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THE IMPACT OF PUBLIC EVENTS ON THE USE OF SPACE: ANALYSIS OF THE MANIFESTATIONS IN LIBERTY SQUARE IN NOVI SAD

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ABSTRACT

Urban public spaces play a crucial role in holding various public events. Although events positively enrich the urban environment and encourage real social interactions, there are no guidelines for their spatial organization, posing a challenge in terms of using public spaces. This paper introduces new classifications of public events and temporary structures intended for their maintenance, applied to investigate their role and impact on urban spaces, using Liberty Square in Novi Sad as a case study. This research provides valuable insights for improving urban planning, considering the need for a balance between events and preserving the quality of urban spaces.

Key words: *public event, public space, manifestation, temporary structures, temporary urbanism,*

INTRODUCTION

The number of different events organized in cities in recent years is greater than ever before. Within this overarching trend, there is another less affirmed trend emerging, which is the increasing prevalence of events taking place in public spaces. While some events have always been held in parks, on streets, and in squares, in recent years, a significant number of events have been relocated from traditional venues to prominent urban spaces. This trend is emphasized by organizers seeking unforgettable and spectacular events, as well as by city authorities aiming to engage citizens and visitors and make urban spaces more visible regionally, nationally and especially internationally and globally. Events generally play a positive role in cities, but the transformation of public spaces into event venues can often be challenging. Depending on how they are planned, events can activate public spaces, but they can also lead to overcrowding and congestion.

Throughout history, urban spaces have always been places of encounter. Even today, despite the growing virtual communication, people increasingly desire and value real human interactions, often leading to the organization of events to confirm their virtual connections. People want to meet their virtual friends in person to validate their virtual experiences, but they also want to share recorded digital moments with others as performances of shared presence [1].

Events are no longer just a means to achieve a series of stimuli but have become a new space for socialization in their own right. As Misener et al. observe "new social networks are formed through participation, planning, volunteering, and often consuming events" [2]. Events have become an integral part of modern society, and their significance goes beyond their tourist value. Many authors agree with the assertion that events are used to attract new visitors [3, 4] or, in the case of regular maintenance, to generate repeat visits [5].

The main goal of this research is to understand the role and impact of public events on the use of space in the urban environment. Liberty Square, situated in Novi Sad, holds a distinguished reputation as a primary public space within the city, serving as the prominent host for a multitude of events (Figure 1). Its significance lies in the fact that it attracts and accommodates the largest number of events when compared to other locations in the city. Therefore, an event analysis was performed for this location. The findings are expected to provide valuable insights for event planning and community enhancement in Novi Sad.



Figure 1. Festival of Love in Liberty Square in 2017

METHODOLOGY

The methodology employed in this research is designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. It combines several critical approaches to ensure a robust and multifaceted analysis. These approaches include:

1. **Literature Research:** The initial step involves an exhaustive review of existing literature. This literature research serves as the foundation for understanding the various aspects of public events and temporary structures in urban settings.
2. **Descriptive Analysis:** Building on the literature research, a detailed and systematic descriptive analysis is carried out. This process involves categorizing and characterizing different types of public events, temporary objects, and their layouts based on various criteria.
3. **Comparative Assessment:** The research goes a step further by conducting a comparative assessment. This phase involves comparing and contrasting the categorized manifestations at a chosen location.

Classification of Public Events

The research places significant emphasis on categorizing public events in urban public spaces. This categorization system enables the classification of diverse events occurring at a specific location, employing a uniform set of criteria. The developed classification system encompasses the following categories, each delineated by its program and purpose:

- **Cultural Manifestations** – events that celebrate and promote cultural traditions and artistic expressions,

- **Fair and Festival Manifestations** – gatherings such as fairs and festivals that often revolve around commerce, entertainment, and cultural exhibitions;
- **Sports and Recreational Manifestations** – events centered on physical activities, sports competitions, and recreational pursuits;
- **Artistic Manifestations** – events showcasing various forms of art, including visual arts, performing arts, and creative exhibitions;
- **Musical Manifestations** – events with a primary focus on musical performances;
- **Scientific and Educational Manifestations** – gatherings that aim to educate and promote scientific knowledge, often through exhibitions and seminars;
- **Political and State Manifestations** – events tied to politics, governance, and state affairs, including rallies, conventions, and official ceremonies;
- **Gastronomic Manifestations** – events highlighting culinary traditions and food-related experiences;
- **Entertainment Manifestations** – events designed primarily for entertainment and amusement;
- **Parades and Processions** – events characterized by organized marches and processions that often have cultural, religious, or historical significance;
- **Humanitarian Manifestations** – gatherings focused on raising awareness and support for humanitarian causes and charitable activities;
- **Protests and Initiatives** – events related to public activism and initiatives, including protests, rallies, and advocacy campaigns;
- **Celebrations and Spontaneous Gatherings** – events that arise from spontaneous or celebratory moments, including impromptu street parties and communal gatherings.

Initially based on Getz's work [6], this classification has undergone further refinement and adaptation by the authors of this paper to better suit the complexity of the subject matter. Importantly, it resonates with categorizations proposed by other researchers, such as Kuusik et al. [7] and Bjeljic [8]. These classifications provide a solid framework for understanding and analyzing the wide range of public events in urban settings, taking into account their functions, significance, and impact. In relation to the type of public event that is planned in the public space, different types of temporary structures are used as means of holding the event.

Classification of Temporary Structures

The presence of temporary architectural structures at a designated location is intrinsically linked to time constraints. These structures are designed to be in place for a limited duration, usually aligning with the timeline of a particular event or activity. The temporal nature of these structures plays a crucial role in shaping their design, functionality, and logistics. Structures intended for shorter durations tend to possess higher mobility, making it feasible to relocate them to multiple alternative locations.

This flexibility is essential, especially when events are short-lived, and the need arises to repurpose or reuse the structures for various events, enhancing their efficiency and resource utilization. The classification of the temporary structures can be carried out based on the following criteria:

- **According to their physical configuration:**
 - Temporary structures with dominant volume;
 - Temporary structures with emphasized construction;
 - Temporary structures as landmarks.
- **Based on their formal characteristics:**
 - Temporary structures as elements of cultural and symbolic space;
 - Temporary structures as elements modeling the environment;
 - Temporary structures as elements enhancing emotional and visual characteristics of the environment.
- **By their functional purpose within urban space:**
 - Temporary structures as commercial facilities – kiosks, exhibition stalls, pavilions;

- Temporary structures as spaces – stages and platforms (covered or uncovered) with accompanying equipment;
- Temporary structures for visual communication – art installations, sculptures, LED screens, mobile fences, barriers, signaling, and alike;
- Temporary structures for entertainment of children and adults – ice rinks, carousels, slides, inflatable structures, and alike;
- Temporary structures for lighting purposes – New Year’s decorations, floodlights, and alike.
- **According to their degree of temporality:**
 - Single-use (during the duration of events, festivals),
 - Multiple-use (seasonal, year-round, during specific periods).
- **By the nature of mobility:**
 - Foldable mobile structures,
 - Transformable mobile structures.
- **Based on the construction material used:**
 - Temporary structures with wood and metal as the supporting framework materials;
 - Temporary structures with wood, glass, ice, metal sheets, plastic, awnings, and canvas coverings as cladding and structural elements of enclosures.

The classification is based on the scientific research by Stepanchuk et al. [9], with partial supplementation and revision. In this paper, the emphasis is placed on their functional purpose and their arrangement in space, as an additional established criterion in this classification, which is explained in more detail in the next chapter.

RESULTS

To gather precise data regarding the utilization of public space and the arrangement of temporary structures in connection with the chosen site, a thorough analysis was conducted on the events occurring in Liberty Square between 2017 and 2022.

Table 1 provides a comprehensive list of 17 events held at this venue during the examined timeframe. The categorization of these event was established, along with the identification of the types of temporary structures utilized for its organization, the duration of the event, and the prevalent arrangement of temporary structures specific to that event.

The data in the table about the events held are based on information taken from the website of the Tourism Organization of the City of Novi Sad [10]. Conclusions about the type of temporary structures and the predominant patterns of temporary structure layouts were made based on the firsthand observations, as well as on the analysis of the available video and photo-documentation.

Based on the data from Table 1, it can be inferred that the most prevalent events at Liberty Square are trade fairs and festivals, accounting for 53% of all analyzed events. They are followed by music and entertainment events, each with a share of 17.6%, and sports events with 11.8%.

Table 1: Events that took place in Liberty Square in Novi Sad from 2017 to 2022.

No.	Name of the event	Event type	Type of temporary structures	Duration (days)	Layout of temporary structures
1.	Celebration of the Orthodox New Year	Entertainment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Stage ○ Floodlights ○ LED screens ○ Mobile fences ○ New Year's decoration 	1	Dominant stage

2.	Festival of Love	Fair and festival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Kiosks ○ Stage ○ Art installations ○ Barriers ○ Carousel ○ Benches 	17 - 35	Linear – perimeter
3.	Novi Sad half-marathon	Sports and recreational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Stage ○ Mobile fences ○ Signaling ○ Inflatable structures 	1	Dominant stage
4.	Colorful square	Fair and festival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Kiosks ○ Stage 	15	Linear – perimeter
5.	Fair of beekeeping and old crafts	Fair and festival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Exhibition stalls ○ Stage 	2	Linear – perimeter or corridor
6.	Rhythm of Europe	Musical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Stage ○ Floodlights ○ Mobile fences 	1	Dominant stage
7.	Taste of Planet (Food Planet)	Fair and festival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Stage ○ Kiosks ○ Urban furniture (tables) 	6-30	Linear – corridor
8.	International Wine Festival "Interfest"	Fair and festival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Stage ○ Pavilions ○ Urban furniture (tables) 	3	Linear – corridor
9.	Novi Sad Ultra Challenger	Sports and recreational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Stands ○ Pavilions ○ Mobile fences ○ Signaling ○ Floodlights 	2	Dominant stands (with linear pavilions)
10.	"Tamburica Fest"	Musical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Stage ○ Floodlights ○ Pavilions ○ Mobile fences ○ Parasols 	3	Dominant stage
11.	Opens Youth Fair	Entertainment and Fair and festival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Exhibition stalls ○ Stage ○ Floodlights ○ LED screens ○ -Mobile fences 	2	Linear – perimeter (combined with a central group setting of stalls)
12.	International meeting of old-timer vehicles and rally through Vojvodina and fair of small cars	Fair and festival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Exhibition stalls ○ Cars (as exhibits) ○ Mobile fences 	1	Linear – perimeter
13.	Festival of honey	Fair and festival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Exhibition stalls ○ Stage ○ Floodlights ○ LED screens 	3	Linear – corridor
14.	Festival of dance and music "Call of the plain"	Musical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Exhibition stalls ○ Stage ○ Mobile fences ○ Floodlights ○ LED screens 	4	Linear – perimeter

			○ Pavilions Urban furniture (chairs)		
15.	Day of the young Portugieser	Fair and festival	○ Exhibition stalls ○ Stage	1	Linear – corridor
16.	Novi Sad Winter Fest	Fair and festival	○ Kiosks ○ Stage ○ Barriers ○ Art installations ○ Carousel ○ New Year's decoration	33-49	Linear – corridor
17.	New Year's Eve	Entertainment	○ Stage ○ Floodlights ○ LED screens ○ Mobile fences ○ New Year's decoration	1	Dominant stage

These findings indicate that Liberty Square hosts a significant number of activities related to festivals and trade fairs. While entertainment, music, and sports events also hold a substantial share, trade fairs and festivals are the most prominent, making them the primary focus of events at Liberty Square throughout the year.

However, to assess their impact on space usage, beyond the event type, it's crucial to consider the temporal aspect. This additional criterion provides information about the duration of space occupation by various event types. Events that span several weeks may have a more significant impact on space usage compared to one-day or two-day events. According to the data from Table 1, events at Liberty Square lasting more than 14 days fall into the category of trade fairs and festivals.

It is noticeable that during the events at the analyzed location, the linear layout and the layout with a dominant stage or sports field stand out as predominant. Variations of the linear layout, which include perimeter and corridor layouts, are most prevalent at events where exhibition stands and kiosks are used as primary temporary structures. On the other hand, entertainment and sports events usually have a layout with a dominant stage or sports field.

Perimeter layout involves placing exhibitor stalls or kiosks around the edges or perimeter of the space, typically along walls or in a designated area. This arrangement is often practical in tight spaces and allows for efficient utilization of the available area. Visitors can easily navigate among exhibitors by moving along the walls or within the defined space, facilitating quick and efficient passage through the exhibition area.

Corridor layout refers to arranging exhibitor stalls or kiosks in a line that extends through the space, forming corridors between exhibitors. This type of layout is commonly used when the space is large and when encouragement of the visitors to explore every part of the exhibition is the primary goal. The corridor layout allows for easy access to exhibitors and provides a positive experience for visitors who can freely move through different sections of the event.

A dominant stage (or sports field) layout involves placing the main stage or sports field with bleachers at a central location where the main activities take place. This layout provides better visibility and experience for visitors because the focus of the event is concentrated in one area.

To gain insights into space occupation during multi-day events, it's essential to examine the type of temporary structures, their arrangement, and their quantity. These details shed light on how the space is utilized and how different activities are accommodated and interact within the framework of each event.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this research affirm that Liberty Square is a hub for cultural and commercial gatherings, with trade fairs and festivals taking center stage. Notably, music and entertainment events, as well as sports events, contribute significantly to the diversity of activities hosted at Liberty Square, emphasizing its multifaceted nature. While these event types play a substantial role, it is clear that trade fairs and festivals maintain their prominence throughout the year. Beyond the event type, the temporal aspect of these gatherings is of key importance as it underscores the significance of these longer-lasting events in shaping the use of Liberty Square.

It is crucial to acknowledge that the classifications regarding public events and temporary structures are not rigid and are open to potential alterations and expansions. Furthermore, it should be recognized that certain events, due to their multifaceted nature, may be classified into multiple categories, highlighting the need for flexible and adaptive classification systems.

Moreover, the choice of layout for these events plays a pivotal role in the use of space. Understanding the type, arrangement, and quantity of temporary structures provides valuable insights into how Liberty Square accommodates various activities and how they interact within the framework of each event. These details shed light on the intricate planning and organization involved in ensuring that Liberty Square remains a vibrant and versatile venue for a wide range of events.

When managed with precision and foresight, temporary structures accompanying such events can have a substantial and positive influence. This impact encompasses various dimensions, including bolstering economic development, elevating visitor satisfaction, facilitating the hosting of a wide array of events, stimulating tourism promotion, and fostering robust community engagement within the designated location [11]. However, it's worth noting that temporary structures may not be universally suitable for every location. Careful consideration should be given to their placement and design to prevent any potential disruption to the existing urban landscape, particularly in areas of cultural and historical significance.

Undoubtedly, there is a compelling case for future research on spatial optimization at Liberty Square. The findings emphasize the importance of this aspect in managing and utilizing the space effectively for various events. The multifaceted nature of events hosted at Liberty Square and their consistent prominence throughout the year underscore the importance of prioritizing spatial optimization as a potential area for future research.

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