

B.3 Socialist urban showpieces Chairs: D.Light, E.Trubina

Bucharest*s Centru Civic: Attempting to reconfigure a Communist Showpiece

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During the 1980s Nicolae Ceausescu set about remodelling Bucharest. Around one-fifth of the city was demolished and in its place arose the Centru Civic (Civic Centre). This is orientated around a 3km ceremonial boulevard along which were constructed various state institutions, grand buildings and apartment blocks. At one end of the boulevard stands *the House of the People*, a huge monumental structure and the 2nd largest building in the world.

The Centru Civic was only partially completed at the time of 1989 revolution. Construction work immediately stopped leaving a legacy of uncompleted buildings. Bucharest*s post-socialist administration faced the problem of what to do with this project which was starkly discordant with the values and agenda of post-socialist Romania. Various projects were proposed that aimed to disguise and reconfigure this landscape. The *Bucharest 2000* project envisaged large-scale construction of skyscrapers on the site of the Centru Civic that would blunt the symbolic impact of the former communist showpiece. However, this project foundered on the material circumstances of post-socialist Bucharest in which there limited financial resources for reconstruction and more pressing claims on the city*s budget. More recently the *Esplanada* project aims to create a futuristic multi-purpose city at one end of the Centru Civic but work will not be completed until 2017. The result is that a large part of the Centru Civic is unchanged since the end of the communist period. In this sense, it is problematic to talk about Bucharest as a post-communist city, let alone a city after transition.

The impact of ‘Bronze Night’ on tourism in Estonia

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In the years since Estonia regained its independence, tourism has become an increasingly important industry. As the industry grows, studies of the reasons why tourists visit Estonia and their behaviour in response to certain political events prove to be of vital importance. Political stability and security are among the most important aspects of a selection of travel destination. Between the 26th and 29th of April, 2007, a number of events took place in Tallinn following the displacement of a Soviet war memorial from the city centre. Clashes between protesters of mostly Russian nationality and Estonian police resulted in violent riots. These events, which have since come to be referred to as ‘Bronze Night’ and the ‘April Unrest’, are considered to be influential political events in Estonia, because they affected both domestic and foreign affairs.

The objective of this article is to study the effect of Bronze Night on Estonia’s tourism by analysing spatiotemporal visits by foreigners. The effects of political violence on the behaviour of tourists of different age, sex and travel experience have been studied earlier. This research concentrates on the effects of the above-mentioned events on tourists of different nationalities. A unique method and data were used to accomplish the set objectives. Location information from mobile positioning was mainly used in the study to assess the changes in the spatiotemporal patterns of tourism flows. In addition, 40 tourism specialists and companies were interviewed. The analysis showed that the greatest fall in tourist flows took place directly after the event. Effects on different nationalities and geographical impacts also emerged.

Design by Use

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The paper discusses the use of public spaces in Tallinn. The base of the survey is the hypothesis according to which spaces that lack strict maintenance are preferred by users when compared to well-kept, “beautiful” public spaces. It is not stated though, that initial design is unnecessary – the site benefits from organisation to a certain degree but the main characteristic in focus is the process of change. The survey looks at space as an “open work”.

The study is based on public spaces in central Tallinn that have previously had a different appearance and use (industrial territories, wasteland), but are now taken as open public spaces. The survey takes a look at the constituents that interact in the place-making process: position, land ownership, infrastructure, municipal intervention, number of people, number of occurring activities, etc. in order to illustrate the correlation between the “openness” of the site and people’s preferences in choosing an environment for activities. When a spatial situation is unfinished it can host a relatively higher variety of activities than a rigid spatial composition that needs constant life support.

The design process never ends with the drawings or the construction. The process is carried on by users who shape the space through their interactions and reflections upon it, therefore – through design by use.