Public space
NOT FOR SALE!

A public space regeneration strategy, aiming to balance the socio-cultural development and strengthen the identity of the city of Sofia

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Graduation presentation

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2011/2012
Defining the project
Analyzing the city
Design
Bulgaria

and the countries on the other side of the iron curtain

Sofia

Capital city of Bulgaria

Population: 1,259,446 mn = 21% of the county’s population
Actuality: Protests in the streets of Sofia
City in transformation

Global pressure

Context-related transformations

Source: Monitor.bg
‘...uncontrolled private-driven development, appariation of a ‘self regulated urbanity’ disregarding any social aspects and mainly serving the market’
Problem statement
Shift in the urban actors
Problem statement

Explosive private development and chaotic urbanity

Copy-paste developments - example from Sofia

Gated community in Sofia

Ethnic tensions and poverty
Problem statement

Uneven urban development
Governmental ambitions

Competition for secondary center in Sofia 2009
The winning project of Dominique Perrault and the proposition of Norman Foster

Source: www.worldbank.org
Images: bustler.net
Economic reality
For the inhabitants, the changes are perceived mainly in their lifestyle, in the way that they “use” the city: through public space network. We need to invest in the “quality of city’s tangible assets” (Friedmann, 2007) - quality of peoples environment in order to achieve a prosperity for the city and ensure a continuity of its identity. We can do this by highlighting its strong spatial characteristics and cultural assets through public space.
Aim of the project

Context

Regime change
Global forces
Market economy/
New private actors
Lack of municipal vision and
regulations /

Identity crisis -
uncompetitive city

Unrealistic municipal
vision; Costly large
scale projects; Lack of
‘local’ attention

Problem statement

- Socio-spatial fragmentation
- Lack of ‘sense of’ community
  belonging
- Uneven development
- Spatial fragmentation
- Decay of urban quality

Invest the city tangible assets and
quality of people’s environment
(Friedman, 2007)

Project aims

Strengthen identity
= competitive city

Feasibility

- Make use of local cultural and
  historical potentials as an available
  tool

Social

- Create opportunities for socially
deprived areas
- Contribute to social coherence by
  national cultural assets

Spatial

- Integrate post-socialist trends
- Improve spatial quality of the
  environment

Management

- Propose a model for balanced
  urban development and cohesion
  between the Public-Private-Civic sectors

Public space network

Urban cohesion
Spatial integration
Spatial regeneration
Public-private-civic
benefits

Providing distinctiveness to the
outside
Attracting global investors and
visitors

Cultural and historical
heritage

Attract investors
Enhance community
feeling
Support spatial
restructuring
Aim of the project

Enhance the existing city center instead of creating new centralities
Existing potentials

Presence of cultural and historical heritage in Sofia

- Mineral water
- Areas with important CHH
- Religion sites
- UNESCO heritage
- Protected CHH sites
- Areas containing cultural sites

Source: by author, based on development strategy of municipality of Sofia until 2015
“Heritage is a key element which defines culture and the European character in comparison with other regions of the world. … together with an appropriate spatial strategy, are essential for the well-being of tomorrow’s city, and the expression of its special character and identity.” (NEW CHARTER OF ATHENS, 1998)
Analyzing the city
‘...a place for interaction and exchange of differences; an open space, accessible to everyone, which is marked by ‘free interaction and the absence of correction of institutions’ (Mitchell, 1995:115)

‘All those parts of the built and natural environment where the public have free access. It encompasses: all the streets, squares and other rights of way, whether predominantly in residential, commercial or community/civic uses; the open spaces and parks; and the ‘public/private’ spaces where public access is unrestricted...’ (ODPM, 2004, p. 10)
Theoretical framework

Public space network:

Effective policy arena for delivering fast collective resources” to engage citizens in a common clause

Urban cohesion
Spatial regeneration

Management
+ Diversity (types of public spaces)
+ Divers uses
+ Accessibility
+ Social dynamics
+ Spatial conditions

Rowe, Peter G., 2006

Pinto et al, 2010

Source: by author, based on development strategy of municipality of Soña until 2015
Pressure and transformation of on the public space

Distribution of the public spaces in socialist cities

Distribution of the public spaces in market-oriented economies

Based on Stanilov, 2007
COMMERCIALIZATION

PRIVATIZATION

CAR TRAFFIC INTENSIFICATION

AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT DECAY

SPATIAL FRAGMENTATION
Public space in Sofia

Commercialization as major function of the public space

Self organized commerce

Commercialization of the residential space
Public space in Sofia

Shopping malls replacing traditional public spaces

Accessibility by public transport
R= 400 walking distance

Existing shopping mall
Shopping mall under construction *opening 2012
Other popular shopping destinations (big supermarket chains)
Public space in Sofia

Intense mobility/ Private car invading the public space

Comparison of the use of the public spaces in Sofia in 1930 and today

Source: www.lostbulgaria.com
Public space in Sofia

Privatization and construction of the public space
Public space in Sofia

Privatization and construction of the public space

Individually built buildings constructed in the open spaces

Private developments benefiting from the public spaces
Public space in Sofia

Fragmentation:

‘Maximum investment in the individual dreams and almost null into the collective’

Ghenciulescu, 2011

Most New developments are separated from the street by thick fence
Public space in Sofia

Typological fragmentation: fragmented urban structure
### Public space in Sofia

#### Conclusions and guidelines: Spatially/Policy/Functionally orientated

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<td>Small scale commerce - Chaotically positioned, and downgrading public space quality</td>
<td>Use as attractor, organize routing through public towards shopping mall. Unite external and internal public space. Mix-use situation better conditions for commerce and more vital spaces</td>
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<td>Technologies leading to individualization of society</td>
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- **Fragmentation**
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More than a public space network

- COMMERCIALIZATION
- PRIVATIZATION
- CAR TRAFFIC INTENSIFICATION
- SPATIAL FRAGMENTATION

Improving spatial quality
Framework for development
Strengthening identity

Areas with important CHH
Religion sites
UNESCO heritage
Protected CHH sites
Areas containing cultural sites
Main research question

How public space and cultural assets can be engaged into a strategy to strengthen the identity of the city of Sofia, while improving the urban environment and integrating the effects of the regime change?
Strategic location

Evaluation of priority areas for development

City center functional boarder as a strategic area to deal with problems on a city scale.
Choice of strategic location

Opportunities to deal with:

- Mobility issues
- Fragmentation
- Possibilities for densification
- CHH

Connection to the existing public space network
Various urban patterns        >>>               Adjustable strategy
Analysis of the area

Spatial analysis of the potentials of the area: making use of the potentials in order to trigger ‘metastasis’ effect of the public space strategy.

- Density of the built environment
- Quality of the built environment
- Heritage structures
- Presence of post-socialist processes
Public space vision

- Structuring function
- Connecting function
- Attracting visitors
- Upgrade spatially area
- Monumentalizing area
- Decreasing density
- Attracting investors
**Strategy**

*Program*
- Proposed public space network
- Public spaces
- Urban pattern
- CHH structures
- Protected areas
- Important attracting points
Strategy implementation

Stage 1a: Regeneration
Stage 1b: Development

Stage 2: Integration

Stage 3: Densification

Stage 4: Connection
Regeneration

Public space intervention + heritage structures:
- Becoming a strong cultural landmark
- Improvement of the overall image of the area
- Attracting visitors and investments.
Public values and public space: opportunities

1. Strengthening identity

Paris 19th century: The city museum

Source: http://www.lenotre.culture.gouv.fr/en/ja/tu/foc03.htm

2. Socio-spatial impact element

The site of the future museum Pompidou. A deprived area within the historical center of Paris

Source: http://www.centrepompidou.fr/education/ressources/ENS-architecture-centre-pompidou/au_coeur_de_paris/p2_img4.htm

3. Feasibility: using cultural assets as an investment tool

Historical area of the city of Pittsburgh, that became the cultural district and generated private investments

Source: Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation
Development

- Public space providing infrastructure for private investments
- Integration of modernist urban patterns and upgrading of the area
Integration

- ‘Monumentalizing’ and integrating the area’ making use of the existing landmarks
- Prevention of further slumization
Integration

- Public space as catalyst for further densification
- Structuring element
- Improve environment by creating pedestrian friendly network
- Integrating the commercialization processes happening in the residential area.
Choice of design area
Implementation method

Profitable area

Historic area

Poor quality

Fragmented urban structure

Mobility issues

Pedestrian hostile env.

Development

Design: addressing main spatial problems;
Implementation existing potentials

Analyzes and choice of area for development
Design

- Providing framework for balanced development
- Connecting fragmented environments
- Densification of inner-city areas
- Stimulating alternative mobility
Current situation

Public spaces invaded by cars

Remains of industrial buildings

Pedestrian hostile environments

Lack of program and facilities
Implementation

Stage 1: Continuity axis
- Pavement and basic infrastructure
- Underground parking garage
Implementation

Stage 1: Continuity axis
pavement and basic infrastructure
Underground parking garage
Design features

Importance of the parking facility on the city scale
Design features

Connecting fragmented environments

Sociable spaces
Implementation

Stage 2: Temporary public spaces
prompting social events
Regulations towards future
developments
Design features

Alternative transports

Integration of a shopping center

Supporting local commerce
Design features

Connecting different environments

Involving local commerce
Implementation

Stage 3: Triggering future development of the area
REGENERATION AREA
Current situation

Poor spatial quality.

Public space invaded by cars. Decreased spatial quality.

Heritage buildings in poor condition. The majority fulfil retail functions.

Lack of spatial organization. Commercialization of the inner court yards.
Existing buildings
New buildings
Commerce and retail
Passage/ walking path
Sidewalk
Bike path
Non-designed green space for public usage
Designed green elements
Communal green space
Private green space

Local commerce
Social encounter
Creating strong landmarks
Densification
Management tool

Creating strong landmarks

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Non-designed green space for public usage
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Private green space
Implementation

Stage 1: Developing of the connecting axis;
Improvements of basic infrastructure;
New regulations for the use of the area
Design features

Improvements of the spatial quality of the area

Re-connecting environments

Creating strong landmarks
Implementation

Stage 2:

Improvement of the historical facades;
Introducing new functions
Introducing cultural values to the public space to

Developing regeneration financing models

Public space engaged with public values. Better image of the area

Design features
Design features

Making use of the specific typology to accommodate local commerce and provide interesting spaces

Current situation

Future situation

Sustaining local commerce
Stage 3:
Construction of new buildings and mixed use developments
New mixed use developments ensure greater social diversity.
Evaluation

How public space and cultural assets can be engaged into a strategy to strengthen the identity of the city of Sofia, while improving the urban environment and integrating the effects of the regime change?
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Infrastructure for further development
How public space and cultural assets can be engaged into a strategy to strengthen the identity of the city of Sofia, while improving the urban environment and integrating the effects of the regime change?

Reinforcing the city center
Implementing CHH
How public space and cultural assets can be engaged into a strategy to strengthen the identity of the city of Sofia, while improving the urban environment and integrating the effects of the regime change?
**Context** 2000 - 2006

- Regime change
- Global forces
- Market economy/
  - New private actors
  - Lack of municipal vision and regulations

**Identity crisis - uncompetitive city**

- Unrealistic municipal vision; Costly large scale projects; Lack of 'local' attention
- Invest the city tangible assets and quality of people's environment (Friedman, 2007)

**Problem statement**

- Socio-spatial fragmentation
- Lack of sense of community belonging
- Uncompetent city
- Costly large scale projects
- Lack of 'local' attention

**Management**

- Excessive private developments
- Fragmented decision making
- Lack of public control
- Weak public-private cooperation

**Project aims**

- Strengthen identity = competitive city

**Feasibility**

- Make use of local cultural and historical potentials as an available tool

**Social**

- Create opportunities for socially deprived areas
- Contribute to social coherence by national cultural assets

**Spatial**

- Integrate post-socialist trends
- Improve spatial quality of the environment

**Public space network**

- Providing distinctiveness to the outside
- Attracting global investors and visitors

**Urban cohesion**

- Attract investors
- Enhance community feeling
- Support spatial restructuring

**Spatial integration**

- Spatial regeneration

**Public-private-civic benefits**
THANK YOU!