

Urban form in diverse contexts

Editorial by Vita Žlender

Urban form expresses solidity and stability because the built environment must endure physical impacts through its material persistence, spatial logic, and historical layers. Buildings, street networks, heritage sites, and infrastructure systems have long lifespans and a constant influence on how people move, gather, feel safe, or form their identity. At the same time, urban form is or should be adaptable in the sense that spaces, policies, and uses can adjust to shifting social, cultural, and functional needs. Inflexibility in this regard may lead to unsustainable development patterns, mobility constraints, public health vulnerabilities, or heritage becoming detached from its contemporary identity. This raises a question for readers, and one that underlies the explorations in this issue of *Urbani izziv*: When does stability in urban form serve people, and when does adaptation become essential?

The articles featured in this issue approach urban form from various perspectives: sustainability, mobility, heritage, disaster response, psychological restoration, and public health. What they have in common is that they all explore how urban environments affect people – their safety, mobility, sense of identity, health, and restorative experience. The assessment of social sustainability in Kazakhstan shows how long-standing demographic patterns and uneven access to services create a stable yet unequal social geography that planning must work with rather than override. The bus terminal study in Uşak, Turkey, demonstrates how the current circulation network, established activity patterns, and the characteristics of the built environment set the conditions in which new mobility infrastructure must be positioned to function effectively. The investigation of open spaces in Malatya, Turkey, shows that places designed for leisure can accommodate various needs during crises such as earthquakes, and it highlights capacity, spatial configuration, and multifunctionality as essential to supporting both recreational and emergency roles. The article on Ljubljana and Sarajevo illustrates how the lasting imprint of modernist architects continues to shaping urban identity and thus shows that urban form's persistence can offer continuity and cultural identity. The contribution focusing on the development of an urban restorative potential scale in the Philippines reveals how people interpret various types of urban environments, demonstrating that distinct spatial and environmental qualities become restorative depending on the scene type. Finally, the short opinion article in the Presentation and Information section offers a view on urban planning from a public-health perspective to underscore that physical structures shape air, mobility, density, and exposure patterns long before policy interventions take effect.

Across all articles, cities are presented as places where stable physical structures and shifting human needs constantly interact. Urban form depends on both solidity and adaptability, and the articles in this issue contribute to the ongoing dialogue on how cities can remain grounded in their histories and physical structures while remaining flexible enough to address present and future needs.