclaiming the streets for public life following the Kosovo War. This essay seeks to explore each of these eras, beginning with Prishtina under Ottoman rule.

Life in the *bazaar*

The main morphological feature of an Ottoman city was a distinct division into two parts: a city centre where economic, religious, cultural and other public activities took place and residential areas separated into a number of *mahallas*, or neighbourhoods. This morphological structure was reinforced by the street network, which consisted of two types: wider streets in the centre and narrow streets, alleyways, dead-end streets or cul-de-sacs in the residential neighbourhoods.

The main form of public space in the Ottoman Empire was the *bazaar*, where the streets interconnected with small squares to link various trading areas. *Bazaars* typically consisted of paved streets featuring one-story constructions that were open to the street, allowing artisans and merchants to exhibit their wares. This extension of the inner space into the public street allowed for intensive interaction between shopkeepers and residents passing by.

Social life in the Ottoman cities in the Balkans usually took place at the *bazaar* and in the small, interconnecting public squares. Since artisans and merchants were organised into *esnafs*, or guilds, it was possible to meet a broad section of society in the public space. In the *bazaar*, people met colleagues and clients, and urban dwellers met villagers who came to trade in the city.

Ottoman cities in the Balkans began to be transformed in the second half of the 19th century in Serbia, Greece and Bulgaria, while

in Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia – where the Empire clung on for longer – change took hold in the 1920s. These changes were not a quiet evolution. Often, they were more of an erasure of the Ottoman urban fabric, leaving behind only samples of the more monumental architecture, such as mosques, *hammams*, and *hans*.

A new way of life

Following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the Balkan Wars and then the First and Second World Wars, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia became the dominant power in Kosovo.

In the first post-war decade (1945–55), most of Kosovo's cities did not experience significant changes in terms of their administrative functions, with the exception of Prishtina, which became the capital of the province of Kosovo. Modest industrial production plants were also developed during this time, while some of the stronger guilds were transformed into state cooperatives, establishing the first production facilities, including leather crafting, silver, gold, food and clothing production.

By the 1960s and 1970s, new industrial areas were being developed on the fringes of cities and an extensive social and technical infrastructure was developed. Modern, paved roads connected the cities, while new schools and hospitals were built across Kosovo. University education began in the 1960s, with the University of Prishtina established in 1970.

Socialism also brought new forms of public gatherings, including walking in the city during the evening, the so-called *corso*, which usually took place on the main streets. People would meet in the evening and walk along the high street, usually doing several laps. Sitting and playing in the streets and parks was also a popular activity, especially in the afternoon and evening during the spring and summer times.

Building over the Ottomans

Meanwhile, during those early post-war years, the city itself became a canvas in which the new political power could demonstrate the progress of the new society by destroying the old bourgeois system, which was represented by old Ottoman buildings and public spaces. The socialist regime had a vision for new, modern cities for the working classes of Yugoslavia, and introduced a new concept: the planned city.

However, instead of preserving existing structures, the authorities built the new city over the old urban fabric. This methodology was established in the initial post-war period, when old houses were demolished and replaced with new housing estates. These demolitions were often justified by the state of the old, damaged buildings that prevailed in the Balkans, which were difficult to preserve from both a technical and financial perspective.

The most drastic demolition of the Ottoman cityscape in Kosovo was the destruction of the Prishtina Çarshia – a century-old *bazaar* with more than 600 shops, which disappeared to make way for a new Brotherhood and Unity Square.

The square featured a fountain, a sculpture and a monument with three columns, which was designed to be a symbol of the long-term battle for equality between Kosovo's ethnic communities. Visually, the square is completely out of proportion. The monument's columns intrude into the skyline, competing with the three minarets of the city's oldest mosques.

Brotherhood and Unity Square was one of many new public spaces that came about in order to fulfil the need to create places for monuments dedicated to the glory of the Socialist system in the early decades of Yugoslavia. Authorities would often use these new spaces for political rallies, where party officials would give speeches in celebration of national holidays.

It is in this way that public space in the socialist city was controlled, as political gatherings organised outside of the framework of socialist society were barred. Across Yugoslavia, such activities were considered contrary to socialist and working class principles, while in Kosovo they were also often considered as counter to the principle of brotherhood and unity between Yugoslav nations.

One of the first major Yugoslav interventions into the urban design of Prishtina was the creation of Marshall Tito Street, which was constructed over the existing centre of the Lokac neighbourhood. Widening the street required the demolition of many houses in Lokac, as well as a mosque and a Catholic Church.

A new modernist street emerged, containing the National Theatre, Hotel Bozhur, modernist housing blocks, green alleys and small squares between the blocks. The shops at street level, although featuring a limited supply of goods, presented some form of replacement for the *bazaar*.

Fortunately, the Boulevard went on to become perhaps the most vital public space in Prishtina. It was briefly pedestrianised in the 1980s,

a vision which was restored in 2007, when it was officially named after Mother Teresa.

New Modernist Neighbourhoods

Modern urbanism came to Kosovo in the 1950s, when the first architects graduated from the Schools of Architecture in Belgrade, Sarajevo and Skopje. However, the first modernist neighbourhoods did not arrive until a decade later, when the southern Prishtina neighbourhood of Ulpiana was planned – the result of a national competition won by Professor Bashkim Fehmiu.

Following a change of political status between 1966 and 1974, as well as a high rate of population growth and migration, Prishtina began to grow into a larger industrial and university city. In fact, the city's population almost doubled between 1961 and 1971.

To help house the growing number of residents, from the mid-1970s to the end of the 1980s, two other Yugoslav-era neighbourhoods were developed: Bregu i Diellit (Sunny Hill) and Dardania. These new housing estates were exercises in modernist planning designed by urban planners from Zagreb and included planned public spaces based on residents' needs – particularly green and recreational spaces.

By 1974, an update to the Yugoslav constitution granted Kosovo greater rights as a Socialist Autonomous Province within Serbia. This greater autonomy became the backbone for the transformation of Prishtina's city centre, including the creation of institutional buildings and public spaces that often deployed remarkable modernist designs.

The most notable developments were the Palace of Youth and Sports, the Rilindja Press Palace, the Prishtina Radio and Television headquarters, the Central Bank of Kosovo, the University Clinical Centre of Kosovo, the National Library of Kosovo, the Institute for Albanology, the Kosovafilm studios, and the Grand Hotel Prishtina.

All of these buildings were characterised by the use of public space surrounding them, while their architecture conveyed the sense of transformation and progress made in the provincial capital, with many becoming symbols of prosperity and emancipation for Kosovo's citizens.

From public space to private retreats

Following the removal of Kosovo's status as an autonomous province in 1989, the Serbian state quickly set to work communicating the message that Kosovo was now Serbian territory. Prishtina's streets and squares were renamed, with the names of "brotherhood and unity" heroes of the anti-fascist war dispensed with and replaced by those of Serbian kings and warriors from the Middle Ages.

As the 1990s went on, Kosovo Albanians found themselves removed from public life, and private spaces had to stand in for institutions. Residential houses turned into spaces for education, cafés and restaurants became venues for culture and performance. Despite not being designed for such purposes, these were spaces which provided the opportunity to engage in some form of a social life, and became democratic spaces for the exchange of ideas.

The marketplace remained the only public place where social interactions between all people, no matter their ethnic background, remained unchanged. Vendors, as well as consumers, could be Albanians, Serbs, Turks or Roma. The lively atmosphere was broken only by police raids on vendors selling imported "illegal" products such as cigarettes.

As time passed, the tension between the Serbian government and Kosovo Albanians rose, culminating in a war at the end of the decade. More than 10,000 people lost their lives, including over 1,000 children, while many cities and villages across the country were left in a state of devastation. The war concluded with UN resolution 1244, which demanded the withdrawal of the Serbian Police and Army from Kosovo.

Rebuilding a new state

The United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), a complex international organisation that included elements overseen by the EU and OSCE, assumed governance of Kosovo on the 12th of June, 1999. In 2001, a Constitutional Framework was approved as a supreme legal act, based on which the elections for the first Kosovo government, the so-called Provisional Institutions of Self Government of Kosovo, were organised.

Throughout this period, urban development suffered, partly due to the changing nature of governance and institutions, as well as disputes over property rights, the desperate need to reconstruct housing and limited possibilities for construction. Meanwhile, public spaces

and buildings had suffered acute damage that sorely needed restoration work.

Flea markets and improvised bazaars became a rapid response to the growing demand for various goods, including clothing and tools. Abundant vacant sites were provided at very low rental costs to allow people to set up businesses.

Due to the high price of land and the strong demand for new housing, as well as locations for industry and the newly emerging service economy, municipalities began to designate the periphery of cities as eligible for construction. A lot of illegal construction also occurred along the main infrastructure corridors during this time.

At the beginning of 2002, the Ministry of Environment was established, and in 2003 a new Law on Spatial Planning was approved that defined key urban planning processes. The law was updated in 2012, but neither pieces of legislation outline principles nor provide definitions for the provision of public space.

Urban planning in modern Kosovo is carried out at the local level through two types of municipal planning: the Urban Development Plan and Urban Regulatory Plans. By 2015, most municipalities in Kosovo had drafted an Urban Development Plan, all of which stipulated requirements for a certain percentage of public space in areas where collective housing was planned.

Local governments have also discovered the importance of public space in terms of increasing the quality of life within cities, including socially, economically and environmentally. The fight for new public space, and reclaiming occupied public spaces, has become a common pledge in numerous local election campaigns, particularly since 2007.

As public awareness around green and common spaces rose, local administrations began to designate separate budgets for investments in public spaces in cities. Meanwhile, civil society organisations addressing public space issues have also multiplied, with the fight for reclaiming illegally occupied public space often fiercely contested.

Unfortunately, throughout the first decades of the 21st century, public space has regularly been designed and created through non-transparent processes, in which the public have rarely been given the opportunity to provide feedback on proposals. This, in addition to a lack of experience and occasional downright incompetence in urban design, has led to the construction of numerous low quality spaces.

That is not to say that there have not also been more successful instances which help show that urban design in Kosovo is gradually improving. Today, at architectural schools, the topic of public space

is not only design-oriented. The social, environmental and economic aspects are all considered equally important.

The increasing competition in the architecture and urban design professions due to the rising number of quality-oriented young professionals will almost certainly improve the design of Kosovo's urban spaces. However, it is also crucial that the planning process is simultaneously improved, particularly in regard to the inclusion of the local community in the process. After all, it is the public who use the space.

Dr. Ilir Gjinolli, co-founder of Kosovo's Spatial Planning Institute and lecturer in Urban Design at the University of Prishtina

New Urban Narrations: A Short Conversation between Carlo Ratti and Deyan Sudjic

Professor Carlo Ratti is an architect, engineer and a founding partner of CRA-Carlo Ratti Associati – a design and innovation practice. He is also the Director of the Senseable City Lab at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Deyan Sudjic is a Distinguished Professor of Design and Architectural Studies at Lancaster University, who served as Director of the Design Museum in London between 2006 and 2020. He was also the founding editor of *Blueprint* magazine and the Director of the Venice Architecture Biennale in 2002.

The following is a dialogue between Ratti and Sudjic on the work undertaken by CRA-Carlo Ratti Associati as part of the pre-biennial research process for Manifesta 14 Prishtina. It touches on the challenges inherent in decoding a city as unique and complex as Prishtina; how literature and artificial intelligence both use data to understand urban phenomena; and the reinvention and reclamation of public space.

Deyan Sudjic:

Its very particular history has made Prishtina an unusual paradox, but also a place whose special circumstances, if we can understand them, have a wider relevance. Official statistics suggest its population is at just over 200,000, closer to what we think of as a town than a city. Yet, in its significance to the community of Kosovars scattered across Europe and beyond, it is the centre of the world. A glance at the departure board at its international airport, which you mapped in your research, confirms that. In the course of 24 hours, one can notice a range and frequency of flights that would be inaccessible to most cities twice its size. It is a testament both to the violence that accompanied the last days of Yugoslavia, and to the continuing lack of opportunity for the young and the ambitious in Kosovo – a combination which has driven so many of its people to leave.

To that diaspora, Prishtina represents an essential part of their identity. They may live elsewhere for much of the year, but it is the place where they buy a home with the money they earned abroad – a home they may only use in the summer. Perhaps it is a little similar to the many people with Jewish heritage around the world who believe it is important to have a stake in Tel Aviv. In these terms, Prishtina is in itself a symbolic public space for Kosovars. At the same time, it is a city that has grown brutally quickly and largely lawlessly since Kosovo declared its contested independence from Serbia.

This is a region with a long history and a very specific identity that goes back long before the Ottoman period, when it was a place where Albanians, Serbs, Jews, Roma and others lived together in a cosmopolitan society. In the best days of Tito's Yugoslavia – represented by the National Library of Kosovo designed by the Croatian architect Andrija Mutnjaković – for a moment it seemed there might be a modern version of that coexistence.

Slobodan Milošević ensured that did not happen, and since Kosovo's independence, Prishtina has become a case study for the eruption of an informal urban economy in the European context. Given so many levels of complexity, where did you start from in your study of the city's public space?

Carlo Ratti:

All the people we have spoken to since early 2021 loved Prishtina unconditionally, and still decried the state of its public spaces. What we tried to do in our study was to leverage this shared feeling – a neglected longing for change – and funnel it into this project, which is essentially an experiment in participatory urbanism.

We started by mapping the city, highlighting the built environment's historical stratifications: the Ottoman city, the Yugoslav city and the Neoliberal city... let's use those labels. We used the traditional toolkit of the urbanist to count and report on buildings, squares, pavements, green areas and so on. We also added sociological data to better understand the different communities and their interactions.

However, we soon realised that this data – which is commonly used in other cities – would not do justice to Prishtina's level of complexity. We had to find new tools to understand how people are living in the city and using its public spaces in real-time. We went back to the urban anthropological work done by William H. Whyte in New York City 50 years ago, when he used video footage in order to investigate the behaviour of individuals as they interact in public spaces.

Yet, Whyte's approach was very time consuming, based on the painful manual annotation of video in order to extract urban knowledge. However, since early 2021, we have been pioneering an alternative methodology at our lab at MIT – a visual analysis that employs artificial intelligence to understand how public space is being used, and how we can fix and improve it.

To do that in Prishtina, we had to create our own Google Street View of the city, as an original does not exist. We did this by sending out student volunteers with 360 degree cameras attached to their bikes. We then started to analyse the resulting feed using artificial intelligence – think of it as a kind of an automated, faster and round-the-clock William H. Whyte.

DS:

In this activity, you have followed in the path of many diligent measurers and plotters of the urban form. Beyond Whyte, I would add Christopher Alexander, and his observation that a city is not a tree – or even Charles Booth's poverty maps of London. There is much to be learned from these strategies. However, personally

I have always believed that the great descriptive novelists, Charles Dickens and Émile Zola, have as much to tell us about the exploding growth of 19th century cities as any scientific method of measurement. Dickens described London as cut in half by the coming of the railways. Émile Zola's *Au Bonheur des Dames* explored the impact of the newly invented department store on urban life.

In the case of Prishtina, for instance, one useful reference might be the Nobel Prize winning novel *The Bridge on the Drina*. It was written by Ivo Andrić, who grew up in Bosnia in a culture that had been formed of some of the same elements – a long Ottoman occupation, in which an ancient bridge and a *hammam* were the city's public spaces, for example.

How do you feel about this tension between scientific analysis and cultural exploration? Do you ever worry that by focusing on analysis and algorithms you might miss something important about what Prishtina is like as a place to live?

CR:

Literary narratives are a fantastic tool for understanding any city, and I think they can complement what we are saying. Data itself is a way to promote cultural explorations – think about how Émile Zola's work was grounded in Realism's quantitative inquiries or how today's data journalists use analytics.

Furthermore, by sharing data, we can promote not a single narrative but a plural one. As in Julio Cortázar's *Rayuela*, citizens can contribute to the mutating canvas of the city. Note that I am not arguing for a postmodernist approach – here, the emphasis is on shared cultural production, not the multiplicity of interpretation.

An important remark that we should make is that whether it is Dickens, Zola, or Andrić, even with their enormous differences, all of their work stems from a single author's imagination. Instead, the opportunity we have here is to create a shared and plural narrative, which derives from data itself. Such an approach becomes even more interesting when you translate it to the architectural level. It leads to an idea that we have termed the "choral architect" – plural and open-ended. This is the iterative methodology we have tried to apply to Prishtina.

First, we wanted to show that public space can be reclaimed quickly and inexpensively, sometimes even just with a bucket

of yellow paint. The objective of our urban interventions was to expose the citizens of Prishtina to different ways in which public space can be reinvented. Second, we wanted to record what people like and do not like, how they can "vote with their feet", and ignite public discussion on how to change their city. We aimed to be a catalyst of change ahead of the arrival of Manifesta 14 Prishtina.

Finally, based on the received feedback, we would like to collaboratively decide which interventions should stay in the long term and which interventions should go – thereby contributing to the city's transformation. We imagine this cycle could be repeated over and over again, in turn contributing to a fast track urban transformation that responds closely to the public's feedback and desires, and helps to reclaim Prishtina's public space.



Citizen Consultations

What do the
public want?

Citizen Consultations have been incorporated into the pre-biennial research since Manifesta 13 in Marseille. For our latest edition, in Prishtina, they have been deployed with the aim of providing a wider perspective on how contemporary culture, urban development and social and cultural policies function in the city.

The results drawn from the consultations create an opportunity for Manifesta, together with the residents of Prishtina, to explore, explain and reflect upon the complexity of the cultural landscape in the city. They have also informed the development of both the Manifesta 14 programme and the vision for the cultural institution that will be established in Prishtina as part of the biennial.

The consultation process included a series of workshops with residents of Prishtina, which were followed up with a Public Survey – an investigation into the social fabric of the city that was powered by conversation. The workshops included 130 people, including denizens of the city, experts and civil society representatives while 300 residents from across the city of Prishtina were canvassed during the Public Survey.

The workshops took place in Prishtina between September and November 2021 and focused on the following topics: well-being, decentralisation, multiculturalism, inclusivity, building relationships and reclaiming public space.

Each of the workshops addressed specifically targeted groups, with four aimed at the general public from cities across Kosovo. Four further workshops focused in on specific localities and communities, with one held with participants from the Serbian community in Gračanica, another with participants from Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in Fushë Kosova and two held with residents from the neighbourhoods surrounding the former Hivzi Sulejmani Library and the Brick Factory.

Discussions during the workshops explored the central topic of: “Whose culture?” and the ways culture(s) are understood and practised by different citizens and communities. The talks also aimed to identify the sensitivities of residents concerning urban development and socio-cultural and educational policies in their city. Questions raised in the workshops then informed the questionnaires that were utilised in the Public Survey, which used random sampling as part of its methodology. The framework of the project was conceptualised and designed by Studio L A, an architectural studio based in The Netherlands, and implemented by the Manifesta 14 Prishtina Education team, in collaboration with Applicative Research Solutions (ARS), NGO Aktiv and Termokiss.

Main research objectives

- To discover how inclusive cultural spaces and institutions are to various communities, including people of different ethnicities, people with disabilities and members of the LGBTQI+ communities, as well as to analyse the existence and impact of cross-cultural events.
- To uncover pre-existing collaborations between actors in civil society and cultural initiatives, as well as their relationships with public institutions.
- To understand citizens' experience of health, happiness and prosperity in relation to their general well-being.
- To explore citizens' varying perceptions of the concept of public space, and discuss numerous practices of reclaiming public space used in Prishtina over the years.
- To investigate the different perceptions and preferences of citizens in relation to cultural activities, including their level of engagement in cultural activities.
- To understand the needs of citizens living or working around the former Hivzi Sulejmani Library, so as to inform the rejuvenation of the building into a relevant interdisciplinary institution.
- To ascertain the needs of the citizens living or working in the vicinity of the former Brick Factory, to use as a basis for the urban intervention planned to take place in the space as part of the Manifesta 14 Prishtina programme, as well as to ensure a participatory process where the community is proactively included.
- To identify the needs of the Serbian community in Gračanica, as well as their level of inclusion and engagement in cultural events, initiatives and public institutions.
- To identify the needs of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities living in Fushë Kosova, both in regard to culture and other social aspects, as well as their level of inclusion and engagement in cultural events, initiatives and public institutions.

Main research findings

The findings from the Citizen Consultations and Public Survey raised a number of key issues, including: the need to decentralise cultural activities and address the neglect of the capital's periphery and rural areas; the lack of accessible venues for disabled people; the absence of inclusivity in cultural decision-making and the need to support LGBTQI+ cultural initiatives. The main findings from the consultations and the Public Survey also further demonstrate citizens' views on a range of issues, such as: well-being, transparency, diversity and accessibility, civic participation, ecology and decentralisation.

The results were presented in an Open Forum and published through a final report in February 2022, and the findings have gone on to inform not only the Manifesta 14 Prishtina programme, but also its institutional objectives, managerial processes and communication strategies. Some of the findings also informed the development process for the former Hivzi Sulejmani Library, including the addition of a community garden to the concept for the permanent institution, the Centre for Narrative Practice, that will be created by Manifesta 14 Prishtina.

Other key concerns identified during the process – particularly those around diversity, accessibility and transparency in decision-making processes – have also influenced Manifesta 14 Prishtina's programming. For instance, activities scheduled during the biennial are planned with a view to involve a wide range of communities, and venues will be made wheelchair accessible wherever possible.

Qualitative findings from focus groups (130 participants)

Themes: inclusivity; reclaiming public space; the former Hivzi Sulejmani Library and the former Brick Factory; well-being; building relationships; issues relating to the Serbian community in Gračanica and the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in Fushë Kosova.

- Cultural activities are mostly centralised in specific areas of Prishtina.
- There are problems relating to accessibility and the involvement of individuals with disabilities in cultural activities and events.
- Public spaces are more often used to serve economic and political interest groups rather than non-profit or cultural organisations.
- There is a general need for more transparency when financing the independent cultural scene, as it is a major source of art and cultural production.
- Public hearings are often conducted more as a “box-ticking” exercise than a genuine consultation process.
- Cultural activities are mainly organised on a mono-ethnic basis (in terms of both content and visitors).
- There is a lack of clear procedures and transparency in the use of public spaces by both cultural and economic entities.
- Public institutions and civil society actors should promote a participatory approach when it comes to the maintenance of public spaces.
- Suggested activities for the former Hivzi Sulejmani Library included: literary activities, a community garden, exhibitions, workshops and establishing spaces and social enterprises such as a coffee corner. The most common remark was that it is essential to protect the library's history and reflect on its future.
- Proposed future for the Brick Factory included a mix of functionalities: green spaces, markets, sports facilities, pool and artisanal production space.
- The limited possibilities in the city to receive mental health assistance or information was regularly mentioned.
- There were requests to develop more community gardens.
- There is a need for better inclusion of ethnic minorities in cultural activities and a greater cultural exchange between communities living in and around Prishtina.

Quantitative findings of Public Survey: (300 respondents)

- The five cultural sites/spaces in Prishtina cited as being the most important were: the National Library of Kosovo, the National Theatre of Kosovo, Gërmia Park, the National Museum of Kosovo and Albi Mall.
- 86.3% of the people reported that there are no cultural activities in their neighbourhood.
- There is a need for activities to be organised within the city's neighbourhoods: sports tournaments, concerts, outdoor markets or cultural events.
- 53% of people reported not attending any cultural events and 30% reported attending one or two cultural events during the last year.
- Instead, people tend to visit shopping malls, parks, squares and boulevards or the cinema with their children.
- The most frequented sites in Prishtina are malls, coffee shops and bars, parks, squares and boulevards, neighbourhoods, stadiums, sporting venues and cinemas.
- There is a general concern that Prishtina lacks spaces such as parks, playgrounds for children, social centres for seniors and cultural centres.
- Libraries are visited by 20% of citizens, the vast majority of whom are younger than 26 years old.
- 70% of people interviewed do not engage in any arts or crafts as a hobby. Only 1.3% do very often.
- Only 14.7% reported that they often, or very often, do sports.
- 17.7% go to festivals from time to time, 80% never go to festivals and only 3% go often or very often.
- 10% of people interviewed reported going often or very often to concerts, while 5.3% said they often or very often attended the theatre and 4% stated that they often or very often visited museums and exhibitions.
- 24.6% of respondents stated that they often or very often read books.
- When people were asked about the importance of art and musical education in schools (on a scale from 0–10) the average score was 7.3.
- 42.7% agreed there should be more multi-ethnic activities, while 46% said maybe.

The qualitative and quantitative data provided a rich insight into the social and cultural fabric of Prishtina in terms of the issues faced by civil society. These included issues and potentials related to: public space; well-being; collaboration between civil society and public institutions

and the future of the former Hivzi Sulejmani Library and the former Brick Factory. Furthermore, the quantitative data provides a baseline for the cultural behaviour of Prishtina citizens, as well as their perceptions and opinions on the most important cultural sites, and their preferences for cultural activities in their city or the neighbourhood they live in.

The qualitative findings specifically indicate a willingness from civil society organisations and individuals to contribute further to issues pertaining to culture, public spaces or spaces which are related to their community. This includes citizens living around the former Hivzi Sulejmani Library and Brick Factory. These findings, especially in terms of the willingness of civil society organisations to contribute to policy making and driving change in the field of culture, are in line with previous independent cultural practitioners in Kosovo.

The findings are also in line with previous issues identified in various reports, including problems with the financing of cultural activities and the usage of public space. They further indicate that there is still a lack of dialogue, or at least continuous dialogue, between independent cultural institutions and public institutions, both at the municipal and central level.

It seems that there is no simple solution, as policy processes that result in good outcomes are complex and require interaction between stakeholders. In this case, it would require communication between the institutions responsible for policy making as well as cultural organisations and other relevant stakeholders in problem identification. It would also rely on general political will and a selection of feasible and practical solutions.

Emotional distress was closely, and negatively, related to citizens' living environments and the stressful life created in the city, related to a lack of green areas and access to mental health services. Although the relationship between well-being and participation in cultural activities has not been directly measured, the focus group findings indicated a direct relation between well-being, a stressful environment and the lack of cultural events in Prishtina.

The request for more green spaces was in line with other studies conducted in Prishtina. For example, it has been demonstrated that, on average, schools in Prishtina do not have one square metre of green space per pupil.

The focus groups provided rich recommendations on various issues. For example, one recommendation was that there is a need for a registry of public spaces in the city and a need for more transparent procedures for the usage of public spaces, especially by cultural organisations.

The recommendations provided are in line with UN-Habitat recommendations, which state that problems with public spaces in Prishtina are mainly of an institutional character, as they lack clear practices in terms of: managing public spaces; spatial planning instruments; municipal mechanisms for public space delivery; stakeholder mapping and public participation. Some other recommendations regarding the maintenance of public spaces included exploring successful models of taking care of public spaces and working on the development of models or guidelines which communities or groups could follow.

Participants also regularly stressed their belief that institutions do not value social capital when it comes to cultural organisations and activities, with many stating that institutions are predominantly oriented towards using public spaces and properties for activities which generate financial capital.

Another interesting finding from the quantitative component was that citizens cited shopping centres as important public spaces that they visit very frequently. This finding appears to be in line with developments in other cities, where instead of urban spaces with a clear public use, we have the loss of the clear distinction between public and private space, in which urban spaces of hybrid character (private and public) are emerging. In short, people are spending more time in shopping centres, which are considered to be semi-private rather than public places.¹

The quantitative findings provide a sound baseline for measuring the cultural consumption of Prishtina citizens and their preferences in terms of cultural activities – valuable information for policy makers and other cultural operators. The full final report of these Citizen Consultations is available on the Manifesta 14 Prishtina website.

1 Nissen, S. (2008). Urban transformation from public and private space to spaces of hybrid character. *Sociologický časopis/Czech Sociological Review*, 44(06), 1129–1149.

Commons Sense

Manifesta 14 Prishtina Urban Vision

Urban Vision Keywords

Abandoned and misused sites
Absence of proper planning
Accessibility
Active citizens
Activism
Agricultural land destruction
Air quality
Artistic interventions
Balanced bottom-up and top-down approach
Bottom-up energy
Bottom-up initiatives
Car pollution
Changes in public life
Changing space politics
Child-friendly spaces
Citizen engagement
Citizen initiatives
Citizen perspective
City periphery
Civil society
Community spaces
Connections
Constant change
Consumerist public space
Continuity
Daily life
Decision-makers perceived as “other” from citizens
Degradation of public space
Deindustrialisation
Diversity
Engaging children
Environment
Environmental activism
Environmental protection
Environmentalism
Flora and fauna

Forgotten heritage
Fragmented actions
Fragments of development
Gated communities
Green areas
Green connections
Green corridors
Green spaces
Hackerspaces
Heritage
Illegal sites
Inclusive design
Informal sites
Land
Leftover areas
Liberal urbanism
Linden trees
Marginalised communities
Marginalised neighbourhoods
Masculine post-war urban spaces
More-than-human design
Multicultural perspective
Multidisciplinary spaces
Multifunctional
Multifunctional spaces
Multifunctional use
Neighbourhood community
Neighbourhood gathering spaces
Neighbourhood public space
Networks
No connectivity
Non-defined public space
Open data
Open street map community
Ottoman city culture
Outskirts connections
Outskirts cultural places
Ownership challenge
Park activities
Pavement erosion
Permaculture

Places for recreation
Places for relaxing
Places for women
Pollution
Potential public land
Prishtina Activism
Privatisation
Public attention
Public buildings
Public monuments
Public space and inclusivity
Public space engagement
Public space network
Public space outside the city centre
Public space safety
Public space visibility
Public/private real estate development
Reclaiming public space
Recreational areas
Regeneration of urban spaces
Repurposing spaces
Rooted individualism
Schoolyards
Spaces for women and children
Spatial justice
Spontaneous post-war development
Sports areas
Squatting
Street greenery
The potential of abandoned places
Top-down, bottom-up collaboration
Transitory spaces
Undefined land ownership
Unfinished modernisation
Unfinished urbanism
Unused sites
Urban acupuncture

Urban ecology
Urban sprawl
Usable data
U-shaped topography
Value of open source
Vernacular forms
Yugoslav public space

Reclaiming Public Space through Open-source Urbanism

Tucked away in the heart of Prishtina, the former site of the Hivzi Sulejmani Library was in a rather sorry state when CRA-Carlo Ratti Associati first visited it in May 2021. The 90-year-old building is a cultural heritage monument, but had fallen into disuse and disrepair since being vacated a few years ago. Illegally parked cars obstructed the gates, and the courtyard garden was filled with weeds.

Despite its poor condition, the former library is in a perfect location to become a new public space – but only if planners and residents come together, experiment and reclaim it. As a testbed for new strategies in urban innovation, this vacant lot in Kosovo represents a series of extraordinary possibilities for cities across the world: to regenerate public spaces, revitalise public life and reimagine the process of city-making itself, thereon rethinking the function of an interdisciplinary cultural laboratory.

As the host city for Manifesta 14, Prishtina is currently exploring exactly these possibilities. Kosovo's capital city has invited Manifesta into its streets in the hopes that the European Nomadic Biennial can help it empower local citizens to reclaim its public spaces. In advance of the biennial opening in July 2022, Manifesta commissioned CRA-Carlo Ratti Associati to study Prishtina, and propose a vision to help achieve that goal.

As we began to observe daily life in Prishtina, we discovered how public space in the city is riddled with paradoxes and inconsistencies

that have emerged over a long and contested history. For centuries, the Ottoman Empire paid little attention to public space. Venues that did exist, such as the *bazaar*, were destroyed during various phases of the 20th century, most notably following the Second World War. The Yugoslav regime went on to build airy plazas, but it failed to create a free civic society to inhabit them.

During the 1990s, ethnic Albanians were forced out of public life and into a segregated, parallel system contained within their own private homes. Then came the Kosovo War, which was followed by a chaotic real estate boom that washed away large portions of public space. In the modern day, cafés and restaurants abound, but public parks are rare and often do not possess any benches. An absence of effective regulation means drivers park wherever they can – their cars fill the city’s vacant lots and even block the pavements.

Yet, there is hope to solve the problems Prishtina faces, particularly through new strategies for urban innovation that have emerged unexpectedly during the disruptive crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic. As the unprecedented contagion spread across the world in early 2020, governments and city hall officials had no choice but to throw out the rulebook of “best practices”, and to experiment across the board. They adopted a rapid, trial-and-error approach that has accelerated the pace of urban innovation, compressing what would have taken years into months or even weeks.

Every city has now become a laboratory where new ideas have the chance to fail and succeed. The incredible innovations that have resulted – in pedestrianisation, affordable housing and dynamic zoning – are a testament to the rapid feedback loops of experimentation, evaluation and iteration that made them possible. Far from the “death of the city” that some predicted during the early stages of the pandemic, the exhaustion of isolation has given us new appreciations of why the city’s physical space matters – and why its public spaces matter above all. In Prishtina, local residents are eager to improve their city and make its public spaces more welcoming and accessible. In numerous interviews, we repeatedly heard that people want change, but felt powerless to enact it. To give residents the opportunity to join the “battle for public space” – a term that we first heard from Prishtina’s former mayor Shpend Ahmeti – CRA-Carlo Ratti Associati has been testing out an experimental methodology that we call “open-source urbanism.” Drawing from the principles of software development, the process seeks to make city-making, traditionally rigid and hierarchical, into a more participatory, iterative and evolutionary process.

It is a topic that designers and researchers at CRA-Carlo Ratti Associati have been exploring for more than ten years, well before the Covid-19 health emergency. The open-source approach builds on a 2016 essay in *Architectural Design* (AD), and the process strives to overcome the limits of other participatory initiatives that have been carried out by countless design practitioners since the 1960s and 1970s.

As design disciplines deal with decisions that involve complex structural, mechanical or regulatory issues, the 2016 article first posited that the role of the public should not be to replace the architect, but rather to augment her. It further argued that stakeholder contributions can reach wider audiences, and be at their most effective, when they are reactive.

The part of the process in which many participatory designs from the past have failed was in their feedback mechanisms. However, if the right questions are asked, simple responses from local citizens or community members can become a crucial mechanism of open-sourcing.

Notably, this already happens in fields outside of design. In software and web design, a solution for gathering natural feedback is sometimes called “A/B testing”. It consists of showing two slightly different versions of a web page to similar users at the same time. People’s responses are then recorded, pointing towards the more successful variant.

Advancing this theoretical framework, CRA-Carlo Ratti Associati’s application of open-source urbanism in Prishtina involves multiple steps.

First, mapping the city, taking into account preliminary inputs given by local experts. Then, making temporary urban interventions, in the form of design propositions to which people can respond, either indirectly, by showing up in person *en masse* (“voting with their feet”), or directly, by participating in collective discussion and reflection.

Furthermore, the project employs a continual process of soliciting citizen feedback. Critically, it assumes the need for many iterations, and argues that initial interventions should be inexpensive and temporary: free to be discontinued, improved or made permanent based on residents’ feedback.

After the dark days of “turbo urbanism”, Kosovo’s capital now has the chance to embrace a new model for urban innovation – one based on a renewed understanding of participatory city-making and the extensive reclaiming of public space. It could even lend its name to the process: the Prishtina Model.

During the mapping process, CRA-Carlo Ratti Associati collaborated with researchers at MIT’s Senseable City Lab to employ the

extraordinary potential of artificial intelligence (AI), which can help us understand how people are using streets and squares in real time. In the summer of 2021, students from the University of Prishtina cycled the streets with GoPro cameras, producing a bottom-up alternative to the absent Google Street View. These collected images can become a foundation for researchers in Prishtina and beyond to deepen studies into the city's public space.

In parallel with this tech-driven mapping, CRA-Carlo Ratti Associati made the first urban interventions with the simplest of tools: paint. In just 24 hours, University of Prishtina students conjured up new public spaces in Prishtina's Brick Factory and at the former Hivzi Sulejmani Library. In front of the latter, we warded off illegal parking with a combination of yellow paint and outdoor furniture. In a flash, a temporary "urban living room" was born.

Next will come many iteration phases, in which people can weigh up the loss of convenient parking spots against the potential for new public spaces. In the first weeks after the intervention, we heard resounding approval from residents who reminisced about the site's former vitality – before the flood of cars, children played basketball there. Residents applauded the intervention's restoration of the space outside the abandoned building, and gazed through the gates, which were still closed, and imagined how the library and its garden could anchor the neighbourhood again.

The main phases of this Urban Vision process, which was conducted ahead of Manifesta 14 Prishtina, have been documented in this publication – albeit for editorial reasons, it was not possible to include all materials produced, but only a limited selection.

In the first section, ANALYSIS (The Battle for Public Space), CRA-Carlo Ratti Associati's preliminary study of the city is summarised through a series of maps, which demonstrate numerous ways of seeing Prishtina and its complex urban fabric. Then there are depictions of some of the experimental AI mapping that was produced alongside the researchers at MIT – these digital eyes which allow us to see the city even more closely.

In the second section, ACTION (The City Fights Back), the process of identifying sites for urban action is narrated, before the compilation of a comprehensive design plan and the enacting of initial interventions are outlined.

Finally, the publication's conclusion underlines how concepts central to the Urban Vision ended up impacting both public debate in Prishtina and the artistic curatorship of Manifesta 14 Prishtina.

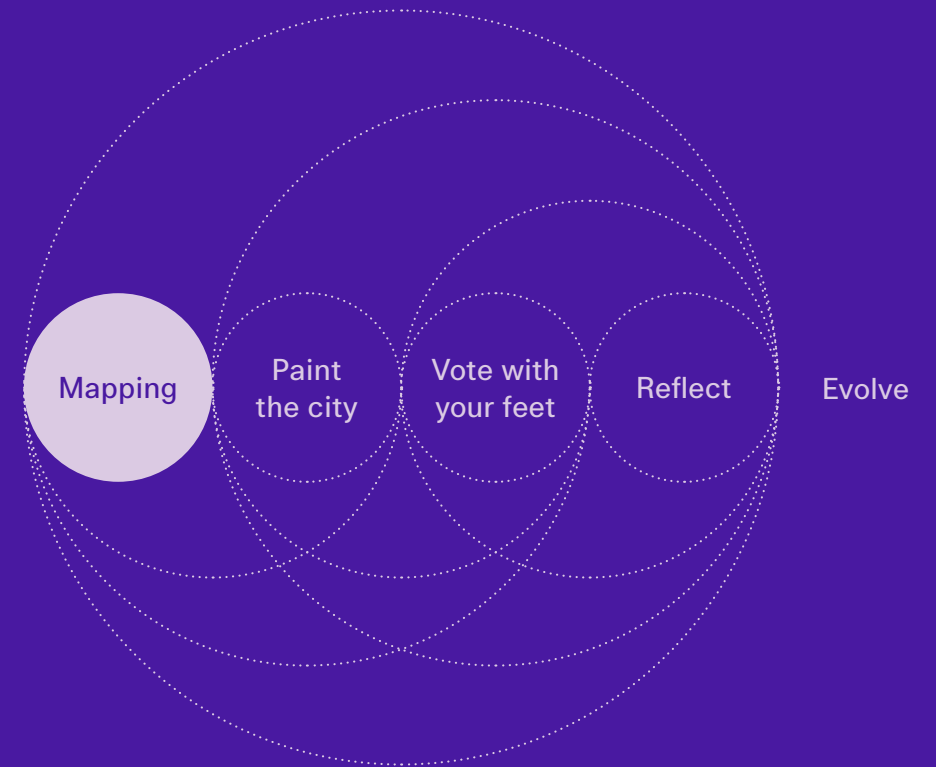
For instance, both the Brick Factory and the former Hivzi Sulejmani Library have become venues in the official programme of the biennial.

Throughout this publication, an illustrated diagram that presents the open-source urbanism process is repeated, demonstrating which phase is currently being explored. All sections are also accompanied by a photo essay from photographers Majlinda Hoxha, who depicted crucial locations that were mapped, and Atdhe Mulla, who documented the urban interventions implemented in the summer of 2021.

With these illustrations and stories, CRA-Carlo Ratti Associati hopes to show the human interest in urban innovation. Consider the words of one Prishtina resident who saw the work completed outside the former Hivzi Sulejmani Library: "We were able to live and play... 20 years ago before cars were there. I believe that now we can do the same".

His ability to recall the past, envision the future and take a stance in the transformation of Prishtina is the essence of our hope. If new technologies and methodologies catalyse the knowledge and passion of Prishtina's citizens, they are poised to win not only the day, but the era to come.

Analysis (The Battle for Public Space)



New Maps and Old Missing Data: The Geography of Public Prishtina

The following is a summary of the results from the first phase of the Urban Vision conducted in Prishtina.

Upon arriving in the city, CRA-Carlo Ratti Associati used a variety of methods to help understand it, including interviewing local experts, poring through archives, and exploring the streets first hand. The sweep of time and space – from the layered legacies of the Ottoman and Yugoslav eras to the consequences of neoliberal development – all came under consideration.

To summarise the early findings that were reached, a series of maps have been created that each present their own way of seeing the city. It takes many perspectives to glimpse the whole, and for the image of the “battle for public space” to gradually take shape.

To frame Prishtina, it must first be placed within its national and international context – no city is an island unto itself. The state of Kosovo, and its capital in particular, extends across Europe through the flows of its diaspora, which has spread to every corner of the continent, and beyond. Simultaneously, Prishtina also pulls inward, drawing in students from across Europe’s youngest state into an incredible hub – 53% of Prishtina’s population is under the age of 25. Within this young, bustling and physically compact city, both people and ideas can spread quickly.

Although its residents are young, the landscape of Prishtina is an extraordinary palimpsest of its long, complicated history. The accumulation of time and the conflicting sensibilities of different rulers plays out across the streets. The ambitious but sometimes incomplete visions of Yugoslav central planning still dominate the landscape, and the memory of the 1990's so-called "parallel system" – under which Kosovo Albanians were forced out of public life and into private homes – may continue to drive a sense of detachment from public space. Today, the city must reconcile its split personalities, and, after considering the pros and cons of its Ottoman, Yugoslav and postwar selves, evolve into a new, open-ended sense of the Commons.

Emerging from a conflict-ridden history and abuzz with the vigour of its young residents, Prishtina is still largely missing infrastructure for public space. The options that are available are not evenly spread throughout the city, leaving many neighbourhoods especially lacking. It is hard to pin down a general rule when it comes to observing where public space is available, but neighbourhoods built in the last two decades tend to perform particularly poorly in this regard.

Even when the quantity of public space is sufficient, the quality suffers – for instance, some green areas are poorly maintained, while some otherwise decent streetscapes are overwhelmed by cars. Too often the city is filled with urban voids – those that Catalan urbanist Ignasi de Sola-Morales called "terrain vague" – instead of healthy public spaces. Some of these discrepancies in access to public space are directly accountable to history. Yugoslav rule left a respectable legacy in this regard, for instance, but many others result from ongoing challenges, like private vehicles obstructing the pavements.

During the study, a profound lack of good data was apparent at every turn. This is yet another consequence of Prishtina's history: repeated regime changes, followed by the unregulated explosion of property development since Kosovo's independence, have not been conducive to thorough record-keeping. Modern Prishtina is broadly informal and unregistered, and many central institutions still struggle to keep track of buildings' ownership. Furthermore, the budget for public works is so low that street maintenance or the enforcement of parking rules are often insufficient. Unsurprisingly, private interests easily end up invading physical space, appropriating it and ultimately devaluing it.

When studying spaces and creating maps, we found that geo-referenced data in particular – a necessity in the Information Age – was inaccessible, unreliable and incomplete. Faced with such fragmented databases and archives, we had to get creative when it came to

synthesising the available information into a patchwork whole. After navigating the profound struggle of Prishtina's data landscape, we want to make future efforts easier for others. Therefore, CRA-Carlo Ratti Associati has resolved to make all of its own data available in open-source mode.

To start understanding Prishtina, it was important to consider the different populations that flow through it. This initial group of maps features three dynamic representations of the city with varying geographical scales.

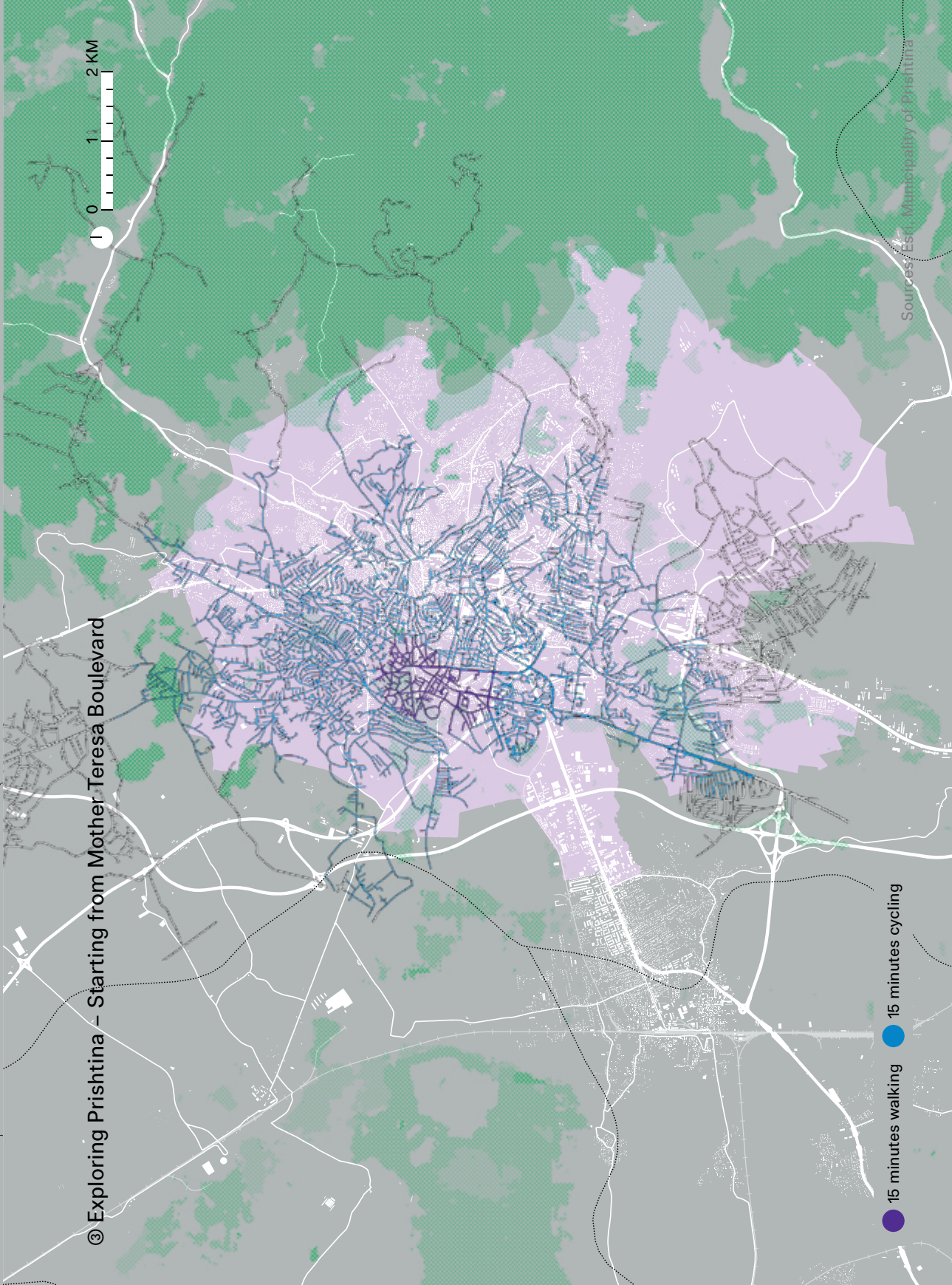
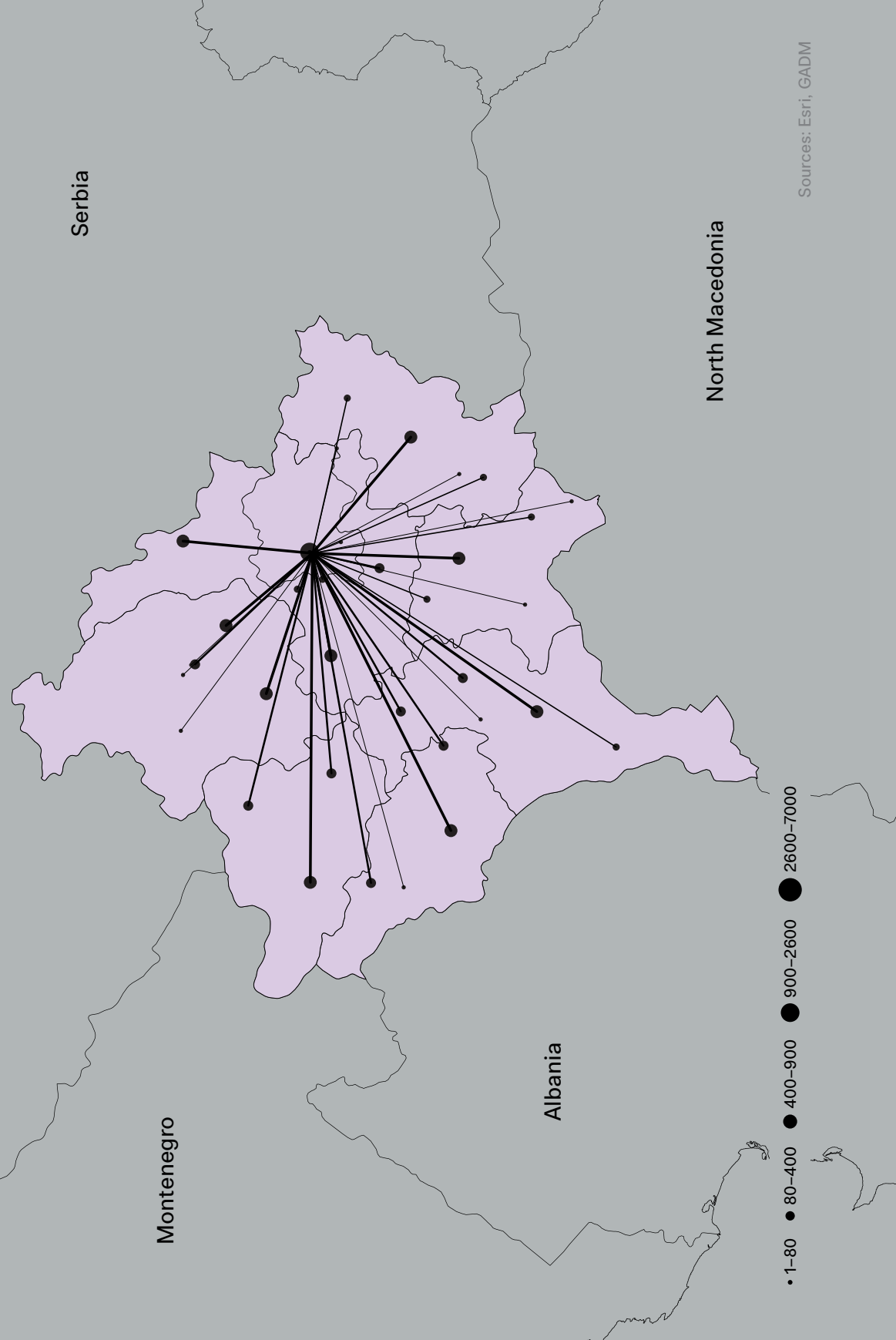
Despite being a relatively small and new state, Kosovo is everywhere – it pulses outward, with 700,000 Kosovo Albanians estimated to live across Europe.

Art historian Nicholas Mirzoeff famously argued that “a diaspora cannot be seen in any traditional sense and it certainly cannot be represented from the viewpoint of a one point perspective”. Map ① attempts to address this task by looking at transportation networks. It tracks all of the flights connecting Prishtina to different international destinations, forming a fleeting image of the Kosovo diaspora. This mobility also notably affects the capital itself – with many emigrant families buying apartments in their home country, Prishtina’s property market is significantly influenced by diaspora investments.

But Prishtina is not just a gateway to the outside world – within Kosovo’s borders, it is an irresistible magnet for young people. How the city attracts university students from every corner of the country is illustrated in map ②. Prishtina’s population is a true reflection of its status as the capital of Europe’s youngest state, with 53% of the populace under 25 years old.

The last map in this group is another visualisation of movement that presents Prishtina’s urban territory, demonstrating which places can be reached within a 15-minute walk or bike ride from the city centre (map ③). This area was the focus of CRA-Carlo Ratti Associati’s Urban Vision for Manifesta 14 Prishtina. Can the restricted size of the Kosovar capital’s urban territory allow ideas to spread rapidly and produce a significant impact, even with reduced resources? Urban innovation might work well in a youthful, pocket-sized capital city.



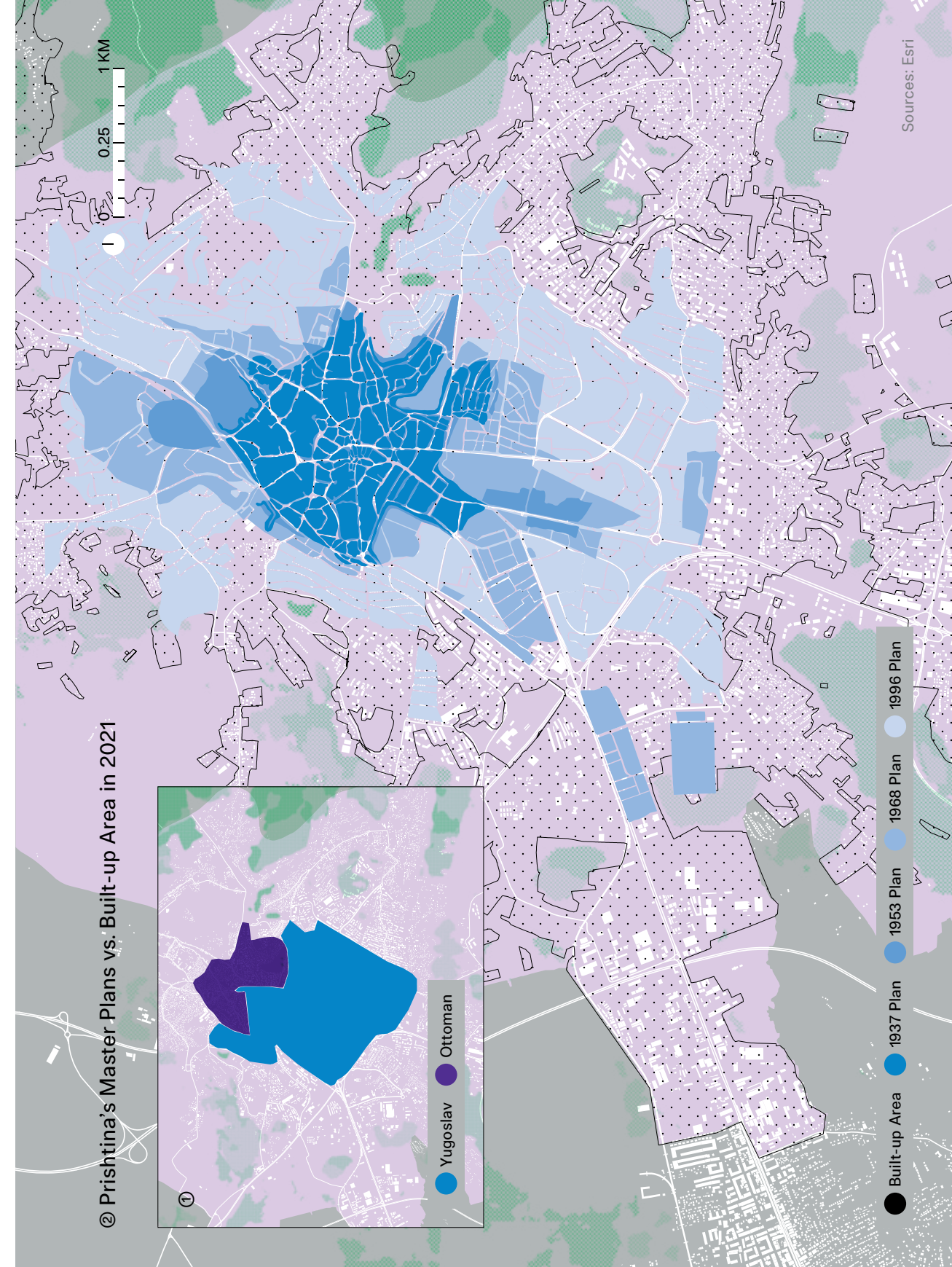


In the period since the end of the Kosovo War, Prishtina experienced chaotic urban growth and mismanaged privatisation, and ultimately struggled to put forward a consistent and effective vision that puts public space at its core. Map ② shows how built-up areas soon overran any planning vision. Urban density has dramatically increased in the two decades since 1998–1999, but the new neighbourhoods rarely feature any green areas or public space.

While all three major historical periods collide, creating a disjointed hole and multiple cases of indeterminacy in buildings' ownership status, there is a common thread that can be drawn. There was rarely a moment in which the bottom-up energy of the people and an overarching commitment to the Commons marched together. Reconciling citizens with the public spaces that have often failed them is one of the main challenges for the future of Prishtina – one that the open-source urbanism methodology strives to achieve.

Over the last century and a half, Prishtina has been governed by numerous political regimes – Ottoman (photo page 80), Yugoslav (photos page 82 and 84), and Independent Kosovo (photo page 86) – each with conflicting visions of how public space should work. No one administration lasted long enough to completely overturn the legacy of its predecessors, leading to highly visible contrasts between different historical eras across the built environment (map ①).

The urban master plans developed during the Yugoslav regime radically and even violently changed the face of the city. Yet, the implementation of their vision of modernity was left partially incomplete, and some of the plazas and public spaces they created sit empty today, disconnected from their surroundings.











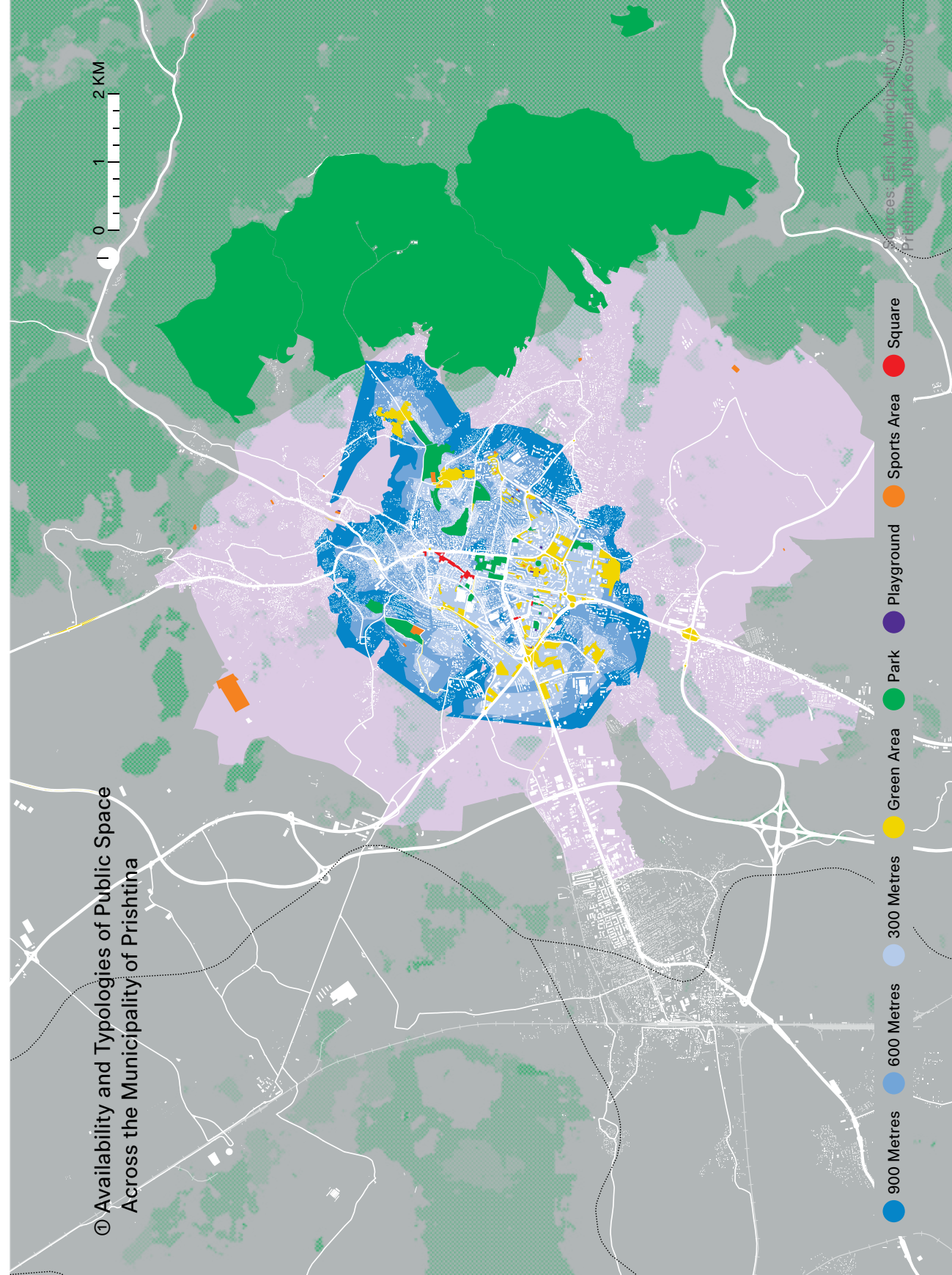
Where Public Space is Missing

Meanwhile, the disordered growth of the early 21st century left countless urban voids. While these areas have the potential to be appropriated for development into public places in the future, they are currently a theatre in the battle for public space.

Another aspect of this battle is parking. Cars regularly take over any bit of available land, rendering the streets of Prishtina all but inaccessible for people with reduced mobility. (Public transport also provides a rather limited service.) Even where buildings are fully inhabited, pavements are frequently infringed upon – if not by private vehicles then by the informal extension of spaces used by commercial enterprises and private activities.

In Prishtina, open-air public spaces are not only lacking – they are unevenly distributed. There are concentrations in the city centre, while most of the northern and southern neighbourhoods are particularly deprived. This means, as map ① shows, that there are entire swaths of Kosovo’s capital where no park or green areas, playgrounds or squares are available within a 10-minute walk.

That said, any map showing public spaces in single colours does not tell the entire story. To do this, one must consider how many of Prishtina’s public spaces vary immensely in terms of actual quality and usability. For instance, although most of the Yugoslav neighbourhoods enjoy a relatively large amount of green space, often they lie dormant in the indeterminate spaces between buildings.









РЕКЛАМА

70

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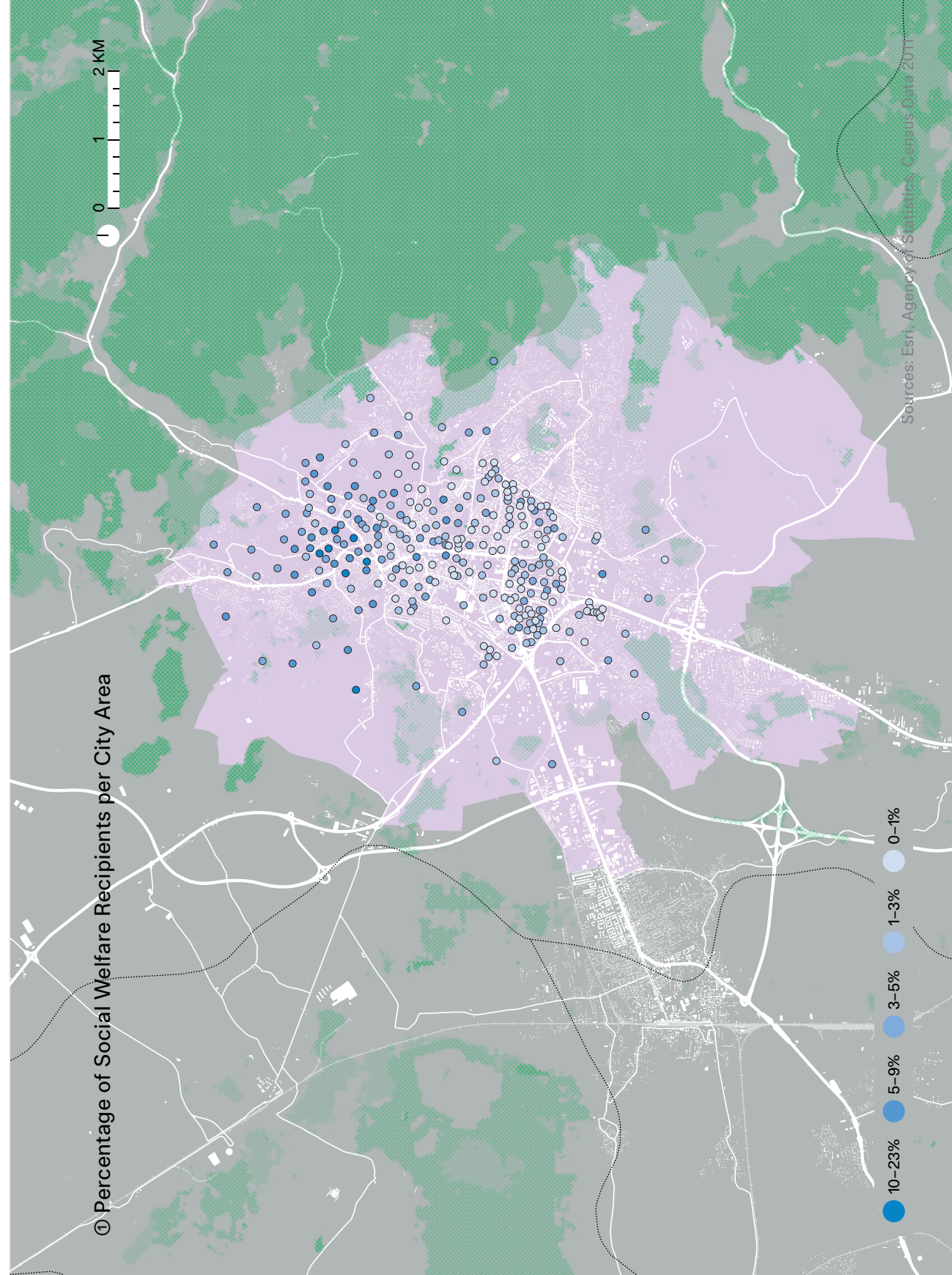
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In the postwar period, rapid urbanisation has harmed quality of life by failing to give rise to pedestrian infrastructure and green spaces. As a result, residents with sufficient means have retreated to gated communities that continue to emerge, particularly in the extreme south of Prishtina, historically one of the less polluted areas of the city. Closed off at night, these neighbourhoods, pictured in map ③, are diametrically opposed to the vision of public space that Prishtina hopes to achieve.

The maps featured in this group are part of a wider research project on the multiple dimensions of Prishtina's social fragmentation: between centre and periphery, north and south, rich and poor.

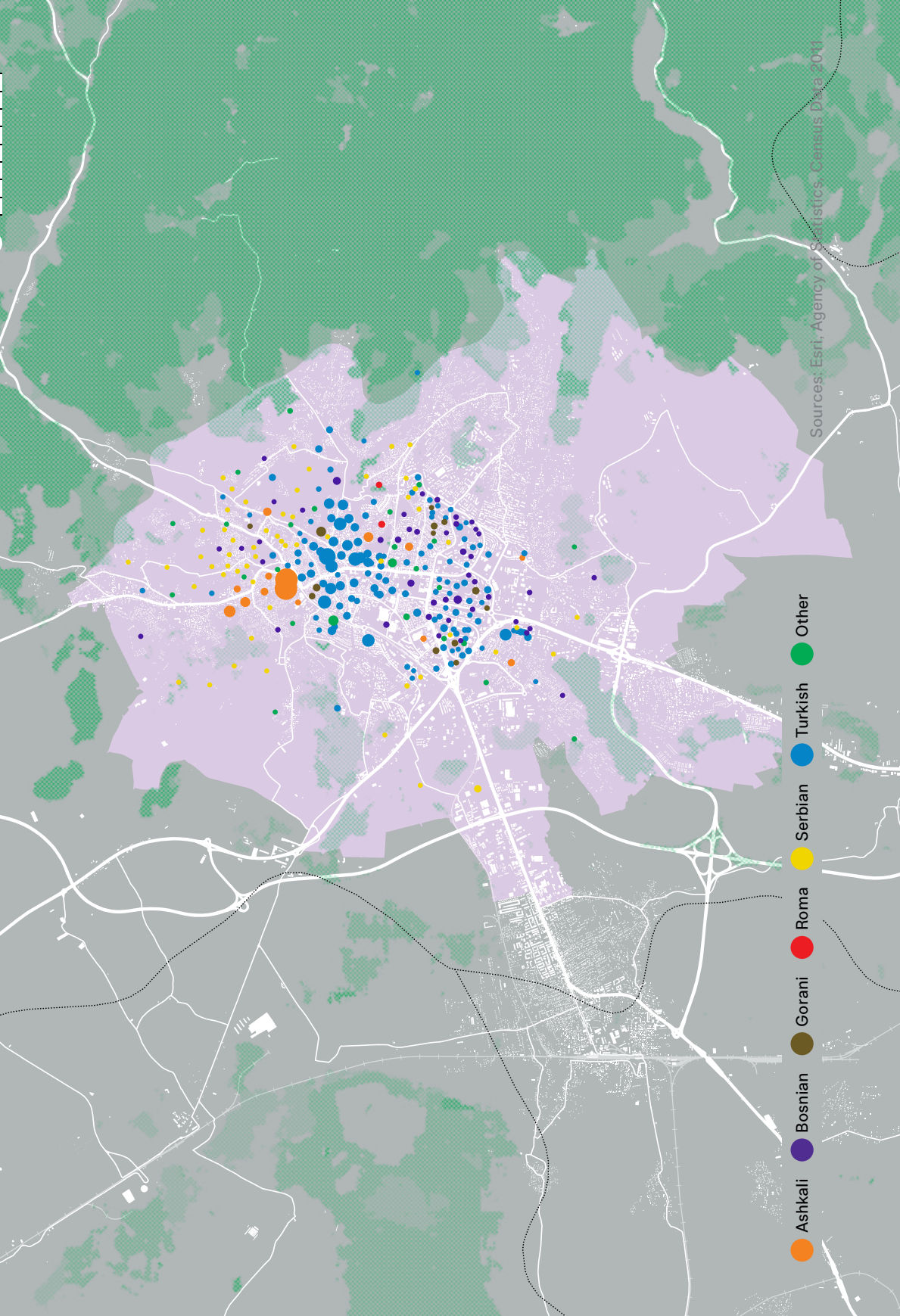
Just like the availability of its public spaces, the socioeconomic status of local residents varies significantly across the city. This can be observed in map ①, where the percentage of residents receiving social assistance highlights pockets of poverty in the northern part of the capital.

Ethnic diversity and ethnic conflict are deeply ingrained in Kosovo's 20th century history, and the city of Prishtina is no exception. Mapping the different ethnic populations and visualising the largest minority groups in given areas, as shown in map ②, allow us to observe possible patterns of geographic segregation.



© Highest Concentration of Ethnic Minority Groups per City Area

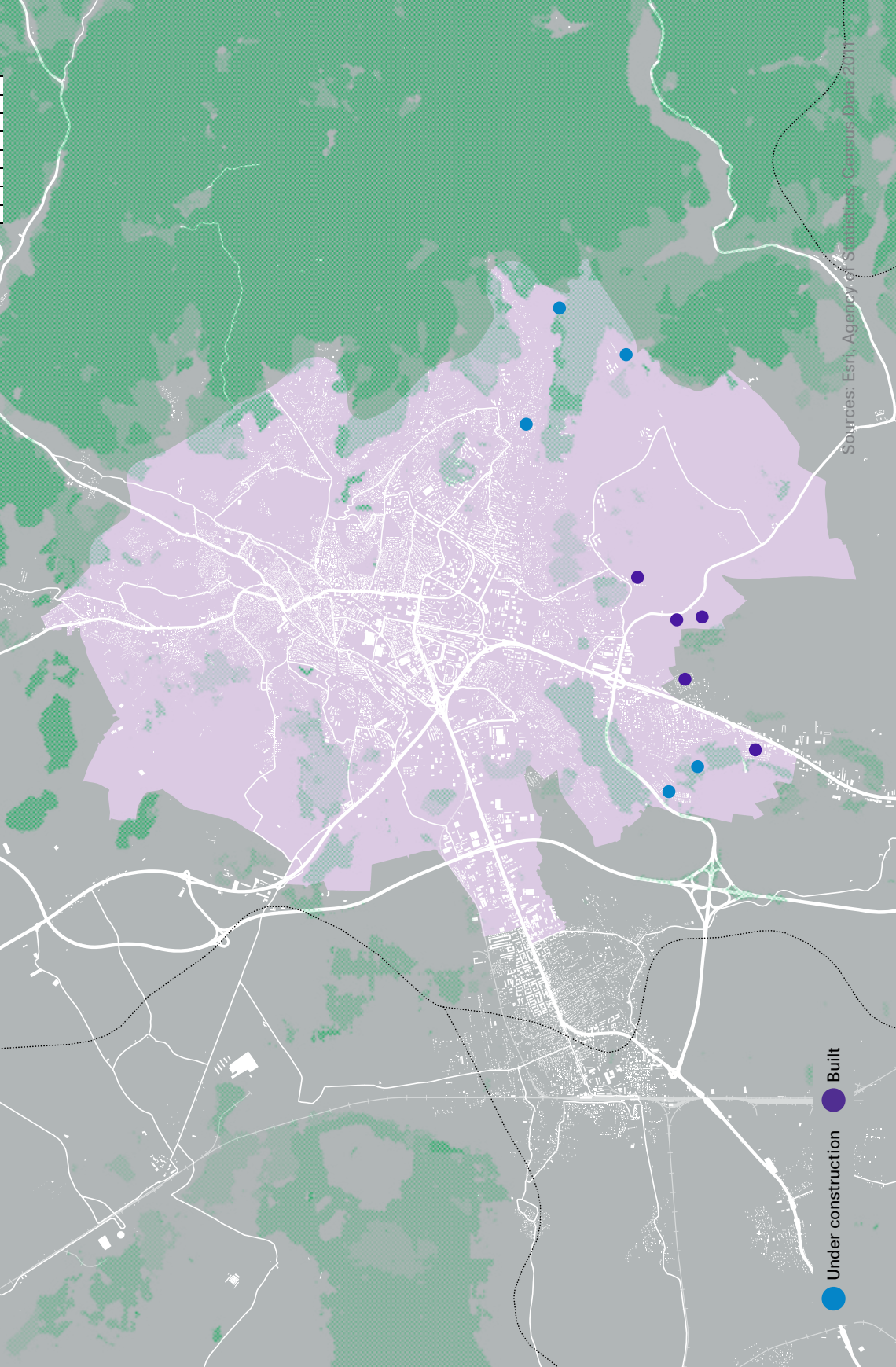
0 1 2 KM



Ashkali Bosnian Gorani Roma Serbian Turkish Other

© Location of Gated Communities in Prishtina

0 1 2 KM

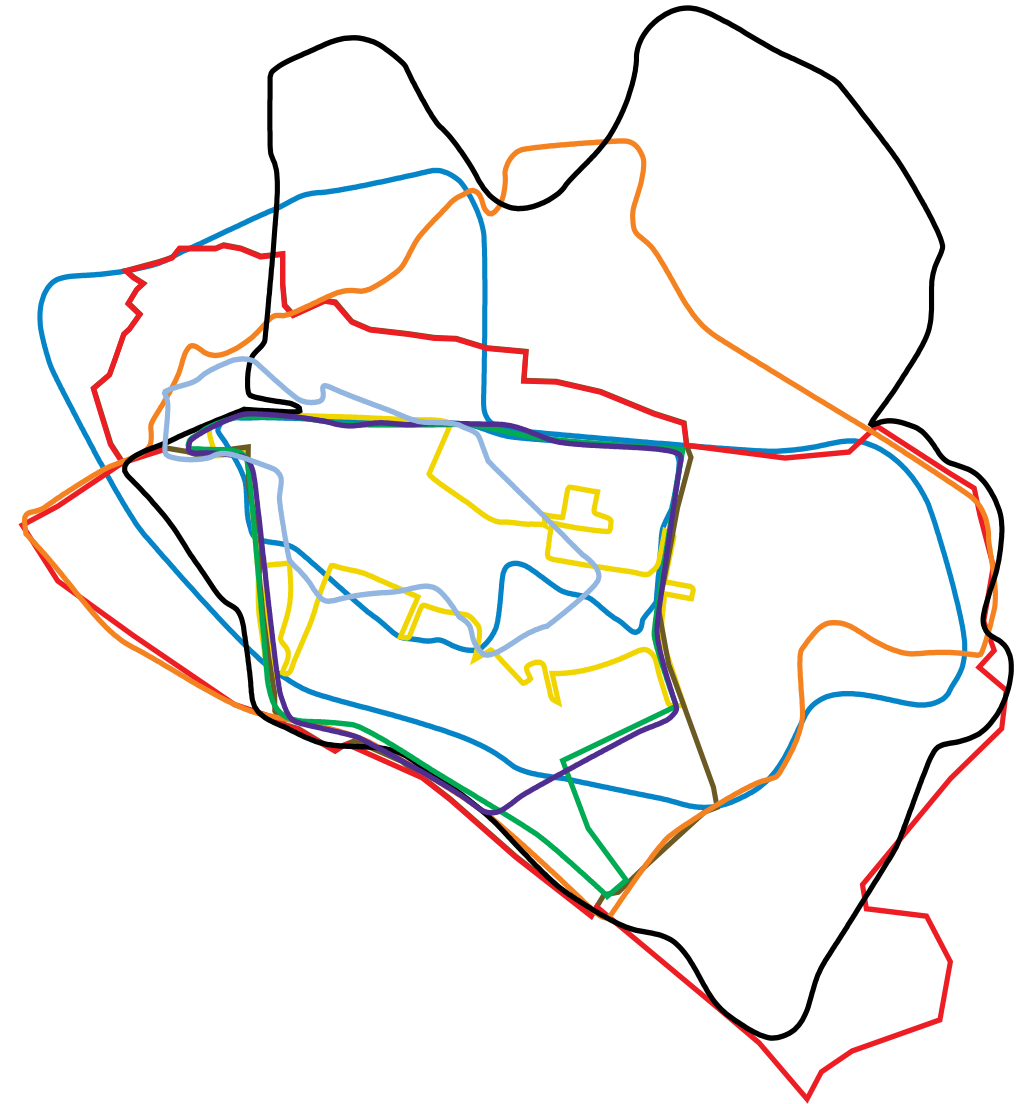


Under construction Built

At the same time, all respondents framed the city centre as much wider than the official definition stated in the plans of the Municipality of Prishtina (represented by the blue line). This informal survey attests to the necessity of pursuing an enlarged, more inclusive definition of the city centre, acknowledging Prishtina's transformations ushered in by the enormous expansion of the last two decades.

Where is the heart of Prishtina? To answer this question, interviewees participating in the Urban Vision were asked to draw what they believed to be the city centre. As a term of comparison, the visualisation also features an isochrone analysis (the red line), showing which sites are a five-minute walk from the capital's most used and central public space, the pedestrianised Mother Teresa Boulevard.

The resulting map shown in this section, with borders that overlap in some places and disagree in many others, underlines Prishtina's social and spatial fragmentation, since the reputation of a neighbourhood as being "central" often appears to be related to its level of affluence rather than to its physical proximity.



“The line that I have drawn is only a ‘border’ of the centre of Prishtina, which is actually defined by physical borders – roads – but at the same time is the epitome of the intersection of various ‘centres’ of the different characters of Prishtina”.
Gyler Mydyti, Postdoctoral researcher at ETH Zurich

“Our first rendering of the city centre is based on the flux of activities occurring there: everything from socialising to public activities is centred around this area. The second version is more a reflection of how we would want to see the centre become wider and more spread out, incorporating a broader scope”.
Foundation 17, an art cultural association that aims to foster positive change in society by enabling cultural vitality and creativity.

“My perception: I have based this perception on childhood memories. The highlighted area is where I would have located the city centre when I was younger – a point of view from Bregu i Diellit, where I grew up”.
Ylli Rugova, political activist, information designer and typographer

“My opinion: based on history, economic activity and social perceptions, I would draw this as the city centre of Prishtina. There are some areas included in the coloured part of the map that are maybe excluded from more dense activity, while some are never really frequented, but I believe all of this area should be considered the city centre”.
Ylli Rugova

“Municipal centre: when it comes to the city of Prishtina, including the 40 villages that are part of it, we can draw a different map. This centre is the area encircled by the city’s small ring road. Considering that Prishtina is the administrative, financial and cultural capital of the country, there is probably an even bigger space to take into consideration. There are students, workers and other visitors who rent or own property in the city. The difference between this map, and the previous one, is that in this one we also include a considerable volume of residential units (e.g. Dardania, Ulpiana and Lakrishte)”.
Ylli Rugova

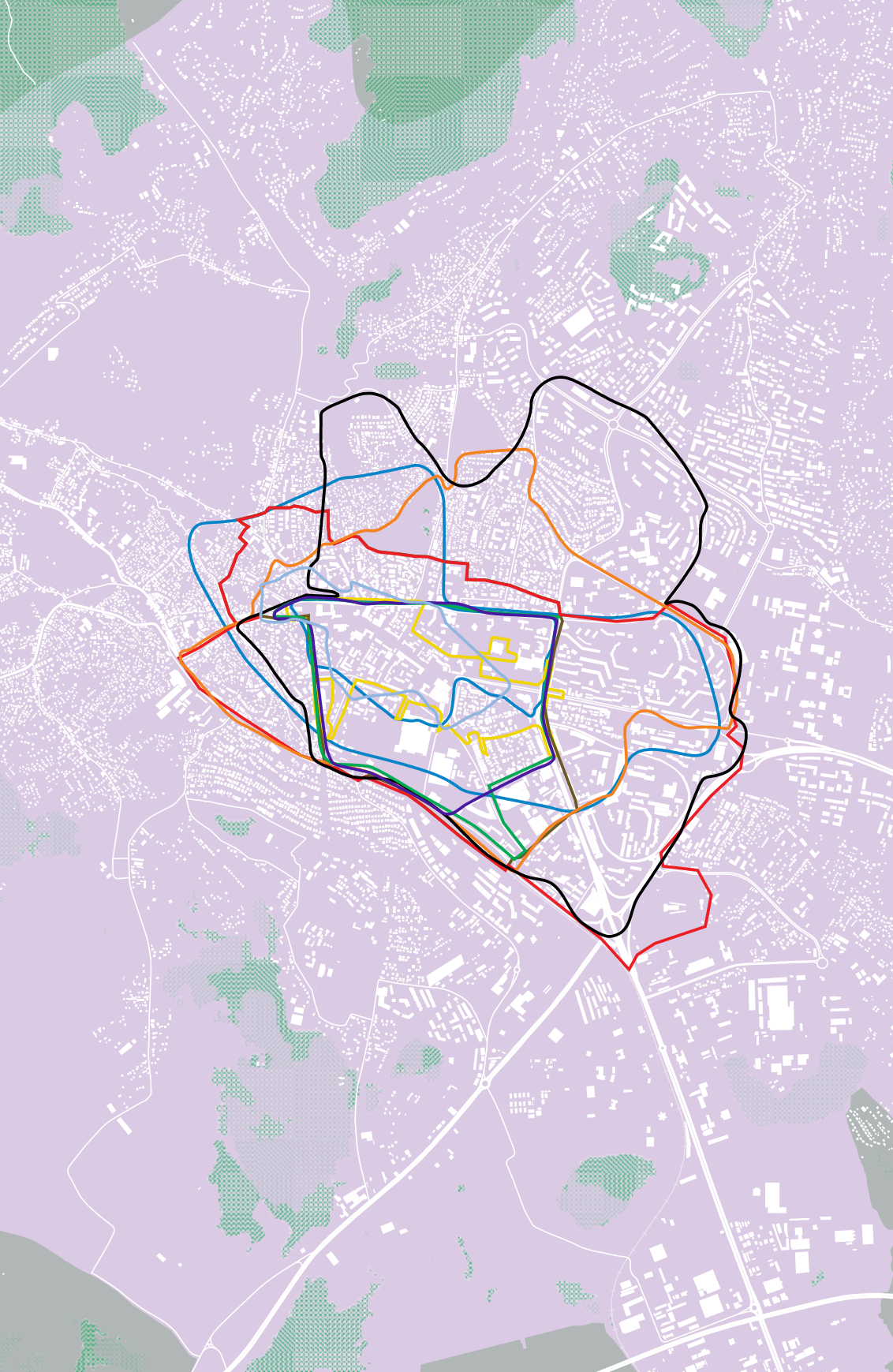
“This was my understanding of the city centre when I arrived almost seven years ago, influenced by the vision of the ‘central’ Prishtina citizens I spent time with. What I would call today the ‘core’ of Prishtina”.
Fabien Techene, Conservation Officer at WWF Adria

“This is now my vision of the city centre, since the city has expanded and changed a lot.”
Fabien Techene

Drawing provided with no quote:
Xhevedet Gegollaj, Director of Green Foundation

Analysis of walkable distance from the center by CRA

Where is Prishtina's City Centre? Different Lines, Different Ideas



The Eyes of the City: Using Artificial Intelligence in Public Space

Over the previous pages, it has been demonstrated how Prishtina’s main urban issues were identified by looking at multiple datasets from many different angles, particularly within the framework of the ongoing “battle for public space”.

How can we go one step further with this analysis? Data does not typically tell us a great deal about the people who are actually inhabiting a city’s urban environment on a daily basis, but today there is a new technological possibility. We can use artificial intelligence (AI) to understand how public space is being used in real time, and then how we can fix and improve it.

This section introduces a collaborative project between researchers at MIT’s Senseable City Lab (SCL) and students from the University of Prishtina, which was coordinated by CRA-Carlo Ratti Associati. The group began work in the summer of 2021 on an experiment with an innovative method, which utilises AI to investigate the city’s streetscapes. Historically, such a quest for a more granular understanding of human behaviour in physical space has been at the centre of work conducted by a number of important scholars. In the 1970s, the pioneering sociologist William H. Whyte used video footage to see how people – down to each individual – moved through, or hung around in, the squares of New York City (image 1, 2, 3).

Whyte's research involved an incredibly laborious process of manually analysing and annotating video footage (image 4), but it yielded extraordinary insights into which features influence how we use public spaces: from the position of benches and chairs, to shady and sunny areas. His observations capture the beauty of the city – as a place that brings us together, where even strangers can find comfort in one another's company – and the patterns he noticed help us understand how physical planning decisions can transform a city's social character.

In *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces* (1980), one of the most influential pieces of urban research of the last century, Whyte described how city features like light, noise, walkability, seating availability and the presence of physical barriers transformed how people navigated physical space. Whyte's findings helped inspire many subsequent urban planners, while his laborious methodology meant that they could not easily replicate his precise data analysis in their own cities.

Fast forward several decades, and the internet gives us the power to access and process much more footage, far more easily. Google Street View is just one example. Moreover, today we can employ AI-powered machine vision to analyse raw data automatically, a process that can allow us to develop a detailed image segmentation of almost any city's streetscape.

First, thousands of images of pedestrians, scooters, cars and buses are assembled to create a library of labelled images, a training dataset that can be used to teach an algorithm to learn the distinguishing features of different images. Once the training dataset is robust, we could feed street views from a given city into an AI model, which, in turn, will identify the corresponding objects from the "testing dataset".

In early 2021, SCL practised this methodology in collaboration with Paris's Régie Autonome des Transports Parisiens (RATP), the city's transportation authority. By quantifying how many cars, bicycles and pedestrians are present at a given time in different street segments, we can characterise public space across the city by how it is being used. This is very similar to what Whyte was doing – but now, implementation can be much more rapid, accurate and dynamic.

Google Street View has no images for Prishtina from which we can harvest the raw data for AI analysis. Therefore, we resolved to build an equivalent database ourselves in collaboration with the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Prishtina. From July until September 2021, local students travelled the streets with GoPro cameras, collecting footage of the various neighbourhoods and compiling a bottom-up alternative.



1



2



3



4

With this open-source data, CRA-Carlo Ratti Associati is ushering in the possibility of unprecedented analyses that can be carried out with AI. It is now possible to pinpoint the locations and relative concentrations of cars, people and green areas in high detail. Potentially, we could even use AI to measure what American urban theorist Kevin Lynch called “imageability”, the key urban features people use to navigate cities and create a concise understanding or “image” of the city. With concrete data, we can investigate abstract questions, like “How inviting does a certain public space appear to be? Are the pavements cracked? Are there trees overhead? Do buildings and parks appear recognisable, even memorable, to visitors?” Such “perception maps” can become a strong interface between our cities and ourselves and prompt further research, or suggest possible design developments.

With open-source AI mapping, we hope to do more than create a resource for our particular objectives. We want to help the people of Prishtina reclaim their own image of the city. By equipping residents with detailed information about the outlines of their home and putting it at their fingertips, we hope to enable a wide range of future research, activism and change. Representations spark the imagination, and with these maps, Prishtina and its residents have new tools to understand who they are.

Here, we see students and researchers from the University of Prishtina traversing their city on foot, by bicycle or in cars, between July and September 2021. By holding scanning equipment, or attaching it to their helmets, their summer of urban exploration produced the first extensive visual mapping of the Kosovar capital, which provides a more bottom-up alternative to the imperious eye of Google Street View.



In order to analyse the visual material gathered in Prishtina during the “Street View” process, researchers at the MIT Senseable City Lab applied a pre-trained object detection model, Mask R-CNN, to all images. Mask R-CNN detects objects in the image through a bounding box and generates a high-quality segmentation mask for each instance. The model is trained to a customised dataset, which contains common objects for street activities such as walking/standing, riding a motorcycle and moving and stationary cars.









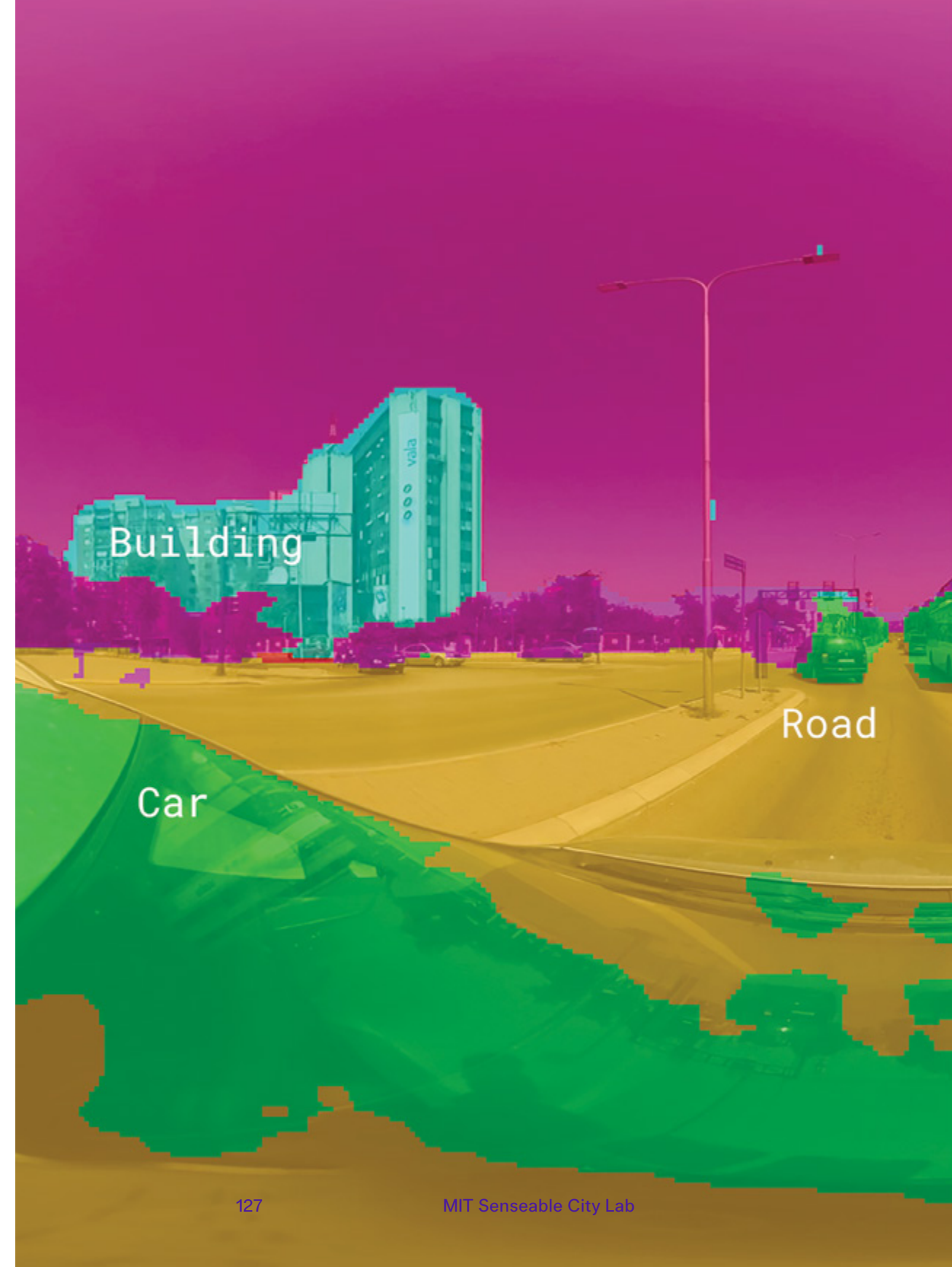






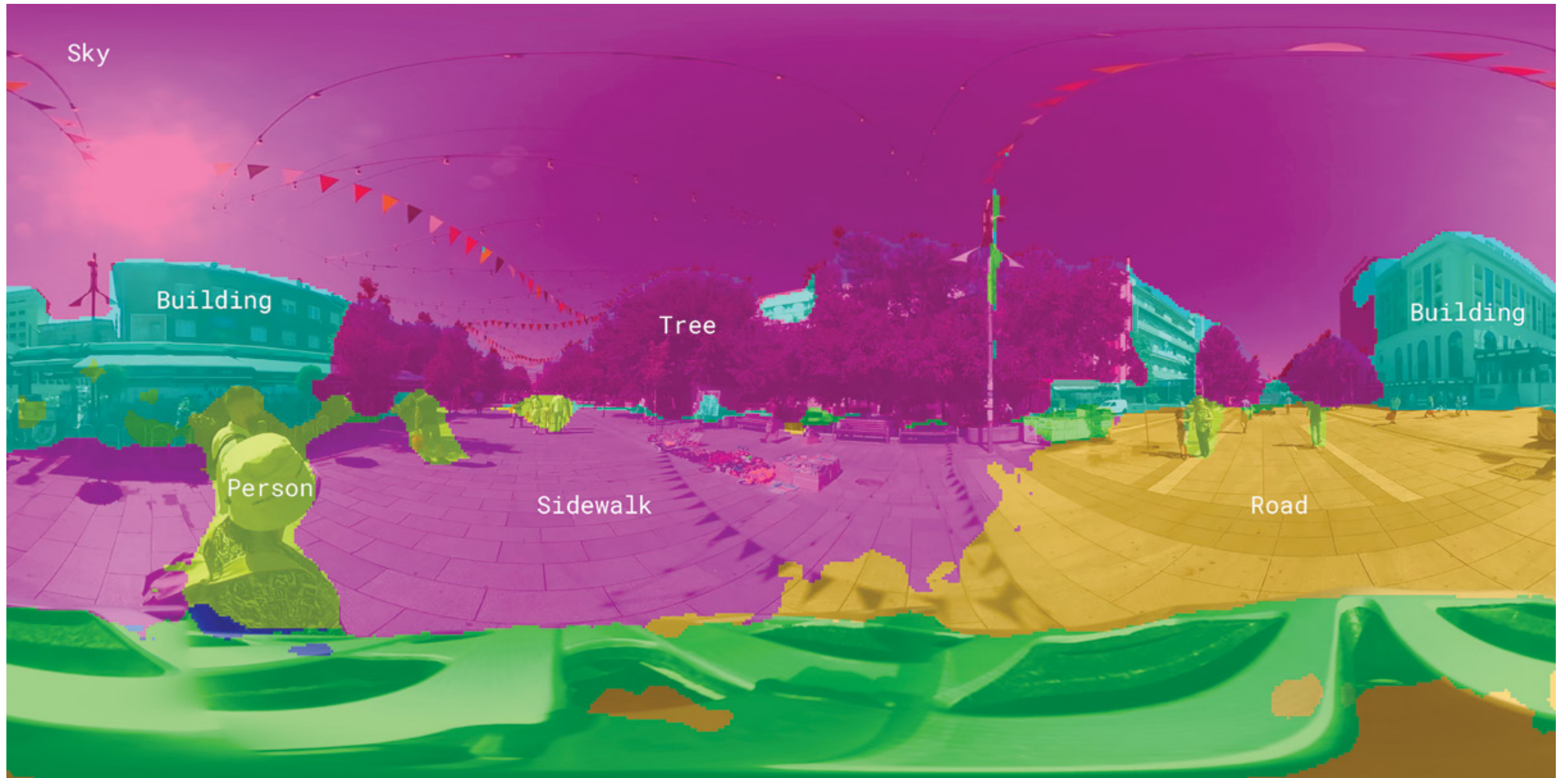
Both object detection and image segmentation are methods that show the potential of applying deep learning into public space analysis. More specifically, with crowd-sourced street footage and images, large-scale analyses of the built environment and human dynamics can be produced automatically. This research helps provide insight into how public space is being used and the spatial pattern of such usage, which in turn can become an integral part of the open-source urbanism vision.

In the case of image segmentation, each frame, shot or photograph of Prishtina's streetscape was fed into a deep learning-based semantic segmentation model, which assigned each pixel in an image a semantic category label. For the work shown in these images, researchers at the MIT Senseable City Lab employed a segmentation model that is trained in the ADE20K dataset, a large-scale image dataset containing images subdivided into 150 categories including both built environment-related objects (e.g. building, fence, pavement, road, etc.) and dynamic objects (e.g. human, vehicle, etc.).















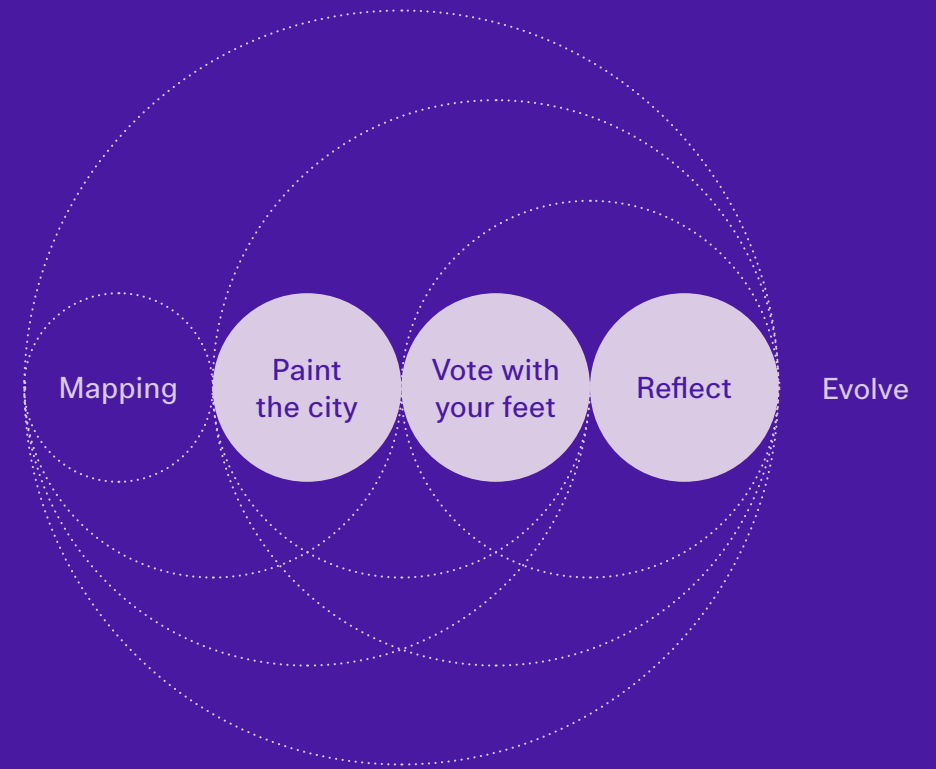








Action (The City Fights Back)



When Public Space is Liminal: A Toolkit for Urban Innovation

In his book *Palaces for the People* (2018), American sociologist Eric Klinenberg puts forward the term “social infrastructure” to describe the many urban elements that can power a good social life.

“‘Infrastructure’ is not a term conventionally used to describe the underpinnings of social life”, Klinenberg writes, “but this is a consequential oversight, because the built environment – and not just cultural preferences or the existence of voluntary organisations – influences the breadth and depth of our associations”.

After studying Prishtina’s challenges, and creating new maps of its streets, CRA-Carlo Ratti Associati set out to make interventions that would demonstrate different possibilities for reclaiming public space. This section narrates the first step of that process: identifying the locations (and their immediate surroundings) that could become the best sites for future reclamations.

A diverse set of sites that met the right criteria were identified, including spaces with different characteristics and in locations scattered across the city. The sites were all loosely categorised as “liminal public spaces”, as each one of them possesses some key hallmarks of a good public space – a high level of accessibility, for instance – but requires a significant intervention to unlock their potential and for them to begin to act as social infrastructure.

To try and activate these liminal public spaces, CRA-Carlo Ratti Associati embarked on a search for related “triggers”: that is, pre-existing elements of the urban fabric that already attract public life, which can then be utilised to draw people to the new interventions.

The first trigger, *nearby commercial activity*, keeps in mind that public and government-run spaces and establishments can benefit from the achievements of the private sector. Here, it was impossible not to look to Prishtina’s historically strong coffee culture, which makes the city rich in what sociologist Ray Oldenburg called “third spaces”, places like cafés, diners and barbershops, where people can socialise and establish bonds regardless of what they have purchased. Could the city benefit from establishing new public spaces close to the private establishments that are already attracting visitors?

The second trigger, *culture and heritage*, was envisioned to leverage the many culturally significant sites that have arisen from Prishtina’s complex history. Collective memory swirls around a variety of places, locations which only partially overlap with official lists of heritage sites. If we revitalise these spaces – in fact, more than a few of them happen to be in a state of disrepair – these memories would be likely to translate into strong interest and engender emotional attachments.

Similarly, spaces of ongoing cultural significance like schools, playgrounds and sporting venues have even broader potential to be used by the community. Research by the MIT Senseable City Lab that was run in Stockholm and utilised big data, demonstrated that schools can act as aggregators for people across different social groups, even outside of term time.

The third trigger, *under-used open spaces and vacant lots* takes account of the fact that so many places in Prishtina have been left empty or glutted with illegally-parked cars, while others – for instance, neighbourhood infrastructure planned via a top-down approach during the Yugoslav period – are struggling to find a purpose today, and sit empty most of the time.

Some of these areas, which Catalan urbanist Ignasi de Sola-Morales famously labelled as “terrain vague” are technically classified as public spaces already, but it will require real effort to fill them with facilities, purposes, communities and other social infrastructure that will allow them to be used. In some ways, these empty spaces are a gift: they are a blank slate for future creativity.

By considering all the sites listed above as “liminal”, rather than defective, CRA-Carlo Ratti Associati suggested that embracing Prishtina’s contradictions and traumatic urban history would be the first

step in order to imagine a new vision for public space that begins where people already are. These public spaces are not the hopelessly flawed products of an unfortunate past, they are the foundations for a renaissance.

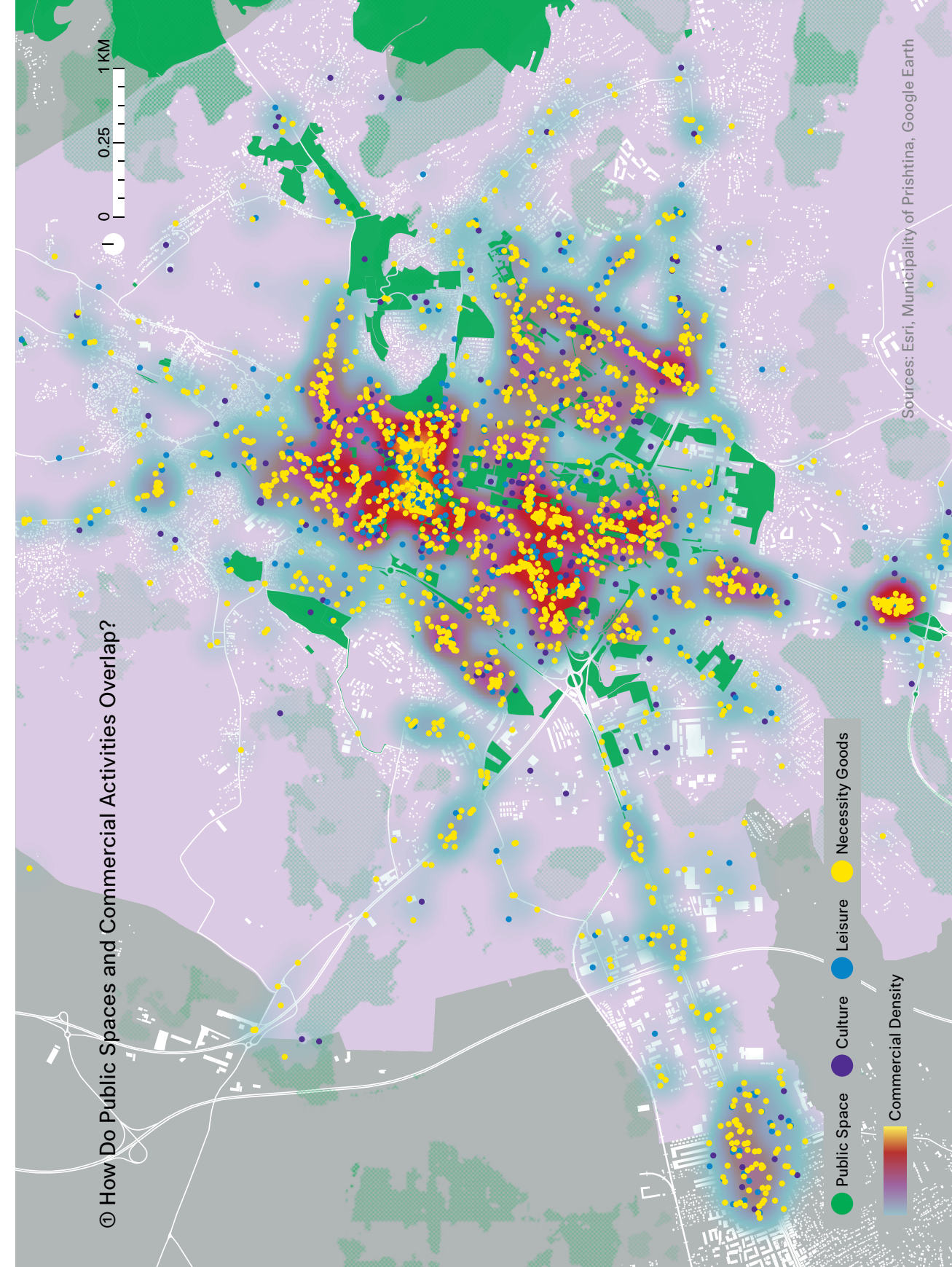
Now these categories have been defined, and the possible sites mapped, the next step is to start a dynamic process of appropriation.

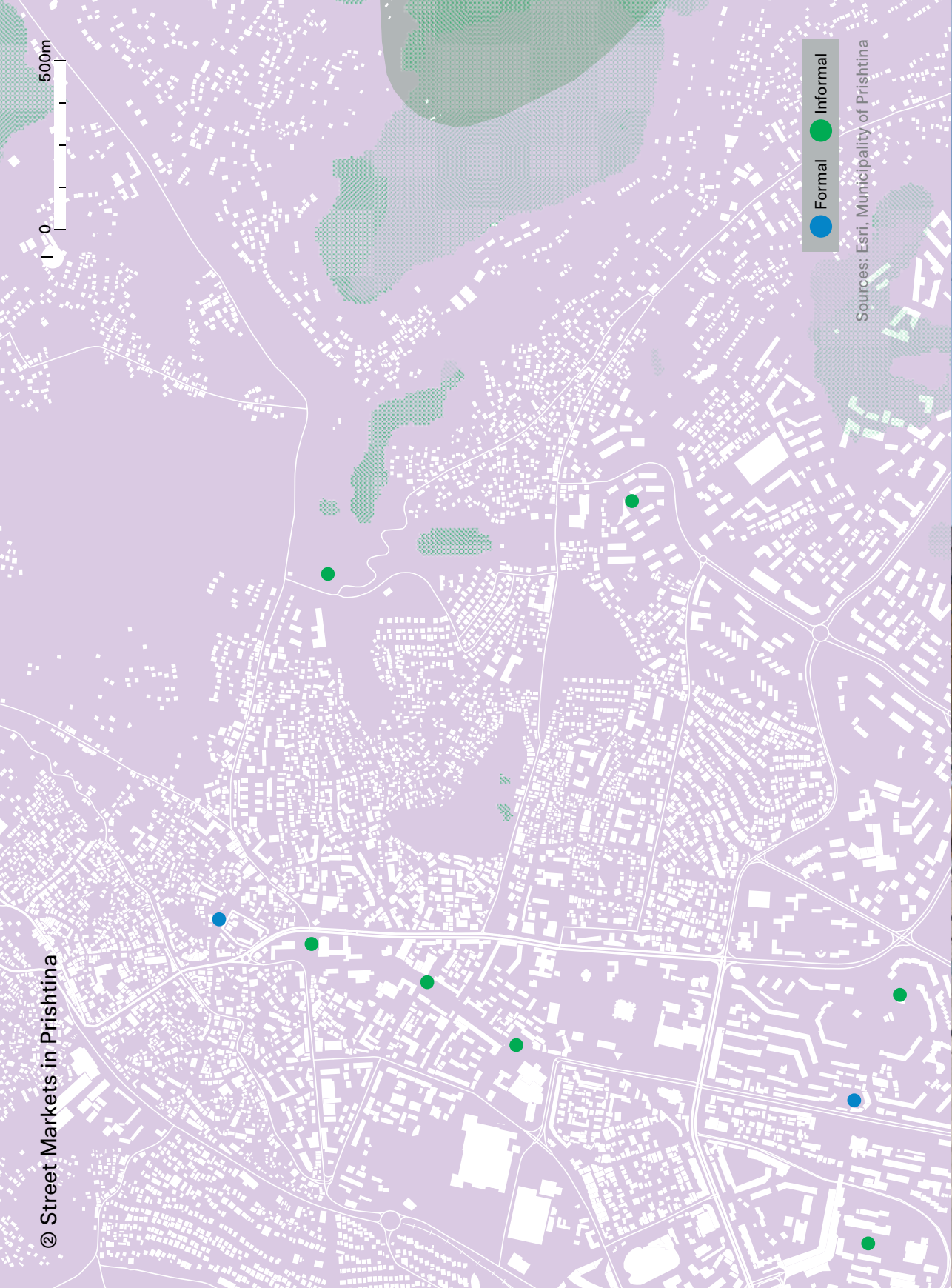
Café Culture and Street Vibrancy

Map ① shows that there is very little overlap between the bustling commercial areas and officially defined open-air public spaces. While this might not be problematic *per se*, it might hint at the possibility to establish closer matches between the former and the latter locations, based on the thriving social venues that Prishtina has already developed. Map ② showcases the multiple formal and informal markets spread across the city that contribute to Prishtina's prominent street vibrancy.

Prishtina is lacking in public space, but it is rich with formal and informal private spaces that could be the foundation of a public renaissance. Restaurants, clubs, and most of all, cafés – ubiquitously located, often inexpensive – are more often used for socialising than official public spaces, in what has been suggested as a legacy of the city's Ottoman history and its rich café culture.

The use of this trigger is not a suggestion that spaces of consumption should replace public spaces – each has vital and separate purposes and neither can replace the other – but any efforts to restore public space in Prishtina must not ignore where people already spend time together.







Hotel Heimli



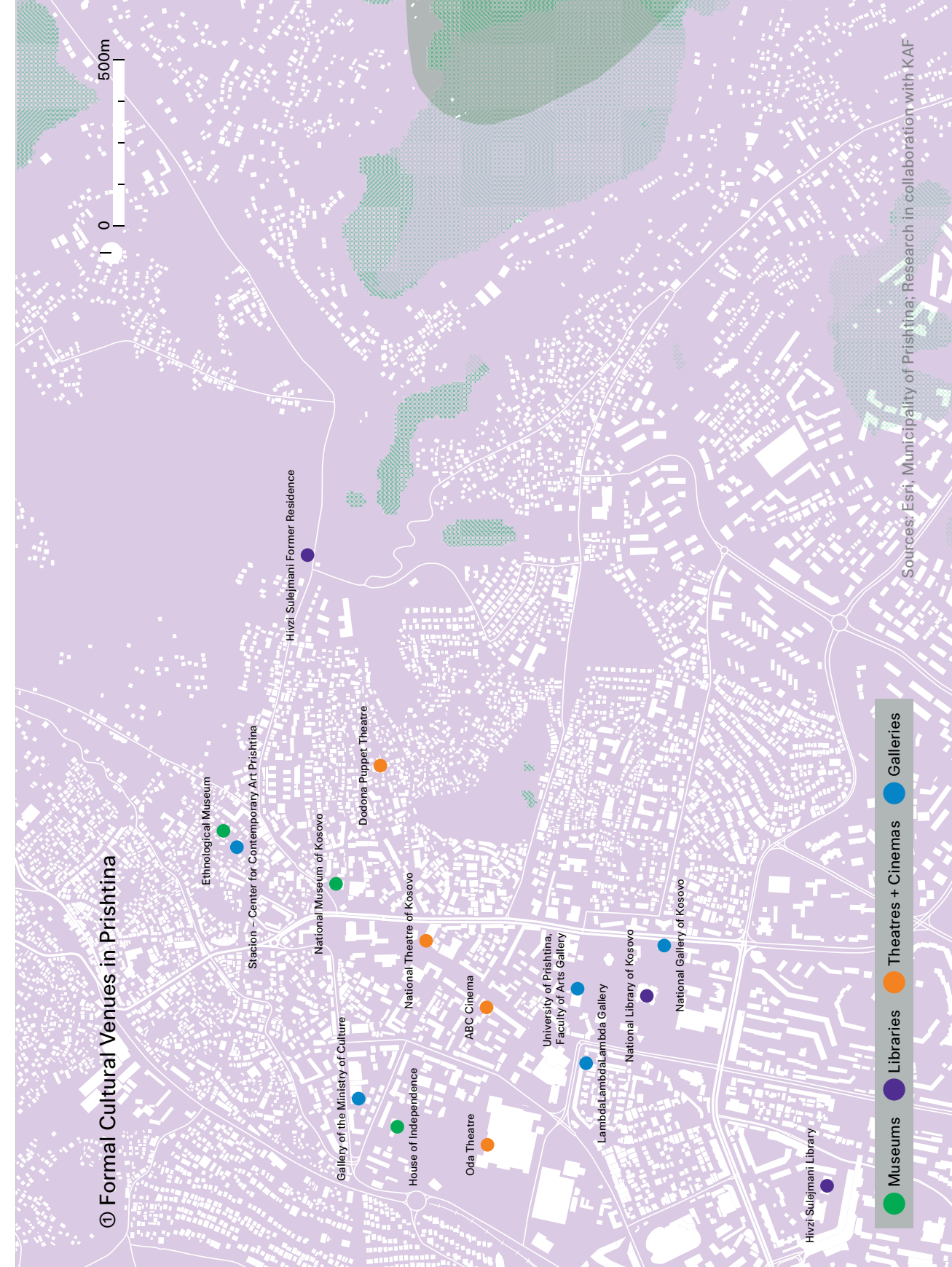


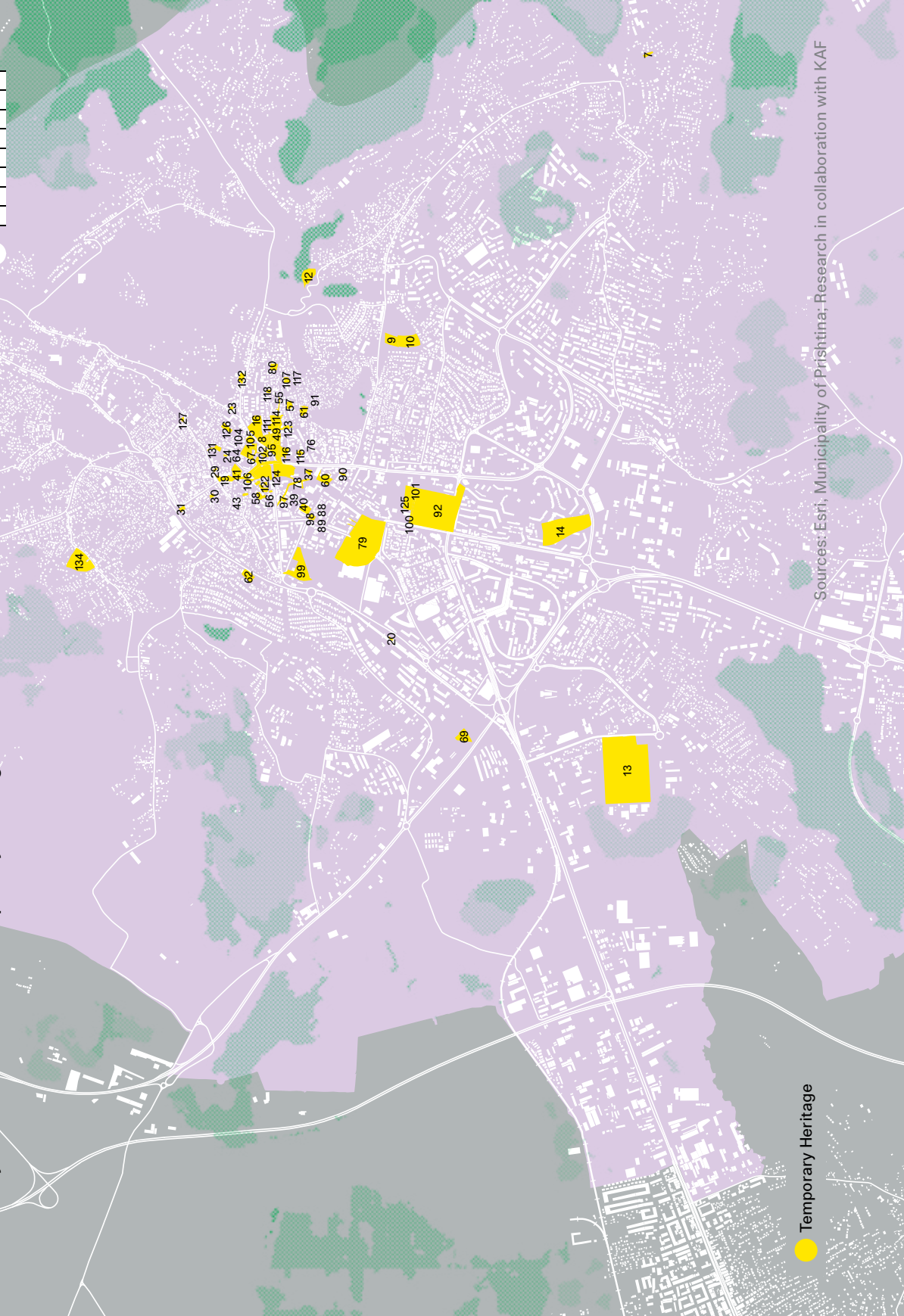


One might naturally be inclined to look at Prishtina's "temporary heritage list" (map ②), with its subset of modern architecture developed in the Yugoslav period (map ③); however, you would encounter a rather nebulous situation, with the status of culturally significant buildings subject to renewal every year. This uncertainty and a frequently complex ownership status, makes it difficult for these sites to be reclaimed by the public. Nevertheless, attracting public attention through bottom-up, temporary interventions could build momentum to help transform temporary sites into lasting fixtures of public life.

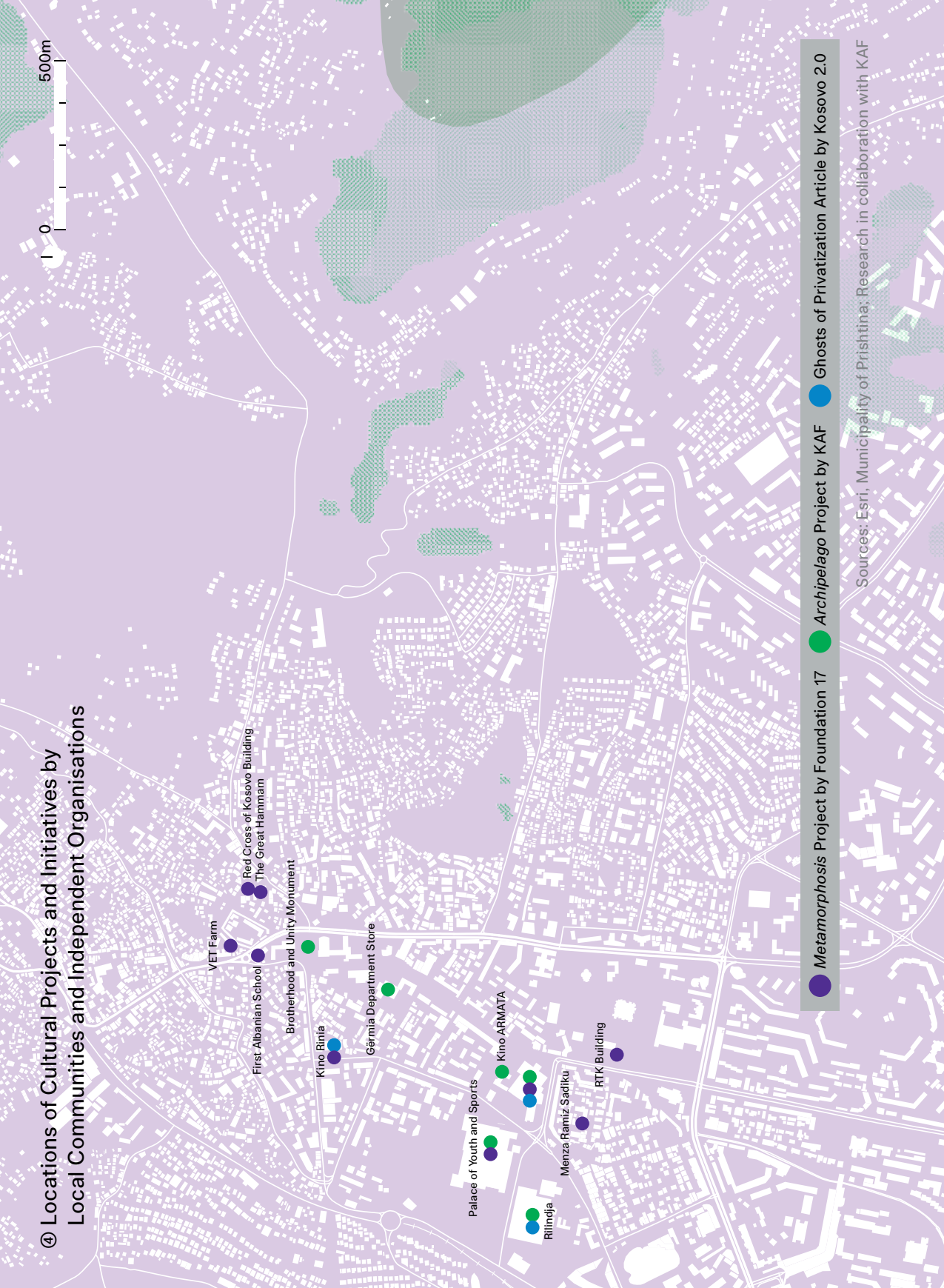
Recent initiatives and projects by the local community put a spotlight on important places in the city that are part of Prishtina's collective memory, as illustrated in map ④. After privatisation, there is a clear yearning to remember and restore them. Can these memories be re-awakened and used for new purposes?

Cultural activity sites, already imbued with collective meaning, have an automatic advantage as triggers for the reclamation of public space. In Prishtina, they tend to be clustered in the city centre (map ①). Hence, the issue is not only to make museums, galleries, libraries and other such sites more inclusive to a wide variety of visitors, but also to explore additional locations in other parts of the capital, and to increase general accessibility.





© Locations of Cultural Projects and Initiatives by Local Communities and Independent Organisations









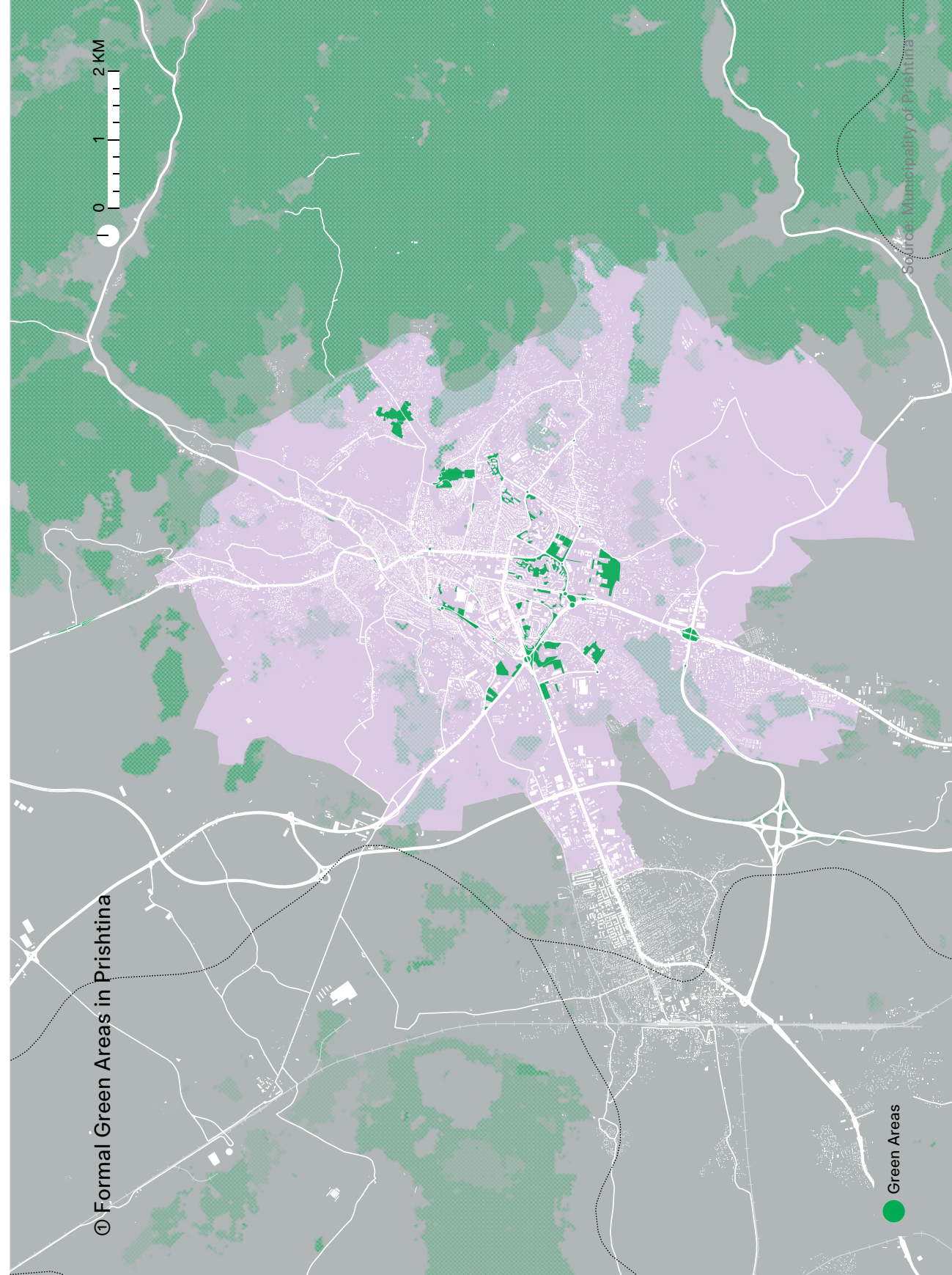


Prishtina features dozens of vacant lots, often nestled amidst buildings (map ②). However, cars automatically dominate every undetermined or empty space in the city, as was observed during a walking and mapping exercise conducted in collaboration with the Kosovo Architecture Foundation (map ③, and following page).

Can a more inclusive idea of public space be adopted, creating squares wherever urban voids are currently being used as parking lots? Termokiss, one of the most successful bottom-up initiatives in Prishtina, was born from an abandoned building like the dozens that are spread across the capital. These empty spaces are so widespread that they could even become the foundation for a new Commons.

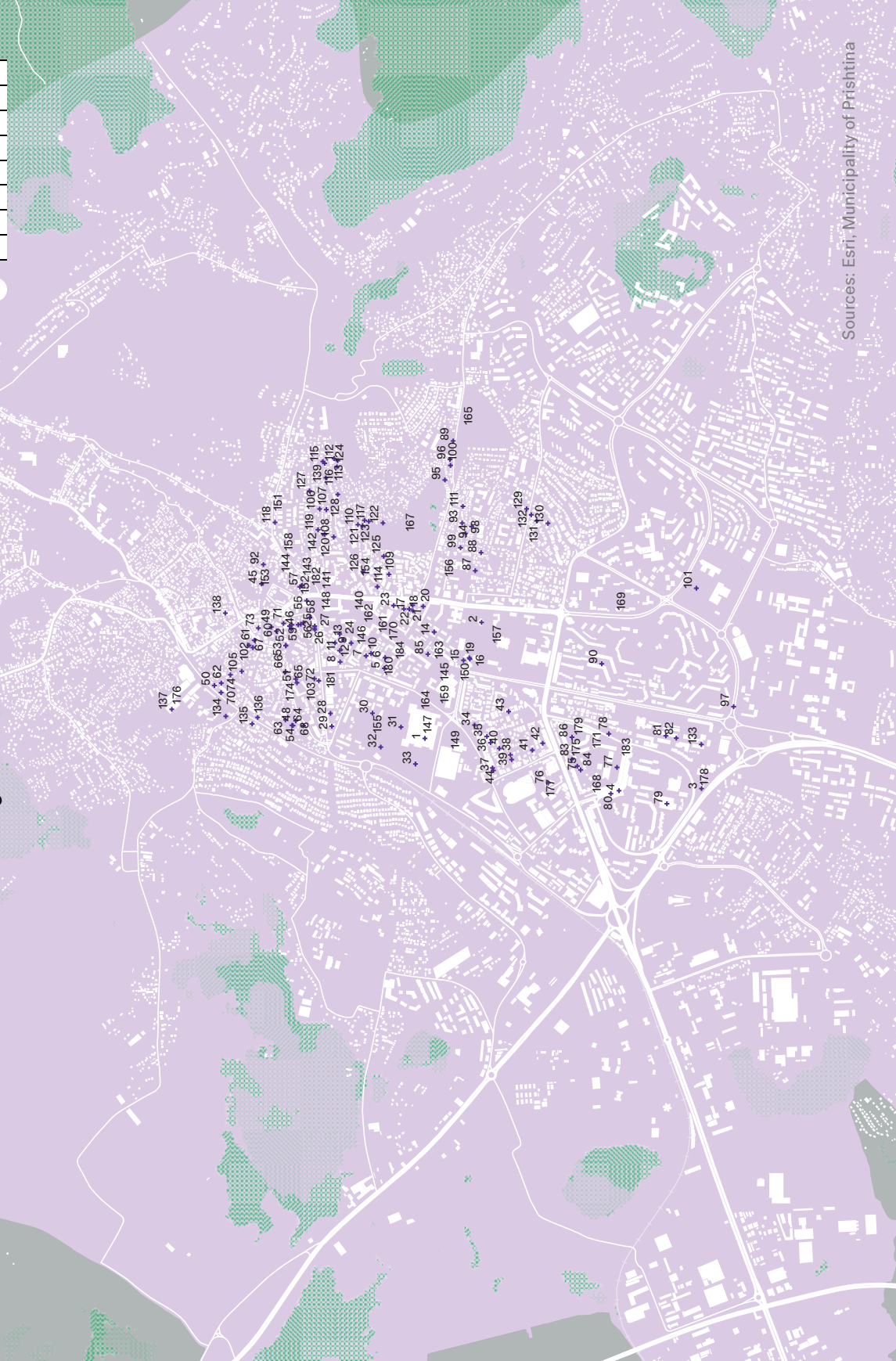
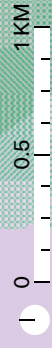
The city of Prishtina has an incredibly high number of open spaces left abandoned or unused. Each of them could potentially be apt to become the protagonist of multiple initiatives of dynamic appropriation.

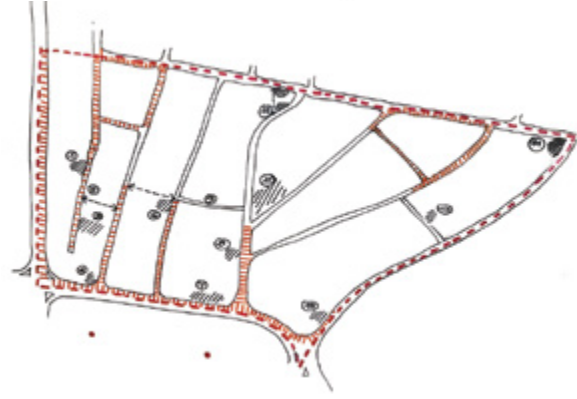
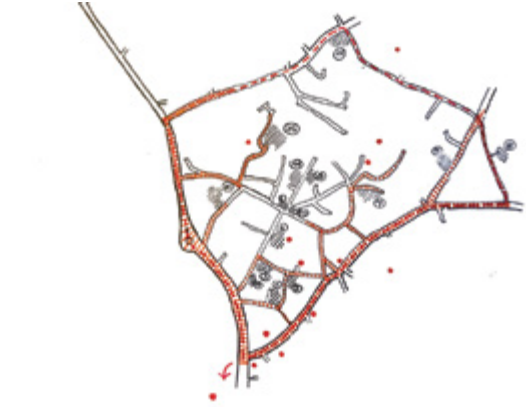
Take green areas, for instance (map ①). Although they are classified as public spaces in development plans, they seldom function as such. Often, they do not have any capacity for recreational activity, nor do they host thriving ecosystems. At their best, these areas might embody what Gilles Clement famously theorised as the “third landscape”: sites that happened to be left behind in the path of urban development. Could temporary interventions help to support the citizens of Prishtina reclaiming these lots as new public spaces?



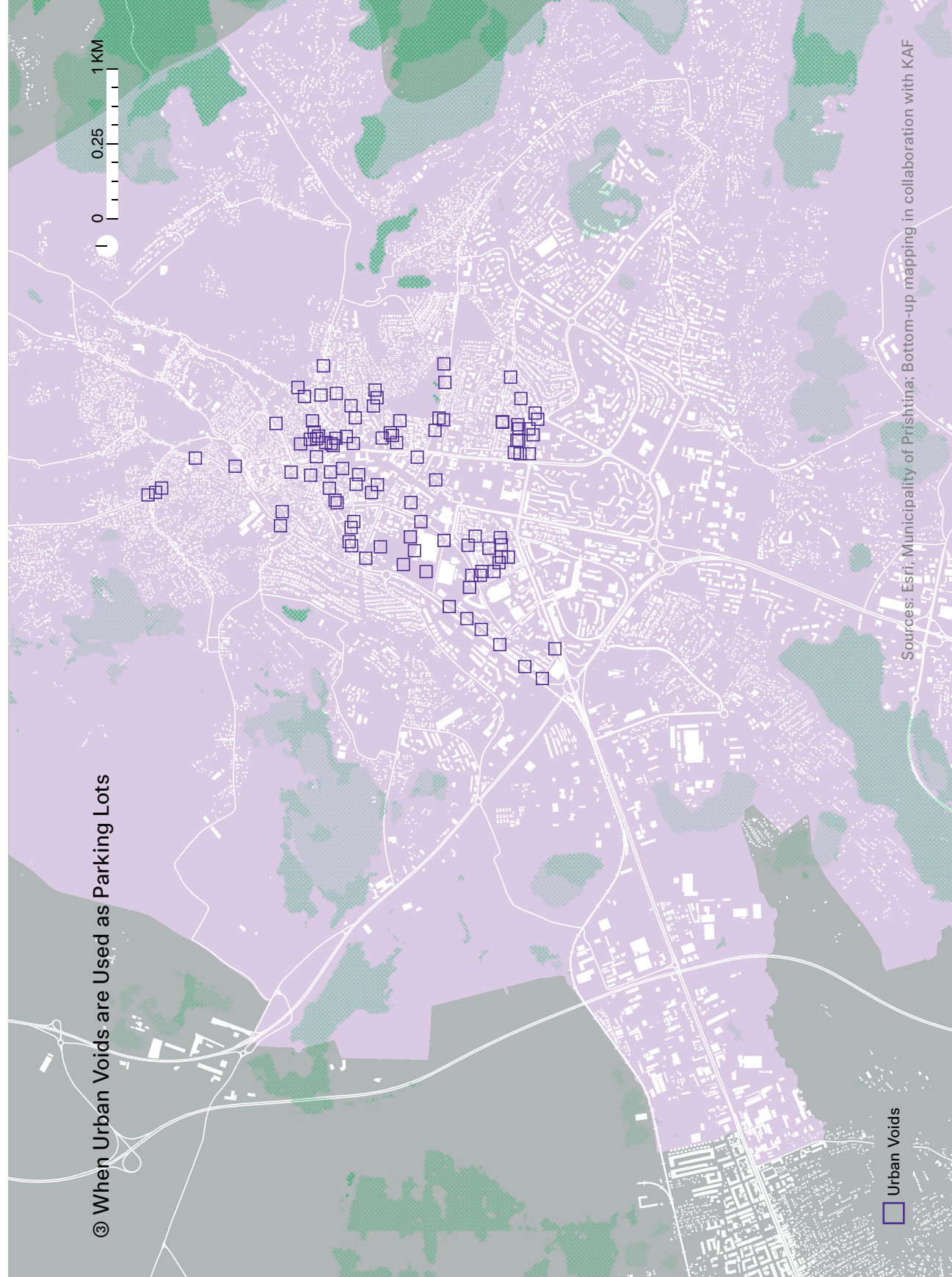
1	Former Sport Facility	39	Vacant Lots	77	Residual Space	115	Former Housing	153	Commerce/Trade
2	Unfinished Building	40	Unfinished Building	78	Vacant Lot	116	Commercial/Services	154	Commerce/Trade
3	Unfinished Building	41	Former Housing	79	Residual Space	117	Commercial/Services	155	Public Facilities
4	Residual Spaces	42	Residual Spaces	80	Commercial/Services	118	Commercial/Services	156	Public Facilities
5	Residual Spaces	43	Former Housing	81	Commercial/Services	119	Former Housing	157	Public Facilities
6	Residual Spaces	44	Vacant Lot	82	Former Housing	120	Former Housing	158	Public Facilities
7	Commercial/Services	45	Commercial/Services	83	Residual Space	121	Former Housing	159	Public Facilities
8	Vacant Lot	46	Commercial/Services	84	Residual Space	122	Former Housing	160	Monuments
9	Vacant Lot	47	Commercial/Services	85	Commercial/Services	123	Former Housing	161	Monuments
10	Former Housing	48	Commercial/Services	86	Residual Space	124	Former Housing	162	Monuments
11	Former Sport Facility	49	Commercial/Services	87	Vacant Lot	125	Commercial/Services	163	Monuments
12	Former Housing	50	Commercial/Services	88	Unfinished Building	126	Former Housing	164	Monuments
13	Commercial/Services	51	Commercial/Services	89	Former Housing	127	Former Housing	165	Natural Landscape
14	Residual Spaces	52	Commercial/Services	90	Commercial/Services	128	Former Housing	166	Natural Landscape
15	Residual Spaces	53	Commercial/Services	91	Abandoned Heritage	129	Former Housing	167	Natural Landscape
16	Commercial/Services	54	Former Housing	92	Former Housing	130	Former Housing	168	City Landscape
17	Former Housing	55	Former Housing	93	Former Housing	131	Former Housing	169	City Landscape
18	Former Housing	56	Abandoned Heritage	94	Former Housing	132	Former Housing	170	City Landscape
19	Commercial/Services	57	Abandoned Heritage	95	Former Housing	133	Residual Space	171	Residual Spaces
20	Residual Spaces	58	Residual Spaces	96	Former Housing	134	Former Industrial	172	Residual Spaces
21	Residual Spaces	59	Vacant Lot	97	Former Infrastructure	135	Former Housing	173	Residual Spaces
22	Abandoned Heritage	60	Unfinished Building	98	Commercial/Services	136	Former Housing	174	Residual Spaces
23	Residual Spaces	61	Unfinished Building	99	Commercial/Services	137	Former Industrial	175	Residual Spaces
24	Unfinished Building	62	Former Housing	100	Vacant Lot	138	Commercial/Services	176	Residual Spaces
25	Commercial/Services	63	Former Housing	101	Vacant Lot	139	Unfinished Building	177	Residual Spaces
26	Commercial/Services	64	Former Housing	102	Vacant Lot	140	Historical Heritage	178	Residual Spaces
27	Commercial/Services	65	Residual Space	103	Vacant Lot	141	Historical Heritage	179	Parking Lots, Sidewalks, Playgrounds
28	Residual spaces	66	Unfinished Building	104	Vacant Lot	142	Historical Heritage	180	Parking Lots, Sidewalks, Playgrounds
29	Commercial/Services	67	Former Housing	105	Unfinished Building	143	Historical Heritage	181	Parking Lots, Sidewalks, Playgrounds
30	Former Housing	68	Unfinished Building	106	Commercial/Services	144	Historical Heritage	182	Parking Lots, Sidewalks, Playgrounds
31	Former Sports Facility	69	Residual Space	107	Unfinished Building	145	Modern Architecture	183	Parking Lots, Sidewalks, Playgrounds
32	Former Sports Facility	70	Vacant Lots	108	Former Housing	146	Modern Architecture	184	Parking Lots, Sidewalks, Playgrounds
33	Vacant Lots	71	Unfinished Building	109	Unfinished Building	147	Modern Architecture		
34	Vacant Lots	72	Unfinished Building	110	Former Housing	148	Modern Architecture		
35	Unfinished Building	73	Unfinished Building	111	Former Housing	149	Modern Architecture		
36	Unfinished Building	74	Unfinished Building	112	Former Housing	150	Modern Architecture		
37	Former Housing	75	Former Housing	113	Former Housing	151	Commerce/Trade		
38	Commercial/Service	76	Former Industrial	114	Vacant lots	152	Commerce/Trade		

© Vacant Lots, Abandoned or Unfinished Buildings





© When Urban Voids are Used as Parking Lots



Urban Voids

Sources: Esri, Municipality of Prishtina; Bottom-up mapping in collaboration with KAF















Painting Urbanism Visions: Implementing Urban Interventions in Prishtina

After assembling a large compendium of public spaces to choose from, CRA-Carlo Ratti Associati selected a few sites upon which the first tangible step of open-source urbanism could be practised: inexpensive, open-ended interventions that created new public spaces in a matter of hours.

It is vital that this process is agile and scalable, inviting opportunities for future interventions based on feedback. The creed of open-source urbanism is this: we might not get it right the first time, but success comes from iteration.

The first urban intervention took place at the vacant former site of the Brick Factory, once Prishtina's most important industrial site. Here, CRA-Carlo Ratti Associati used the easiest of urban instruments, bright yellow paint and portable furniture, to demarcate a large area for public use: an "urban living room".

To implement this vision, CRA-Carlo Ratti Associati relied on the help of locals and students from the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Prishtina. After an opening night dinner, the students took over and decided to organise film screenings that were open to the public. The aim of this intervention was to ignite a debate about how such a space could be used, how it could be made accessible and how it might become a well-incorporated component of the city's broader infrastructure.

The next intervention was at the abandoned Hivzi Sulejmani Library, an early 20th-century building whose exquisite courtyard garden has been inaccessible since 2016, despite being located in the centre of the city. The gates were closed and illegally-parked cars had flooded the area in front of them. Again, paint and temporary furniture were used to drive the cars away, creating another urban living room and restoring a formerly vital public space.

The design team invited local residents for an informal chat over some pizza, and listened to anecdotes about the neighbourhood's history. Most importantly, positive comments and suggestions were made as to how the temporary intervention could be turned into a permanent one.

The neighbourhood's plight seemed to derive from a common phenomenon in Prishtina. After a decaying public space gets *de facto* appropriated by private interests – in this specific case, a parking company operating nearby using the library's courtyard as an extension of its property – it is very hard to recollect how it happened, or to collectively imagine that an alternative is still possible. The precise objective of the urban interventions was to show how a different reality can quickly be realised.

A few weeks after the first activities, CRA-Carlo Ratti Associati designed another 'paint the city' intervention, this time in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, close to its building on Mother Teresa Boulevard. The plan featured different components: opening up one of the Ministry's courtyards to the public, and at the same time pedestrianising 2 Korriku Street, a road so full of third places that it is known locally simply as *Kafet e Rakisë* (Rakia's cafés). As of June 2022, the former objective has been implemented, while the latter is still being worked upon. It is a reminder of the complexity of achieving a permanent removal of cars and car parks in a city where private vehicles are violently dominant. The mission of reclaiming Prishtina's public spaces will stretch into the long haul.

These initial interventions, while impactful, are only a preliminary taste of what Prishtina can do going forward. Each one necessitates sustained engagement – feedback loops of citizen response and subsequent iterations that will slowly turn the light touch of yellow paint into more solid changes. Other urban interventions, for which the technical components and security constraints are much more complex than those we enacted in the summer and autumn of 2021, will need to happen all at once, albeit holding firm the principle of inviting each citizen to "vote with their feet."

The necessity for a more comprehensive urban development framework emerged from discussions with multiple stakeholders following the initial actions listed above. This determined the next phase of the Urban Vision process. Ultimately, the project strives to match a mix of scalable interventions with a wider design plan, to accelerate the reclamation of the city's public space.





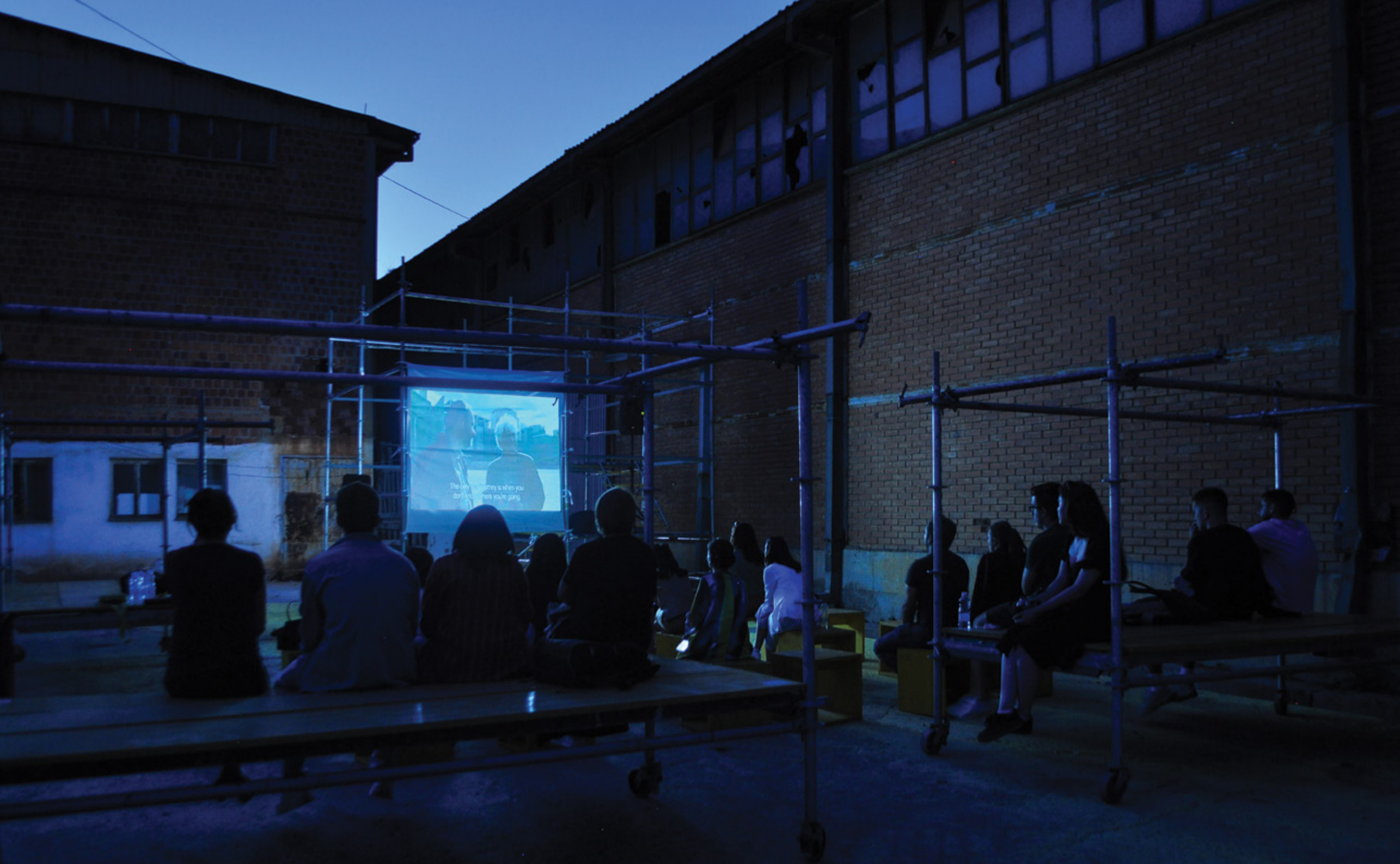






















Towards a Comprehensive Plan for New Public Space

Following the temporary urban interventions developed in the summer and autumn of 2021, a design plan was developed by CRA-Carlo Ratti Associati to accelerate the reclamation of Prishtina's public space at a city-wide scale.

The dramatic real estate boom and widespread privatisation of the last two decades, along with an excessive reliance on private means of transportation, have hit Prishtina's streetscape hard. Large swaths of urban territory have become virtually inaccessible to pedestrians because of traffic and chaotic parking.

The design plan strives to tackle some of the issues with Prishtina's public space that have emerged since the beginning of the Urban Vision, in particular: inequality between different neighbourhoods and ethnic groups; spaces that prevent social cohesion; broad challenges in terms of accessibility; and the need to reintegrate natural elements and green spaces into the city's streets.

The vision for future development presented in this section pivots around a Sustainable Mobility Path, which can address the issues above while also encouraging an extended understanding of the borders of the city centre. The Sustainable Mobility Path is envisioned to connect the Brick Factory and the Palace of Youth and Sports to the existing pedestrian axis of the Mother Teresa Boulevard.

In the short term, such infrastructure will serve Prishtina while it is welcoming the attendees of Manifesta 14. But, more importantly, it could contribute to enhancing the untapped richness of the city's liminal public spaces.

The path is designed in the shape of a loop, and will act as a catalyst for further expansions inside and outside its perimeter. While its full development might entail years of work and substantial funding, its potential can be already appreciated during the days of the biennial in the summer and autumn of 2022, as most of the Manifesta 14 Prishtina venues happen to be located along this route, or not far from it.

Among many other aspects, CRA-Carlo Ratti Associati's design plan also includes a vision for a pedestrian bridge that comes straight out of the unfinished pages of Prishtina's history. This bridge is envisioned to rise above the streets, connecting the roofs of the Grand Hotel Prishtina and the Palace of Youth and Sports.

The notion of bridging these two areas was first conceived in a master plan by the Socialist government in the 1970s, but was never constructed. By finally realising this "missing bridge", Prishtina could facilitate pedestrian mobility in the heart of the city, while also making peace with a fragment of its urban and political past.

In addition to acknowledging the historical architectural reference, the proposed bridge will have an additional function: to act as a public space that would invite people not just to pass by, but also to linger. A long, uninterrupted central table would turn this large piece of infrastructure into a space for socialising and unexpected encounters. Close to the bridge, another aspect of the plan is to convert an unused section of railroad tracks into a Green Corridor – a sustainable, accessible path that would connect different parts of the city and the natural with the artificial.

The proposed 1.3 kilometres of walkable path would connect the Brick Factory to the back entrance of the Palace of Youth and Sports, and more broadly facilitate connections between three surrounding neighbourhoods: Tophane, Arberia and Kodra e Trimave. Tophane was developed in the Ottoman era, while Arberia (also known by its Serbian name, Dragodan) and Kodra e Trimave arose under Yugoslav rule. All three neighbourhoods have become unmanageably dense due to the postwar construction boom.

The corridor, developed alongside UN-Habitat with the sponsorship of the Embassy of Sweden in Prishtina and the support of the Municipality of Prishtina, is designed to help bring these neighbourhoods some much-needed public space. Dotted with benches and streetlights, it is intended to be safe and comfortable to use at all hours, and serve the most vulnerable social groups – those who usually pay the highest toll for poor planning decisions.

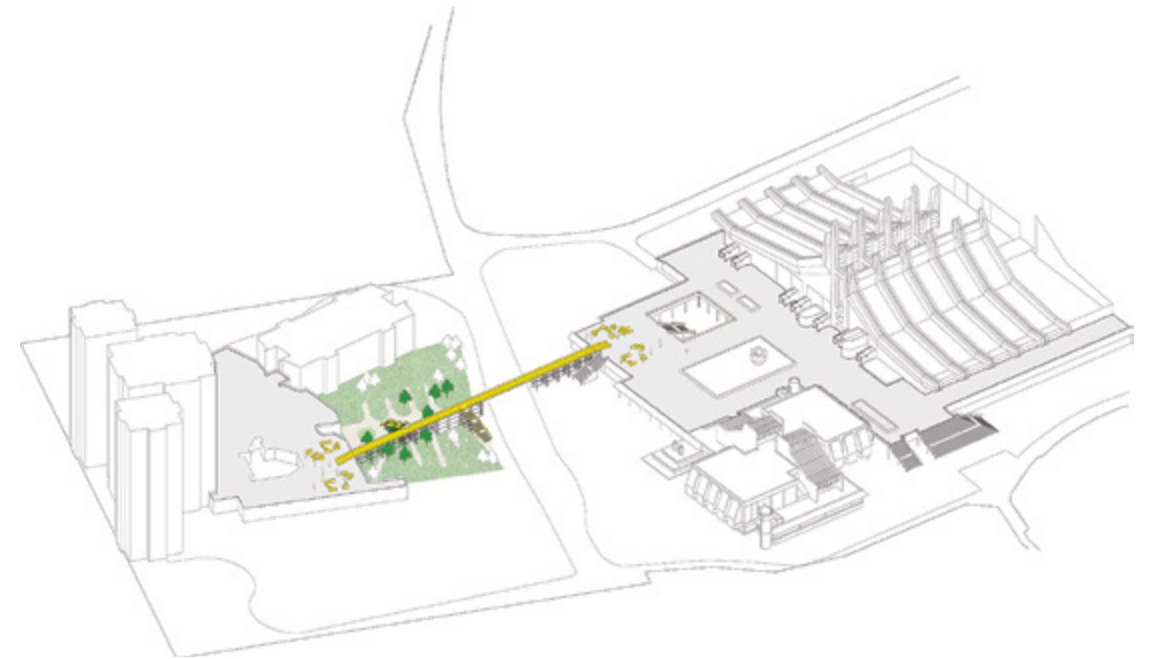
The Loop of Prishtina

It includes the Missing Bridge, which would connect the Palace of Youth and Sports to the Grand Hotel Prishtina and the Green Corridor, which would make the Brick Factory accessible from the Palace of Youth and Sports. By aspiring to mend several highly-visible pieces of urban fabric in the centre of Prishtina, this circular path is designed to encourage locals, as well as visitors of Manifesta 14, to reimagine the physical borders of the city in a more inclusive way.

This loop envelops all of the actions designed by CRA-Carlo Ratti Associati in Prishtina during the course of this Urban Vision. Starting from the locations of the three urban interventions planned in summer 2021, it brings all of the sites together as part of a Sustainable Mobility Pathway – an ideal circuit of reclaimed public spaces and rejuvenated public life.



The proposal of the Missing Bridge, first presented by CRA-Carlo Ratti Associati to the Municipality of Prishtina in autumn 2021, would connect the roof of the Grand Hotel Prishtina with the Palace of Youth and Sports, finally completing an unfinished plan from the Yugoslav era. This intervention would foster sustainable mobility in the area, with pedestrians soaring above the clogged vehicular traffic. The bridge is envisioned to feature a long, uninterrupted table, so that it is not only a way to traverse the city, but a place worth visiting in its own right.









The Green Corridor is conceived as a temporary installation, in line with CRA-Carlo Ratti Associati's experimental method of Open-source Urbanism tested for Manifesta 14 Prishtina. Visually, the project is marked by the same yellow paint colour that also characterised the previous "urban interventions" developed in Prishtina in summer 2021. The temporary nature of this project means that the Green Corridor also responds to a logic of circularity in design. If the railway tracks need to become operative again in the future, trees and urban furniture can be quickly moved and installed somewhere else in the city's public space.

The Green Corridor is commissioned by Manifesta 14 Prishtina and designed by CRA-Carlo Ratti Associati.

The Green Corridor is developed by Manifesta 14 Prishtina together with UN-Habitat and supported by the Embassy of Sweden in Prishtina, Municipality of Prishtina, GCF | Generale Costruzioni Ferroviarie, KFOS | Kosovo Foundation for Open Society, Block by Block Foundation, Embassy of Italy in Prishtina and the Italian Institute of Culture Tirana.

The Green Corridor is a temporary installation envisioned to follow the path of a currently abandoned section of railway in the west of the city, reconnecting the Brick Factory with the Palace of Youth and Sports.

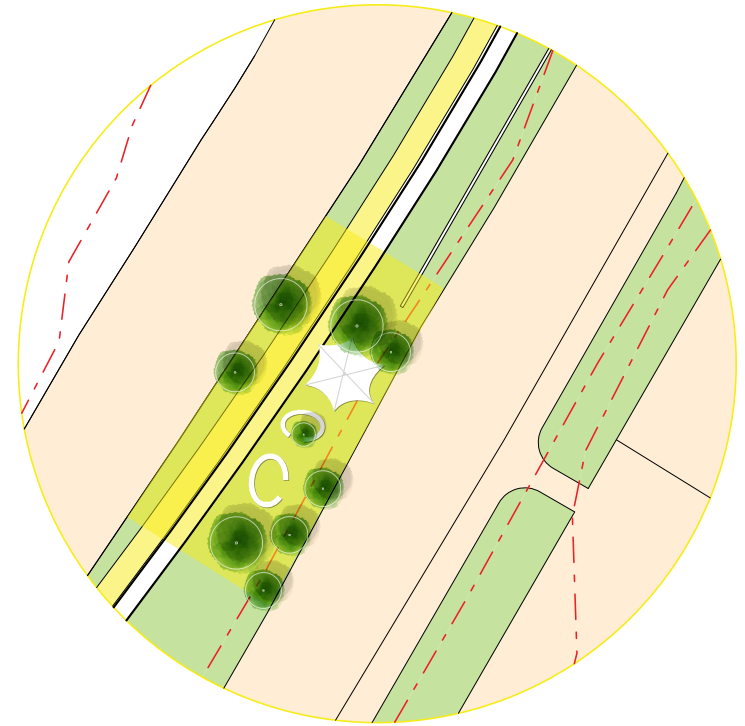
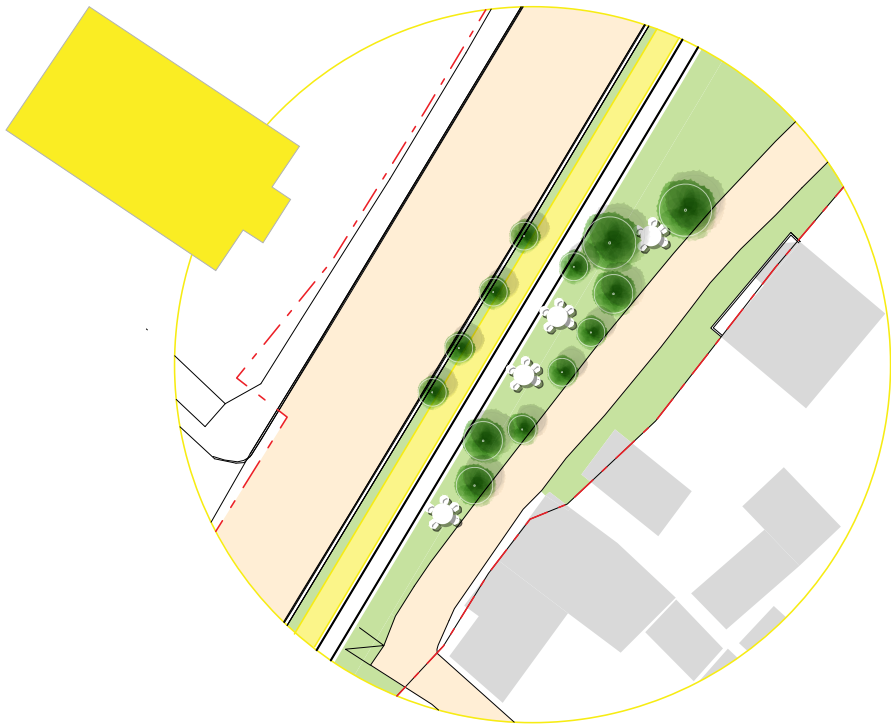
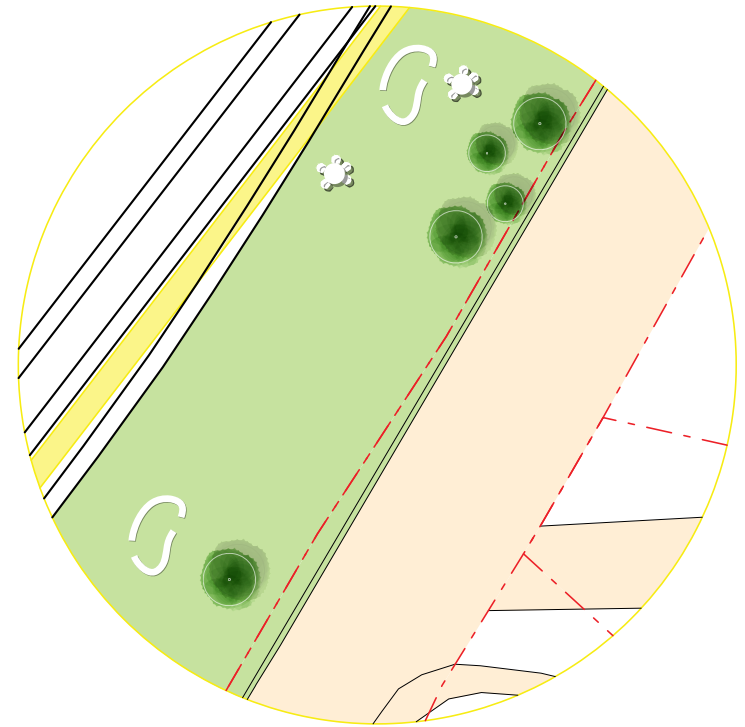
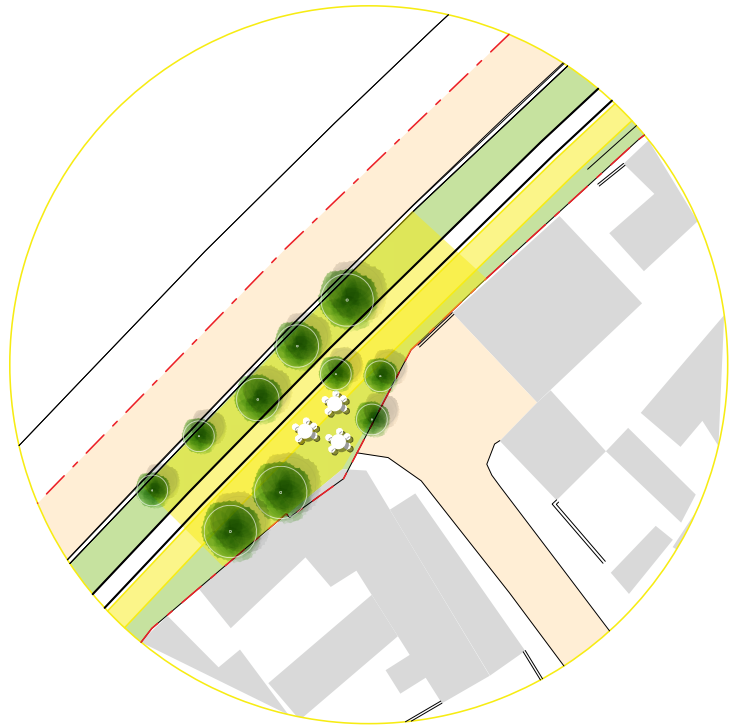
Trees and other natural features will insulate the pathway from the sights and sounds of cars, while with street lights and urban furniture, this journey would be accessible to the whole community, showcasing the possibility of low-cost, inclusive public space that fosters clean mobility and connects socially diverse neighbourhoods.

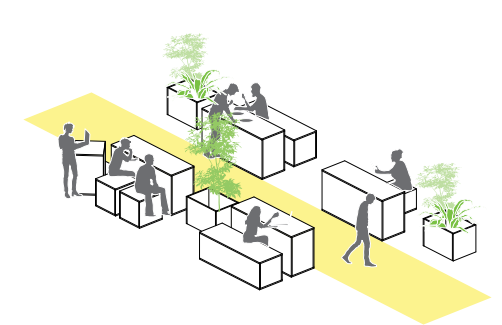
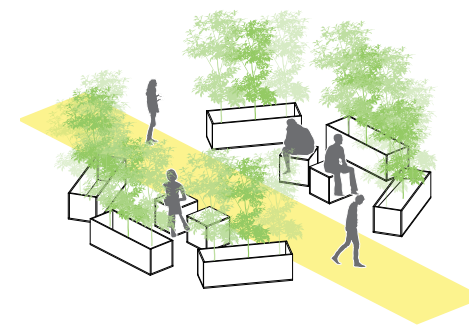
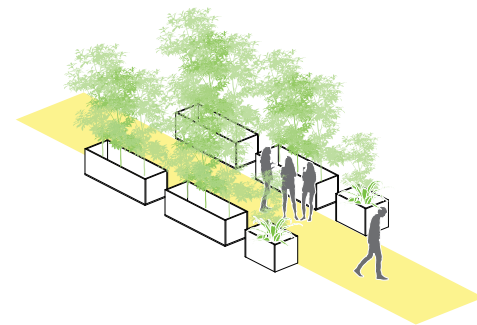
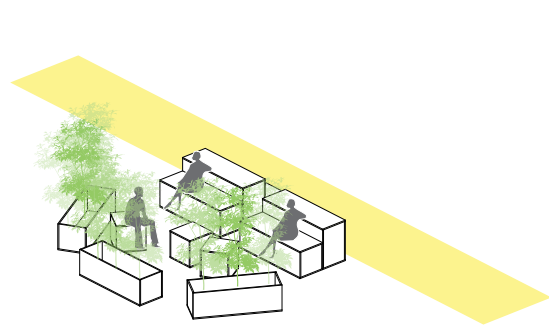
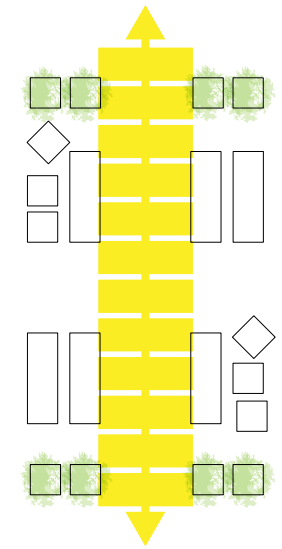
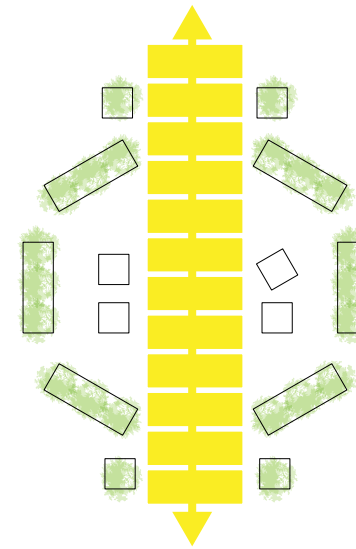
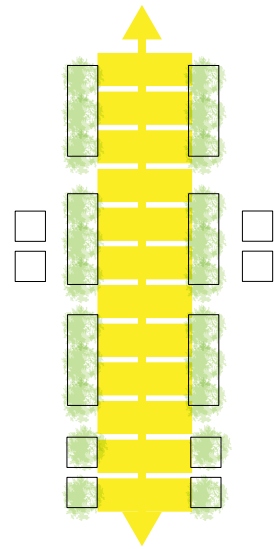
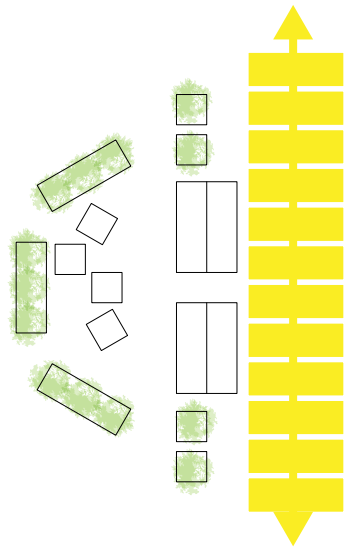


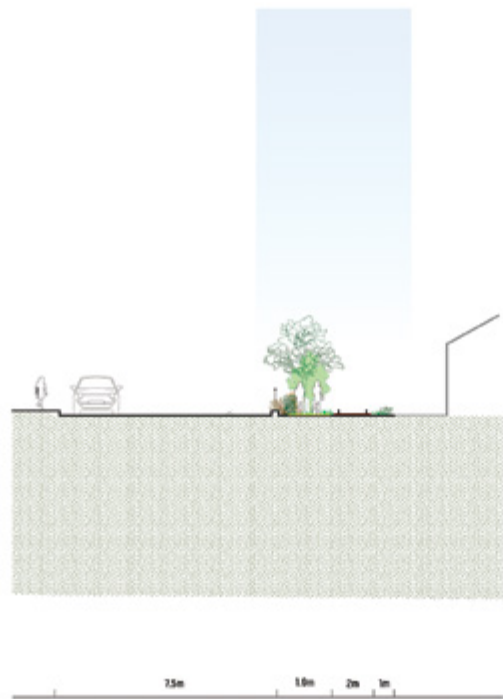
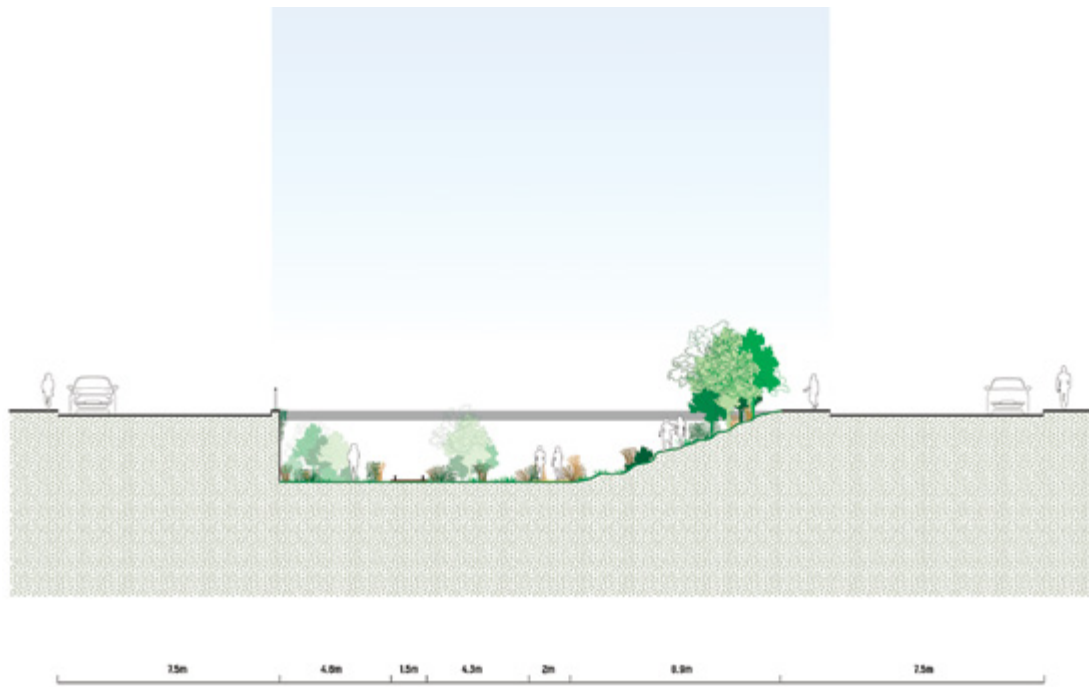


In these pages, a series of preliminary design materials about the Green Corridor. On the right, an overview of the 1.3-kilometre path running on a south-north axis, connecting the Palace of Youth and Sports to the Brick Factory while acting as a hinge between the city centre of Prishtina and the neighbourhoods on its west and north. On pages 248–251, the various seating and trees arrangements in the “green oases” scattered along the path, which establish many new meeting points. The Green Corridor would carve safe, repaired spaces for people to walk or bike, away from heavily trafficked streets (page 252–3). While developed as a temporary installation, the project encourages people to rediscover their city from new perspectives, suggesting alternative strategies to reclaim public space in the Prishtina.



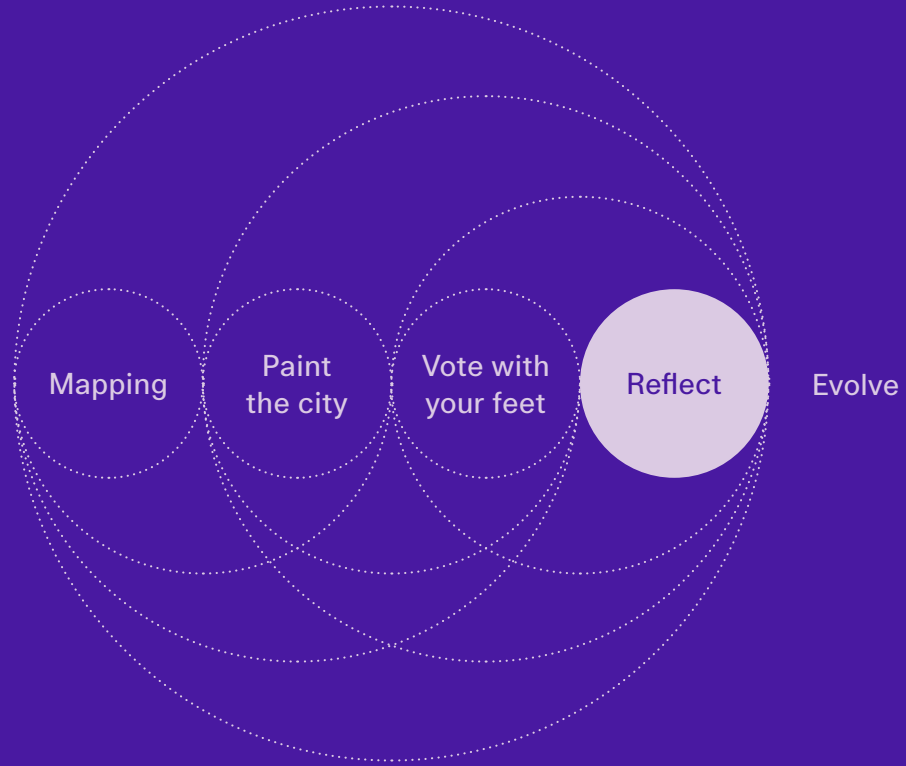








Conclusion



Future Reclamations: The Legacy of the Urban Vision in Prishtina

The legacies of this Urban Vision are only just beginning to be established at the time of its publication. That said, it is already possible to observe a series of circumstances where this work has begun to produce its desired effect – that is, to accelerate discussions and stimulate concrete actions around the reclaiming of public space in Prishtina.

One of the initial objectives of the research, which was developed as part of the pre-biennial programme of Manifesta 14 Prishtina, was to help shape the subsequent artistic programme created by Catherine Nichols. Indeed, most of the locations that were protagonists of the study have become central nodes for exhibitions and cultural events occurring at Manifesta 14 Prishtina. This list of locations includes the Brick Factory, as well as the former Hivzi Sulejmani library, as well as other venues that were flagged in the study as examples of the city's liminal public spaces.

After finalising the first urban interventions in Prishtina in the summer and autumn of 2021, CRA-Carlo Ratti Associati sketched a concept plan for future development centred around a new Sustainable Mobility Path. The most conspicuous part of it, a 1.3 kilometre-long footpath running along a stretch of unused railway tracks, would help mitigate the consequences of Prishtina's recent real-estate boom – inaccessibility for pedestrians and the uneven distribution of public space.

Since proposing the design, a dialogue has begun between numerous stakeholders, including the Municipality of Prishtina, Manifesta 14 Prishtina, CRA-Carlo Ratti Associati and UN-Habitat to make it a reality. The tentative plan would be first to implement the Green Corridor as a

temporary installation, then to imagine possibilities for a more permanent contribution to the life of the city.

On a different level, both the analytical maps developed by CRA-Carlo Ratti Associati and the artificial intelligence analysis conducted by MIT's Senseable City Lab put together a series of insights about the city, which can now be made accessible to anyone seeking to continue research into Prishtina's streetscape. Paired with the methodology of open-source urbanism, it is hoped that residents can use the data collected during this study to fuel their visions of alternative civic futures. The urban and geographical representations featured in this study – and the dozens that could not be included here due to editorial limitations – can support those who are advocating for a stronger sense of common ownership in the ongoing battle for public space. After all, data itself is a fundamental new common resource in today's urban life. In more global terms, this Urban Vision has allowed for the testing of a new, innovative methodology: open-source urbanism. This experimental model for participatory urban design is based on positive feedback loops, and can contribute to changing the way that cities are made across the world.

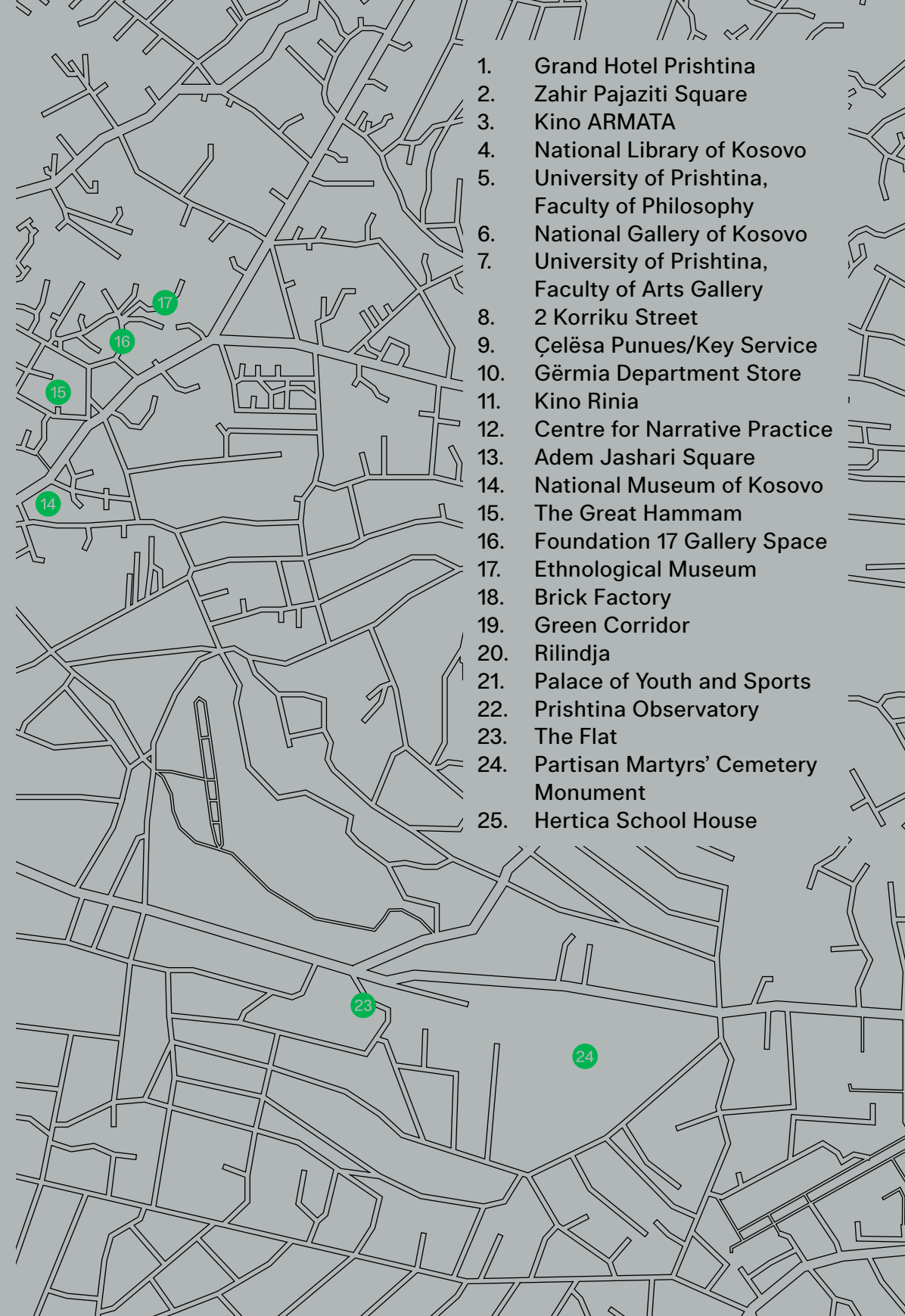
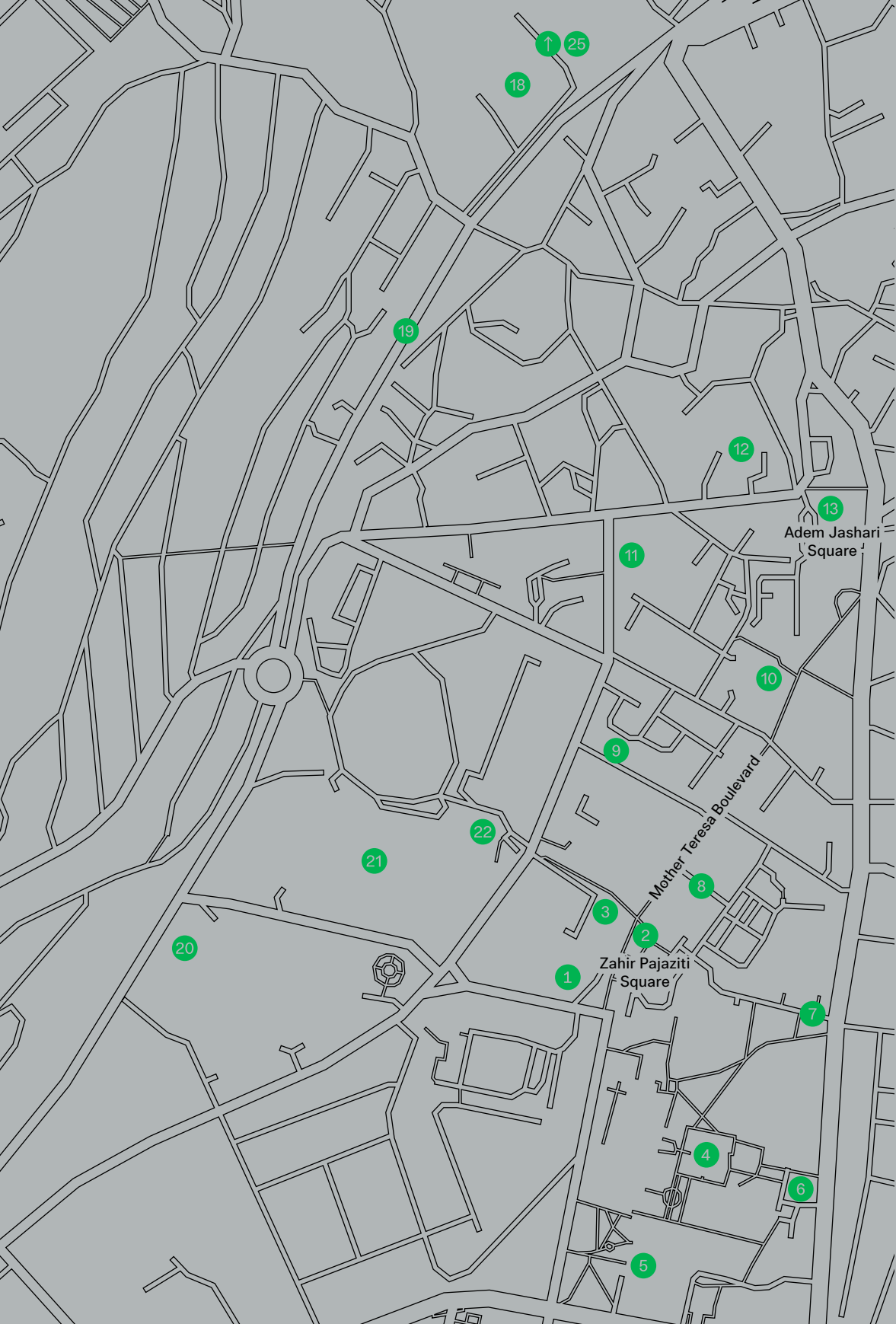
The model encourages the power of dynamic appropriation, leveraging existing “triggers” in the built environment that can attract public life and become the basis for vibrant public spaces. Inexpensive and temporary design actions then prompt people to react and advance the process by “voting with their feet”. By experimenting in Prishtina, we have demonstrated the potential of this methodology, one that could unlock urban innovation strategies well beyond the borders of any single municipality.

In Prishtina, this process has ignited a wider awareness around the issues related to public space. Local stakeholders have launched their own design proposals and urban interventions that have embraced the iterative methodology proposed by CRA-Carlo Ratti Associati; the debate around public space even featured in the 2021 electoral campaign for the city's next mayor. The eventual winner Përparim Rama, himself an architect and an urban planner, has brought the need to innovate in design and urban planning to the highest levels of local government.

Long after Manifesta 14, the people of Prishtina will continue the struggle to reclaim public space. Hopefully, this publication can be a companion to their journey, providing both an overarching vision and timely suggestions on how to accelerate the evolution of the city.

Manifesta 14 Prishtina

Parcours and Venues



1. Grand Hotel Prishtina
2. Zahir Pajaziti Square
3. Kino ARMATA
4. National Library of Kosovo
5. University of Prishtina, Faculty of Philosophy
6. National Gallery of Kosovo
7. University of Prishtina, Faculty of Arts Gallery
8. 2 Korriku Street
9. Çelësa Punues/Key Service
10. Gërmia Department Store
11. Kino Rinia
12. Centre for Narrative Practice
13. Adem Jashari Square
14. National Museum of Kosovo
15. The Great Hammam
16. Foundation 17 Gallery Space
17. Ethnological Museum
18. Brick Factory
19. Green Corridor
20. Rilindja
21. Palace of Youth and Sports
22. Prishtina Observatory
23. The Flat
24. Partisan Martyrs' Cemetery Monument
25. Hertica School House



1. Grand Hotel Prishtina



2. Zahir Pajaziti Square



3. Kino ARMATA



4. National Library of Kosovo



6. National Gallery of Kosovo



5. University of Prishtina, Faculty of Philosophy



7. University of Prishtina, Faculty of Arts Gallery



8. 2 Korriku Street



10. Gërmia Department Store



9. Çelësa Punues/Key Service



11. Kino Rinia



12. Centre for Narrative Practice



14. National Museum of Kosovo



13. Adem Jashari Square



15. The Great Hammam



16. Foundation 17 Gallery Space



18. Brick Factory



17. Ethnological Museum



19. Green Corridor



20. Rilindja



22. Prishtina Observatory



21. Palace of Youth and Sports



23. The Flat



24. Partisan Martyrs' Cemetery Monument



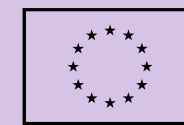
25. Hertica School House

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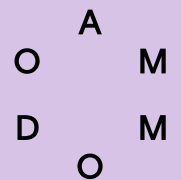


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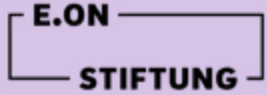
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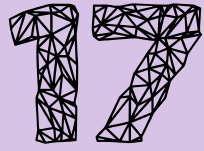


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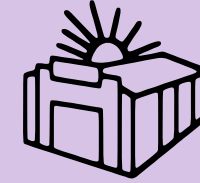


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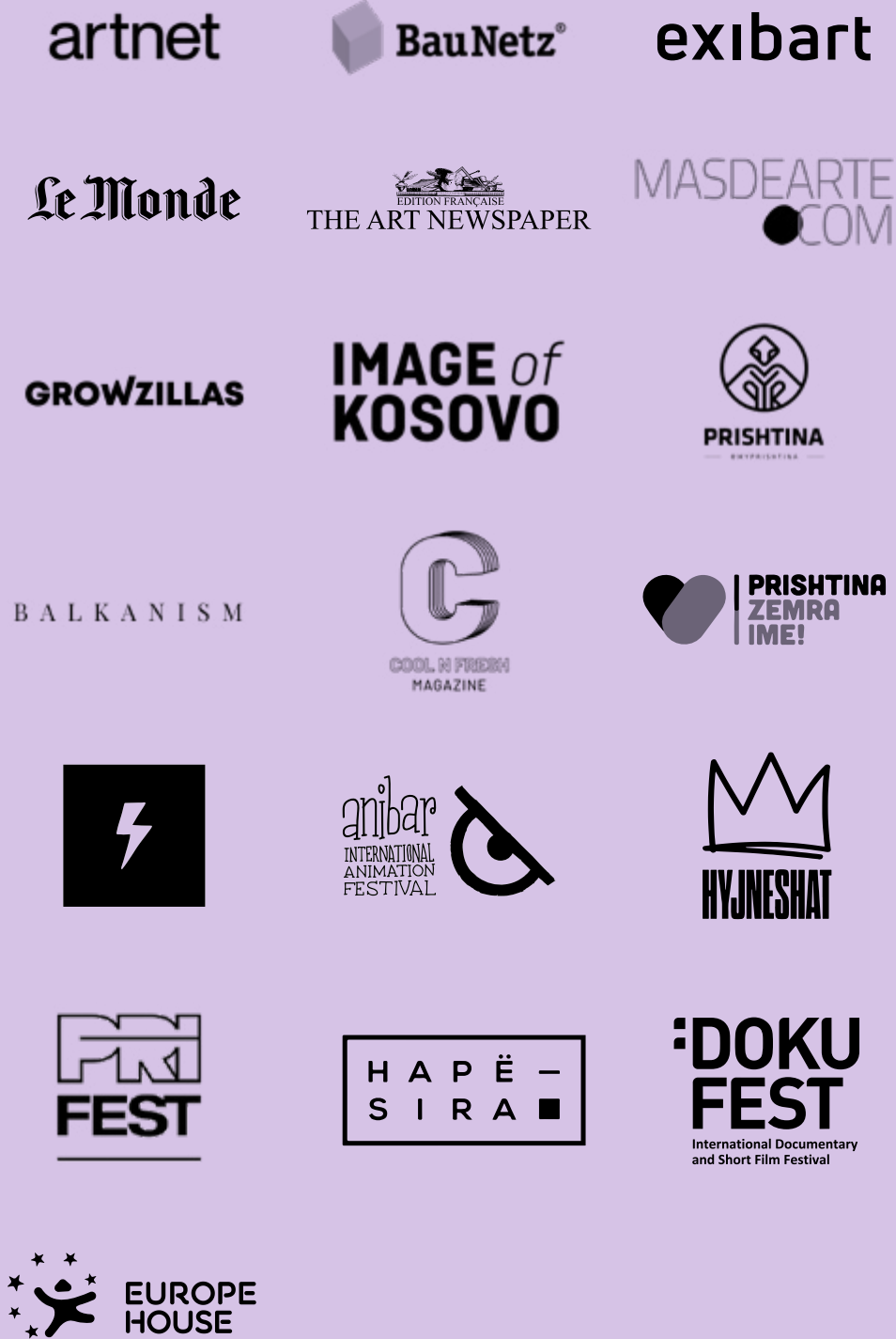
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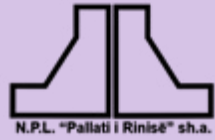


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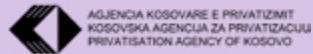
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