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on

CHANGING CITIES III

Spatial, Design, Landscape & Socio-economic Dimensions

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Urban Cultures and Public Open Spaces



Morphological analysis of squares in Europe's common cultural context

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Abstract

The square is one of the elements of the town's morphological structure. The balance between a square's volume and space; as well as its social content are topics often discussed by urban design professionals. The term public space in principal refers to the functional aspect; while the term square primarily denotes geometrical parameters. This paper presents insights into the square's urban design aspect treating it as a composition of volume and space bearing a social function. It sets the criteria for the formation of a square on the basis of earlier studies of squares found in professional literature focusing on the principals of urban space formation. These criteria form the basis for the comparative analysis of squares (not in the old towns but within the central parts of cities) in the context of the common European cultural framework. The capital cities of countries from a pre-defined region with similar culture; known as Central Europe; have been selected. These countries have a common feature – they have all undergone the restoration of independence (marked by gatherings in squares in the city centres); have been labelled as postsoviet; had similar economic conditions; etc. The paper aims to find out 25 years after the restoration of independence) in Lithuania these squares need to be transformed or just adjusted (improved). This question is frequently raised at various levels (professional; political; social); just like the issue of status (both physical and social); which still has not been formed in certain Baltic cities and states.

Keywords: morphology; square; central part of the city; Europe.

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