



Sveučilište u Zagrebu
Faculty of Architecture

Safete Veliu Rexhepi

**ARCHITECTURAL ATTRIBUTES OF APARTMENT
HOUSES BUILT IN PRISTINA FROM 2000 UNTIL 2021**

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

Book 1



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Supervisor:

Assoc. prof. Kristina Careva PhD. March.

Zagreb, 2024



University of Zagreb

Arhitektonski fakultet

Safete Veliu Rexhepi

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation researches the architectural attributes of apartment houses built in Pristina from 2000 until 2021. The research problem resulted from the phenomenon of a rapid construction of numerous apartment houses during the study period, which is believed to have affected their architectural quality. The aim of the study is to analyze and assess the architectural attributes of apartment houses constructed by the private sector, in terms of design and spatial standards (function and organization), related to the sustainability of residential neighborhoods and apartment houses. The research is based on the case studies and is carried out using the qualitative method. For research purposes, a total of 24 examples are selected in Pristina, according to different periods and the occurrence of architectural morphologies and typologies. Each case study is analyzed using urban and architectural criteria set in three types of catalogues – the urban, the building and the apartment catalogue. Also, by using the method of comparison of spatial standards of apartment houses in Croatia constructed by POS, the architectural attributes of apartment houses in Pristina are assessed. Based on the analysis, examination and systematization of the collected data from case studies and the literature reviewed, recommendations for improving the architectural quality of apartment houses in Pristina are proposed. The methods used for research resulted in effectiveness as the goals of the study were achieved. This dissertation concludes that architectural attributes of apartment houses built in Pristina, in terms of function and organization, have been improved throughout the years, housing policies have impact on their architectural quality and based on the comparison of spatial standards, it is found that they meet the criteria of apartment houses in Zagreb more than moderately. The study has contributed to scientific and professional fields and opened the path for further research, which should be related to research for improving the sustainability of existing and future apartment houses.

Keywords: Apartment houses in Pristina, apartment design quality and spatial standards of apartment houses.

EXTENDED SUMMARY

Housing is a phenomenon of a symbiosis between health, well-being, social and economic aspects. The importance of housing for citizens is vital (UN-Habitat, 2014)¹, and it is an important topic in literature research. The responsible authorities globally and in Europe have continuously set norms, standards, and goals to contribute to the improvement of housing, and one of the main aims is to achieve sustainability in buildings. Urban and architectural design are significant concepts in this study, having key role in raising and improving the sustainability of buildings, and the quality of housing.

This topic deals with the apartment houses built in Pristina from 2000 to 2021. The definition of this research is related to the problem of the large number of construction of apartment houses during the past two decades, as the new millennium in Kosovo was characterized with political change. The last conflict resulted in movement of citizens from smaller towns to the capital, which increased the demand for housing. In a period of transition and economic recovery, the city of Pristina was no longer able to manage and handle the apartment houses supported by the state, which were previously a shelter model for citizens. This political, economic, and social gap was used by the developers, who swiftly started the constructions financed by the private sector. After the war, the city expanded almost twice in size, and apartment houses spread the most, which raised doubts about their architectural quality.

The main purpose of the topic is to identify the quality of architectural attributes of apartment houses built in Pristina from 2000 until 2021, which is relevant to the main question of this research, i.e. what are the architectural attributes of these buildings? Housing policies are also included on the research, where the impact of housing policies on the architectural quality of housing should be identified through research. This part of research was carried out using the qualitative study method. In addition, to assess the condition of these buildings, a comparison was made between the spatial standards of housing in Pristina and the apartment houses in Croatia built by the POS (Program društveno poticane stanogradnje; English: State subsidised housing model in Croatia), which are standards referred to as qualitative in the literature. The assessment of spatial standards of apartment houses is made using the comparison method. Various archival and bibliographic materials were used for the research. The study is

¹ Housing is the basis of stability and security for an individual or family. The center of our social, emotional and sometimes economic lives, a home should be a sanctuary—a place to live in peace, security and dignity.

specifically based on case studies, which have been analyzed using the criteria defined in the design of the catalogues in three aspects: urban, building and apartment catalogues.

The second phase of the study is mainly based on literature review, which define an apartment house as a building that contains more than one residential unit and is sometimes combined with business premises. In literature, the urban, architectural design and spatial standards have impact on improving the quality of housing, which are the main areas of this study. These topics have been researched globally, with a detailed focus on housing research in Europe.

Furthermore, the research has addressed the indicators that affect the architectural quality of apartment houses, which were used to determine the criteria for analyzing the case studies. The studied indicators are divided into two groups: housing policies and urban planning. The research begins with the review of housing policies, their development and applicability in Europe and in Kosovo. This part of research includes literature review on the impact of housing policies on housing quality, focusing on their importance in laws, regulations, etc. and in potential ways of their improvement. Most of the EU countries mainly practice housing policies developed at local level, as is the case in Kosovo, but they differ in terms of practices for maintaining and improving adequate housing. Research showed that housing policies have an important role in decent housing, and there are mechanisms for their improvement. According to recent research, the physical improvement aspect of apartment houses can be enhanced by creating symbiosis between urban planning and spatial standards defined by housing policies. Therefore, the next phase of the study deals with the correlation of urban planning and the quality of housing design. The ongoing goal of planners, urbanists and architects is to create sustainable cities, and in order to achieve the 'cities of the future' there are several elements that must be incorporated into the process, which also includes the urban design of residential neighborhoods. To achieve qualitative housing, we must apply sustainable urban design, which also has a practical impact on the spatial standards of apartment houses design. It is worth noting that proper planning enhances the urban and architectural attributes of the neighborhoods, while the inclusion of informal buildings reduces the quality of housing and increases the dissatisfaction of residents. This part of the study is concluded with the setting of urban and architectural design parameters that affect the quality of life inside these buildings, set out in housing policies and urban planning.

This dissertation topic has met some of its goals by examining and analyzing case studies. In order to assess the architectural attributes of apartment houses, the relevant studies showed that it is necessary to include the research in the urban, building and the apartment context. In this

context, three categories of catalogues have been designed. Systematization and filtering of the collected data has been carried out through the criteria defined for urban, building and apartment catalogue. Their design, namely the defined criteria were developed using the method of data collection from relevant literature for the assessment of housing. The materials which are used to define the criteria are mainly relevant to models for the assessment of these buildings used in Europe (London and Ireland), as well as the criteria used in dissertations for the assessment of the same residential morphologies (Croatia). The parameters included in the study are mainly spatial, which affect the quality of life – an important factor of sustainability. The urban catalog contains criteria that have impact on the architectural design of buildings. The urban catalog analyzes density, orientation, usability of the plot, greenery, common spaces, parking lots, distance between buildings and sunlight on the buildings. The other two catalogues, for apartment houses and for the apartments, have been compiled using spatial and content criteria in terms of their function and organization. The building analysis deals with issues of access, evacuation, communication, parking, additional services, common alcoves and orientation of the building. Residential units are analyzed more specifically, and the study includes the analysis of rooms of apartments in terms of their content, dimensioning, orientation and the way of lighting and ventilation, their organizational aspect. Analysis of the construction as an important element for organizational flexibility. The process of collection and systematization of data was carried out using analytical, comparative and digital methods.

As mentioned above, this study is based on case studies in Pristina, and in order to have a reliable way of analyzing the examples, a review of development of apartment houses was first carried out. This phase of study briefly describes the apartment houses built before the 1999 conflict. Furthermore, the expansion of the constructions in the city during the study period emphasize the impact of the plans designed for residential neighborhoods within the urban area, as well as the impact of uncontrolled constructions, which affected the urban quality and gave the city the epithet of a 'chaotic city'. Further research also includes the impact of the law on the development of new concepts of housing construction in the city, where the development of the relevant laws and regulations is specifically described. This chapter concludes with research on the spatial standards of housing, with special emphasis on the research of the Minimum Technical Standards for Residential Building in Condominium (MSTRBC).

In addition to researching the urban and legislative issues of Pristina, the following research identifies the characteristics of the apartment houses in terms of their architecture. In the absence of data, the research includes a cartographic study over the years that has documented

the spread of buildings in the city, according to official records from the relevant institutions. One of the objectives of the topic that has resulted in the selection of case studies has to do with the morphology and typology of apartment houses. The definition of the morphology and typology of apartment houses was carried out using the data collected from field study, and the categorization list is made referring to the typologies of apartment houses defined by Faculty of Architecture in Zagreb, Croatia. Founded apartments house morphologies are: urban villa, slab, tower, stepped block, complex shape block and open block. While apartment house typologies are: 3, 4 and 5 or more apartments per staircase, gallery and central corridor typology (Delić, 2024). In order to have a more accurate selection, the division according to the study periods was also made, which it based on the legal changes that took place from 2000 to 2021. After analyzing this material, four criteria were set out for the selection of case studies, which are: occurrence of the buildings depending on the morphology, division of periods of time, availability of materials and professional reflection. In line with the criteria set for the study, the case studies were defined, 24 examples were selected and included 136 apartment types in different neighborhoods of Pristina within the urban area, which include examples of the two most widespread morphological types in Pristina (complex shape block and slab) for each study period.

After designing the catalogues and selecting case studies, the data for the research have been collected. It provides the description of each example of the study from the data gathered in catalogues, which are illustrated with photographs, drawings and plans of characteristic floors. After the examination and analysis of data collected from the preliminary study, the discussion of results is described, which analyzes the data according to the divisions of the periods of time. The results obtained from the analysis of urban parameters showed that in Pristina there has been an enhancement of urban parameters. Even in analyzing the architectural attributes of apartment houses, 85% of the analyzed parameters have improved over the years, while 15% of the parameters have not changed. From the analysis of spatial parameters of the apartments the types of dwellings have been identified. Also, this study has shown that apartments in Pristina during the studied period increased in surface area, but when it comes to organizational and functional aspect (orientation and function of apartment) from 2016 until 2021, the results show less satisfactory apartments than in other periods of time.

From the above study, the first two objectives of the dissertation have been achieved. On the other hand, in order to assess the state of the selected examples, the comparison method has been applied, and the data collected for evaluation of architectural attributes of apartment

houses in Pristina have been compared with the spatial standards determined according to the POS regulation in Croatia. This comparison was carried out because according to the literature, buildings designed with POS regulation have been assessed qualitatively in terms of layout. Also, there are similarities of circumstances between the two countries used for comparison, as both were part of the SFRY, leaving behind the similarities of constructions of apartment houses and both countries went through a period of transition and economic recovery.

The study gathered the catalogues of case studies, it defined their morphological types, it filled a part of the gap of literature and it defined recommendations for improving the quality of the design of apartment houses in Pristina, providing a professional and scientific contribution. Research concludes that the architectural attributes of apartment houses in Pristina built from 2000 to 2021 were continuously enhanced and were assessed as partially satisfactory in terms of spatial standards analyzed from a functional and organizational point of view. Six morphologies of apartment houses were categorized, and the most common type of dwelling is the three-bedroom apartment. The studied urban parameters in most cases turned out to be continuously improved as well. The continuous improvement of apartment houses over the years, based on research, has taken place thanks to legal changes (law enforcement, improvement of regulations, improvement of housing policies), which validates the hypothesis that housing policies have an impact on the architectural quality of housing. The applied research methodology meets the objectives of the topic, answers all the research questions, validates the hypotheses, and enables new perspectives for further study.

