Aspect 1: the relation between the research and the design - The main research question of this graduation project is ‘How can spatial design interventions, aimed at accommodating the social environment and increasing the public domain, foster post-conflict Dodona’s transition to a livable place? The question is divided into sub questions that individually answer elements of the main question. Questions on post-conflict transition, public life and social environment characteristics, what a livable place is and what design in the public domain do we need. All questions intend to include or focus direct on the local context of Kosovo.

I started with a literature study on public life and parallel on post-conflict situations. This combination of understanding both slowed down the projects process. Both are extensive parts of research and involve various other domains, like social environment, economy, history, culture, institutional and international systems. The lack of data and maps are increasing the need for self-organization. In order to clear minds and gain more direct knowledge several shorter and longer trips were made. Interviews with various stakeholders, researchers and professionals slowly made the story. The story of conflict related places is often a complex one, not even mentioning the process of urban development. Fig. 1. shows the profound urban fabric change of Dodona neighborhood which indicates so many other issues and conflicts on architectural, construction, infrastructure and environmental level which could not all be answered.

By a literature review, other research documentation, personal observations and some of local professionals and stakeholders I found the challenges in designing renewed public life in Dodona but in general all neighborhoods of Prishtina. Then I returned to Prishtina for 2,5 months to do the fieldwork and interviewing. An extensive part of the research and aim is about the public domain and social environment, but particularly gaining local knowledge on situations and absorbing specifics of post-conflict in the local context. In collaboration with urban research company: PRO Planning and the office for Urban Regeneration and Kosovo’s Architecture Foundation new networks gave me access to the situation in depth and made it possible to closely absorb the neighborhood.

The design development through the research started to evolve. A list of challenges need to be tackled through the design from the research perspective. Besides that, the mind of the individual designer and with that specific aims and ideals chanced the direction of the design somehow. The urban feeling and sense of the problems opened up new parts of the neighborhood: the history of public life in the oppressed period in ‘90s, the uniqueness of the self-organization and the rich street profiles that were created and the entrepreneurial and open characteristics of the population. The design became more than just the development of a better street or square it got a sense of activism and with that statements about planning questions, state-community relations, self-organization and richness of all places in the world despite its location and economical state.

The design now, is growing towards a network larger than the neighborhood itself on one side which increases triangulation and crossings of various groups and on the other side can give answers on the smallest scales, the relation with your neighbor about sharing front yard spaces for optimal outcomes in the public domain. New public places form eventually a larger network and are increasing the public-private communication, but most important growing the sense of the public realm: spending time outside and increasing the social environment.

Aspect 2; the relationship between the project and the wider social context - The topic of this graduation project is nowadays gaining importance. Various organizations and institutions are putting pressure on the essentials of urban environments with global research on intrinsic values of cities. In these research projects the social dimension of rebuilding after a civil strife or conflict is pointed as important but neglected in significantly. This project is inspired by the general interest in various urban environments and backgrounds.
of society and their urban print in cities. Kosovo got within my vision and focus due to its very unique circumstances and limited time passed since the conflict. It could show through research its situations as a post-conflict place within the European context, which we know generally of the state planned reconstruction of for example Rotterdam as post-conflict rebuilding process. The main context I refer to is the overall situation of urban environments described as urban areas in transition accelerated by a conflict. More and more places (fig.2) will reach the point of post-conflict periods and the challenges that it brings.

Much written about post-conflict, rebuilding its physical, etc. but practical urban ideas about small improvements/strategic designs and integrated plans are not much developed yet. Therefore, I think that the project really contributes to the wider social context of sustainable renewal and livability of post-war development processes. However, this project needs some more in-depth research and testing to really understand the impact of the solutions and the design. Besides that, the project leaves areas untouched within the social environment like social housing and organizational activities in the community building and social studies area. The design and the project is focusing firstly on the spatial requirements of places and the search for these within the conflicted urban fabric and besides that using public life study’s physical indicators that have been researched on their social impact in an urban environment. The Priority concept of minimum-desired-maximum intervention levels tries to really touch the necessary and basic needs of public life first. It works as system on multiple levels in order to enhance public life.

The project uses Prishtina as a case study in the topics of post-conflict development and public life, and the approach of the socio-spatial common ground analysis is tested. Improvements are in the understanding of local uses of the public places and life. This needs a more in-depth and larger survey in order to know their feelings and uses of the public domain besides observations. Second, design interventions proposed here are tailor made, these are a combination of creative thinking with knowledge of general public life design examples, needs and evaluations of the local population, general UN-habitat principles on public spaces and streets but not from other designs elsewhere in which post-conflict processes were tackled.

In general, the aim of the project: creating a socio-spatial common ground and a renewed public domain could be tested elsewhere. The case of Dodona, is not unique as a post-conflict development process. However, the design interventions are very specific to the local context and challenges. The vision and idea on the other hand are more general for post-conflict situations.

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fig. 1 Dodona Development

fig. 2 Wars of the world since 1945