

# Assessing the Idle Downtown Elements: Case of Trg Nezavisnosti Square

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## Abstract

The main city square, Trg Nezavisnosti, in Podgorica is a relatively young square formed as a part of the new city "Nova Varoš". Its turbulent history of existence is anticipated from the initial placement of a central square distanced from public social events. With several changes in design and outlook over a short period, the square still fails to fit within the general urban image. Besides not being recognized as the central point, citizens do not identify with it in the current state. This paper offers an overview of the square development through an analysis of the social background of each affected period. Through the analysis of unsuccessful attempts at construction and reconstruction, we can sense a much deeper problem that transcends just the physical forms and boundaries. Chains of events and urbanistic decisions that lacked more profound research provided temporary solutions that could not grow old within the city and community. In the transitional period, this place shares the destiny with many others, as decentralization and the fast pace of new urban dwellings make it hard to find a single central point. This research explores more layers of societal problems that physically and visually manifested in the example of the main square in this capital city.

## Keywords

square, society, urban development, downtown, Podgorica

## 1 Introduction

At first glance, architecture seems to be an evident example of a public good. The aesthetic appeal of the building is accessible to anybody regardless of the payment (Hough and Kratz, 1983). Unfortunately, not many proposals have dealt with the quality of architecture in general. This way, we are partially denied access to quality planning, and our way of living is affected by it. In our immediate environment, we are getting buildings that do not belong where in their place, with the excuse that it is what society needs (Čeferin, 2010). This approach is directly connected to politics, as theorists are separated in opinions if the architecture plays a role in society. Tafuri (1979) claims that the question is not how to change social reality for the better in the time of global capitalism but if it is possible at all to start a truthful change.

These forms leave behind neither monuments nor stories and hardly any memories to enter history. Lack of power does not mean a lack of public institutions but signifies their weakness. The public sphere will be predominantly determined by market logic, the interest of political

parties, and other partial influences that do not serve community interests (Arendt, 1998).

Being between what is right and what is needed, architecture often does not develop the feeling of belonging in the context of location. These problems occur worldwide, regardless of the region's size or status. This paper analyzes the development of Trg Nezavisnosti over the last century to the present day.

### 1.1 The feeling of things

The inspiration for the analysis came from the book *The Feeling of Things* (Caruso, 2008), which says that bold contemporary profiles strive to generate completely original forms either in a plan or section, sometimes both. Lacking the complexity and ambiguity inherent in the tradition of architectural form, these profiles quickly lose shine and novelty. However, they are also not old enough or ordinary to become part of the urban background. Caruso calls this phenomenon the *inability to grow old*. Talking about architecture projects, he reflects on form and the

profound new ways to connect matter and energy. Place, material, energy, and memory motivate Zumthor (1999), counting that the design is found in a specific place and becomes part of the environment. In his book "Feeling of history", he describes the project as a wish to create a sense of history without using nonexistent motifs and exaggerated materials (Zumthor and Lending, 2018). This way, his work can be loved, discovered, abandoned, and even hated. All in all, it will be alive in the broadest sense.

If it turns out that the project does not fit into the given place or it cannot grow old, who is to blame for that situation? Over time, the architect's role in a broader sense got mitigated, and various power holders influenced architecture outcomes. Market, socio-political situations, and technological development shaped architecture more than ever. Some of the earliest written knowledge of the duties of architects came from Vitruvius (1960), who described the architect as someone equipped with knowledge from many branches of study and different types of learning, saying that this knowledge is a child of practice and theory. Caruso (2008) now disagrees with this claim, rejecting the idea of erudition and the architect as a connoisseur today. Two claims are logically opposite because of the time difference of two millennia and the progress of society, technology, and politics. Although each project has the signature of the responsible designer, there is no record that the responsible person was responsible even when he had something to do, which pointed to business partners rather than the profession (Markuš, 2001).

## 2 Urban development and shift of the city center

Urban environments as created spaces are pure expressions and physical manifestations of the transformation of socio-spatial processes that occur on many articulated geographic scales (Swyngedouw et al., 2002). While Montenegro is still in the transition period, this capital city was mostly affected during history. The country has a "Podgorization" regarding the "concentration of money and power in the capitals". In other words, the development was urban-centric and monocentric (Vujović, 2018).

After five centuries under the Ottoman Empire, Montenegro became an independent state in the Berlin Congress in 1878. The previous core in Podgorica, oldtown "Stara Varoš", placed beside the riverbanks of Ribnica and Morača, had a particular identity shaped by the Ottoman culture. Meandering streets and family houses with inner gardens characterised the architecture. Development of the

new urban area of Nova (Mirkova) Varoš began in 1886. On the right side of the river Ribnica. Vukićević (2020) states that the new orthogonal urban matrix seemed reasonable and appealing to citizens and leaders, while not fully justified, as the construction technique did not significantly differ from the one applied in oldtown for centuries (Fig. 1).

The relationship between society and architecture conceptualizes in various ways. Many histories assert that politicians devised all-encompassing housing, work, and leisure programs that were 'concretized' by architects in their designs (Avermaete, 2018). In these narratives, architecture appears as a passive portrayer of political ideas, a mute accommodator of social and political programs. Regarding this, Vukićević (2020) concludes that the deflection from urban-morphological patterns that were valid during the Ottoman administration was nevertheless radical. He sees it as an ideological deviation, manifested in the formal level (urban planning and architecture), but whose root undoubtedly was in the political level. On the other side (Bergdoll, 1994) sees the importance of creating new additional elements based on the past. He claims history never replicated previous history, and if it did, it would be irrelevant. The only act that counts as historical provides a new element that can build a new tale and thread that can be picked up again.

In the following years, there were no significant changes in Podgorica and the central square. Many multi-story public institutions were built, as well as hospitality facilities. Wanting to be closer to the European standards, many stores and facilities are built in neoclassicist style and given internationally recognizable names (Hotel "Europe", Hotel "Moscow", Hotel "Imperial").



Fig. 1 Mirkov square in 1923, today Independence square (Bjeladinović; 1923)

### 3 Rebirth and search for new values

Podgorica, back then called Titograd, was bombed multiple times during World War II, with almost 60% of its construction stock destroyed and 96% of its buildings damaged. Specific socio-political and historical context shaped Mirkova Varoš, which set up a foundation for the cultural and urban identity of contemporary Podgorica (Perović and Bajić Šestović, 2019). The monograph of Titograd Šabović (Titograd Monografija ,1958b) gives a statement: "On the ruins of old Podgorica, a new Titograd is emerging as a historical monument of the triumph of freedom and socialism in our country". After the war, the reconstruction and construction rebegan on political and ideological grounds. Vukićević (2020) argues that then-progressive visions of the socialist city had no place for the relics of the past, for the "undesirable" remains of old Podgorica. The architecture of Podgorica, created during the first decade of post-war reconstruction, has not been the subject of extensive research to date (Ašanin, 2016).

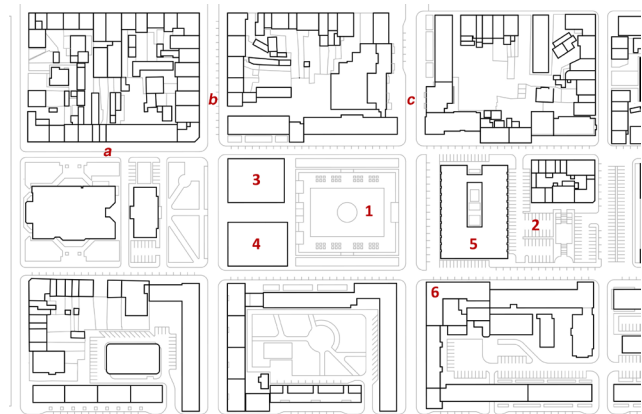
Our spatial behavior is formed and determined by the places around us, which is an essential aspect of our social existence (Madanipour, 1999). As a result, we comprehend space and spatial interactions the same way we understand the other components of our social lives.

#### 3.1 Innovative ideas offered by competitions

At the end of 1960s, Ivan Milutinović Square (today Trg Nezavisnosti square) seemed like a rather inharmonious combination of the remains of the pre-war town and new buildings. This structure could hardly represent the ambitious vision of fundamental modernization based on the first-prized competition solution from 1957 by Milorad Knežević and Petar Muličkovski (Ašanin, 2020). Since the 1950s, there have been four competitions to redesign Trg Nezavisnosti Square. Current structure of square consists of mixed residential, administrative and cultural facilities (Fig. 2).

New architecture still did not offer familiar places and genuine meeting spaces, as new competition happened in 1971, with the winning entry from architects Milorad Vukotić, Vasilije Đurović, Slobodan Slovinčić and technician Budmila Stanić (Ašanin, 2020).

Although different from the original, the Detailed Urban Plan (DUP) developed from the proposed design significantly but reasonably changed. Originality and socio-cultural programmes that the plan strived for did, and since the 1970s square has predominantly served as a parking lot (Fig. 1). In the interview for the portal Vijesti (2020), Ašanin (2020) described this state of space as forbidden



**Fig. 2** (1) Trg Nezavisnosti square; (2) Balšića square; (3) National Library "Radosav Ljumović"; (4) City Hall; (5) Former department store "BEKO"; (6) Former department store "Podgoričanka"; (a) Njegoševa street; (b) Njegoševa street; (c) Slobode street (Popović, 2022)

for any activity. He further argues that a then citizen was content with shopping in two leading town department stores, "BEKO" and "Podgoričanka", parking his car nearby and that this represented the fullness of public life expected from the square (Figs. 3 and 4).

Vukićević (2022) describes BEKO as a socialist representation of consumerism and a modernist, highly functional building, which was not built to be a department store, but a kind of shopping center. He says the so-called consumerism culture occurred in honor of the fact that in the late sixties and early seventies of the last century, the economic power of the average ex-Yugoslavian socialist citizen began to proliferate. However, we should remember that commercial space has always integrated into public space and vice versa (Lees, 1994).

#### 4 Transition period of frequent changes and decisions

The second last competition for the square redesign occurred in 2002 when first place was awarded to the architecture studio ARCVS, with Branislav Redžić as the principal architect. There is no publicly accessible information on why the solution was not applied. The knowledge of established architects, professors, and science doctors ends up on the table of another architect who either did not succeed in that competition or did not participate. This situation even happens when the competition reaches the final stage, a detailed urban plan. Markuš (2001) states that everything falls before the pre-selected architect-tradesman, which is only the first step because the process of realization also shares the fate of the design. The current square lookout has existed since 2006. As an individual architectural project by architect Mladen Đurović, free





**Fig. 3** Department store "Beograđanka" (later "Podgoričanka"), late 1950s (Titograd Monografija, 1958a)



**Fig. 4** Square serving as a parking lot where people parked cars while shopping in stores "BEKO" (left) and "Beograđanka" (middle), around 1970 (Fatić, 2015)

from any solution from the past (Fig. 5). In the meantime, final renovation of the pavement occurred in 2016, when works on the City Hall building finished (Table 1).

#### 4.1 Inclusion of the society

Many architects and planners want to believe in the power of design to alter social and political life. The spirit of architectural determinism has survived (Lees, 1994). Since none of the competitions got fully executed, it is worth questioning their vast importance for the role of community. A study of design competitions reveals their contribution to the shaping of culture. Two ways manifest: physical and material – by constructing the heritage of tomorrow, and immaterial and intellectual – by building knowledge and culture (Chupin et al., 2015). Bern (2018) asserts that there is a need to comprehend the architectural competition in terms of its inner workings and how it fits into a larger sociopolitical environment. He further states that in the context of this neoliberal entrepreneurial



**Fig. 5** Current look of the square (Rabrenović, 2022)

**Table 1** Timeline of the square development

Year	Project type	Status
1957	Competition	Partial realization
1971	Competition	Partial realization
2002	Competition	Unrealized
2006	Design project	Realized
2016	Reconstruction	Realized
2020	Competition	Unrealized

planning process, it is evident that competition provides no democratic opportunity in a system with existing democratic deficits. The competition's democracy is, at best, a democracy solely among architects.

Public squares are fundamental features of cities, which constitute the main social areas. Square is essential for expressing democratic rights and claims in a modern democracy (Mehan, 2016). In today's urban planning, there is a practice of excluding the public in making decisions about the city. There is a growing lack of analyses and studies on the potential effect of some urban interventions (Doderović and Ivanović, 2018). On July 10, 2020, the capital Podgorica announced the international, general, one-stage, and anonymous competition for the conceptual urban-architectural solution of the Independence Square in Podgorica. In the interview for the portal "Kombinat" (Čađenović, 2020), Ašanin (2020) brings up the problematic lack of public inclusion, as the discussion of users' needs occurs only declaratively. He states that the brief described the history of the square quite shortly, while the announcer did not even conduct a public survey. The central square was treated as isolated within the city fabric as if it were not an organic part of it.

#### 4.2 Community voice, feedback, and petition

Although the municipal government praised the winning solution, the citizens did not accept it as adequate. They stated negative opinions through social networks and public media (Vijesti, 2020), followed by caricatures of the redesigned square. The refusal of this brand-new image mainly came from the unusual shapes and elements, as the new water surface and raised corners on Slobode street would reduce the possibility of a gathering on a bigger scale. Cities bring together differences; strangers need a center and place to connect and communicate. However, the mere existence of this center is insufficient to establish an urban polity (Sennet, 1998).

Capital City Podgorica did organize Press Conference for the public, but this event happened after the winner's announcement, only when citizens could ask questions about the existing proposals. The city mayor justified the solution ideal for the regeneration of the center, the opening of new working places, and efficient execution through public-private procurement (Capital City Podgorica, 2020). At the same conference, part of the jury described the solution as contemporary with overall accessibility, rationality, aesthetics, and function. However, consulting company "Fidelity Consulting" from Podgorica created a petition against the announced reconstruction. More than 5500 citizens have signed it, with over 3800 of them during the first day (Change.org, 2020). Today, urban projects and plans are made with or without appropriate analyses, which in any case can have an impact on the functionality of the project, the degree of its integration into the existing environment, as well as several other significant elements of acceptability in the urban environment (Doderović and Ivanović, 2018). However, investing in a civically significant public place requires more than artistic design. History, public memory, and political legitimacy play a role (Lees, 1994). The most successful public places have numerous identities and significant symbolic power, typically gained at a high cost. Coming back to the inspiration of this analysis, Caruso (2008) explains that radical developments have never emerged from tabula rasa but have always worked from a deep engagement with the architectural culture. With the latest design of the square (Fig. 6), the architectural approach seems unprecedented, with no reflection on the past of the square identity. It introduces an entirely new design but does not carry the feeling of the previous spaces and events. This indifference to the past is one of the possible reasons the winning entry did not get society's approval.



Fig. 6 Suggestion of the new recognizable symbol of Capital City Podgorica (Capital City Podgorica, 2020)

#### 5 Methodology

Trg Nezavisnosti square is in the middle of the orthogonal grid of the New Town settlement. This regularity of the layout and distribution of street and buildings does not seem problematic at first glance. Issues mentioned in this research require a sensitive methodology that focuses on the parts of the overall problem. The New Urbanism tool set, notably Christopher Alexander's pattern language, was chosen to test how well it works and to give a framework for the examination of the downtowns built environment.

##### 5.1 The tool set of the New Urbanism

Alexander was explicit in his view of the city as the consequence of a generating process – or, more correctly, numerous, nested generative processes – and thus the patterns and pattern languages are all presented in ways that give the theories human agency. Alexander's theories are not analytical instruments for testing the outcomes of design processes that occur in a distinct realm of thinking or a different type of professional activity – they constitute the foundation for action, design, and building. He worked almost simultaneously with Bill Hillier, who originated space syntax, so their strategies (using mathematical concepts to describe the built environment) are very close (Davis and Griffiths, 2022). They, along with Jane Jacobs, William Whyte, Stanford Anderson, and others, contributed to a viewpoint that regarded post-war urban decline and the difficulties of urban modernism as opportunities to learn more about how the urban built environment may support human existence and society in a positive way.

Pattern language is a system Christopher Alexander explains in his book "A pattern language" (Alexander et al., 1977). The book contains 253 patterns that can be worked through to improve towns and neighborhoods. The patterns are organized hierarchically, from regions, towns, buildings, and construction. Author points out that, regardless of how refined, no pattern is isolated and that they should connect to produce the beauty and the power of the language. Each solution is stated in such a way that it provides the essential field of relationships required to solve the problem. This general and abstract way allows approaching the research by adapting it to the specific local preferences.

Mándoki (2019) utilized this methodology by firstly choosing the initial design problem, secondly choosing smaller patterns and lastly following and collecting their requirements until there was no more urban-scale pattern to continue the analysis with.

### 5.2 Applicable patterns

Even though most patterns are connected to the town, they are still applicable for the research since Podgorica has less than 180,000 citizens and New Town is a separate community of even smaller size. Also, patterns recognize the elements of the downtown and the square, such as high traffic, the town hall on the square, pedestrians, and night life. For the case of Trg Nezavisnosti square, first 94 patterns were analyzed, as they are global ones which define the town or a community. Analysis will run both through the urban layout of the center and through the square itself, which will further be explained in the descriptions.

The patterns were evaluated and marked individually based on how well they fulfilled the requirements. Each suggestion described in the book was given a score. Pattern success was determined by calculating the proportion of achieved points out of the total points and considering the average success rate of related descendant patterns.

Fig. 7 shows the chosen patterns relating to the current state of the square. The ones marked with an '\*' were dropped because they, even though relevant, led too far from the current research.

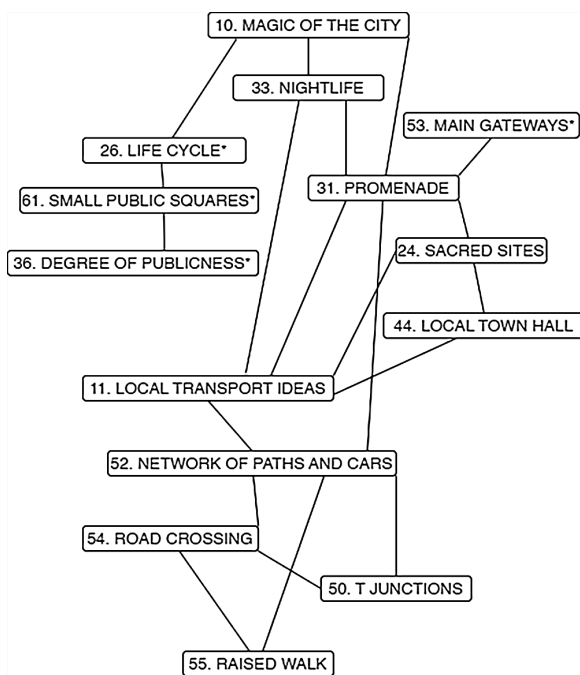


Fig. 7 Applicable urban planning patterns (Author)

## 6 Pattern analysis

### 6.1 Magic of the city

This pattern (see in Fig. 7) categorizes different requirements for cities depending on their size. Podgorica has around 180,000 citizens and falls under the category of more than 100,000 inhabitants. A city like this should support different kinds of retail stores: for jewelry, fashion, and fur.

Every city resident should be able to feel its magic, which the structure can achieve by decentralizing the core into smaller ones, but of the same importance. The city, in our case, is polycentric, but the main attractors of the other centers are mostly shopping centers.

Madanipour (1999) claims that today, in comparison to other historical times, the significance of public space in cities has decreased. This fact is partly due to the decentralization of cities and the despatialization of the public realm. He notices a clear shift from when a high degree of socio-spatial concentration gave central public space overarching significance to a period when places and city activities have established a more diffused spatial pattern.

Perović and Bajić Šestović (2019) notice similarities with these claims in the case of Podgorica city center and Trg Nezavisnosti square. Transitional and globalization processes have contributed to the fast development of the city's society, which is more oriented towards consumerism and other sorts of amusement in interior public areas. This shift is evident in Podgorica's traditional public spaces, decreasing the appeal of the old city center and street spaces. The authors state that the historic city center's urban life is diminishing. As a consumer culture develops, there has been an "urban spillover" of users who have replaced the open public spaces of the old city center with closed public spaces (i.e., shopping centers with impoverished social power) (Table 2).

### 6.2 Local transport ideas

Public transportation is accessible through every adjacent street of the New Town. The usage of private cars and taxi services is predominant in the downtown area. Even though traffic is highly present in the core, none of the bus lines operates on the inside (Table 3).

Table 2 Evaluation of the Magic of the city pattern

Score	○	Decentralize the core into smaller cores of the same importance
2/4	●	City supports stores with sophisticated jewelry, fur, and fashion stores
	●	Downtown serves less than 300 000 people
	○	Treat downtown as a pedestrian and local transport area



Only two streets – Hercegovačka and Njegoševa are entirely pedestrian, while the rest serve as two lanes for car traffic and a sidewalk from each side. This situation is not encouraging for walking and biking activities since people need to pay special attention to their safety.

### 6.3 Sacred sites

This pattern describes the importance of protecting and maintaining the connection to the past in the physical world. Previously mentioned retail stores "BEKO" and "Podgoričanka" mostly fit this pattern.

The "BEKO" building has been in an unstable situation since the closure of the stores. In the recent past, the building was deemed unsuitable for further reconstruction, with malfunctions in technical installations. In 2018, the mayor of Podgorica announced the demolition of the existing facility and preparation for the new shopping mall funded by foreign investors.

The former "Podgoričanka" building was as well in 2018 proven to be under the ownership of the municipality after 17 years of civil procedures. The original plan was to transform the structure into a public good, preferably a modern gallery. Such changes required unreachable funds, so two years later, the municipality made a public tender to purchase the building. Until 2022 the sale did not occur, leading to an even lower price that still did not awake interest (Table 4).

### 6.4 Promenade

Promenade pattern analysis shows the incompetence of the current planning regarding the proven past success of this route.

From the formation of New Town until the 1990s, Slobode street, bordering the square's east side, served as a promenade (Fig. 8). Besides being entirely pedestrian, endpoints where walks occurred, were hill Gorica on the north and connection to the oldtown on the south. The construction of the city stadium directly on the promenade axis cut the



Fig. 8 Former promenade along the Slobode street (Titograd Monografija, 1958b)

connection with the northern point of attraction. In addition, the southern point of downtown lost significance because the old core did not offer engaging content.

In the last decade, with the intensifying of vehicle traffic, the street incorporated two car lanes that operated every day until 5 pm. This way, pedestrians could take over the space in the evenings. However, since 2022, with the reconstruction of Njegoševa street, Slobode street has become available to vehicles throughout the day without the priority of pedestrian traffic. Citizens resent this move and draw attention to the impossibility of free movement in the city center, as this street represented the way of possibly meeting with people (Table 5).

### 6.5 Nightlife

The aspect of nightlife is one of the positive ones of the analysis. Bokeška and Hercegovačka street host places that operate both during daytime and night. Usage of these cafes, clubs, and restaurants encourages the further exploration of the downtown. The intensity of social life on these streets was always high, especially among the younger generation, but it grew over the last period since they became entirely pedestrian. This safety offered new points of meetings of locals and more opportunities for

Table 3 Evaluation of the Local transport ideas pattern

Score	●	Local public transport areas on 1 and 2 miles across
1/3	○	Using private cars for making long trips only
	○	Street patterns that discourage people from using private cars but encourage walking and bikes

Table 4 Evaluation of the Sacred sites pattern

Score	○	Preserve places that embody people's relation to the land and the past
0/2	○	Establish ordinances that will protect sacred sites

Table 5 Evaluation of the Sacred sites pattern

Score	○	Promenade that allows walking up and down, meeting and observing friends and strangers
0/4	○	Encourage the gradual formation of a promenade linking main activity nodes
	○	The community is within 10 minutes' walk from the nodes
	○	Main points of attractions at the two ends

sightseeing of tourists. Still, the downtown core has the most places for active nightlife than other centers within the city (Table 6).

### 6.6 Local town hall

Local town hall and national library are the main buildings located directly on the square. Town hall building was designed in 2006 by the architect Pavle Popović, but the execution finished only in 2006. The main entrance to the institution is on the side opposite of the square and does not communicate directly with it. Users of the national library as well enter the facility to the same side facing the municipality building and Njegoševa street.

This situation does not offer open areas for public discussions and public services. Demonstrations, protests, and political events happen on the square, but they do not intersect with the town hall building, because of the lack of visual and physical connection (Table 7).

Patterns 50, 52, 54, and 55. describe the situation of the traffic streets within the downtown.

### 6.7 T junctions

Except of the new pedestrian streets, Njegoševa and Hercegovačka, roads have a four-way intersection, without the appropriate T junctions. The municipality of Podgorica announced plans for canceling the private vehicle roads across the downtown and treating the center as a pedestrian area (Table 8).

### 6.8 Network of paths and cars

This pattern's value varies depending on the traffic density

**Table 6** Evaluation of the Nightlife pattern

Score	●	Knit together places that are open at night to form centers of nightlife
2/3	●	Increase the intensity of pedestrian activity by attracting people to the same few spots
	○	Encourage evening centers distribution evenly across the town

**Table 7** Evaluation of the Local town hall pattern

Score	●	Located near the busiest intersection in the community
1/3	○	Areas for public discussions and public service around it
	○	Space to rent out to ad hoc community projects

**Table 8** Evaluation of the T junctions pattern

Score	○	Two roads which meet at a grade should meet in three-way T junction nearest to 90°
0/2	○	Avoid four-way intersections and crossing movements

within the core. Separating cars from pedestrians is appropriate where these densities are medium to medium-high, which is the case in Podgorica's downtown. Having two orthogonal networks separate for roads and paths is one solution. As mentioned previously, except for the two pedestrian streets, every other has pedestrian walkways along the street for vehicle traffic. A solution for this problem would be extra wide sidewalks connected to the pattern raised walk in Section 6.10. (Table 9).

### 6.9 Road crossing

However, current internse traffic requires numerous road crossings. On the square borders there are totally six road crossings of standard width and outlook. Communication is not eased with any additional island, elevated path or narrower lanes (Table 10).

### 6.10 Raised walk

The surface of the square is 45 cm below the street level, without a particular functional reason. This lowering gives the visual and space power to the surrounding streets and vehicles rather than pedestrian users (Table 11).

## 7 Results of the pattern analysis

The pattern analysis results are summarized in Table 12 below. The success rate is calculated based on the points earned, indicating how well the pattern's structural logic has been executed. The following column contains the

**Table 9** Evaluation of the Network of paths and cars pattern

Score	○	Two orthogonal networks, one for roads, one for paths
1/3	●	Gradually lay out pedestrian paths at right angles to roads
	○	Putting one path at time, but always in the middle of the "block"

**Table 10** Evaluation of the Road crossing pattern

Score	○	Narrow the road to the width of the through lanes only
0/5	○	Continue the pedestrian path through the crossing 30 cm above the roadway
	○	Put in islands between lanes
	○	Slope the road up toward the crossing
	○	Mark the path with a canopy or shelter to make it visible

**Table 11** Evaluation of the Raised walk pattern

Score	○	Pedestrian paths along a traffic road should be 18 inches above the road
0/3	○	Include a low wall, railing, or balustrade along the edge to mark it
	○	Raised walk on the one side of the road



**Table 12** Results of the analysis

Pattern	Fulfillment	Core (%)	Correction	Result (%)
Magic of the city	2/4	50%	0.66 (50%) + 0.33 (14% + 44%) / 2	43%
Local transport ideas	1/3	33%	0.66 (33%) + 0.33 (6% + 14% + 44% + 22% + 22%) / 5	29%
Sacred sites	0/2	0%	0.66 (0%) + 0.33 (14% + 22%) / 2	6%
Promenade	0/4	0%	0.66 (0%) + 0.33 (44%)	14%
Nightlife	2/3	66%	0.66 (66%)	44%
Local town hall	1/3	33%	0.66 (33%)	22%
T junctions	0/2	0%	0.66 (0%) + 0.33 (22% + 0%) / 2	4%
Network of paths and cars	1/3	33%	0.66 (33%) + 0.33 (0% + 0%) / 2	22%
Road crossing	0/5	0%		0%
Raised walk	0/3	0%		0%

corrected value computation, which combines the structural logic success rate with the average quality of the descendent patterns.

Latter pattern could affect the overall score of the pattern that is above it on the list. Because of this importance, weight ratio was set between 2:1 and 4:1 so that the role of the descendant pattern could impact the result, but not critically. The weights were set at 0.66 and 0.33 in this case. Outcomes were only slightly different from the ones shown here by using different, but still realistic weights.

The results were sorted:

- up to 33%: weak or missing elements from the downtown;
- up to 66%: implemented elements with major problems;
- above 66%: working elements with possible future improvements.

Individual results will not be investigated further because this was covered in the previous part, but the trends of the results will be analyzed.

Table 12 shows only two patterns that fall into the middle category, while the rest show the lower result, with no pattern that manifests fully working elements. Better performance of Magic of the city (10) and Nightlife (33) could stem from the fact that these patterns are not connected to the architectural or urban planning, but rather the usage of the existing spaces by the people. Road crossings (54) and Raised walk (55) showed the performance of 0% and contain the most present elements on the square borders.

The rest of the patterns have low result as well, and are mostly connected to the vehicle traffic, public buildings of importance (local town hall and two former retail stores) and promenade that no longer exists. As previously stated, the Municipality of Podgorica has been announcing improvement of the traffic and the conditions of the

unused facilities worthy of collective memory. For now, it is uncertain to know whether this plan will be executed, and if it could upgrade the current state of the New Town and Trg Nezavisnosti square if not analyzed thoroughly.

### 7.1 Suggested improvements

Since eight out of ten patterns scored under 33%, there are many things which could be improved in the downtown to achieve better results. Based on the previous section the following suggestions were made:

- Vehicle traffic should be less intensive in the downtown. To determine which streets should serve only for pedestrians, planners need to do a deeper research based on the successful examples of the cities and squares in the similar urban contexts.
- Library and town hall facilities should communicate better with the square. Entrances to these facilities exist on the square side, but they are both visually blocked by the marble fountains (Fig. 5), while that side of library is fully closed on the ground floor.
- Nightlife could be spread to the bordering streets of the square, as they already have restaurants, but are missing pubs, bars, and clubs.

Former retail stores "Beko" and "Podgoričanka" should be preserved as they embody people's relation to the land and the past. Before this is possible, it would be worthy establish ordinances that will protect these facilities until the architects find permanent solution.

## 8 Discussion

Ašanin (2020) argues that to reiterate that Podgorica Square is a mirror of both Podgorica and Montenegrin society at the moment and that our society has been going through a very complex transition for several decades. Accompa-

nied by severe changes in all spheres of life, it may be premature to initiate any intervention in the central square of Podgorica at this very moment, one of the most confusing internally and externally (Vukićević, 2022). It is imperative to determine the real reason for adverse events in the analysis of problems in space planning. Doderović and Ivanović (2018) claim the reasons can often be systemic, such as a change in the political and value system and legislation, and they can also be the result of individual actions that are inappropriate and uncontrolled. The authors further explain that it is undoubtedly challenging to decide between measures/instruments for dealing with such situations without concrete reasons.

In the past century, planners considered the square and surrounding area part of the bigger urban image. Drafting urbanistic plans and competition entries, designers created

programs where the city could function as a single organism. This holistic approach could not succeed besides the honest intentions of the architectural professionals, as it needed the approval and support of the higher institutions. Nowadays, we are in a different situation where the central space is isolated from the urban tissue. Current elements of the square do not complement each other, and do not offer the permanent content for citizens. Existing surrounding buildings are out of original function, while the new one does not generate place for staying longer nearby the square. As Podgorica is a polycentric city, it is challenging to prioritize specific open public spaces. Feeling of history, past and memories make Trg nezavisnosti square more unique than new centers created in the past decades. In this case, reconstruction of the square can succeed only with the conduction of a long-term planning process and analyses of the wider urban area.

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