

h u m a n

The word 'human' is rendered in a large, bold, sans-serif font. The letters are filled with a dark, textured material. In the center of the word, between the 'u' and the 'a', there is a silhouette of a group of people sitting around a table, engaged in a discussion or meeting. The silhouettes are dark and detailed, showing individual figures and their interactions.

mediators

Ljubljana: Urban Scripts f

Studio Tutor

Markus Schaefer and Marijn Spoelstra, Mountainworks, The Hague

Participants

Tina Jelenc, Jung Bin Kim, Ryuta Oohori, Yoko Sano, and Changho Yeo

Client

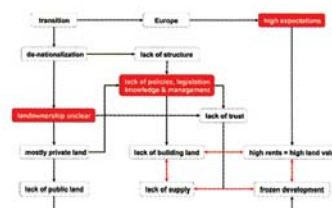
City of Ljubljana, Marin Gajsek, Head of Urban Planning

Globalization is weakening and positioning cities, increasing competition and creating opportunities for growth. It certainly questions a city's strategy and traditional means of planning. The aim of the studio was to develop an approach to integrate the scales and methods of strategic planning and project development using scenarios and (proto-)typologies to create an "urban script." The studio was taught by an architect and a financial consultant. Between the direction given by vision and strategy and the constraint established through an understanding of development mechanisms (or vice versa), urban imagination and architectural innovation unfolded

Light Capital

Ljubljana has been a national capital since 1991, the year of independence of Slovenia from Yugoslavia, and an European Union capital since 2004. While built on layers of older political systems, national capitals have historically been established and characterized by the mechanisms that shaped the modern nation-state, the establishment of democratic governance structures and buildings, industrial and infrastructural growth (railroads and, later, highways), a shareholder-based banking system and the national banks, or the technical universities. The current global context is very different. Cities are subjected to dispersion or even contraction, finding at best new life in polycentric

diagnosis

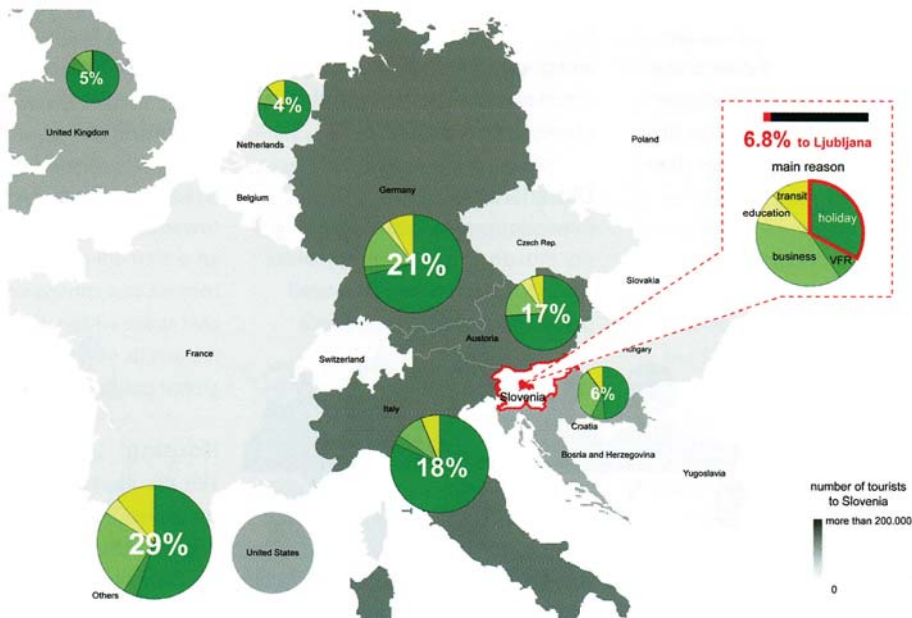


City physiology: the large suburban shopping mall BTC thrives while the city center is blocked due to the de-nationalization of property, high expectations, and a lack of quality.

city regions and at worst facing decline in one of the new global hinterlands. However, cities are gaining importance again as producers of cultural innovation. The creative class, according to Richard Florida, the emergent force in the

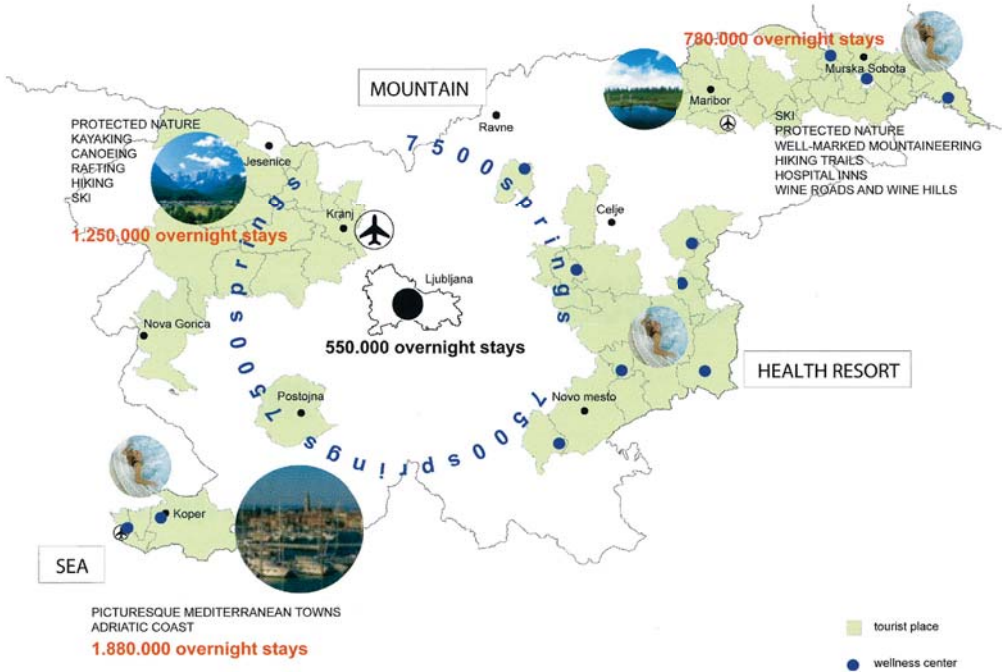
global knowledge-driven economy, is moving to cities. The companies are following this essential but mobile resource.

A case study of five small European cities, some of them capitals (Dublin, The Hague, Bilbao, Bern, Bratislava), showed tools like master planning employed by a strong public hand to manage and direct growth are replaced with strategic plans that define a framework for new alliances between public and private interests. These alliances focus on projects to create a specific urban experience. In this context, the identity of Ljubljana could be seen as an assembly of four layers: the Baroque city, the post-earthquake reconstruction, the city built by



Percentage of Europeans who visit Slovenia

or a Light Capital



Undoing the doughnut: currently tourists visit all of Slovenia except Ljubljana. Yet Ljubljana could be a hub from where to explore the country.

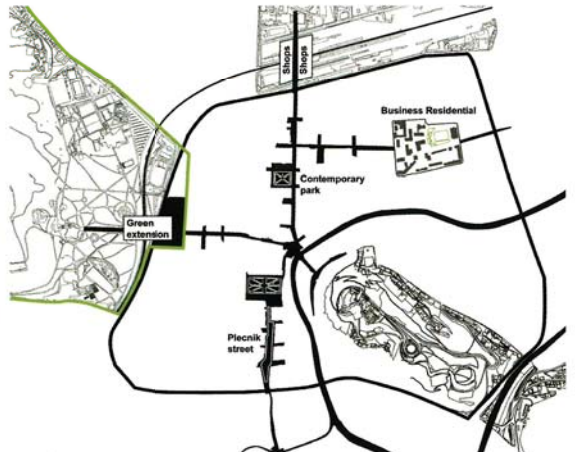
Plecnik and others during the "Drava province period" (when Slovenia was part of the Kingdom of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs), and the fourth layer established under socialist rule. The independence would allow establishing a fifth layer that characterizes Ljubljana as a European capital of the 21st century. The symbolic qualities of a capital city are traditionally understood in terms of history, monumentality and centrality. Ljubljana has had only a very short history as a capital.

With the exception of moments of coherence created by architects and urbanists like Plecnik and Ravnika, it lacks the monumental qualities of an established capital and has an uneasy relationship with Slovenia regarding its central role. Despite its geopolitically strategic location between Europe and the Balkans, it is not a city that has a large growth potential due to its global or regional economic and geographic positions. On the contrary, it even seems that an overstated potential

for growth after joining the EU currently blocks development. Yet Ljubljana could be a capital where, in a small and "light" format, politics, culture, commerce and urbanity could coexist with equal value. Can an urban design be rendered to represent a leisure-culture and knowledge-driven society? Could Ljubljana be a center for the emerging creative class? Can new types of urbanity emerge that will be essential to not only perpetuate, but to reinvent the city?



Ring of exacerbated difference: new developments at the outer ring road create new opportunity and urbanity, both sufficiently different from the city center.



Re-conceptualization of the city center: "urban corridors" can regenerate the historic monuments and undo the existing fragmentation of the city.