

New urban bridge as a socially responsible public space

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Summary

New governmentally financed project “Skopje 2014” with intention to “re-establish” the identity of the nation through development of infrastructure and architecture in Baroque style has substantially changed the urban, social, political and ethical context of the central area of the city.

The aim of our work is to present an open approach of form finding process as a result of interaction of functional, engineering and social issues that is in contrast with fixed and predetermined typology proposed by government. Our new pedestrian bridge on river Vardar in the centre of the city creates new urban landscapes acting as a social attractor and urban infrastructure. Its geometry and structure is a result of formal and functional concept generated as a complex emergent property of the topologically based system expressing high level of social responsibility of design and ethical and esthetical approach to complex engineering challenges in urban areas.

Keywords: Skopje, urban transformations, fixed typology, process, bridge, form finding, socially responsible design

1. Introduction

Skopje, the largest city in the Republic of Macedonia, owes its present form to the process of stratification of differentiated layers developed as a result of urban transformations. The process of spatial and urban planning intensified at the end of 19th and beginning of 20th century as a result of modernisation of the Ottoman Empire, emergence of new geo-political context within the region and influences of new concepts and models of urban form. Development of the city of Skopje has followed this path of dissolution and then reconstruction of the urban form through a process of modernisation. Sequences of historic events and policies that have resulted from these events generate the geopolitical and social context of the development of the city. These policies have influenced the process of urban transformation of urban centres in Macedonia, and especially the city of Skopje on conceptual level, as referential models for development of urban plans and introduction of new ideas and concepts, but also as strategies for implementation of planning policies in practice and within the urban fabric [1]. These conceptual and real urban transformations have dissolved the conventional spatial models.