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## ANALYSIS OF PLACE INTENSITY IN THE EXAMPLES OF LIBERTY SQUARE (TRG SLOBODE) AND NJEGOS SQUARE (NJEGOSEV TRG) IN TREBINJE

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Cómo citar este artículo: KARAN, I. *Analysis of place intensity in the examples of Liberty Square (TRG Slobode) and Njegos Square (Njegosev TRG) in Trebinje* [en línea] Fecha de consulta: dd-mm-aa. En: ACE: Architecture, City and Environment = Arquitectura, Ciudad y Entorno, 9 (27): 27-46, 2015. DOI: 10.5821/ace.9.27.2734. ISSN: 1886-4805.

ACE

Architecture, City, and Environment  
Arquitectura, Ciudad y Entorno

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# ANALYSIS OF PLACE INTENSITY IN THE EXAMPLES OF LIBERTY SQUARE (TRG SLOBODE) AND NJEGOS SQUARE (NJEGOSEV TRG) IN TREBINJE

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**Initial submission:** 11-02-2014

**Final submission:** 23-10-2014

**Keywords:** Intensity; place; Liberty Square and Njegos Square.

## **Abstract**

Development of the theory of place in discourse does not always include its application in everyday life activities. Necessary connection of the two domains is possible only by studying actual and concrete places, and the methods in which they were constructed and how they function. Actual places, which always come as a result and are part of a specific context, are being analysed in this paper from the aspect of intensity. Seen as dynamic tensions resulting from correlations of various place characteristics, the intensity influences the creation of *diversity* and accomplishment of place *permanence* through time. Research of place intensity is performed by analysing systems of the two squares, Liberty Square and Njegos Square, both located in the town of Trebinje in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and for the purpose of understanding the manner of construction and its influence on the surroundings. Research results should serve as the basis for defining guidelines for future improvements of the two squares, but also as the basis for further research of the relationship between the place and its intensity.

## **1. Introduction**

### *1.1 Place and intensity*

Although there are opinions on decreased significance of places nowadays, the concept of place is still one of the most commonly used in discourse of many disciplines. In relation to the aforementioned, different interpretations and definitions of the concept of place are being created and they vary comparing to the spatial scale in which it occurs (settlement, town, region, etc.) and in the significance attributed to it or from which it originates from (emotional, cultural, historical, etc.). According to Madanipour (1996), reducing the concept of place to a

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single definition which should cover all aspects of it would be hard to achieve, maybe even unnecessary. As Madanipour concludes, prior to establishing a unique concept, the emphasis should be on how to make places better. In regard to that, the research perspective has been defined, saying that only by studying actual and specific places, which are being created and belong to the specific context, better places could be created and necessary bond between the field of discourse and field of everyday experiences could also be established.

However, in order to study specific places, we still need theoretical frameworks, which in this paper are being developed from the perspective of place intensity. DeLanda sees intensities as factors participating in the process of creation, which, after the process is finished, are hidden behind the *qualitative* and *extensive* features of the final product (DeLanda, 2002: 59). Town and place imply everlasting process, but without doubt, their intensities could be *hidden*, and they should be sought both in the area of everyday urban experience and in the urban palimpsest. *Disclosure* or understanding of intensity, which must not be reduced to density as is often the case, could be of great significance for creation of *better* places.

Kim Dovey defines intensity related to everyday experience of urban space as dynamic *tensions which are sustained and sustainable*. Dovey looks for intensities in “the sunlight, the buzz of conversation, the whiteness of the walls, the vastness of the sea, the sound of birds, the smell of coffee” (Dovey, 2010: 26) and explains them as directly desired effects and qualities, rather than meanings. The intensity Dovey is referring to is primarily achieved through *diversity* of urban space and experience in it. Nevertheless, if we see intensity as the characteristic of the process, as DeLanda considers it, then it should certainly also be sought in the process of creation of the urban palimpsest and the meanings created in the process. In that regard, intensity could be seen as the concentration of urban pulsations or tensions which influenced the genesis, character and significance of the urban space, and which superimposed over time, primarily in its permanent parts.

Urban space intensity cannot be spatially fixated, but still there are places in which intensity is *piled up, redistributed* and further *spills* into the surroundings. Such places could be called *intensive places*. Hence, the relation of the place with the surroundings is of great importance in studying specific and actual places. Places are always parts of specific surroundings or context: geographical, sociological, cultural, economical. Porous and dynamic (Massey, 2001), places change in relation to the context, but the context (which can be seen as a set of places) also changes in relation to them. Corner (1999) explains the context-place relation through *Milieu*<sup>2</sup>, which has no beginning and no end, and is surrounded by other *Milieus*, fields of connection, relations, extensions and potentials. *Intensive places* are the ones in which the concentration of connections, as well as potential, occurs. Although multiscalar, intensive place is primarily considered as a part of the urban space (square, street, part of the settlement, etc.).

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<sup>2</sup> French word meaning centre, surroundings.

## 1.2 Permanence and diversity

Intensity can be found in the area of everyday urban activities, but also in the urban palimpsest, and it can be regarded in relation to the present time, or in relation to the passage of time. This paper analyses the intensity of the area of everyday experience from the aspect of its *diversity*, while the intensity of urban palimpsest is analysed from the aspect of its permanent elements. Through these two aspects the *invisible* and *hidden* intensity is being *disclosed* and analysed. *Intensive place* hence has *diversity* and *permanence*, from which the stability (necessary for development of meaning and the *locus* of collective memory), but also the changeability (necessary for sustainability and actual role in the urban life) are simultaneously being created. At the same time, *permanence* could also be seen as an ability of structure to maintain *diversity*, and *diversity* as potential for achieving *permanence*.

The concept of *permanence* as a form of intensity was developed from Aldo Rossi's *Theory of Permanence and Monuments*. According to Rossi, *monuments* representing permanent points of a city are *architectural creations of extreme value*, generators of urban structure and dynamics, catalysts of spatial transformations, elements which give the *sum of the city* and on which collective memory is being built upon. "In internal structure there are certain elements of specific nature with the power to speed up or slow down the urban processes and which are, by their nature, above the average" (Rossi, 1999: 111). According to him, *permanence* is achieved through the form, while the function presents only *current reality of the form*, and is discovered and built through the process of urban evolution. In comparison to the relation accomplished between the form and its current realities, he divides *monuments* into *pathological and vital*. *Vital* are the ones which have managed to remain *intimately connected to the city* and whose form has continuously managed to accept different functions and to mark its urban surroundings and the field of influence. *Pathological* are the ones which have remained isolated in relation to their surroundings and whose experience is *essential* in an unchangeable fashion (Rossi, 1999). This paper regards *vital monuments* as being also *intensive*.

What Rossi's theory lacks is that he links *permanence* primarily to the duration of the form, and that by observing a city as an architecture, he neglects the significance of natural surroundings in its creation, as well as in creation of urban space in general. Still, *permanence* could not be reduced to the duration of the form, but to the duration of the urban phenomenon. The aforementioned is illustrated in Poete's analysis of ancient cities, in which he noted that the *city's continuity* (Poete, 2011) was achieved even though various cities and their typical structures had alternated on one location. Besides that, city and *permanences* could not be considered solely as an architecture but as a unity of natural and artificial surrounding elements (Sauer, 2008).

Issue of urban space *diversity* appeared in the 70's of the last century in Jane Jacobs's book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* and in Alexander's ideas in the article *A City is not a Tree*.

Alexander (2005) considered *diversity* as the richness of connections, layering and intertwinement of different elements of a city (grass, cars, bricks, gardens, houses, yards, etc.). He was of the opinion that elements or sequences of urban space should be connected in such manner to create rhizome organisation, instead of hierarchy organisation of a tree. Unlike

Alexander, who, in order to achieve *diversity*, offers a *pattern language* which can be reduced to diagrams (Dovey, 2010), Jacobs focuses on *diversity* related to the lives of people in the city. Jacobs deems the significance of *diversity* to be exactly in joining different persons, their tastes, their knowledge, their needs, their wishes, etc. Nevertheless, she also lists four necessary conditions for its accomplishment, as follows: “one settlement has to have more than one primary function; urban tissue must be broken down into fractions; settlements must have physical structure originated from various time periods; and that there is a sufficient number of inhabitants and users of urban spaces” (Jacobs, 2011: 182).

Hence, *diversity* represents the richness of various elements of urban space and their correlations, but also the richness of experience and meanings created through their daily usage and daily experience (trip to work, interaction with neighbours, shopping, etc.). *Diversity* is not a city feature per se; instead, in order to create it, it is necessary to have a large number of participants and to launch initiatives which are to take place outside the formal boundaries (Jacobs, 2011). Participants include various sociological, class, age, ethnic and other groups which are using the urban space on a daily basis, thus forming it and giving it the *authenticity* (Zukin, 2010).

### 1.3 Characteristics of intensive places

Both *permanences* and *diversities* are achieved through urban activity, character of physical structure, experience and significance of urban space. *Permanence* is achieved through the abovementioned characteristics over a period of time, while *diversity* is being created in present time of the urban space. At the same time, these characteristics are also the characteristics of the *intensive place*. They alone are not capable of creating the intensity; instead, the intensity originates from the nature of their correlations, and in actual space they act as one inseparable unit. So, for example, the presence of activities in the urban space depends on the character of the physical structure, which, on the other hand, enables *permanence* of physical structure over time; physical structure and activity together create the experience of urban space (at a given moment) and its meaning (which is mostly created over time). Characteristics of the *intensive place* are always defined by the given context, therefore are studied within it.

*Urban activities:* The term urban activity implies various human activities performed daily in the open public spaces. Their occurrence and character depend on many factors, such as: climate, culture, etc., but are primarily conditioned by the organisation of the urban space and by the characteristics of its physical structure. In that sense, a good arrangement of the facilities, on the city level, of its settlements and squares in them leads to occurrence and then is followed by the intensification of the urban activity (Jacobs, 2011). Good arrangement of the facilities implies their intertwinement, but also the distances on which various kinds of facilities (residence, trade, culture, etc.) appear, intertwine and complement. Smaller the distances, i.e. more adapted they are to a pedestrian as a primary user of the city space, greater is the activity in it. By studying the city matrices, Gómez Ordoñez (2006) finds the 800 meters distance as the optimal for the creation of urban activity. However, besides spatial, the time distribution of the facilities is also important. Observed over a period of one day, the degree and the character of the urban activity vary. However, in order for a space to be *alive* it is necessary to be *active* and to attract people during the whole day, since it is the people that attract other people, and

observing the urban spectacle of their circulations is one of the most common human activities in open public spaces (Ghel, 2010). Open public spaces and activities conducted there should be oriented towards various users, regardless their age, sex, ethnicity, class, etc.

*Character of physical structure:* The physical structure implies integral system of spatial units and complexes, as well as the relations formed through them and through which the space is transformed into *closed* and *open*, that is, private or public (Hillier and Hanson, 2005). In that process, elements of physical structure do not include only those that are constructed, but also the natural ones, such as: water, vegetation, etc. Character of physical structure, as a sort of reflection of the connection of local and global<sup>3</sup>, can be seen, among other things, in relation to the following: the spatial scales and the manner in which the individual parts are organised in one unit, the character of connection of *open* with *closed* or *interface* and through the aesthetic value of physical structure. According to Radović y Boontharm (2012), experimenting with scale (near could seem far, small could seem big, and vice versa) is one of the main principles applied in order for *diversity* to be achieved, but in the process, human scale must always be present, that is, physical structure dimensions must be adjusted to the human body dimensions and their field of vision. In this way, the possibility of social interaction increases and at the same time the feeling of comfort and safety in space is also achieved. Comfort, safety and vivacity of open public spaces are additionally influenced by the character of interface (transparency of facades, organisation of entrances, etc.), and an aesthetic value of physical structure (rhythm, colours, views, etc.), but also by the manner in which different parts of a city are connected into one unit. The position of a single space in a city conditions its *readability* (Lynch, 1974), but also the role in urban dynamics and genesis of the urban structure as a whole.

*Symbolic meaning:* Based on the semiotics of architecture by Eco (2005), the meanings which develop in urban space can be divided into two categories: *primary*, originating from the function and physical structure expressed through that function, and *secondary*, which are different ideological meanings. At the same time, meanings must always be observed within the context in relation to which they constantly change (Bathers, 2005). This way, in relation to the specific sociological, cultural and political circumstances, the meanings are being reinterpreted, which could lead to the manipulation of symbols for political or some other purposes. In European cities nowadays, the creation and reinterpretation of symbols is conducted in the following manner: on one side, historical facilities symbolizing *rootedness* and national identities are being glorified, while on the other side, symbols promoting economic growth, social solidarity and multi-ethnicity are being created via avant-garde design (Gospodini, 2004). At the same time, both types of symbols are being used in the development of tourist industry. The presence of symbols is of great significance for cities, regardless of their references to the past or present. However, they should not be reduced to fragments or *the places of nostalgia*, and they should be based on the experience of urban activity referring to the particular physical structure.

*Urban space experience:* The urban space experience implies various methods used by a person in order to perceive the urban space and to create reality about it, that is, the sensation of being *in the place* is being created (Cullen, 2001). People primarily perceive places and

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<sup>3</sup>The term local primarily implies natural-geographic group of factors, while the term global implies economic-political group of factors influencing the development of physical structure.

urban spaces, their *tangible* and *intangible* parts, by using their senses, followed by cultural specifics and age of those creating it. Although experience is primarily associated to an individual, it is possible to speak of collective experiences, such as are specific smells by which the cities could be recognized (Durán, 2008). In order for an individual or a group to be aware of the place and to be able to relate their memories and experience to it, they must perceive it by using all senses (Pallasmaa, 2006). Therefore, the urban space is not being perceived only visually, but also through its smells, sounds, feelings of physical activities and its *materiality* (Sóla-Morales, 2008). Nevertheless, besides activating all senses, the way in which that experience is being created is also important. In that sense, Steven Holl (2009) speaks about *enmeshed experience*, that is, about creation of experience of one space by experiencing its parts, which overlap, complement each other and guide each other one to another. Keeping this in mind, Holl deems that both subjective and objective experiences of the city are equally relevant. Work on their synthesis should be the starting point of urban design, and according to Killaus (2001), also a possible meeting point of abstract and concrete approaches on place.

#### 1.4 The importance and relevance of research

Intensity is always dynamic and never fixed, and therefore influences the surroundings. *Intensive places*, as intensity concentration places, as defined in the introductory part, have the ability to change (through the concept of *diversity*) those surroundings more than others and, at the same time, making them recognizable (through the concept of *permanence*). For that reason, studying of *intensive places* is considered to be necessary and relevant. However, the abovementioned gets its real purpose only if performed on concrete places, which are seen as a part of a certain context, and as a result of specific method of its construction. Therefore, the central point of this paper focuses on the case study of Liberty Square and Njegos Square. At the same time, the concept of *intensive place* mentioned in the introductory part, was not entirely defined, but was given as a theoretical basis within which the intensity is being researched and within which it could be additionally defined for purposes of some future researches.

In relation to the previously stated, the aim of this paper was defined and that is the understanding of intensity of the two squares, whose relevance lies in following: it represents the basis for defining the guidelines of the future enhancement or maintenance (which could influence the town as a whole), but also in the knowledge which could contribute in the improvement of the previously stated concept of *intensive place*.

## 2. Methodology

Understanding of intensity is achieved by analysing it, taking into consideration the context and characteristics of the intensive place, that is, by verifying the presence and relation between: urban activity, physical structure character, symbolic meaning and urban space experience. Positive and negative aspects of such relation are being evaluated and based on that, the recommendations on its possible improvement are given.

Analysing is performed on a system of the two squares, Liberty Square and Njegos Square<sup>4</sup> located in the town of Trebinje in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The two squares are primarily considered as a unit, but also as individual spaces. Although the permanences' analysis implies analysis of the urban evolution of the two squares, the focus is placed on current moment and area of everyday urban activities. Selection of the system of squares as a possible *intensive place* of Trebinje is based on the opinion that certain squares are "places of synthetic expression of the town, of the time, culture and a human group" (Parcerisa y Rubert de Ventós, 2000: 93).

Various techniques and methods are combined in the analysis of the two squares. Context analysis is performed by studying historical data and oral heritage of Trebinje, and by studying the ways of development and typologies of public urban spaces of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian town. Analysis of intensive place characteristics is primarily performed by observing and collecting data in the field which refer to the following: types of human activities, time of the day in which they occur and their duration; contents of the ground floors and types of interfaces of the immediate square surroundings; distribution of open public spaces and facilities on the town level; types of spatial connections and scales, and also access to the squares and the experience of the space.

Observations obtained in the field are complemented by a survey and by the analysis of promotional material on tourist development of the town and the two squares. The survey was conducted on 200 respondents, inhabitants of Trebinje, of different age group, gender and education level<sup>5</sup>. Majority of survey questions were organised by typo-test system, also giving the option to add the answers which were not included by the survey. The results of research are presented in the form of text, maps and illustrations.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1 Putting it into the context

Trebinje is a town located in the southernmost part of Bosnia and Herzegovina, only 30 kilometers away from Dubrovnik<sup>6</sup> and the Adriatic Sea. The metropolitan area occupies an area of 854m<sup>2</sup>, and the urban area occupies 103 km<sup>2</sup>. The population of Trebinje is 31.433, out of which more than 75% lives in the urban part of the municipality.

In creation of the urban palimpsest of Trebinje and Bosnian-Herzegovinian territory in general, three main periods with different ideologies and social systems have been identified: the period of the Ottoman Empire (1482-1878), the period of the Austro-Hungarian rule and the period between the two world wars (1878-1914), and the period of the socialism and Yugoslavia (1945-1991).

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<sup>4</sup>Named after Petar Petrovic Njegos (1813-1851), a writer and a prince-bishop of Montenegro whose statue is in the Square.

<sup>5</sup>Age of respondents: 9%, aged 0-17; 46%, aged 18-30 ; 26%, aged 31-45; 14%, aged 46-60 ; 6%, older than 60 years; gender: 45% male, 52% female.

<sup>6</sup>Dubrovnik is one of the most famous tourist destinations of the region; during the Middle Ages and early modern times it was an important harbour and a city of commerce and it influenced Trebinje.

During the Ottoman Empire, oriental culture and Islamic religion influenced the organisation of cities, strictly divided into zones of private and a zone of public life, where there was no need for squares as the meeting places (Dokić, 2004). The Austro-Hungarian rule marked the beginning of the *Europeanisation* of cities. *Citizenry* was created, strict boundaries between private and public were removed and urban spaces got new forms and functions. As a result the squares were created, mostly of irregular shapes and positioned in front of the significant facilities or on the junctions of important roads. During socialism, the inherited squares were mainly given new ideological meaning, and planning of urban spaces in the form of *classic square*, described by Sitte (1976), was not in align with “modern” development of a city. This method of squares development led to the failure of understanding it as the urban phenomenon (Dokić, 2004), but can be found nowadays with the transition to neoliberal production of space.

### 3.2 Historical development of the two squares

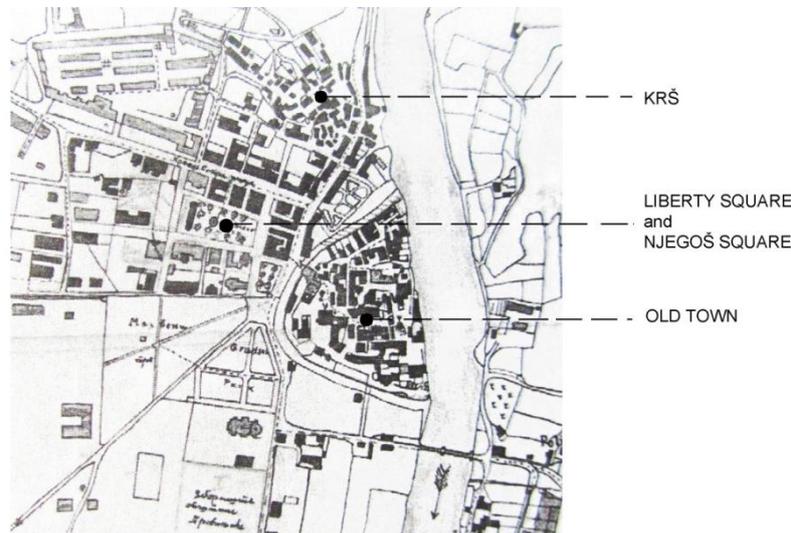
System of the two squares, Liberty Square and Njegos Square, was created during the Austro-Hungarian period at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. According to the oral testimony of the people of Trebinje, the squares were founded where former Ottoman cemetery used to be. They were designed according to the idea of General Djuro Babic<sup>7</sup> (Jokanović, 2009), and their form and artistic expression showed clear influences of littoral-Dalmatia architecture and the area of the former Venetian Republic. Almost classical form of a square, rarely seen in cities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, certainly influenced the development of squares as some sort of trademarks of the city from the very beginning.

On how the squares looked at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Figurić wrote the following: “In the middle of the city, in the shade of the fully grown trees, lies Babic Square, used as a market of daily groceries. In the immediate vicinity of the square, in front of the building of the District Centre and in a deep shade of high and rich tops of plane trees one can find Wilson Square” (Figurić, 1930:52). Wilsonov Square is today's Njegos Square, Babic Square is a Liberty Square, while the building of the District Centre became Platani Hotel.

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<sup>7</sup>Even though Jokanović states that two squares' plan was the first city planning project, in the BiH Republican Archive, Trebinje City Archive and Herzegovinian Museum in Trebinje there are no available documents to confirm it.

Figure 1. Part of the Austro-Hungarian plan from 1889



Source: Bosnia and Herzegovina's Archive.

Two squares were formed in the vicinity of two main traffic axes on the right bank of Trebisnjica River. They were a part of an orthogonal matrix of the *European* city leaned on the former Ottoman city and its organic matrix, which today can be seen in the Old Town and in Krs settlement (Figure 1 and Figure 3). Even though it can be said that the entire urban ensemble created around the two squares is just *leaned* against the Old Town and does not *merge* with its urban tissue, still the spatial logic in their relation and anticipation of city's future development directions can be perceived. This refers to Njegos Square with the main entrance into the Old Town, as well as the tracing of the main Karadjordjeva Street, with Liberty Square leaning on it. In the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century when the main street was extended to the left riverbank, the position of the new part of the city with indications of the urban centre was defined. During the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the urban structure of Trebinje from the Austro-Hungarian period became more than three times bigger. Although the mentioned town's expansion was done in eccentric manner in relation to the position of the squares, which was conditioned both by natural characteristics of the surroundings and the locations of military compounds, Liberty Square and Njegos Square have kept the role of urban and symbolic centre until today.

Greater part of squares' physical structure has remained the same until today and it forms a specific architectural complex. Only the southern part of the Liberty Square (Figure 5.3) had undergone some changes. Unlike the physical structure, the contents of facilities on the squares have changed over the course of time. The aforementioned changes mainly refer to conversion of former social services into bars and hotels. The changes were brought on by town's expansion and beginnings of its decentralisation, as well as by changes in the use of urban spaces in general, where sitting in the summer gardens is the most common *excuse* for spending more time in open public spaces (Gehl, 2010).

### 3.3 Urban activities

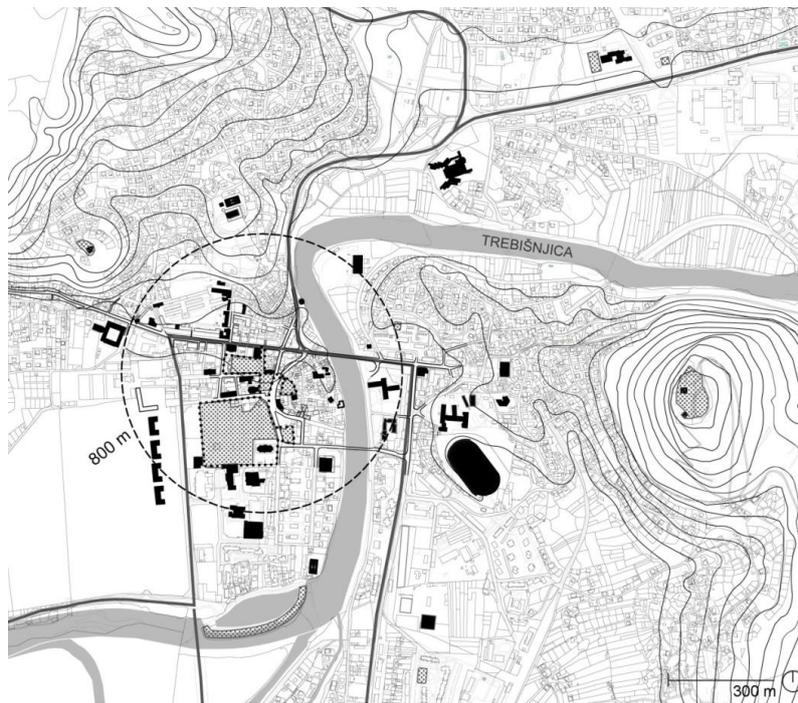
Since the local centres in the area of Trebinje are not developed enough, the town centre, together with the two squares, represents the most frequent urban activity zone. By analysing Figure 2. showing facilities and public character open spaces on the town level, it can be noticed that the majority can be found within a 800 m. radius in relation to the position of the squares (800 m. radius is recognized as being the optimal for combining urban facilities and urban activity appearance).

The centric position of the squares, in spatial and functional sense, has caused the appearance of primary urban activity, the circulation, which can be divided into the one conducted in order to cover a certain distance (for example, from home to work), and the other being a kind of a social act (for example, an evening walk down the promenade). Circulation is being concentrated in the linkage zone of the two squares or *Trebinje promenade*, and in a diagonal direction of Liberty Square (Figure 5.2), while the urban spectacle which it creates is observed from the summer gardens organised in the peripheral zones of Liberty Square and at Njegos Square.

Although there are a number of various types of facilities at the squares -shops, administration, cafe bars, residences, craftsmen's shops- the domination of catering facilities can be noted. Summer gardens came as a result of this, turning the whole Njegos Square into large summer garden of Platani Hotel (Figure 4 and Figure 5.4). That way the variation of urban activities during different times of the day has been reduced, while their spontaneous and unplanned appearance has been disabled.

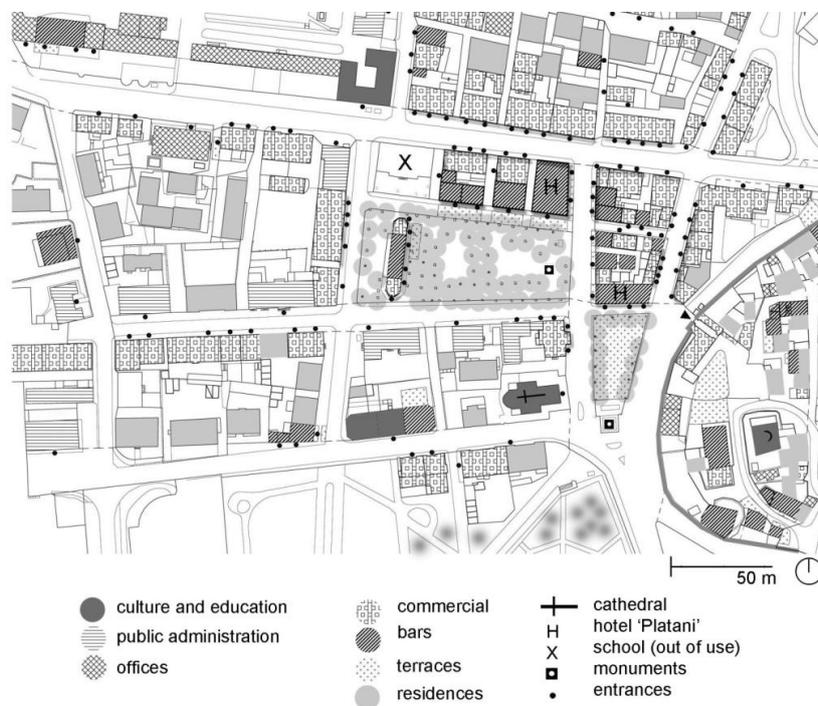
On the other hand, the Liberty Square is a real gathering spot for all citizens of Trebinje, but also for the tourists who visit the town mostly in summer time. Every day various activities are taking place among the people at the square, and it is occasionally used as the place for manifestations, concerts, etc. However, it is the activity at the market place that the square is recognizable for and every morning it attracts different kinds of people. Some of them, such as retired people and housewives, can rarely be seen during other times of the day, and they use their shopping at the market place as a reason to stay in the town space.

Figure 2. Position of the squares, distribution of public buildings and public open spaces



Source: By author.

Figure 3. Analysis of ground-floor uses



Source: By author.

Supplying with groceries, drinking morning coffee<sup>8</sup> and conducting activities in administrative buildings nearby interweave, making the two squares the epicentre of all activities and events in the morning. When the market closes down, usually at 1 p.m., the number of people there significantly decreases, especially during hot summer days. However, in the evening hours, the squares again become the central spot for people to gather. They occupy the summer terraces, while the free surface of the Liberty Square is used by children as a large playground. Urban activity of the squares usually stops around midnight, when the shops and bars close down, though there are still people, mainly the youth, passing by till late in the night. The abovementioned description of every day urban activities refers to the sunny days, which are more often than the cold rainy days, since Trebinje has a Mediterranean climate with 2008 sunny hours a year. On the other hand, the Mediterranean climate also influenced the culture of spending time in open public spaces. For that reason, the number of people at the squares drastically decreases during winter, and urban activities are reduced to those named by Gehl (2010) as *necessary*<sup>9</sup>.

Although the field analysis may give different impression, the results of the survey showed that citizens would rather spend their free time in a neighbouring Old Town -41% of survey respondents, instead of Liberty Square and Njegos Square- 21% of respondents<sup>10</sup>. The citizens, male and female, aged 31-45 years, spend most of their time at the two squares, while the citizens, aged 17-30, spend most of their time in the Old Town. This can be explained by the fact that many activities at the squares are of short duration (passing place, place for shopping, meeting place), but also by the fact that recently there has been a growing number of entertainment facilities for younger people in the Old Town.

When asked for the reasons of their decision to spend their free time at the two squares, out of five possible answers, the respondents said the following: 55% chose the *liveliness* of the space (explained as lot of people and happenings there); 12% chose various contents offered by facilities at and around the squares; 12% chose the nearness to their places of residence or work, while 10% chose the ambience value (explained as an architectural and cultural-historic value of the buildings, natural surroundings and greenery, etc.).

When asked to choose what they considered to be the shortcomings of the two squares, the results were as follows: 43% were of the opinion that there was a lack of facilities and events at the squares; 32% stated inactivity of the space during a certain part of the day or the year (there are no people in the evening hours, cafe bars and shops are closed early, nothing is happening in the winter, etc.), while 20% stated bad maintenance of the space (not enough benches, not enough lighting, bad maintenance of the facilities at the square, etc.). The results imply that citizens regard events and facilities at the squares to be the most important, but at the same time, they are of the opinion that they could and should be improved.

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<sup>8</sup>“Drinking coffee” is the most common social act in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which nowadays can be considered as a traditional.

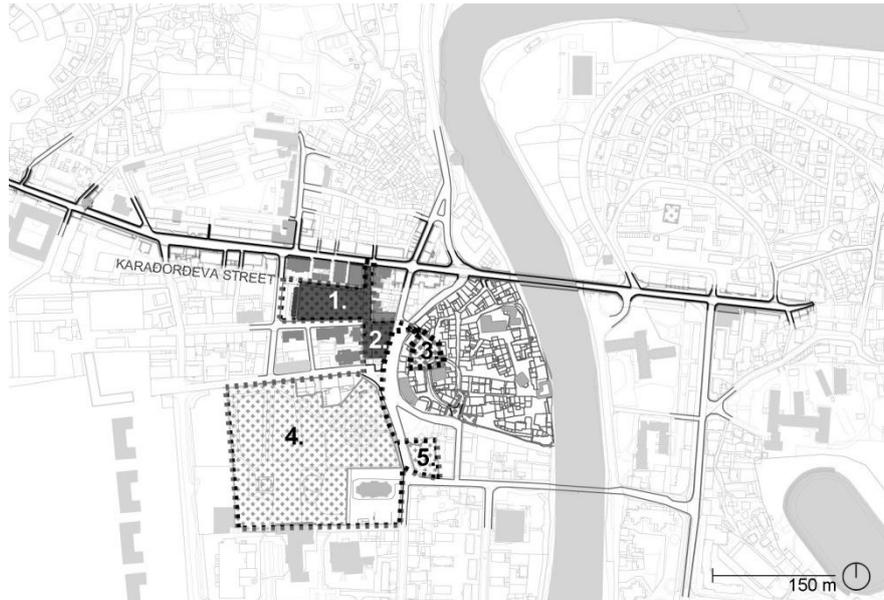
<sup>9</sup> Gehl divides urban activities into necessary, optional and social activities; the example of necessary activity is circulation from home to work.

<sup>10</sup> Possible answers also included the riverbanks, the town’s park and Crkvina hill.

### 3.4. Character of physical structure

Liberty Square and Njegos Square belong to the system of open, interconnected public spaces, with different characters, typologies and periods of formation. These spaces are interconnected across the Njegos Square, which acts as a kind of a central point of the system mentioned (Figure 4.). Still, the actual integration of the parts of the system is partly limited by traffic communications intersecting it.

Figure 4. Connection between the squares and their immediate surroundings



Notes: 1. Liberty Square, 2. Njegos Square (Austro-Hungarian period); 3. Osman Resulbegovic Square (Ottoman period); 4. Petar Kocic park (period between the two world wars); 5. Cvijetni Square (21<sup>st</sup> century).

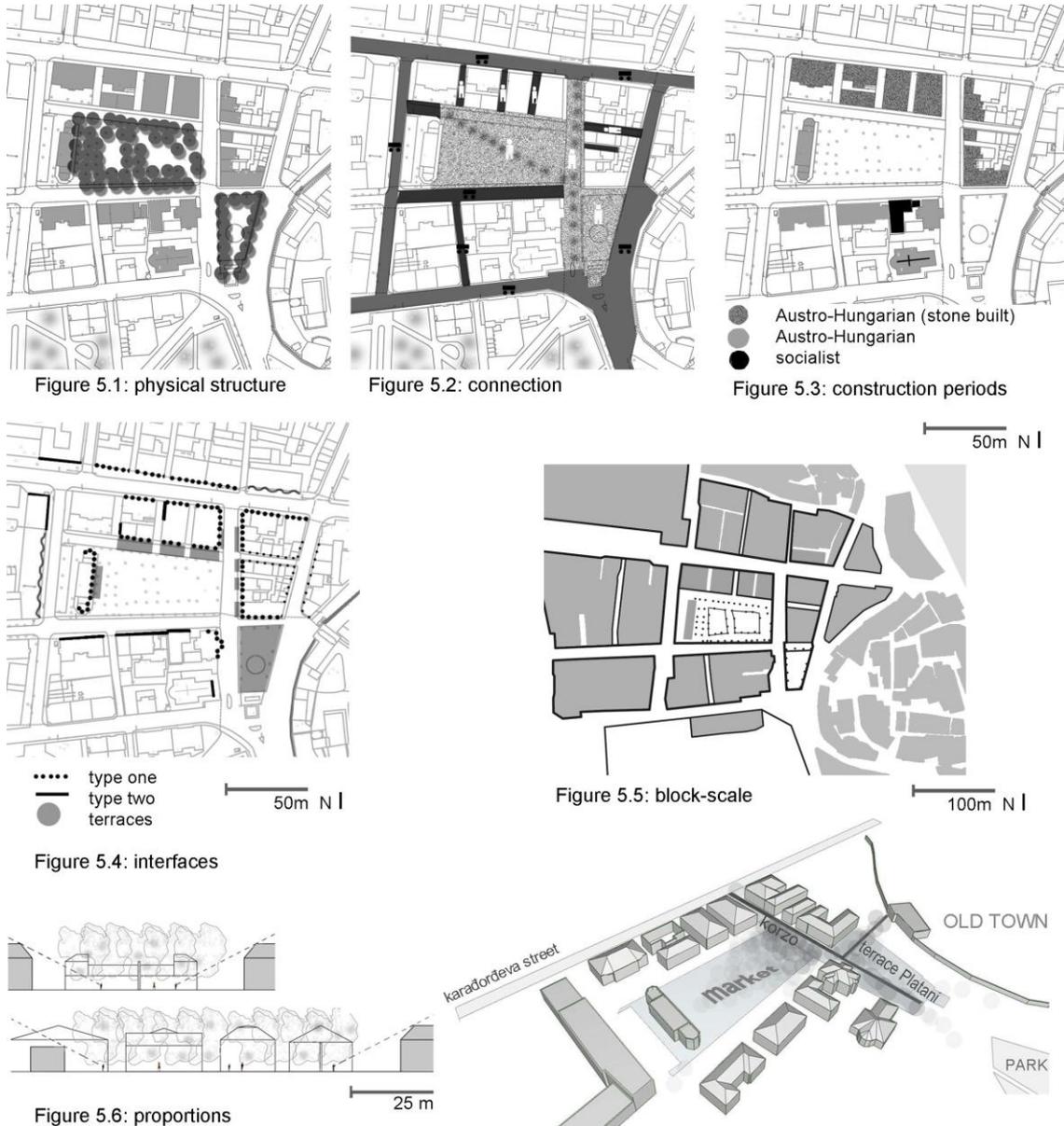
Source: By author.

Squares are of a slightly trapezoid shape, with 34x84x44x84m dimensions (Liberty Square) and 16x44x42x28 m. dimensions (Njegos Square), and are orthogonally connected in the shape of letter L. The longer side of the Njegos Square is parallel with the walls of the Old Town, and the longer side of the Liberty Square is parallel with the main, Karadjordjeva Street. The Liberty Square is connected with the main street via a system of small pedestrian streets (cca 5x25 m.), which, apart from putting the emphasis on the connection of the two squares, also enables views towards the vertical plans of recognizable Leotar mountain chains (Figure 5).

Majority of facilities at the squares originated from the Austro-Hungarian period and were all similarly constructed. Stone walls, vertically emphasised openings and horizontal cornices, resulted in a harmonious architectural frame, with visual focus put on Platani hotel facility, positioned at the linkage of the two squares. Two types of interfaces, excluding the walls of the Old Town, are being identified in the architectural frame of the squares. The first type is connected to the stone walls facilities, where a certain degree of visual and physical integration of *open* and *closed* space is achieved through rhythmic openings on the groundfloor level. That connection is almost completely gone in the second type, which is found in the southern part of

the Liberty Square. The first type of the interface is the dominant one, and is most often extended by summer gardens (Figure 5.4). Shorter fronts, corresponding to various facilities located in the groundfloor, are also typical for the first type of the interface.

## Figure 5. Character of physical structure



Source: By author.

Dimensions of the squares are synchronized with the dimensions of the urban matrix of the immediate surroundings where, on a relatively small area, the superposition of scales and ambients can be found. The gradation of distances, scales and plans at the squares is

increased by *internal matrix* or *internal structure* of plane trees. In relatively regular order, plane trees are covering the entire surface of the squares, thus marking them and informing us that we are *in the place*, but also giving us the information on their position in relation to their surroundings (Figures 5.1 and 5.5). With plane trees, dividing the space into smaller parts, and with harmonious dimensions of the squares adjusted to the visual field of people in vertical and horizontal sense, human scale in space is achieved. This way, protection and intimacy are simultaneously accomplished, as well as the visual exposure and the possibility to initiate a sociological interaction. Although space users are often unaware of the importance of the character of physical structure, as shown in the results of the survey, still it is certain that it has facilitated the creation of *liveliness* on the two squares

### 3.5. Symbolic meaning

Formation of squares, as symbols of civil liberties and freedom of expression, marked the end of the Ottoman and the beginning of the Austro-Hungarian rule in Trebinje. Squares became the symbols of urban life, and have kept that role until today. Contrary to the Ottoman town, which developed around the mosque and a religious complex, *modern* and *European* Trebinje developed around the two squares system where most of the facilities of public and social importance were located. However, religious symbols were not completely excluded, but the catholic and an orthodox church constructed in that period, occupied less prominent positions at or in the vicinity of the Njegos Square (Figure 4). Besides that, construction of churches suggested equality of three major ethnic groups which inhabited the town.

Out of five options offered, when asked to choose what they personally thought to be the symbol of Trebinje, 60% of respondents chose the Liberty and Njegos Squares. It is interesting to mention that citizens of Trebinje rarely use names Liberty Square or Njegos Square; instead they refer to both squares by *Platani* (plane trees). Although squares are not deprived of ideological meanings (there is a monument dedicated to Njegos at the Njegos Square, and a monument dedicated to the heroes for liberty at the Liberty Square, shown in Figure 4), they are primarily identified with the plane trees and the urban activity taking place there. The previously mentioned is in connection with frequent changes of official names of urban areas in BiH towns in general.

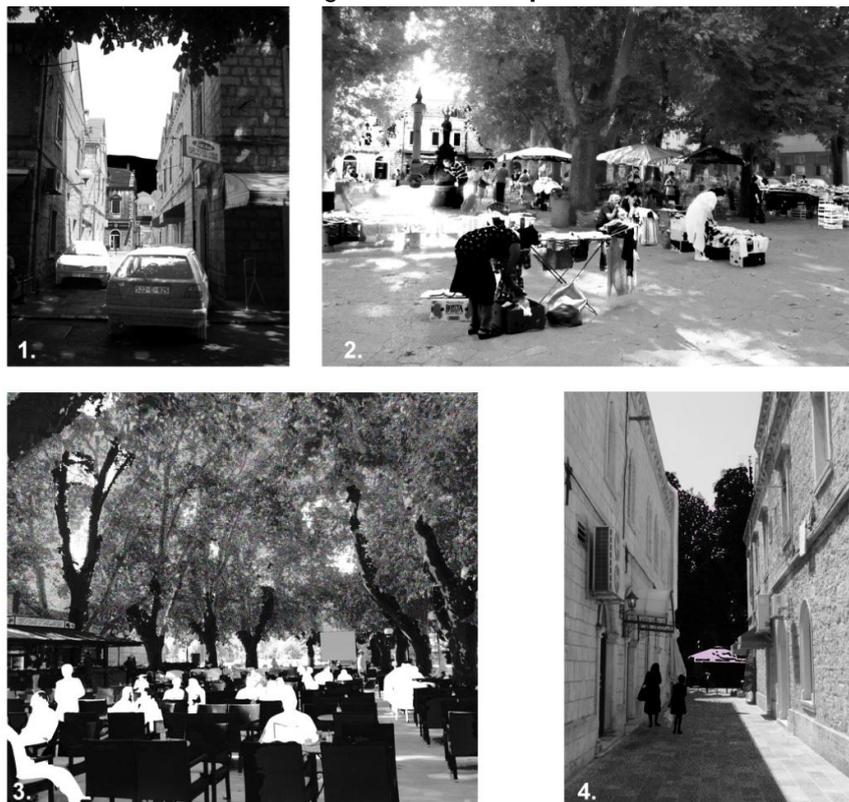
Recognisable image of the Liberty Square was defined by the market place, which has been organised on a daily basis since the formation of the square. It has both functional and symbolic role. Unlike the Liberty Square, the Njegos Square, which was turned into hotel Platani summer garden, lost traditional authenticity of the public space for all (Zukin, 2010). However, *Platani* garden (as the official tourist town presentation refers to the Njegos Square) is presented as one of the main landmarks and tourist attractions, being the "favourite place of citizens of Trebinje of all age groups, as well as of the visitors passing through the town on their way to the Adriatic Sea" (TOT, 2008: n/p). Having coffee in the garden *Platani* is a *must* if you visit Trebinje. Symbolism of the squares created through their everyday use is becoming increasingly used as a brand which, among other things, will serve as a foundation for future touristic development of the town. Transformation of squares into tourist attractions is already showing its effects when it comes to domination bars and hotels at the squares.

### 3.6. Experience of urban space

Squares create a rather strong impression of us being *in the place*, but at the same time there is an experience of the context which that *place* belongs to. Intimacy and secludedness of the space are harmoniously complemented by the occasional views of the park, which seems to be a sort of extension of the squares, and the views of recognisable peaks of Leotar Mountain. Superimposing of views, senses and spatial scales leads to simultaneous experience of part of the space and its unity. That way both subjective and objective urban space experiences are enabled.

Plain trees have significant influence on a unique experience of the square. By changing structure, colour and smell depending on the season, plain trees also change the square, making it new and different. Their wide tree tops create shades making staying at the square possible and pleasant, especially during summer days. At the same time, they create an interesting game of light and shadow and enrich visual perception of the space. Usage of stone as a basic construction material, present in different forms and textures in parterre and on facades, stimulates tactile experience of the space. Besides that, stone as a local and traditionally used material, enhances the impression that squares belong to Trebinje and Herzegovinian region.

Figure 6. Townscape



Notes: 1. View from the Liberty Square; 2. Market place at Liberty Square; 3. Afternoon coffee at Njegos Square; 4. View from the main street toward the Liberty Square.

Source: By author.

On the other hand, presence of people in the space and their activities (retired citizens with their grandchildren going shopping, young people on their way to school, tourist enjoying in the shade of the plane trees, etc.) additionally enhance the experience of the squares, characterised as *lively* ones. Activities at the market place certainly have the strongest influence in experiencing the Liberty Square; “Physical experiences of market activities are unforgettable and it is for that reason why the market is associated with many images individuals have about their towns” (Lync, 1974: 88), while drinking coffee under the shade of a plane tree in experiencing the Njegos Square. It is exactly the urban activities which created the dynamic ambient of the Liberty Square, and the peaceful ambient of the Njegos Square. These two ambients complement each other, and at the same time, they intensify the experience of the squares individually and the unity they create. Illustrations of spatial sequences in Figure 6. are an attempt to demonstrate the previously described experiences of the squares.

#### 4. Discussion

By correlating different characteristics of intensive places analysed on given examples of Liberty and Njegos Squares, the following observations, which could also be interpreted as recommendations for the improvement of their intensity, can be made:

- From the moment they were founded until today, Liberty and Njegos Squares have been identified as generators and epicentres of urban activities. They continuously play the role of the urban centre of Trebinje town despite the fact that the town has been expanding eccentrically in relation to their position, and that on that occasion some new locations were formed which had potential to become centres. Their central role was not reduced only to the significance which historical cores commonly have for towns and their identities, but also has its roots in daily human activities which take place there.
- The two squares build their symbolism firstly on primary and then on secondary meanings (Eco, 2005), which could be considered as positive and desirable, taking into account the context of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian town and the manner in which it was created. Within the aforementioned context, considering their form and manner in which they are used, the squares are assessed to be specific, which additionally contributed to their role in creation of town's identity and *brand*.
- Although squares' symbolism is based on urban activities, it is most certain that the activities were enabled and provoked by the positive characteristics of the physical structure: the way it is adjusted to the human scale, Mediterranean climate and culture of spending time in public places, and also the specific relation established between its natural and artificial elements. Insufficient integration between open and closed spaces is seen as an omission of the physical structure. By emphasising it and with minimal interface interventions, the impression of *liveliness* of the squares could be achieved even during winter periods.
- Change of facilities' contents did not have any major influence on the Liberty Square and its urban activity. On the other hand, transformation of the District Centre building into Platani Hotel established some new forms of use for Njegos Square. That had a positive result for it created

two different ambients which led to the intensification of the general perception of the squares seen together, but it also had a negative effect of public spaces paradox (Zukin, 2010).

- Similar principle of *enmeshment* of different ambiances (Holl, 2009) could spread out to the entire system of open public spaces (Figure 4). More emphasised integration of the squares with other elements of the system would contribute to creation of more compact and expanded urban centre. On one hand, that would contribute to the enlargement of the town structure, which already happened, while, on the other hand, it would influence the current centre to keep its dominance in case new and stronger local centres are established. The first step towards it is the creation of continuous pedestrian connections and activation of the linkage zones (the cross streets or the interior of the blocks).

- Domination of catering facilities over the recent years could have negative consequences on *diversity* of the two squares. Focusing urban activities on tourists, instead on inhabitants, is jeopardy to vitality (Rossi, 1999). Therefore, implementation of new facilities should be done carefully, by increasing the flexibility in use of spaces (for example, the hotel's ground floor could also be used for artistic exhibitions; after working hours, some administrative buildings could be given to civil associations for use, etc.).

## 5. Conclusion

Characteristics of the intensive places exemplified in the cases of Liberty Square and Njegos Square in Trebinje show high degree of connection without clearly established hierarchy. One characteristic complements and improves another one, and this way, the intensity of place has sustained and is being sustained. For example, without shades made by the treetops of the plane trees the market place would probably be relocated; relocation of the market place would influence the decrease of urban activity and the reduction of spatial experience of the square itself; and the symbolism of the Liberty Square is created on plane trees and market activity together. Synergy of characteristics of *intensive place*, for example turning Njegos Square into the garden of Platani hotel, influenced even certain spatial conflicts to be turned into diversity, and the disadvantages of one into advantages of other characteristic. On the other hand, previously described relationship between the characteristics of the *intensive places*, regardless of changes within each of these characteristics separately or changes in the town as a whole, has been sustained since its formation until today.

The *tensions* are being generated from the relationships of the characteristics of intensive place of the two squares in Trebinje; those *tensions* have managed to *sustain* over a period of time and can be perceived at the squares and their surroundings. According to the previously stated observations, it is likely for them to *sustain* in the future as well. The two squares showed both *diversity* and *permanence*, as defined in the introductory part; hence Liberty Square and Njegos Square can be regarded as one of the intensive places of Trebinje.

The process of their analysis is a result per se, which, from the specific spatial situations, reveals new aspects of intensity characteristics and the way they interact. The new aspects of the relationship between the place and its intensity can further be developed in the theory of

place or *intensive place*, but also applied as a sort of principles for achieving urban space diversity.

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