Article

A Bourdieusian Framework for Understanding Public Space Heritage Transformations: Riga's Castle Square

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Abstract

The article investigates how Bourdieu's theory of practice can be mobilized to analyse the micro landscape of decision-making in urban practice, framing it by means of the concept of habitus. The reconstruction of the Riga Castle Square in the UNESCO-protected area is used as a case study. Using the vocabulary of habitus-related concepts—*illusio*, *doxa*, and hysteresis—an attempt is made to trace the interrelations between the motivations and actions of professionals involved in the project and their influence on the outcomes. This article assumes that the symbolic significance of a place causes symbolic space, understood as a grid of cognitive structures guiding agents in their choices, to become salient. When representative public spaces are transformed, the symbolic space imposes on social and physical spaces through the symbolic forms of power used by specialists. In conclusion, the article offers an interpretation of heritage as a manifestation of habitus: Public space thus exemplifies a social interface, expressing interplay between traditional and emerging values. The findings reinforce the relevance of the theory of practice for researching non-physical phenomena of urban practice. The concept of habitus supports the conceptualization of urban planning practice as assemblages of diverse interdependent interactional settings where fraternities of practice communities communicate around values. This communication defines motivations and determines decisions, shaping physical space. The theory of practice helps decompose the micro-level of socio-psychological dynamics underlying stakeholders' decision-making and to relate it to macro phenomena, such as power distribution or participation.

Keywords

Bourdieu; habitus; heritage; public space; Riga Castle Square; urban project

Issue

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1. Introduction

Entering Riga Old Town from the left bank of the river Daugava via the Vansu Bridge, at the right side appears Riga's Castle—a landmark of Old Riga, a 15th-century building hosting the Office of the President of the Republic of Latvia and the National History Museum. It expresses the symbolic agency of the state, the authority, alien to the natives in the past but celebrating national identity since the beginning of the 20th century, especially after Latvia regained independence in 1991. There are three open spaces associated with the Riga Castle: the riverbank occupied by the city ring road in the west, the semi-public Castle Garden in the north, and the public space of the Castle Square in the southeast. Hidden behind old walls, the garden is visually accessible for everybody from the bridge on the edge of the castle wall, but the square in the summer is sheltered from the bridge by the crowns of more than 100-year-old trees. These trees occupy a small, symbolically unique place—Riga's first public pocket park within the city walls, laid out in 1817, simultaneously with the erection of the Victory Column in the central part of the square.

The Castle Square has neither many visitors nor residents. It is located off-road from the vibrant life of Riga's Old Town, on its northern periphery (Figure 1).

Cut off from the river and the neighbourhood of the Riga Harbour Passenger Terminal by heavily loaded traffic arteries, it quietly lives its symbolic and social life without ups or downs. Populated by the state's administrative, cultural, financial, and religious institutions, lacking its own community, the Castle Square offers a couple of cafés, one bench, a wide lawn with a long flowerbed, and more than 50 old trees (Figure 2).

The sharp contrast between the symbolic significance and the physical deprivation of the place was the reason the third president of Latvia, Valdis Zatlers, initiated the reconstruction of the square in May 2008. The high initiative received full support from Riga's municipal administration as well as from the professional society and resulted in the launch of a contest in early 2009. The design process started in October 2009 and was meant to be finalised at the end of that year. The expected planning period was seriously underestimated. The design process took 10 years, and the project was finished in 2018, but its implementation was finally discarded from Riga's priorities, prolonging the symbolic, social, and physical decline of the Castle Square.

Why was this initiative frustrated even though it had both necessary and sufficient preconditions for its successful and swift implementation, was supported by all stakeholders, and was in a place which does not face either social struggle or natural disasters? Did it happen due to a resistance of deprived citizens, a routinized bureaucracy, a politically orchestrated sabotage, a competition of priorities, or a lack of theoretical knowledge by the involved practitioners? Concepts prevailing in urban planning discourse often offer explanations which polarise the physical and the social, the powerful and the powerless, theory and practice, and the rational and the collaborative.

The article shares the view that urban practitioners in their daily routine continuously converge social and physical spaces, making decisions and taking actions guided by the logic of practice. Following a topological mode of reasoning (Wacquant, 2018a), it attempts to decompose the process of this convergence by building an analysis of the case on Bourdieu's theory of practice (ToP). The analysis of the case features the community of the involved practitioners as the main players since their ways of thinking, forming influential symbolic space, defined the outcome. The article argues that symbolic space understood as a grid of cognitive classifications that builds motivations and guides actions is often imposed over social and physical space. In the case of the Castle Square, it formed the socio-psychological background of the decisions which led to results nobody wanted or was happy about.

2. Methodology

From the classical conceptual "toolkit" of Bourdieu—the field, the capital, and the habitus—the latter is used as more methodologically suitable to highlight motives behind decision-making and their relation to actions the agents take while designing public spaces. The Castle Square, a symbolically and socially saturated public space in the historical centre, has been chosen as a case because of its aptness for analysing these relations from a historical perspective. The symbolic load of this place and the exemplary set of the stakeholders involved, from high-ranking politicians and key urban, cultural,
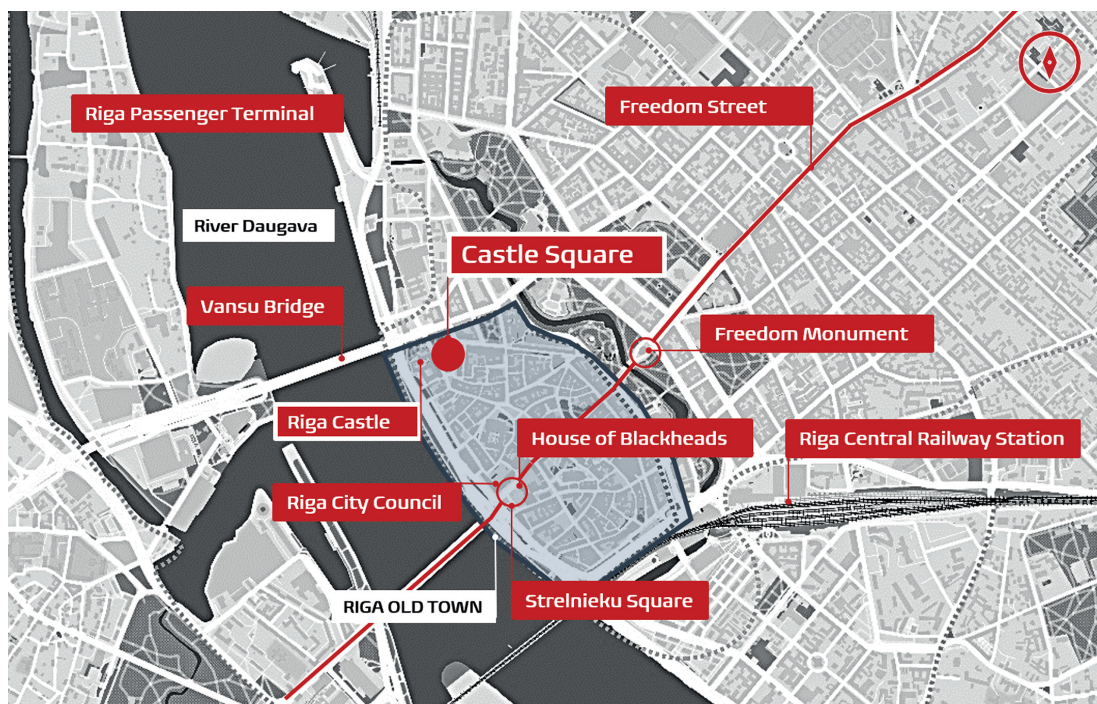

Figure 1. Situation of the Castle Square in Riga Old Town.

Figure 2. Main viewpoints to the Castle Square.

and religious institutions to professional urbanists, provides a comprehensive context for an analytical thread. It enables researchers to take the practicality of the ordinary ritual of designing and use it to examine generalised assumptions, such as communicative planning, the theory vs. practice juxtaposition, concerns about "choreographed" citizen engagement or the potential ideologising of planners.

The analysis in a condensed mode uses the data gathered by following a 10-year-long design process in which the author participated both as a designer and as a researcher. This provided advantageous access to the full range of information, observing the communicative dynamics from the inside, participating in the elaboration of spatial analysis and design solutions, analysing plans and normative framework set out during these 10 years, making observations and taking notes, as well as executing in-depth and semi-structured interviews with the involved stakeholders, which included high-ranking politicians, individually and in groups, in public and private interviewing settings. The time span provided an opportunity to conduct several retrospective semi-structured interviews, which helped to verify the assumptions made about the socio-psychological aspects during the process. These two conditions—extensive time and the insider position—helped to create a rich informative basis for conducting a thick description.

The thick description (Geertz, 2008) is effected by historization which is aligned in three axes: the institutional axis of public space transformations in Riga during the decades following Latvia's independence in 1991, the axis of the socio-spatial milestones of the history of the Castle Square, and the axis of micro-dynamics of the everyday practice illustrated by the story of the contest and the project elaboration.

The contribution of the article is that generalization from interactional settings of the small-scale public space project justifies its analytical usefulness in researching non-physical tacit, thus methodologically difficult to-access phenomena. The application of Bourdieu's concept of habitus enables accessing the micro-level of socio-psychological dynamics underlying stakeholders' decision-making. This requires observable scale, time, and a number of participants as well as the exemplarity and diversity of the situations, which this case provides.

The article is structured as follows: Section 3 gives a short overview of the recent literature in the discourse, which applies Bourdieu's conceptual frame. Section 4 looks at the relevance of the concept of habitus for analysing urban projects and explains key notions used in the case. Section 5 provides a brief outline of the planning and design context in Riga in the last three decades, with a particular focus on public space. Sections 6 and 7 deal with the research case—the construction project of the Castle Square. One explains spatiotemporal characteristics that played a crucial role in elaborating and communicating design solutions, whereas the other reflects socio-psychological dynamics of the process, analysed through the concepts of habitus. Section 8 offers discussions on the relevance of Bourdieu's framework for researching non-physical phenomena of urban practice.

3. Dichotomised Discussions in Urban Planning and Bourdieu's Relationality

The inconsistencies in the urban practice process are often discussed with dichotomic aspiration—on theory and practice (for discussion, see Forester, 2020), on communicative and instrumental rationalities (see Innes & Booher, 2015), and on consensus and conflict (see Legacy et al., 2019).

The "pro-theoretical" view recognizes that knowledge on the social nature of planning is filtered down

"through an unmediated process of 'enlightenment'" in education and reflective practice (Alexander, 2003, p. 182) to the practitioners perceiving their practice between expertise and technology. The confronting statement is that planners' actions "must be crafted in place" because they face new situations without preconceived principles and a prescribed code of conduct (Sanyal, 2002, p. 119). This thread of arguments can be traced in the recent contributions to the issue of ideology dynamics in planning, where planners' self-assessment as dealing with practical situations is mistrusted while the "planner in her everyday work inevitably becomes ideologically implicated and an entangled player in broader struggles for political hegemony" (Metzger et al., 2021, p. 318).

Debates on rationality highlighted opposed approaches in planning—one of the "rational" planning model (RPM) with its affiliation with scientific decision model, predictability, and predominance of spatial characteristics (see Faludi, 2013; Huxley & Yiftachel, 2000) and advocacy, radical, and especially collaborative planning theory, which argue for recognition of planning activity as being embedded in day-to-day social relations and the usefulness of collaborative approach (Albrechts, 2015; Davidoff, 1965; Friedmann, 2011; Healey, 2020; Innes, 1995; Sandercock, 1998). The heavily polarized theoretical debate between RPM and collaborative planning theory followers "has been at the expense of alternative sociocultural theoretical approaches that are worthy of serious consideration" (Howe & Langdon, 2002, p. 210).

There is a consensus among scholars about the ability of Bourdieu's framework to overcome juxtapositions (Fogle, 2011; Medvetz & Sallaz, 2018; Shin, 2013) and:

> To range along levels of abstraction and to travel smoothly across analytic scales to link large structures of power (a country, state or metropolis) and the meso level of institutions (such as fields of cultural production, science, journalism and politics) to the minutiae of everyday interaction and the phenomenological texture of subjectivity encapsulated by the term of practice. (Wacquant, 2018a, p. 92)

Although there is a considerable number of applications of Bourdieu's ToP in urban studies (Arnholtz, 2018; Shin, 2013), the scholarly contributions from the field of urban planning and design are of a rather episodical character (Howe & Langdon, 2002; Shin, 2013, 2016). Noticeable attempt to gather urban scholars under a "Bourdieusian flag" has been undertaken in the book *Habitus: A Sense of Place* with contributions from Friedman, Sandercock, Healey, Hillier, and others (see Hillier & Rooksby, 2005). Other contributions include Fogle (2011), Flyvbjerg (2001), Howe and Langdon (2002), Marom (2014), and Webster (2011). They test Bourdieu's relational sociology and ToP for building a generic theoretical framework of urban politics and political communication. In contrast

to methodological salience concerning the Bourdieusian framework, the significant contributions to urban studies, particularly to urban planning, policy, governance, and design, come from related fields of sociology, philosophy, management, and institutional studies. A notable example is an analytical impulse stemming from Savage (2011), Wacquant (2018a, 2018b), and Wacquant and Akçaoğlu (2017) assessing the prospects and pitfalls of Bourdieu's work in urban analysis. The social relations and cultural practices in neighbourhoods are viewed through Bourdieu's model of social space and symbolic power (Pereira, 2018). The "big-city effects" highlight the crystallisation and accumulation of "cosmopolitan cultural capital" instead of national forms of cultural authority (Savage et al., 2018). Unemployment and job precarity is assessed as a spatial question of housing design and civic access within a metropolitan hierarchy (Tissot, 2018). Finally, contributions of Bourdieu to the study of the home are used to analyse the affordability of the housing for the urban poor (Desmond, 2018).

Bourdieusian literature inspires to extend analytical attention beyond the "large-scale" issue of housing, poverty, and "big-city" effects to locality of urban greenspaces, personal attachment, and civic engagement (Krarup, 2022). Planners' practice as a subject of investigation shows how the professional structure of urban planners affects the field of urban planning in accordance with social change over time (Edman, 2001). This article, analysing planners' practice "on the ground," contributes to yet undiscussed aspects of sociopsychological patterns behind decision-making.

4. The Concept of Habitus in Analysis of Urban Project

Habitus, defined as acquired, durable, and transposable dispositions to act, think, and feel in definite ways (Bourdieu, 1990; Wacquant, 2018a) is methodologically equipped to approach the heterogeneous nature of an urban project. The latter composes a tight mesh of interacting values, identities, cognitive constructions, and actions taken "in the wild" and can be conceptualised as situations of complex knowledge (rational, social, sensual) production and human energy, cooperative as well as confronting (Pluym & Schreurs, 2012). As a collectively accepted system of rules, an urban project creates institutional facts containing an assignment of functional status, as well as clearly defined collective intentions. As with any institution, the urban project depends on financial order. It both produces and is influenced by requirements and regulations. However, there are several aspects that differentiate an urban project from a formal institution, such as a department or commission. The most crucial are *time*, *identity*, and *attitude*. Urban projects are limited in time, have defined stages, and are oriented towards practical goals. As an instrument for the realisation of a spatial intervention, it invites diverse types of knowledge and value systems, which must be negotiated in a relatively short period within uncertain

settings. Actors involved in an urban project, unlike those in traditional institutions, experience the successful end of the project as a desirable outcome. Therefore, urban projects can be perceived as temporary semi-formal institutions. An urban project involves individuals from different social and professional groups. This diversity highlights social identities and attitudes as a settled way of thinking and feeling, which serve as motivational factors. The settings of an urban project require swift decoding of written and unwritten rules, facilitate often subconscious and automated models of perception and action, and demand improvising in uncertain and new situations. An urban project thus exposes for observation the components and attributes of different *habiti* and their interaction. Below are listed a few characteristics which align the heterogenous nature of urban projects with the concept of the habitus.

Being a set of cognitive and motivational structures and dispositions, habitus is constituted in practice and always oriented towards practical functions (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 52). It is unconsciously targeted, collectively governed, and has a set of unspoken and unwritten rules and regulations. Practices produced by habitus do not react to stimuli automatically; they should be recognized by the agents. The very act of recognition (and acceptance) is neither "officially" required nor supported by habitus: An agent or group of agents have to "decode" the set of unspoken and unwritten rules mostly against the system of habitus. The act of decoding, being a stage in a process of communication, presupposes practical or explicit mastery of a code (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 2).

The "codes" are created by "masters"—specialists in the fields of cultural production. Since urban projects are symbioses of different fields (art, science, technology, politics, bureaucracy, law, and often journalism), codes or symbolic forms created by the specialists form a heterogeneous symbolic space, which is understood as a grid of mental classifications guiding agents in their decisions and actions (Bourdieu, 1989; Wacquant & Akçaoğlu, 2017).

In the relatively homogeneous social space with an uneven representation of social groups, the domination leads to the formation of *doxa*—a symbolic form of power inherent to established formal institutions and those informal or semi-formal institutions that are able to appropriate differential values. Bourdieu defines it as "a set of fundamental beliefs which does not even need to be asserted in the form of an explicit, self-conscious dogma" (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 16). This set of beliefs or opinions is an attribute of the traditional, when "what is essential goes without saying because it comes without saying," "taken for granted," and when the traditional is silent, "not least about itself as a tradition" (Bourdieu, 1977, pp. 166–167), *doxa* ensures the stability of any field, where social structures produce and reproduce themselves in practices and cognitions of agents, thus in their habitus. In this way, it is a halyard between habitus and field, mutually reinforcing and strengthening the pre-

vailing power of the *doxa*. *Doxa* is more specifically used in traditional social organisations where social and mental structures, objective social order, and subjective rationalities are in perfect correspondence. In this way, *doxa* is at the root and at the heart of unanimous responses (Deer, 2014, p. 116). *Doxa* justifies the practical sense, which is possible only when the agent collides with a familiar social field. It must resemble the field in which his socialization and formation of the structures of his habitus took place.

Doxa is also in charge of *hysteresis*—a lag between habitus and field, when the agent still reproduces the old social relations sometime after these social relations have changed or the agent has taken a different position in them. As an example, Bourdieu shows Don Quixote who fights the windmills as the enemies in his illusional world (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 16).

Illusio is another notion Bourdieu uses to name the belief that some social activities are very important and worth doing. It is a value we assign to the thing or action, always illusional. There are as many values as there are social fields: each field in a social space offers agents a specific goal. The interactions of motivations, perceptions, and actions happen around values. *Illusio* and *doxa* thus are the forces that continuously regenerate symbolic space. Figure 3 intuitively visualizes the components and attributes of habitus in relation to *doxa* and field.

5. Planning of Public Space in Riga After 1991 and Formation of Symbolic Space

The collapse of the centralized planning system after the fall of the Soviet Union changed the established institutional order and instruments of spatial transformation. The restoration of a socially and symbolically alien institute of private ownership manifested itself in the "real estate war," a maximally sharpened struggle for the appropriation of social and symbolical goods through physical space. The institutional system, based on the principles of an RPM and centralized organisation, was deconstructed in Riga during the first years of independence. The new modes of decentralized governance were compliant with the restored democratic municipal organisation (Liepa-Zemeša & Hess, 2016).

Established in 1994, the Riga Development Department aimed to cope with the new challenges presented by a free market economy and a democratic system of government. Nevertheless, it retained the inner structure of its functional predecessor—the Riga Chief Architect Board, founded in 1944, and the legacy of the first independent state as observed practice in post-socialist cities (Tsenkova & Nedovic-Budic, 2006). The institutional traditions can also be traced back to the end of the 19th century when the modern structure of Riga City Municipality was introduced along with the reforms realized in the Russian Empire. The then-established Construction Commission had

Figure 3. The components and attributes of habitus and field.

comprehensive tasks of supervising the planning of both public and private construction, installation, and maintenance of engineer communications, as well as public spaces and greenery (Bennett, 2019). Riga historically had a strong tradition of planning, building, and maintaining public spaces and green infrastructure. As an institutional reaction to the fire of 1812 which had devastated the Riga neighbourhood, the Committee for Suburban Greenery was established. The plan for the rebuilding of neighbourhoods elaborated by it became the cornerstone for the centre of Riga's spatial layout with its extraordinary interplay of green, blue, and built structure for centuries to come. It is remarkable that the institution founded at that time, alongside the Commission for Suburban Greenery Construction, endured socio-economical disasters and structural changes throughout nearly three centuries, maintaining its profile and important role until nowadays. Since the beginning of the 18th century, when Riga entered a politically and economically less turbulent period, its public and green spaces became a matter of special political and professional attention, and with time the city has maintained the reputation of an innovator in the art of gardening. This tradition remained well maintained during the Soviet period.

The time of deep socio-economic and political restructuring at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries can be viewed as a demarcation line when architecture and planning of public space started to draw different professional attention, shifting it towards the policy and quality aspects of architecture, but undermining the public space issues. To enhance the realm of planning and following the enthusiasm for national rebirth, professionals of Latvian origin who had practiced their profession abroad returned to Latvia, introducing contemporary knowledge and professional habits of Western planning and architectural practices (Liepa-Zemeša & Hess, 2016). The elaboration of the first territorial plan of Riga—Plan 1995—was guided by Andris Roze (Canada), engaging a mixed team of young professionals and specialists with Soviet-time experience. The Plan 1995 was designed

according to the principles of collaborative planning theory, involving different stakeholders, ranging from the experts to the general public and had an ambition to elaborate a strategic spatial plan. Unfortunately, it was undermined by the realities of legal restrictions of land-use planning legislation (Geldof et al., 2008) and was later criticised for its too-general character, legal incapability, and illusive attitude to the property aspects (Akmentiņa, 2020).

A less significant engagement with the city public space, in general, and with the Riga Historical Centre (RHC), in particular, can be partly assigned to the phenomenon of hysteresis. In this context, hysteresis refers to situations where planning specialists who are used to working under the conditions of the centralized planning system, reproduce social relations of RPM habitus, incongruent with an emerging reality of reconstructed institution of private property and absence of defined building principles and clear goals which emerged after the real estate wars. The sharp contrast in values of these specialists with the values of emerging financial, political, and business elites drew multiple red lines and caused disruptions in the planning process. The hysteresis is mirrored in the underdeveloped normative body of laws and regulations both on the national and municipal levels concerning public spaces. Within and before the elaboration of the Riga Territorial Plan 2006–2018, several events on public space took place. Among them are a draft of RIGA Greenery in 2006, the workshop "Public Space—Challenges and Opportunities," and research on the natural foundation in the RHC. These events formulate challenges concerning the public spaces policy of that time, which can be summarized as a lack of systematic approach to green infrastructure and public spaces.

In the absence of stable procurements and procedures, competitions of various types became a popular if not a main instrument for mediating spatial and aesthetic quality, economic feasibility, legislative aspects, and social responsibility among stakeholders involved and wider professional and civic society (Leitāne-Šmīdberga, 2014, 2016; Mikelsone, 2016).

The profile of the competition shows the misbalanced relationship between architecture and public space as discussed above. After 1991, the competitions organised on the national level were five to 10 per year. The number of competitions reached its peak during the economic boom in the middle of the second decade, when there were more than 70, with private companies constituting most organisers (Leitāne-Šmīdberga, 2014, p. 11). From 590 contests organised in Latvia between 1991 and 2018, more than 350 pertained to Riga, distributed as around 90 out of RHC and around 250 in RHC and protection zone. The opposite situation, concerning both quantity and the customer, can be observed in the realm of public spaces. Organized between 2005 and 2015, only nine of 250 competitions were devoted to RHC public space. Most of the contests were initiated by the municipality and have not resulted in construction works (Figure 4).

6. The Spatiotemporal Structure of the Castle Square as a Bearer of Symbolic Space

The contest for the Castle Square in 2009 was only the second one organised for this place in more than 100 years. The first one was organized in 1902 with the winning proposal by the famous landscape architect Georg Kuphaldt (Dāvidsone, 1988). Realized in 1904, it preserved the pre-existing composition of Dutch baroque, though introducing some adjustments (Figure 5). The medieval building fabric of European city centres resisted the openness and *la grande maniere* of the classic garden, maintaining the characteristics of late baroque such as the intimacy of the garden, division into boxes, separation of the palace facade from the garden with tree plantings to hide the visitors of the garden from the eyes of others, and a combination of park-like and formal greenery (Likhachev, 1998, p. 116).
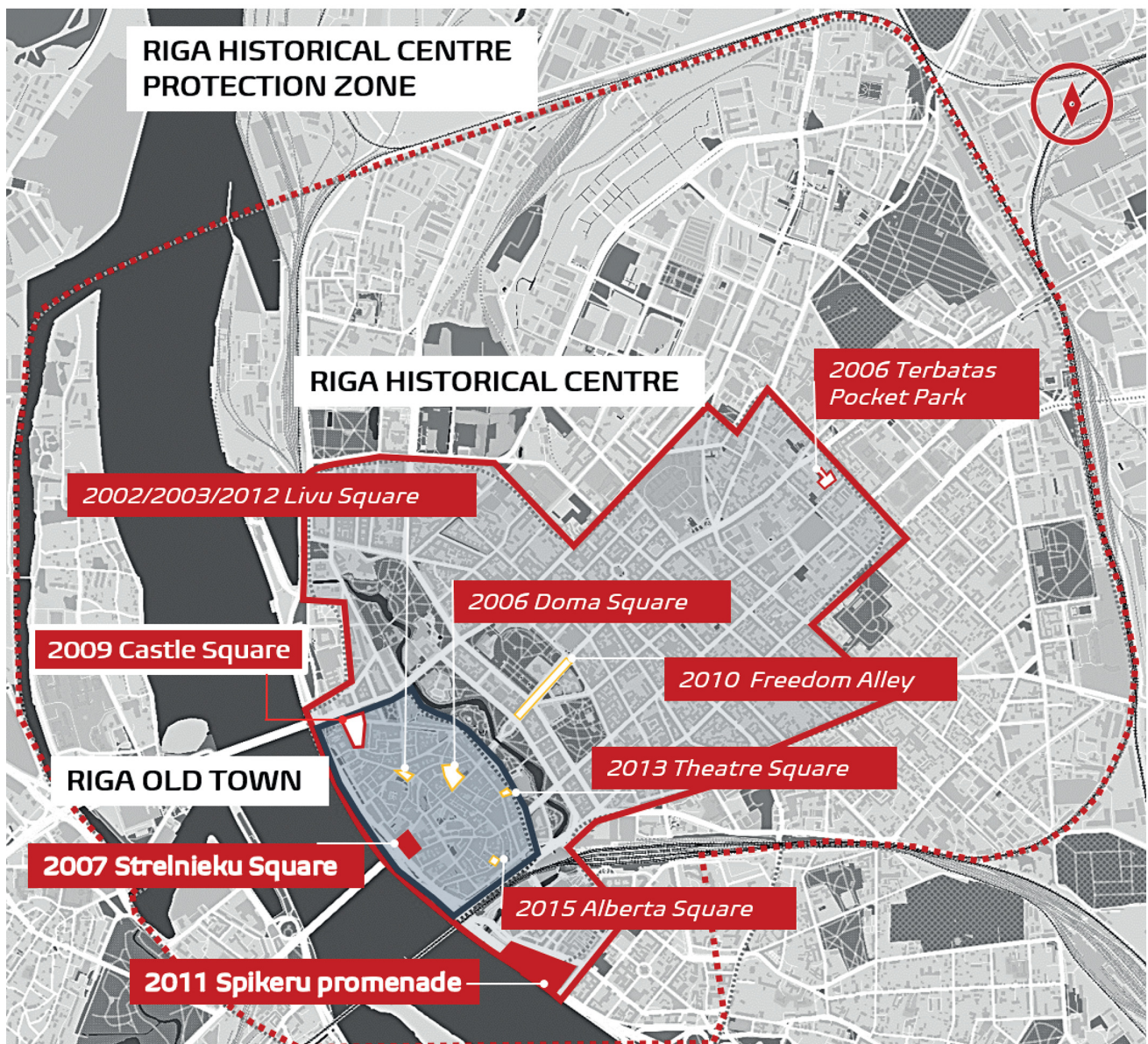
Figure 4. Competitions for public space in the RHC, organized between 1995 and 2015.
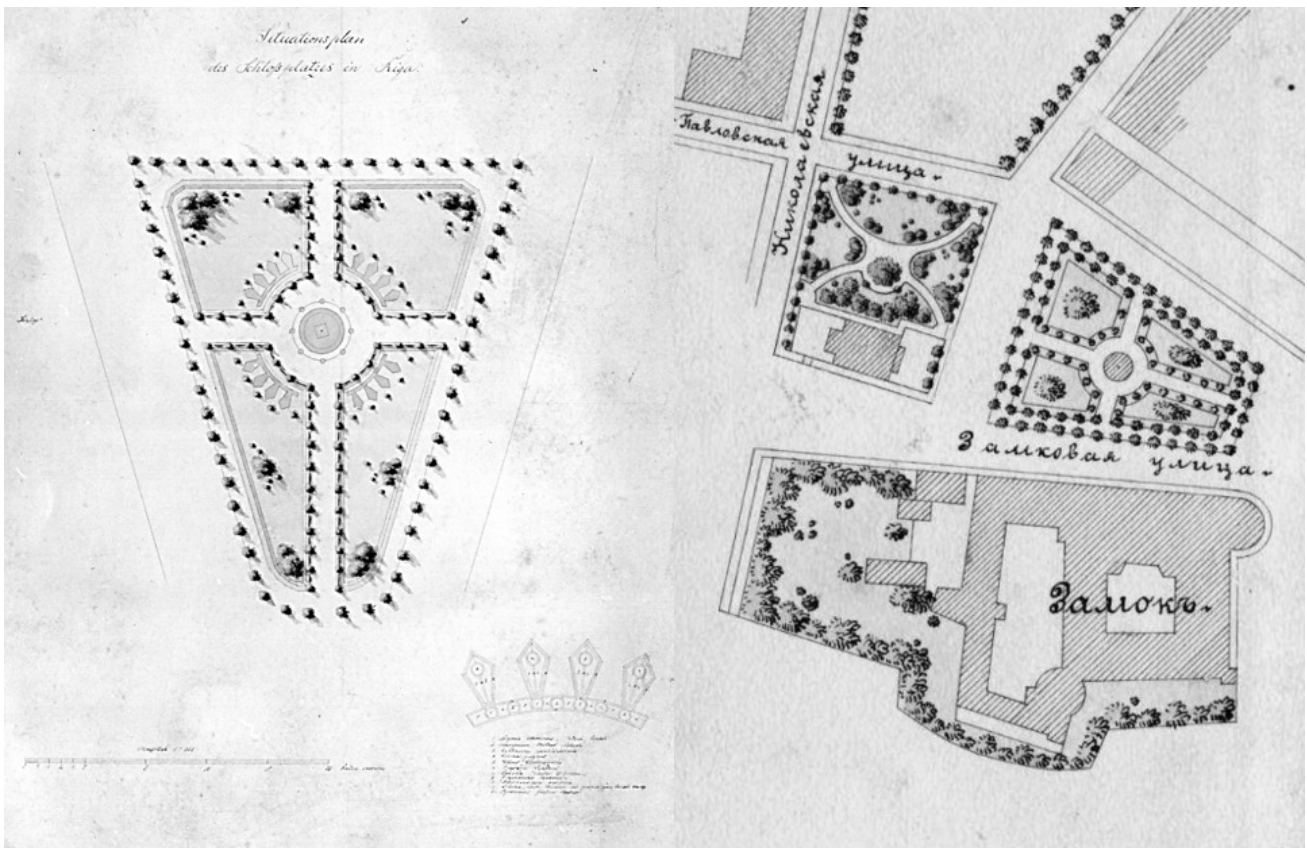
Figure 5. The central part of Castle Square laid out as a garden in the Dutch Baroque style: Plan of the Castle Square, signed by G. Kuphaldt, ca. 1881 (left) and 1902 (right).

Habitus is historically embedded. Its practical sense is formed by temporal structures, i.e., its rhythm, tempo, and especially direction, which are fundamental for practical feeling (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 81). The historical line of the Castle Square exposes two attributes: the rhythm and pace of its transformations and the manifestation of symbolic power in physical space. Defining the dominant authenticity of the physical structure of the place in front of the Riga Castle and aligning the design with a historical perspective is a challenge because the main temporal characteristic of the place is a continuous and rhythmic change of physical structure. Since the 13th century, the place has been restructured and reshaped in different modes around 16 times, having a deeper mode and slower pace between the end of the 13th and beginning of the 18th centuries (about three changes) and shallow mode and rapid pace since the beginning of the 18th century until the present day (around 13 changes).

The new history of the place, its "modern" period, is a set of frequent and rhythmical spatial interventions that concern rather the matter of "style" than possession of land, except one which was caused by the urbanisation and development of technologies (construction of a bridge). The rhythm of changes in the "new era" shows a basic step of about 30 years with higher frequency in the time of the first republic (four-to-five-year step) and Soviet period (ca. 10-year step), having a 23-year step till the Second World War and a 33-year step after the Singing Revolution until now (Figure 6).

According to Bourdieu, temporal structures are incarnated in "physical space as reified social space" (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 162) by the guidance of omnipresent and omnipotent symbolic schemes. The physical space of the yearly period mirrored the constant struggle between the Rigans and the Livonian Order, where a rebellious, independence-seeking military habitus of the ruling class of traders, artisans, and craftsmen (the Brotherhood of Blackheads) in the booming city of the Hanseatic League constantly violated the religious authority of the military habitus of the Livonian Order.

The ditch and fortifications around the Livonian Castle, when the Order was pushed out of the city, was a remnant of this struggle and remained in the physical fabric more than 200 years after the Livonian Order ceased to exist in 1562. The Castle Square, having been integrated into the city fabric in 1783 after the ditch was filled up, remained at the geographic periphery of the city and at the periphery of the Rigans' perception and use, even though the Riga Castle became the residence of secular Polish, Swedish, Russian, and at last also Latvian powers.

The struggle of "two castles"—the Blackhead House and the Livonian Castle—is incorporated not only in the spatial memory and social life of two places in Old Riga but also inscribed in the perception of citizens
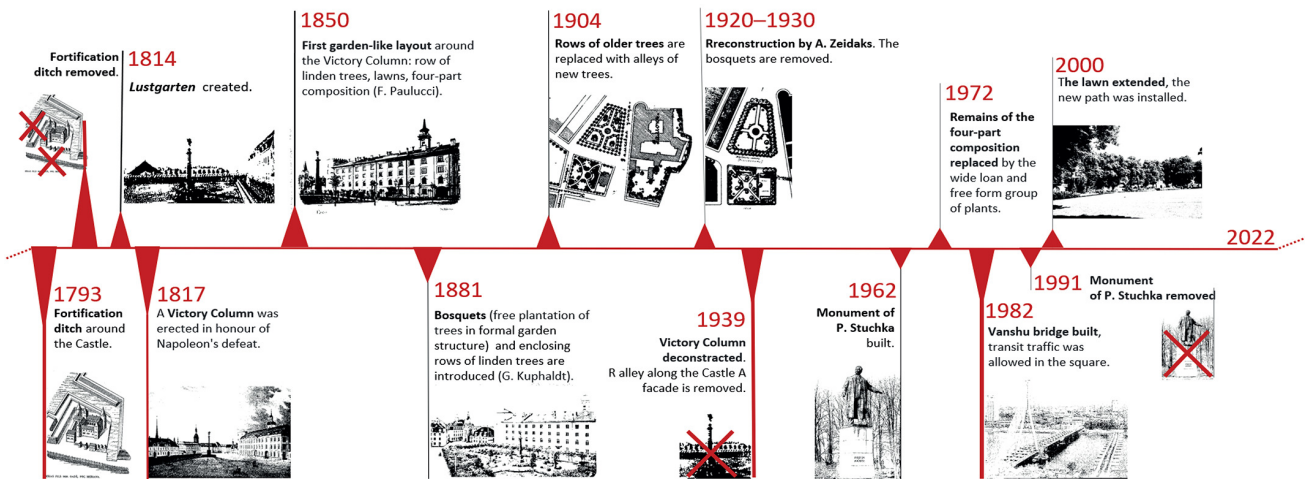
Figure 6. Chronological line showing the rhythm and pace of spatial changes. Source: Author's work based on Zudusī Latvija (n.d.).

and professionals dealing with city-making. The results of a survey conducted in 2002 show less interest of respondents in the Castle Square, pointing to six other places as potential priorities, all located in the centre of the Old Town (Bratuškins, 2006, p. 4). The workshop for the experts, organised within the URBACT II project "Sustainable Development of Urban Space" in June 2013, analysed the eight places of RHC with an aim to define the priority spaces. Although the Castle Square was scored high and named among spaces of higher priority, it was not chosen as a case for the next URBACT workshop. Instead, the work focused on Strelnieku Square, which was reconstructed in 2021 in the administrative centre of Riga, where, among others, the Blackhead House is located. It is worth mentioning that the Blackhead House, demolished in 1948, was built anew as one of the first within the rapid renewal of the administrative centre of Riga between 1996 and 1999, with funds provided by bankers and crowdfunding. The Riga Castle renovation works, however, started nearly 20 years after the regaining of independence and were partly finished in 2016.

The spatial oppositions (centre/periphery) of the two centres—the administrative centre of Riga and the administrative centre of the Latvian state—strengthen the differences in their socio-spatial profiles. The first is highly diverse, hosting the building of the Riga City Council, the Museum of Occupation, the House of the Blackheads as a centre of cultural events and a historical exhibition, residential buildings, and a large number of cafés, hotels, and restaurants. The second is populated by high-ranking state institutions, representing political, economic, traditional, artistic, religious, administrative and other fields, sustained by a habitus with a strong emphasis on "tradition" and "order" (Figure 7). The place, in the words of Loic Wacquant (2022), is a physical demonstration of the power of a state as a symbolic agency that sets out the broader parameters of

physical, social, and symbolic space in the city while fostering or hindering the concentration and operation of rival symbolic agencies.

7. The Design Process of the Castle Square as a Manifestation of Habitus

The contest brief adopted the proposals from the planning documents and earlier research, translating them into requirements for design. As it was stated in the brief, these considered improving the planning and spatial structure of the Castle Square by developing a representative space for the presidential protocol, recovering the layout typical of the square of the Classicism era in the middle of the square; improving the connection between Old Riga and the Citadel; and distancing traffic from the perception of Castle Square physically, visually, and acoustically. The characteristics of the "classic" garden style were explained as a symmetrical trapezoidal square, delimiting the row of buildings built in front of the Palace, with a column in the middle, which corresponds with classical principles.

The brief stated that the square should regain the characteristic layout of the classicist square in the middle part of the square and the greenery should be reconstructed, preserving the valuable trees. Among all the requirements, "historicism" became a "stumbling block," bringing the practical issue of trees to the level of public scandal in 2010. The highly important question of traffic organization, controversially formulated in the brief, has not constituted a constraint and was one of the first to be solved within the elaboration of a technical project.

The six entries delivered different solutions, maximally covering the diversity of possible interpretations of three key components—traffic, "classical" style, and reconstruction of the existing green structure. Attempting to translate the statements of the brief into design solutions, each of the participants had to disobey

Labels on image:
- Bank of Latvia
- Office of the President of the Republic of Latvia
- State Heraldry Commission
- National History Museum of Latvia
- The Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments
- Museum of Literature and Music
- Restaurant *Alus Arsenāls*
- Latvian National Centre of Culture
- Department of EU and Foreign Economic Relations
- Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church
- Baltic Communications Office Ltd.
- Restaurant *Vecmeita ar kaķi*
- Latvian National Commission for UNESCO

Figure 7. Institutional profile of the Castle Square, 2009–2022.

one or two requirements to a larger or lesser extent. Two obeyed the claim to restore "classical" style, improving the existing functionality, one by simple, clear, and functional composition, preserving all trees, another referencing existing eclectic style, but removing the historical alley of linden trees. Both proposals significantly changed the configurations of the Lustgarten paths network. Other two replicated the composition of a formal garden with or without plants, in this way translating the description of a "classic garden" provided in the brief. Two created open paved squares in the central part, drastically intervening with the historical structure of the trees. One enacted the modern rearticulation of historical plantings, deconstructing the formal character formed by the remains of historical alleys; another offered "traditional" reading, restoring the open character of the "classic" square, at its closest reconstructing the historical situation of the 18th century, when the square was formed by the surrounding architecture without later introduced plantings.

The green structure was approached differently as well. Four entries interpreted the contest brief to be to design a garden, one to design a modern square, and one a classic square. Four entries interpreted the aim of the contest to be to design a garden and two—a square—a "modern square" and a "classic square." Both "square" approaches, as well as that of "gardens" with replicas of

existing landscape-like characters, removed the northern alley of linden trees, evaluated in the inventory as valuable. The "classic square" proposal, in opposition to the two others, consequently holding the "classic" line, preserved the row of the trees with formed crones, as it was planned by Kuphaldt for the alleys and the rows.

The three entries were nominated by the interdisciplinary jury, however with a dominating majority of architects with specialisation in The HC environment. The "classic square" proposal was selected as the winner, because it offered the most sensitivity to the requirement of "classic" historical character, backed up by strong historical analysis, as well as an innovative approach to mobility and detailed elaboration of the design solutions. The third place was granted to the "garden'' project with a high level of sensitivity to the historical natural environment (all trees untouched) and equally high level of disregard for the "classic spirit" of the contest brief. The second place was given to a "modern square" with its insensibility to both historical facts of greenery and spatial composition, however with a high attractiveness of vibrant functionality and aspiration of a radical, modern approach to historical environments (Figure 8).

Influenced by a contradictory spirit of contest statements and diverse proposals, the elaboration of the project started in the conditions of a high level of both
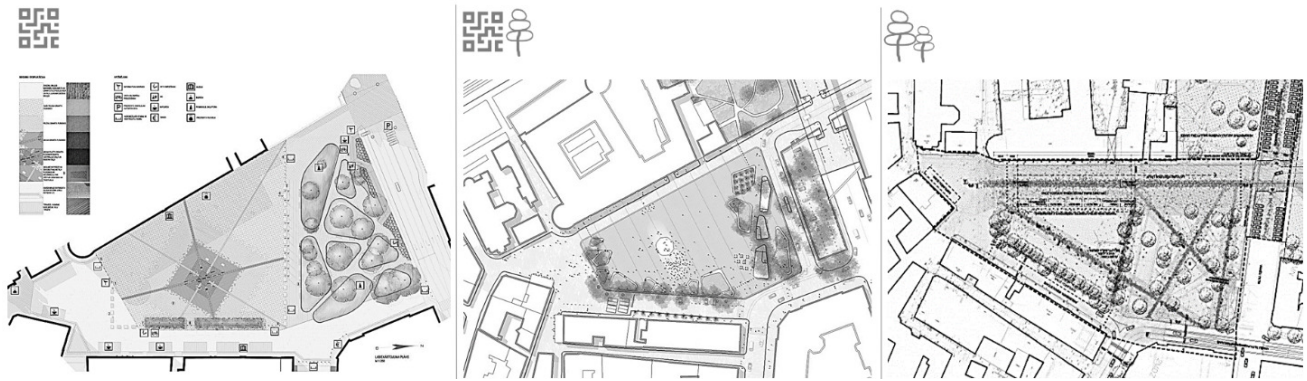
Figure 8. Winning proposals illustrate different approaches to the historical context: The first prize was awarded to ALPS, Future Living, Krauklis & Grende, and Baltatrend (left); the second prize was awarded to Fletcher Priest Architects and Grupa93 (centre); and the third prize was awarded to ARHIS (right).

explicit enthusiasm and implicit uncertainty, co-shared by the winning team and the customer, the Riga City Development Department. A contract stating a winner followed in August, pointing to a deadline in December 2009. The willingness to promptly deliver quality results and the conviction that the timetable of four months is feasible can be attributed to several factors.

Firstly, the initiative maintained a high degree of political, urban, and economic support. The contest was launched as a response to the initiating letter of the president of Latvia to the lord mayor of Riga at the beginning of 2008. It was, hence, highly loaded symbolically as an incarnation of presidential status. Moreover, it was rooted in consistent planning activities. As a result of these two factors, the investment was allocated for the project elaboration, and there was a mutual political agreement between the state and the municipality about the future investment in construction (Gutmane et al., 2013, p. 2).

Secondly, the winning proposal was highly rated by the jury. It was elaborated in detail, and the timetable was discussed with the relevant stakeholders prior to closing the contract. Thirdly, the Castle Square is "populated" mostly by institutions. As a result, it has a low diversity social profile, and the impact of the reconstruction work on the social environment of the square was evaluated as manageable. The civic activity in Latvia at that time was of relatively low intensity (Akmentiņa, 2020), mostly initiated by experts. Finally, the geographic position of the Castle Square was topical since, at the same time, the development of the Riga Passenger Terminal and its area as well as its connection to Old Riga were being widely discussed.

These accounts ensured a stable political, socio-economic, and physical "foundation" for the project, providing it with a solid symbolic but also financial capital for its successful execution. The symbolic capital, in Bourdieu's view, is a credit that the group gives to those who provide it with material and symbolic guarantees (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 120). The joint group of professional clerks and the designers with the successful contest entry provided symbolic guarantees for the initiator—a joint

group of the office of the president of Latvia and of Riga's lord mayor. The symbolic capital, just like the monetary one, is sensitive to changing conditions. It heavily depends on trust, perception, and attitude. Its stability must be continuously maintained throughout the duration of the event.

Practice is inherent to its duration. The practical strategy is continuously playing with time and especially tempo (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 120). When constructing the timeline of the case, four phases can be distinguished: collateral (the time when the initiative "profited" from a "mortgage" of the symbolic capital, ensured by high authorities of political initiators, institutional executors, as well as the winning position of the designer team), active, latent, and unmanned phase.

The *collateral phase* (May 2008–September 2009) includes establishing the new evidence—a need for a representative space of the presidential residence, from the initiation of the contest to signing the contract with the winner. Its characteristics are a defined hierarchical composition of stakeholders with high authority, reactions predicted by subordination, the unanimous (due to being politically supported) agreement about the practical goal (a modern representative square), goal-oriented coordination of actions, established procedure (contest-project-construction), the enthusiasm and emotional attachment. The disposition of the involved stakeholders to perceive the situation as predictable, "under control," can be attributed to the interiorized, and therefore unconscious, subordination to the power of the authority. This facilitated a relatively "barrier-free" execution of planned actions and gave rise to a false perception of this phase as the most significant within the cycle of designing, the feeling of "the things are done."

The *active phase* (September 2009–end of 2014) covered the elaboration of the design proposal and the procedure of obtaining permissions for the proposed design from the responsible institutions. Its characteristics are a changed set of participants, a diverse and "free-for-all" stakeholders' profile; conflicting and contradicting opinions around the *doxa* of "classic" and

"historic'' as the "universe of the undiscussed" (Bourdieu, 1977); absence of end-oriented goals in the group of the authored commissions; turbulent and disordered communication, where designers and planners had to abandon their reflective habits and "communicative" habitus in order to form quick responses to the constantly arising challenges of technical, communicative, and psychological nature; opportunistic behaviour of responsible politicians; and collective feeling of despair and dissatisfaction with the previously accepted design. This constituted a "breaking point" when public discussion on the old trees' destiny deleted the "classic" approach of the winning design and transitioned the project to the next phase.

The *latent phase* (2014–2016) included actions of low intensity like formal issues regarding the contract (the team of designers initiated the termination of the contract) and informal communication on the past and the future of the project (the renewal of the acceptance process). The phase is characterised by a limited number of participants (only those involved in the legal procedure), unambitious goal-oriented work, emotional detachment from the project, and feelings of relief.

The *unmanned phase* (2016–2018) covers the period from the repeated tender for the technical project in 2016 until its acceptance in 2018. Its characteristics are a defined hierarchical composition of stakeholders with moderate authority and social capital; goal-oriented coordination of actions; an established procedure (project acceptation); renewed discussion on "historicism" concerning lighting issues that do not lead to a breaking point; and moderate emotional attachment, motivated by the necessity to finish the project. Interviews conducted at that time show evidence of emotional tiredness of the stakeholders involved (designers, responsible commissions, and managers of the project).

Due to botched negotiations, the doomed project could, fortunately, be quit early upon mutual agreement of the participants. On one hand, it enabled the finishing of the project; on the other, it constituted a loss of political, bureaucratic, and civic interest in the place.

8. Conclusions

Contributing to the analysis of socio-psychological dynamics of urban practice, the article provided specifications on which and how components interact when decisions are made during the design process. The assumption was made that the everyday of urban planning practitioners is guided by the logic of their practice when they continuously converge social and physical spaces under conditions of relative uncertainty. This convergence occurs by enacting socially constructed and interiorized ways of thinking, which Bourdieu conceive within the concept of habitus, and which often form influential symbolic space, strongly impacting the outcomes. The concept of habitus as a central in the ToP of Pierre Bourdieu was applied in the analysis of the case of a small-scale urban project in UNESCO pro-

tected area—the square in front of the presidential office of Latvia. Using the vocabulary of habitus-related concepts—*illusio*, *doxa*, and hysteresis—an attempt was made to trace the interrelations between the motivations and actions of professionals involved in the project and their influence on the results.

The choice of the case and the theoretical framework can be defined by several considerations. Firstly, symbolically and socially saturated public space in a historical area is the most appropriate for analysing these relations from a historical perspective. Secondly, designing public space involves a set of diverse stakeholders whose perceptions and actions form a turbulent communicative landscape, providing an exemplary opportunity to study patterned practices "in the wild." Thirdly, habitus, a set of acquired, durable, and transposable dispositions as models of cognition and action, is methodologically equipped to approach the heterogeneous nature of an urban project, which exposes the components and attributes of different types of habitus and their interaction.

The analysis of the case, aimed at answering a practical research question of why the realization of symbolically and spatially significant and supported by most stakeholders public space project was frustrated led to several conclusions. One is that the process was hampered by the effect of *hysteresis*—the discrepancy between habitus and the field where it acts. The field of planning and architecture, merged with at that time rapidly transforming fields of business, law, and economics, already having institutions compliant with the restored democratic municipal organisation, nevertheless upholds the rituals and "codes" of RPM habitus—affiliation with the scientific decision model, predictability, and predominance of spatial characteristics. Neither the authoritative initiator nor the knowledge about participative practices brought by multiple workshops and foreign experts helped to avoid the application of the "traditional," behind-the-door, formalized procedure of decision-making.

Another conclusion is that those involved in the procedure experienced difficulties in "decoding": The logic of communicative planning practice was not automatically recognized by the specialists used to apply the logic of RPM and vice versa. Not having any knowledge of how to enter "a code" of RPM habitus, the designer's team, which involved foreign experts and urban activists, tried to insert the collaborative ritual into the process, unconsciously following the logic of collaborative habitus. Interestingly, the Commission for Preservation and Development of the RHC (RVC SAP)—the player with the most symbolic capital and, consequently, symbolic power—consisted not only of the representatives of the traditional institutions but also of the practising well-known architects, high-rank clerks, involved in the democratic institutional reorganisation and young professors from academia. Thus, one would not evaluate RVC SAP as "stagnant." Additionally, the still-operating RVC SAP had no status of a formal institution; the experts

were involved on a volunteering basis, and its opinion has an advisory rather than a legally binding character. However, this commission evaluated the project during the first two phases 14 times between 2009 and 2014. During this time, the designers tried to clarify their arguments by elaborating five finalized and several in-between variants, studies of traffic, hydrology, dendrology, history, infrastructure, lighting, social profile, and underground communications, creating about 20 books with technical drawings and a participation plan.

This leads to the conclusion that the anamnesis of the case suggests a strongly developed bureaucratic field inhabiting its autonomous, self-referential symbolic space. The relative autonomy of symbolic space arises wherein symbolic forms are elaborated by specialists according to internal criteria (Wacquant, 2022). This statement is supported when one observes the local institutional systems in the field, which operate out of touch with the practical topicalities, promoting bureaucracy rather than the quality of architecture (Miķelsone, 2019). Self-promoting logic of practice in the bureaucratic field of planning in Riga, keeping alive the old RPM habitus of "making plans not places," results in the inefficiency of vertically and hierarchically organised governance structures. It paralyses the creative ability of professional civil servants to take responsibility, which, in turn, leads to the politicization of the managerial level, where decisions are taken "on the phone" as the most efficient city development instrument.

Bourdieu's ToP offers two concepts—*illusio* and *doxa*—which explain the persistence of these symbolic forms and their symbolic power. These concepts offer a plausible explanation for why planners and designers, both public sector and private practitioners, were not able to join forces despite the shared stimuli to create a so much needed liveable, modern, and representative place in Riga's urban fabric. Bourdieu conceived *illusio* as a shared sense of purpose within a field, as a kind of *collusio* (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 145). The shared value, undoubtedly, was a new quality of the Castle Square. But *collusio* becomes an individual's own sense of purpose once they begin to invest themselves (Threadgold, 2018). The decision of where to invest can be taken unconsciously when there is a lack of time or unclear context. The concept of habitus supports the conceptualization of urban planning practice as assemblages of diverse interdependent interactional settings where fraternities of practice communities communicate around values.

The analysis of the contest and the process of the project elaboration leads to the final conclusion: Among several important and practical aspects such as traffic, greenery, and space for presidential protocol, which were mentioned in the contest brief and needed real improvement, obscure historic value became a demarcation line between the professionals, caused the prolongation of the procedure, and finally resulted in the collective denial of the project implementation, letting the project fade slowly from the financial, political, and psy-

chological investments' priorities of Riga. Thus, fetishizing of historicism is a form of symbolic power, which heritage institutions like the National Cultural Heritage Administration, RVC SAP, and the heritage section of the Development Department unconsciously "overimpose." It often occurs at the expense of the quality of public spaces and economic feasibility.

With regards to the more specific discussions concerning debates on consensus and conflict and undermined or abused democratic character of participation (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2012; Metzger, 2017), the analysis of the case does not detect the arranged "choreographies" of citizen engagement or purposeful attempts to tame the conflict. Moreover, the disturbed communication cannot be understood in terms of conflict since there were no situations that the participants could label as "conflict," and consensus was reached in many of them. On the contrary, communicative planning tools used by the design team, although not able to prevent the undesired outcome, contributed to the growing participation wave in Riga, involving museums, pupils, artists, pastors, and the president.

The evidence also supports the Bourdieusian "toolbox" of habitus as more appropriate in explaining planners' practice since more than 20 professionals involved in the process explicitly and implicitly enacted different urban metaphors from classical sustainability to the newborn empathic city. Because of their relatively short existence in the symbolic space, these are not able to become an "ideology" on the ground, a "discourse that generates a sense of shared societal mission" (Metzger et al., 2021, p. 306), guiding decisions and action until they become *illusio* and *doxa*.

To summarize, one can state that the symbolic significance of a place makes salient symbolic space understood as a grid of cognitive structures guiding agents in their choices. When representative public spaces are transformed, the symbolic space imposes on the social and physical spaces through the symbolic forms of power used by specialists (Bourdieu, 2018). This offers an interpretation of heritage as a manifestation of habitus and historical public spaces as a social interface, expressing an interplay between traditional and emerging values.

The conceptual toolbox of Bourdieu's ToP, particularly the concepts of habitus, *doxa*, *illusio*, and hysteresis, is equipped to analytically assess the everyday rituals of urban design practice, where the almost mystical process of making decisions occurs. It offers methodological access to socio-psychological dynamics of decision-making and therefore micro-dynamics of power. How decisions are made is a source of never-ending discrepancies in urban planning practice, heavily impacting the outcome—physical and thus social—as well as the economic and psychological environment of the city.

The argument presented in the article highlights Bourdieu's ToP as a framework that, analytically relating symbolic, social, and physical space, can create a methodologically sustainable and diverse landscape, enabling

navigation between spatial scales and analytical levels, merging comparative urban studies into a broader topological science (Wacquant, 2022). Following topological mode of reasoning and overcoming duality of theory and practice, it offers a relational alternative to theoretical polarization of such phenomena of urban practice as the physical and the social, the rational and the collaborative, power and powerless.

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Conflict of Interests

Supplementary Material

Supplementary material for this article is available online in the format provided by the author (unedited).

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