



## DEMOCRACY AND PUBLIC SPACES

By Robert Špaček, Ján Legény

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The emergence of democracy and of the first public space - Agora dates back to the ancient Greece. Urban environment is an essential attribute of development of cultures and civilizations. It concentrates the nature of environment, history, people's mentality and affects the way and quality of life of inhabitants. Public spaces have played and will always play an important role in the life of every society by providing the place for revolutions, executions, control of the masses (by barricades, cameras, through their layouts) and for the demonstration of political and economic power. In general, democracy in relation to public spaces implies the *equality of access and approach* on grounds of age, physical predisposition, sex, wealth and faith. It represents the freedom of movement (with minimum of prohibitions), safety, environmental friendliness and an opportunity to explore new "secrets" of public spaces. The city with its public spaces has to be open and amiable for everybody. Foucault said that the 20th century was the century of space. We would be pleased if we could entitle the 21st century THE CENTURY OF PUBLIC SPACES

The contribution tries to answer the two basic questions - *what* represents the public spaces and *who* constitutes them? In this respect, the authors introduce the spatial interpretation of Wilhelm Landzettel.

The authors clarify these aspects by many examples of historical periods (antiquity, middle age, period of the monarchy until the recent past) and examples from different countries. Public spaces are changing and are

closely linked to political regimes. The relation between totality and democracy is the best example. Monumentality characterizes both of them. Mainly, it is the attribute of the "Cult of Faith" (Parthenon), the "Cult of Man" (Hitler's Zeppelinfeld), the "ostentatious architecture" (Koolhaas's *Bigness (or the problem of Large)* or of the "military force" (Pentagon). An architect, as the creator, plays a key role in the issue of public spaces. One can mention the Haussmann's renovation of Paris, projects of Albert Speer for German Führer or the Gottwald Square in Bratislava.

Public spaces are primarily intended for people and inhabitants need to be involved. In this context, the Greek term *politeia* can be used. It represents the "*conditions and rights of citizens or citizenship*" in analogy with the Latin *civitas*. As actors in the public spaces we need to acquire "*civic virtues*".



## AN ARCHITECT AND URBAN PUBLIC SPACE

By Bohumil Kováč

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The topic of public space has become an interdisciplinary topic as well as a public matter. Different participants in discussions and decision making processes on public space have different expectations. The topic of public space has its historical development and interdisciplinary intersection. The urban planning and design relations of the topic are indisputable. In this respect, the question of what is the historic, current and future position and role of an architect in the decision making process as for public spaces is quite natural. The legislative definition of the term *public space* appears to be a problem especially if we would like to derive professional competences from the definition.



## THE PUBLIC SPACES METHODS ASSESSMENT

THE SELECTED SQUARES ANALYSES IN BRATISLAVA

By Lubica Vítková

The article deals with the complex of public spaces assessment methods, which focus to the complex or overall evaluation of public space quality, as well as methods which focus to evaluation of partial aspects of public space's quality. The article addresses theoretical as well as practical aspects of application of the monitored methods applied in real conditions of selected cities in foreign countries. The article is mainly focused to the methods that evaluate the quality and functionality of the complex of public spaces within a city as a whole or within a part of the city.

The article presents the applied research that was realized at the Faculty of Architecture, Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava in cooperation and by support of the Bratislava Municipality and the office of the Main Architect of Bratislava. The research, in its first stage, was oriented to the system of node areas and their assessment within the Bratislava urban structure. The node areas were considered as natural epicenters of individual city districts and/or neighborhoods. The presented article follows these public spaces as a system and evaluates their functionality or dis-functionality in the frame of the city as a whole.

The article, at the same time, presents the results of detailed analysis focusing to the node areas like e.g. squares of the central city zone. The authors of the research focused their attention to relations between the morphology, spatial types, character of the spaces – ergo their spatial quality, as well as their operation and functional uses, and facilities they provide. The authors observed the relationship between the mentioned

spatial aspects and the character of their use, from the point of view of intensity and quality of public life. At the same time, the basic review of functional surfaces and capacity of the surrounding urban area was processed. In the research, the evaluation of problems, drawbacks, threats as well as potentials of the researched squares was paid special attention. The authors especially focused to all kinds of barriers which restrain to provide richer and more intensive social life in the squares of the central zone of the city of Bratislava.

Teachers and students of the Faculty of Architecture were involved in the research. The realized analyses represent the basis for the potential of evaluated spaces. Recommendations for the process of transformation and revitalization represent the main outcome.



## HISTORIC GARDEN AS PUBLIC SPACE (?)

By Miriam Heinrichová, Tamara Reháčková, Ivan Stankoci

The status of public spaces in a city, their importance, function and facilities they provide, belong to the today's most discussed themes by professionals and non-professionals. Public spaces can be defined as open free spaces which are available to the public regardless of gender, race, religion etc. Especially in urban areas, the public green spaces like parks, public gardens and other green areas play an important role in the city. The problem is that this group of public areas doesn't grow proportionately with urban development. Buildings have become more concentrated in any city structure, often at the expense of green areas. The result is that the existing green areas are too small to cope with the increasing volume and demand of citizens in the case of recreation, resulting in degradation of green areas. Green areas suffer because of urban development and as they are adapted to suit new functions, such as children playgrounds and cafés. Especially the application of this trend in historic gardens is particularly questionable.

Our paper is addressed to this specific type of greenery - historic gardens. These areas, protected as historical monuments, are usually owned by the state or municipalities and also used as public spaces for different kinds of activities. In theory there is nothing wrong with this way of use but historic garden should not substitute the role of urban parks and it is only a logical consequence of the lack of new public and recreational areas in cities. In the case of historic gardens, this trend may cause their degradation by introduction of unsuitable elements

and inappropriate activities. It implies the conflict between public interest, heritage protection and municipal policy. Public prefer to have adequate and quality recreation spaces in the city and for them it doesn't matter where. Municipalities want to be open to public needs; the problem is that there are not enough open spaces for activities that would cover the public demand.

Municipalities then sacrifice historically protected areas for almost all public activities. Case studies show that many activities in today's historic gardens are contrary to the Charter of Florence and the Act no. 49/2002 as regards the protection of monuments, which are binding for the Slovak Republic.



## VALUE APPRAISAL OF A SQUARE PROJECT MOJENAMĚSTI.COM

By Pavla Kílňarová, Ivana Lelkes,  
Kristián Škoda

Our society is constantly changing. Regardless, if this development is considered a progress or decay, it has a significant impact on all fields of human activities, including the forming of public spaces. Changing needs of the society influence also the way of using the interspaces between the buildings. However, the new functions are not always compatible with the existing urban structure of towns.

Public spaces are alive. They are not represented only by the volume structure, but they also involve all the life that pours through the streets and flourishes on squares. Every event – cultural happening, political meeting – leave an imprint in the history of that place and contribute to creation of its character and ambience. Houses are alive, too. They are growing, ageing and changing their appearance with the passing time or they get replaced by the new ones. It is a natural process causing the constant evolution of public spaces.

Decision making in the context of the future of public spaces is a responsible task, as it has a long-term impact on the life of a wide group of public and eliminating mistakes is usually rather expensive. As an example serve the public spaces within the built-up area from the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that do not fulfil the present requirements anymore. Those spaces have their historic value and reflect their period. To make the right decision about their future form, it is inevitable

to analyse not only their current problems but also their values.

The presented methods for value appraisal of a square are complex, including multi-criteria evaluation (by architects and urban planners), evaluation of real activities (by sociologists) and public surveys (providing the opinion of users of the square), can facilitate the specification of problems and values. A common discussion of professionals, municipalities and public are the right way for problem solving. Communication and finding an agreement is after all the elementary privilege of human society.



## BRATISLAVA – PUBLIC RIVER SPACES

Tomáš Hanáček

We expect four two different scales in the waterfront environment assessment in the urban structure (XL, L, M, S). The interdisciplinary research in the Bratislava public space potential, problems and individual quality help us improve the conceptual development coordination. In the complex land-use planning process, however, it is also necessary to know everyday residents and visitors requirements to the site and the local community. The concept of participatory planning method of URBAN WALK aims at mapping of the small-scale urban structure (S-scale). The knowledge of human needs, a research of their activities in the space and time, as well as uncovering of the historical context and the space predisposition are some of main results of this method.

The problematic aspects of the waterfront regeneration illustrate the current status of the Danube waterfront area in the middle urban scale. The built-up aspect compares two waterfront sectors walkability in the historical city centre. The fragmentation of Bratislava blue-field area into segments, sectors and zones is based on a pedestrian walking net and the main public spaces. The comparison of the active waterfront line from Vienna, Bratislava to Budapest refers to the waterfront potential and an opportunity to create a base urban identity and to create a progress of the whole city (L- scale) and Danube region (XL- scale).

The unexploited blue-field areas inside the city centres require



## PUBLIC AND PUBLIC SPACES

By Zora Pauliniová

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appropriate public attention. They have a potential to restart social and economic city development. The regeneration of such process increases the rate of collective knowledge and creates the new specific solutions for the urban environment and its inhabitants.

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Many cities in Slovakia use instead of strategic planning the tactics of everyday struggle with problems. They create thus a space for civic initiatives and associations and with their ideas of how to solve the problems. Although an appropriate usage of the potential of civic initiatives and associations would bring benefits for all concerned parties, the local government is not able yet to respond to the changing roles of the actors present in the process of urban development. A useful instrument for involving people and organizations in the process of decision-making is the participatory planning.

Evolving of civil society and empowerment of communities can be seen in various areas. This visible input of citizens and professionals in the sphere of development and urban planning has several common features. Citizens (represented by civil initiatives, as well as professional associations) engage in favour of rescuing and revitalizing public spaces, they start and participate in discourse about public spaces and the development of the city as such, and bring new concepts, analyses, policies and solutions. Among other reasons, as they are personally affected by the local government decisions, it is the above mentioned commitment and professionalism which qualify them as important actors in urban planning. A great tool for this purpose is participatory planning. Planning that involves the public is gradually changing, becoming more complex, expanding its range of tools, addressing a wider range of stakeholders and striking diverse goals.

Experience from Bratislava show that it is not sufficient to claim public space and promote changes in it, but the very nature of these changes should be negotiated downwards and upwards. Steps for public involvement in decision-making are not difficult – we need to identify stakeholders and communicate with the interested public, to map sensitive and important topic, and then begin to discuss and negotiate. Such processes are not the shortest ones, but everybody involved can be the winner.

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## DATA FOR BETTER BRATISLAVA CITY

UTILISATION OF PORTAL DATA – ODKAZPRESTAROSTU.SK

By Mária Žuffová

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Online urban mapping executed by its inhabitants could contribute significantly to creating better evidence-based urban policies. The reason behind is that the inhabitants as daily users of the city identify their needs in the city most accurately. The municipality should take their opinions into consideration as they are its only clients. The main aim of this article is to present online mapping by inhabitants and demonstrate under what circumstances this kind of mapping could be beneficial for the municipality. For this purpose the article uses an example of the municipality Capital City – Bratislava, the area of the Old Town, and data from the portal odkazprestarostu.sk, which is an online mapping portal available for inhabitants and municipalities free of charge.

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