

TERRITORIAL - SPATIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF PRISHTINA WITH ITS SUBURBS AND METROPOLITAN DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Ibrahim RAMADANI¹

SUMMARY

The purpose of this paper consists in defining and determining of territorial-spatial units of the municipality of Prishtina with several other surrounding municipalities that would facilitate the formulating of fundamental concepts of the overall spatial development of the municipality and the city of Prishtina as the capital of Kosova, as well as formulating of development concepts of the metropolitan zone.

Work methods and methodology rely on the analysis of several relevant geographic factors of the aforementioned territory (morphology of the terrain, spread of settlements, population density, infrastructure network), while based on the assessment of these very important geospatial indicators we will be able to determine the development directions of this urban agglomeration.

Key words: municipality, infrastructure, metropolitan zone, transformation, urban agglomeration.

FUNDAMENTAL GEOSPATIAL CHARACTERISTICS

The analysis and evaluation of the geographical position is of an outmost importance when studying a particular area, as based on this component one can understand opportunities/ possibilities for development and functioning of the area. Therefore, geographical position and the entire complex of natural factors reflects especially on the importance, the population density and the capacity of a city to function, moreover of the region as whole (B. Maksimović, 1986). The municipality of Prishtina has a surface area of approximately 57.000 ha and is comprised of 47 cadastral zones (J. Osmani, 2003). The territory of the municipality of Prishtina stretches in the north-eastern part of the Republic of Kosova, in the

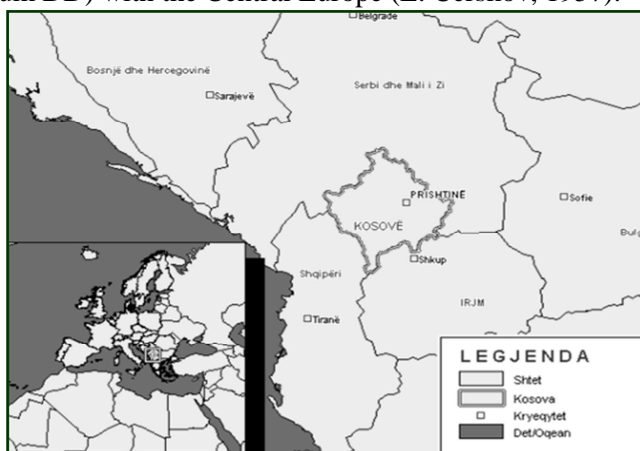
¹ **Assoc.Prof.Dr. Ibrahim RAMADANI**, ibrahimramadani@yahoo.com
University of Prishtina, Geography department, www.uni-pr.edu
Tel. +37744 139 730;
Address: 10000, Str. "Nëna Terezë" no.no., Prishtinë, Kosova

geographic latitude $42^{\circ}40'00''$ and geographic longitude $21^{\circ}20'15''$, which shows a very convenient central position in the Balkan Peninsula.

Regarding the micro position of this area, the Municipality of Prishtina in the north is bordered by the municipality of Podujeva, in the northeast by the Republic of Serbia, in the east by the municipality of Kamenica, in the southeast by the municipality of Novobërda, in the south by the municipality of Lipjan and in the west by municipalities of Obiliq and Fushë Kosova. Surrounding municipalities (Obiliq, Fushë Kosova, Graçanica, and Novobërda) have close connections with the city of Prishtina, and with the aid of a stronger and more functional connection it will represent an opportunity for creation of urban agglomerate with a metropolitan character in the future.

Due to its good geographical position, the city of Prishtina has become an important centre not only for its periphery but for the entire Kosova and beyond. Since ancient times very important roads pass through the territory of this municipality; roads which lead in the inland of the Balkan Peninsula, but also in the Central Europe and further. The distance of other important centres from the city of Prishtina is as follows: Prishtina - Tirana 421 km, Prishtina - Skopje 86 km, Prishtina - Sofia 304 km, Prishtina - Thessaloniki 300 km, Prishtina - Belgrade 340 km, Prishtina - Podgorica 280 km.

The importance of the geographic position of the city of Prishtina was noticeable even in the earliest ages, because of its excellent connections with surrounding regions. In ancient times through this zone passed and intersected roads that connected Lezha, Prizren, Prishtina and Nish (Lissum - Theranda - Ulpiana - Naissus) and the Aegean route which connected Thessaloniki, Skopje, Prishtina and Zveçan (Thessalonica - Scupi - Ulpiana - Municipium DD) with the Central Europe (E. Čerškov, 1957).



Map 1. Geographical position of the city of Prishtina in Europe

The municipality of Prishtina stretches in the north-eastern part of Kosova, in the contact zone of very important tectonic and morphologic units which have reflected in complicated natural processes, but has also reflected in excellent communications connections, as well as economic, cultural and political development all throughout history. A part of its territory stretches in the central part of the Kosova Plane, whereas eastern, south-eastern and north-eastern parts of the municipality are characterised by hilly and mountainous landscapes known as the Gollaku territory. The hilly-mountainous part of the municipality of Prishtina is a corrugated terrain with a relative altitude, and geological rocky structures are exposed in some parts of the territory (in serpentine areas in Badovc, Koznicë and some steep schist areas). The rest of the territory is covered by forests and greenery and a very important pedologic layer. The lowland or plain part is comprised of lake sediments and other sedimented river materials. The altitude in the lowland area is around 550-650 m, whereas in the mountainous part in some of the mountain peaks it reaches up to 1.200 m. River valleys enable communications between different parts of the municipality and further, as well as the establishment of settlements and development of various human activities. Through these river valleys (Teneshdolli Valley, Graçanica Valley and River Prishtina Valley) municipality of Prishtina connects with other parts of Kosova and beyond. The same applies to the population of the municipality, as all settlements of the mountainous zone utilise the established communications (commuting) lines in these important valleys in order to connect to the city itself. These territorial dispositions with various local physical-geographic features represent the natural foundation for organizing of and development of settlements and human activities.

SPATIAL ENTIRETIES AND PREDISPOSITIONS FOR METROPOLITAN DEVELOPMENT

The partition of a municipal territory into spatial units for spatial planning purpose is considered as one of most significant problems of the social organization. By partitioning a municipal territory into smaller spatial units we enable the spatial detailing and the identification of all influences and interactions that condition the overall social, economic and cultural development (K. Mihajlović, 1968). Natural, geographic, social, economic and functional characteristics have attested that in the Municipality of Prishtina one can come across small spatial units with different features. This partition of the municipal territory into spatial units has an exceptional importance in the planning process, with significant influence on the spatial organization and development of these territorial units (D. Perišić, 1985).

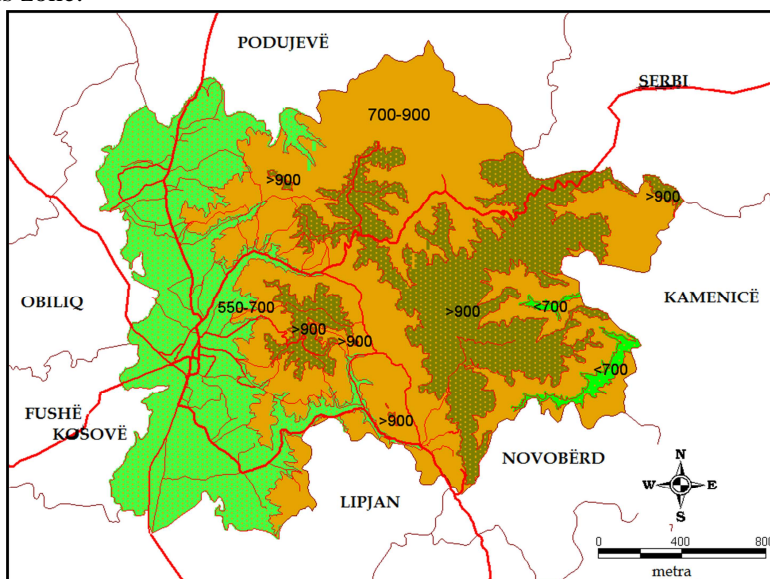
For the purpose of implementation of the planning process, in the municipality of Prishtina we can distinct two major spatial entireties, which are separated by reasonably discernible natural boundaries, which in turn can be separated into sub-zones. The territory of the Municipality of Prishtina in the overall geographic sense can be divided in two major spatial entireties:

1. Eastern Zone - hilly and mountainous, and
2. Western Zone - lowland (plain).

The boundary between these zones is situated at the meeting line of the lowland part with the hilly-mountainous part, in the north-south direction. In some cases this line penetrates through river valleys in the east, such as the Valley of Graçanica and Valley of Prishtina.

The eastern part of the Municipality of Prishtina is mainly hilly-mountainous territory with relatively large surface area. Farming and mining are predominant economic activities as a result of this hilly-mountainous terrain.

Roads in this territory are relatively passable, whereas as an exception we can take the road towards Leskovc. Relatively unfavorable natural conditions (folded landscape) and until recently impassable roads reflected in a very low population density of this municipal territory, as well as decrease in population size. The Novobërda mining settlement emerges as the local centre for this zone. However, in the functional sense this settlement is underdeveloped and with poor connections to other settlements of this zone.



Map 2. Predispositions for metropolitan development

The north-eastern part of the Municipality of Prishtina is mainly characterized by a hilly-mountainous landscape. This territory is mainly covered by forests and meadows, whereas in the economic and social aspects it is significantly lagging behind in comparison to other parts of the Municipality. Therefore, when drafting the spatial planning of the municipality in question we should offer an answer regarding the possibilities of a faster development of this part of the Municipality.

Unfortunately, no production unit has been established in this area for decades, and the lack of investments attests to this underdevelopment. Keqekolla is the centre of this zone and it integrates ten (10) surrounding settlements. It is important to emphasize that regardless of the relatively high natural birth rate, the population size in 1981 (7.200 inhabitants) remained the same as two (2) previous decades, whereas in the last decade the population size has a continuous tendency of decreasing. The population size decrease in this zone is a consequence of the evident migration of population towards the city of Prishtina and towards the lowland zone.

The majority of the population of the municipality, as well as economic and non-economic activities, infrastructure, etc., is concentrated in the western part, because of the suitable position and favorable terrain. Out of 211.156 inhabitants that the municipality of Prishtina had in 1981, 109.200 inhabitants or over 50% of its population lived in the urban zone, while two (2) decades prior this participation was only 37%.

The territory of the city of Prishtina has undergone an outstanding physical and social transformation. These changes are mostly expressed by the expansion of the urban area with new districts and the expansion of settlements surrounding the city, very often as a result of constructions without any plans in many zones of the city. Uncontrollable growth of the city brought about the disruption of the balance and the disintegration of the urban space area, as well as deterioration of the city's physiognomy, very often with spontaneous development trends and degradation of open spaces. Another problem that should be mentioned in the case of urban development of Prishtina are the barriers for further development due to the exploitation of coal and the energy - industry development in the western part, which is manifested by significant contamination of the environment, including the largest parts of the city.

Fushë Kosova with its centre in which gravitate 20 settlements stretches in southwest of the wide area of the city of Prishtina. This space area in the morphologic sense is one of the most favourable metropolitan zones, as in this zone River Drenica and River Prishtina flow into the River Sitnica. This space area is considered as one of the most favourable communications, commercial and industrial zones of Prishtina. The most important

communications lines towards Nish, Leskovc, Peja, Skopje, etc., intersect in this zone. This area is also characterized by an immense increase in population size, at around 2,5 times for every two (2) decades. The rapid growth of population in this area could not be followed even by current development plans. Therefore, the spatial organization is of considerably chaotic and irrational character. Construction of buildings outside settlements in agricultural land and along main roads gives the impression of a disintegrated and inauspicious development, but also with serious consequences for the future development (M. Kadić, 1972).

Graçanica, an important centre with its integrative area is located south of Prishtina. In the future this area will present the most important part of the metropolitan zone of Prishtina. The terrain is flat and partially corrugated, but very favourable for the further expansion of urban development of Prishtina. This will be considered as one of the most attractive and safest zones for future urban development of Prishtina. The settlement of Hajvalia is also situated in this zone, a settlement which will soon be integrated into the urban network of Prishtina. In addition, a few kilometers further down there is the water accumulation reservoir that supplies drinking water to a significant part of Prishtina.

In the west of Prishtina lies the zone of Obiliq with extremely favourable provisions for the development of agriculture. However, because of the exploitation of lignite for energy needs, this area even in the future will be considered as a source of energy for the metropolitan zone of Prishtina and beyond. Therefore, municipal and urban development plans should give a notable consideration to this fact, which as much as it is economically advantageous, is also challenging for the future metropolitan development of Prishtina.

In the territory of the municipality of Prishtina there are big differences in regards to the expansion/spreading of settlements and the population density. Lowland zones of the territory of the municipality of Prishtina and the zone around the city of Prishtina in terms of social-economic processes are under the stimulus of an intense development. This area is characterized by a high population density. According to the 1991 statistical data, lowland area of the municipality of Prishtina has a density of 2.371 residents per km², while the territory of the municipality of Prishtina around 500 residents per km².

Prishtina and its surrounding area is one of the zones with the greatest concentration of population not only in the region but also in the Republic of Kosova. Whereas, its mountainous part (Gollak) is characterized by rapid depopulation for reasons analyzed above.

Table 1. Population density by zones

Component	Low Area	Mountain Area	Total
Population size	275.000	18.517	293.517 inhabitants
Surface	116 km ²	456 km ²	571 km ²
Density	2.371 cap/km ²	40,6 cap/km ²	514 cap/km ²

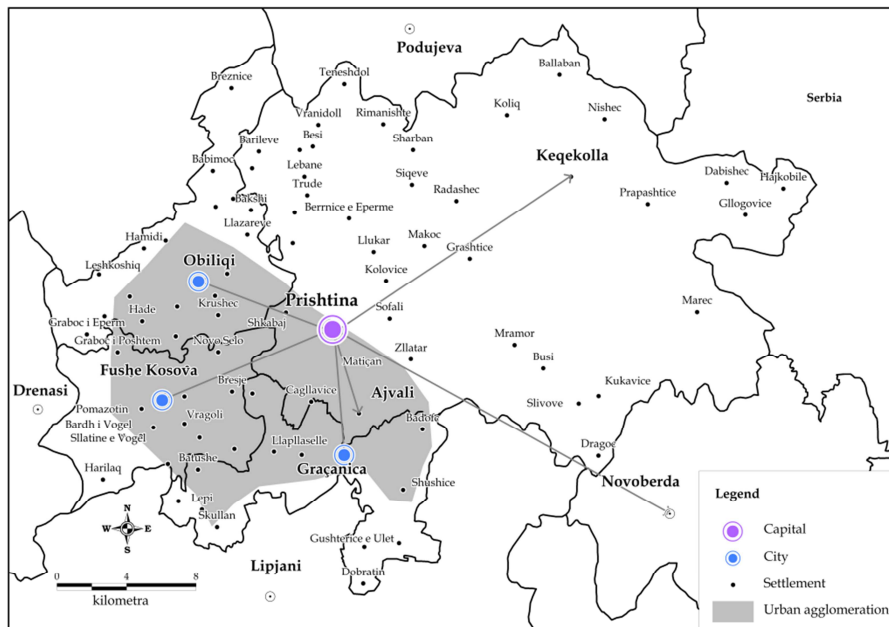
From a total of around 300.000 residents that the municipality of Prishtina counted in 1991, in 20% of its territory which is a lowland zone live around 275.000 residents or 93% of the overall population of the municipality, whereas in the hilly-mountainous zone with 456 km² or 80% of the overall territory, live around 18.517 residents or 7% of the overall municipal population.

In urban and suburban settlements of Prishtina nowadays lives over 90% of the overall population of the municipality, while the rest of the population lives in peripheral settlements with poor communications links.

With such population growth intensity (around 8.200 residents per year), the municipality of Prishtina until 2020 will have around 550.000 inhabitants, with an overall population density of 963 residents per km², while in the lowland zone the population density will reach up to around 4.500 residents per km².

Considering the territorial - spatial integration processes, it may be calculated that the Association of Municipalities of Prishtina (Prishtina, Fushë Kosova, Obiliq, Graçanica, Novoberda) in 2020 will have approximately 600.000 inhabitants, with an overall population density of 761 residents per km², while in the lowland area (agglomerative zone) with a heavy concentration of people, infrastructure and superstructure, the average density of population will reach up to around 2.400 residents per km², with quite significant differences between urban area of Prishtina and other parts of this urban agglomeration. In the last decade several mountainous zone settlements have been almost entirely abandoned.

The table shows that mountainous zones have much lower population density than the lowland zone. The population density in the lowland zone is 14 times greater than in the mountainous zone, excluding here the city of Prishtina. Whereas jointly with the city of Prishtina the population density in the lowland zone is 58 times greater than in the mountainous zone.



Map 3. Concept of metropolitan development

The average density of settlements in the municipality of Prishtina is 7,1 settlements per 100 km², but with large differences between zones. The density of settlements in mountainous zone is 4,6 settlements per 100 km², whereas in the lowland zone is 17,2 settlements per 100 km². This shows of the role that the natural factors have on the expansion of settlements and human activities in a given territory, but also of our inability for a harmonious and sustainable development.

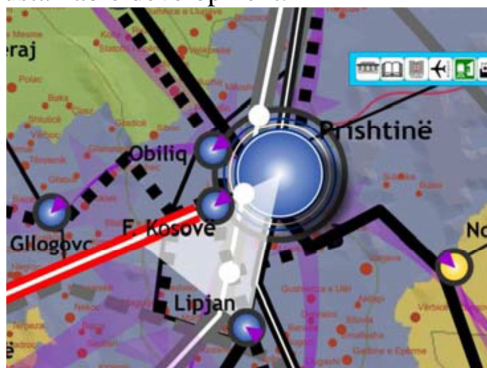


Figure 1. "Triangle Economic Development of Kosovo"

Source: Plani hapësinor i Kosovës 2010-2020+, Prishtinë, 2010, f. 137.

Finally it should be noted that in this area is also foreseen with the Spatial Plan "Triangle of Kosovo's Economic Development" as the fulcrum of development of national interest (Plani Hapësinor i Kosovës 2010-2020). This justifies the strategic development location of Pristina City as the capital of Kosovo, - governmental and diplomatic headquarters, foremost corridors of road infrastructure, railways, airlines, telecommunications and energy that extends in this area and the proximity to European corridors.

Full functioning of this complex urban system will be implemented in case of strengthening the system of road infrastructure as an important element of metropolitan development (Princ D., 2006), when Pristina City will be connected with a tram line from the city center to the railway station Fushë Kosova, while linking with other centers (Obilic, Hajvalia and Gracanica), as well as some neighborhoods in the City will be made by trolley bus network.

Settlements that are under intense influence of Pristina City (Lipjani, Drenasi, Podujeve etc..) will be integrated in the metropolitan area through developed traffic and railway.

CONCLUSION

This paper has defined the strategic development guidelines and the possibilities of utilizing natural assets. It has also defined the administrative development and regulation of the territory of the Prishtina region as a unified spatial and functional complex with a metropolitan character.

Based on the analysis of several key spatial components we have defined strategic development guidelines, the possibilities of utilizing natural assets, as well as the administrative development and regulation of the Prishtina region as a unified spatial and functional complex with a metropolitan character. From everything that was aforesaid it can be concluded that the city and the municipality of Prishtina with its spatial potential and natural assets cannot have a sustainable development as a separate and disintegrated unit, without the aforementioned settlements and surrounding municipalities, which should be integrated into the Association of Municipalities of Prishtina (Prishtina, Fushë Kosova, Obiliq, Graçanica, Novobërda). These centers are organically related to each other, and future metropolitan development of Prishtina cannot be imagined with these current barriers that weaken its viability as the capital of Kosova.

REFERENCES

1. Čerškov E., *“Oko problema komunikacije i položaja Kosovu u rimskom periodu”*,
GMK, II, Priština, 1957.
2. Kadić M., *Društveni uzroci bespravne izgradnje*, Odjek, Sarajevo, 1972.
3. Kuboviq B., *Ekonomika regjionale*, Rilindja, Prishtinë, 1979.
4. Maksimović B., *Urbanizam; Teorija prostornog planiranja i uredjenja naselja*,
Naučna knjiga, Beograd, 1986.
5. Mihajlović K., *Ciljevi regionalnog razvoja*, Ljubljana, 1968.
6. Osmani J., *Vendbanimet e Kosovës* (1), Prishtinë, 2003.
7. Perišić D., *O prostornom planiranju*, IAUS, Beograd, 1985.
8. *Plani Hapësinor i Kosovës 2010 – 2020 +*, MMPH, Prishtinë, 2010.
9. Princ D., *Urbanizam - Urbanističko planiranje*, AFSZ, Pëkthim nga Gjermanishtja,
Zagreb, 2006.
10. Šuvar S., *Od zaseoka do megalopolisa*, IDI, Zagreb, 1973.
11. Tošković D., *Metode analize i sinteze u prostornom i urbanističkom planiranju*,
IAU, Beograd, 1985.