*Matjaž URŠIČ**

ONLINE NEWS MEDIA AND LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS IN THE URBAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS – THE CASE OF RENOVATING THE BEŽIGRAD STADIUM IN LJUBLJANA

Abstract. *The transition from printed to online media has not only simplified and shortened the reporting process from the field but also improved access to news and ways for readers to react to reporting. The article focuses on an analysis of online news media that have opened up new possibilities for specific groups of readers interested in the urban development process to express their opinions. Based on a database of online news items, readers' comments made on news websites, interviews with representatives of local stakeholders and research data from the field, the article analyses the socio-spatial context which leads to potential interconnections between online news media and local stakeholders linked to renovation of the Bežigrad Stadium.*
Key words: *online news media, news websites, local stakeholders, urban development, urban renovation, Bežigrad Stadium*

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Introduction – online news media in a local and global context

When analysing the relationship between media and place, Meyrowitz (2005) stresses the importance of the globalisation process. Although "all experience is local" (2005: 1), meaning that our physical experiences are proximal to our physical bodies, digitalisation and the expansion of the Internet have allowed media to expand our range of experience that was once bound to be prevalently local. According to Meyrowitz, our locality is becoming less central for us and "we are less likely to see our physical surroundings as the source of all of our experiences". Meyrowitz continues by suggesting that the digitalisation of modern media has enhanced, i.e. intensified, our connections with distant places, thereby weakening our local bonds and reducing the intensity of the individual's integration with their locality.

*   Matjaž Uršič, PhD, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana.

Meyrowitz's arguments are akin to those of other authors who emphasise the importance of new technologies in globalisation processes. For example, Harvey (1989: 141–172) mentions the "time–space compression" effect which occurs as a result of technological innovations and has blurred the divide between local and global. Castells (1989) similarly stressed the dependence of communities upon a system dominated by global networks. His concept of the opposition between "the space of flows" versus "the space of places" has its roots in the emergence of new communication and transport technologies which have completely transformed our comprehension of today's space and time. At first glance, it seems that due to the influences of new digital technologies the space of places is gradually losing its function as a generator of social interactions.

In contrast to this thesis of vanishing territorial determinism, it is also legitimate to be sceptical and more careful when predicting the future relationship between the individual and their locality. The rise in the use of Internet technologies has surely lowered the possibility of attachment to a physical space, which on the other side may simultaneously acquire new values and qualities. In fact, the online platforms that enable us to have a look at the world and acquire global experience work in two directions. First, we may assume that their growing use has helped introduce new socio-cultural characteristics to the localities involved, and has thus directly influenced the organisation of everyday life in the local community. In this sense, we may say that the locality is becoming more globalised and culturally less distinctive. Second, the rise of Internet-generated media also gives possibilities for greater embeddedness in the locality. The new technologies allow an individual to 'never leave' the community and stay in constant connection with happenings at the location, regardless of his/her physical location. Some authors like Mlinar (2001) and Strassoldo (1990, 2004: 7) even suggest that in the era of globalisation individuals are becoming even more sensitive to the protection of localness, thus allowing "new localisms" to thrive in communities. The connection to locality (and place generally) thereby remains an important ingredient in the construction of a person's identity and a possible crucial theme for online news media.

In the last decade, locality has become an important element of news structure as it allows online media to come closer to the reader. The transition from printed to online media allows fast interventions in the structure of news and not only shortens the time needed to distribute news from localities but also increases the quantity of news and opens up new ways for readers to participate in the debate via news websites. For these reasons, readers can quickly 'familiarise', i.e. associate specific media with their local environment. Some authors in this context state that on occasions media tend to become "hyper-local" (Glaser, 2004), where the race for readers leads

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to the so-called local journalism effect (Lauterer, 1995; Black, 1997; Lowrey, Brozana, Mackay, 2008). Local journalism includes professional news coverage that typically focuses on small areas or locales (i.e. city neighbourhoods, individual suburbs, small towns, villages etc.) rather than state, national or global news. Instead of covering wider and complex topics, local journalism concentrates on the impact they have on local readers. For these purposes, they concentrate on very local, i.e. hyper-local, subjects that are sometimes dismissed as 'chicken dinner' stories.

Although local journalism is not new in the Slovenian context, its combination with online news media has changed the mechanisms of readers' access and possible reactions to news, thus adding to the specific context in which local stakeholders are embedded when it comes to the process of urban development. The possibility to comment on situations in which local stakeholders are found reveals elements of so-called "participatory journalism" (Jarvis, 2004; Gillmor, 2005; Nip, 2006, 2010). In this perspective, participatory journalism: "takes the form of the news users generating content, more or less independently of the professionals, whereas the professionals generate some other content, and also produce, publish and market the whole news product" (Nip, 2006: 217).

The paper will give a small insight into how online news media are changing ways of reacting to news. In this regard, special attention will be paid to readers' reactions to local reporting. The goal of the article in this regard is to expose how specific groups of readers react to online news items and how these reactions are seen by local stakeholders in the urban development process. We presume that the use of online news media is more suited, i.e. gives voice, to specific groups of news readers, while leaving other groups 'outside' or even excluded from the debate. The analysis of the described processes will be performed based on interviews with representatives of local stakeholders and a two-step text analysis of selected articles and comments on articles. Public opinion survey data from selected neighbourhoods are used as secondary information to help contextualise, i.e. put the interviews and text analysis in a broader perspective.

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The role of local journalism in the spatial context of Slovenia

Local journalism is often confused with "public", "citizen", "public", "guerrilla" or "street" journalism (see Glaser, 2004; Flew, 2005; Moretzsohn, 2006; Radsch, 2011), which is due to the process of the shift to online news media becoming more and more interwoven. In practice, the boundaries between all the listed terms are inconsistent and fluid (Corrigan, 1999; Glasser, 1999; Lambeth, 1998; Voakes, 2004). In this sense, local journalism may include elements of public journalism, which some authors (Nip, 2010)

grade according to the level of inclusion of readers[1]. On this basis, specific differentiations which are approved, i.e. recognised, by the scientific community do exist. In comparison to very inclusive citizen journalism, where citizens play the pivotal role in creating published content, in the case of traditional journalism professional journalists still hold the main keys that allow them to filter information from the field. Nevertheless, with the introduction of online news media this possibility of professional journalists to filter information from the field can have specific limitations, in turn giving opportunities for the development of more participatory journalism. Elements of participatory journalism are becoming ever more present in mainstream news organisations. These elements include platforms that allow readers to express their experiences and views about the news and then publish them in a particular section (e.g. comment sections, letters to the editors etc.). Although elements of participatory journalism are becoming visible in specific Slovenian media, their role remains unclear and is difficult to define.

The importance of local journalism and participatory elements in media varies from country to country. It depends on specific social, economic and also spatial factors. In the case of Slovenia, which is marked by a very specific urban system, the role of local journalism is very important and even more strongly emphasised than in other countries. The reason lies in Slovenia's urban system characterised by a dispersed settlement system including more than 6,000 small villages, towns and a very small number of cities with more than 10,000 inhabitants (Uršič, Hočevar, 2007). In 2015, only 16 cities in Slovenia had over 10,000 inhabitants, with Ljubljana as the biggest city reaching 280,000. Consequently, the high level of settlement dispersion with small densities of urban population creates a specific socio-spatial context that is very connected to the local environment and small communities. The media are adapted to the Slovenian socio-spatial context and, in terms of the geographical distribution of content, i.e. in their character, are very local and regional. We may speculate that publishing a theme connected to the national context is closely linked to local problematic and locational particularism[2]. The Slovenian media are thus limited to a very narrow geographical area, which in terms of audience is even further narrowed due to

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[1] *Nip (2010: 136) lists seven modes of citizen connection in news making. The gradation starts at level 1, which represents the lowest incorporation of views and experiences of ordinary people and continues to level 7 as the highest possible level of inclusion. The levels include: 1) professional incorporation; 2) professional co-option; 3) citizen response; 4) guided professional reporting; 5) guided citizen reporting; 6) citizen submission; and 7) citizen journalism.*

[2] *Similar parallels are noticed in the case of the political arena where the national problematic is on occasion closely tied to, i.e. inseparable or indistinguishable from, the local problematic (see, for example, Uršič, Maksuti, Deželan, 2015).*

the small dispersed settlements, low urban heterogeneity, low urban density and consequently low "urbanity as a way of life" (Wirth, 1938; Uršič, Hočevar, 2007). The geographical features automatically place Slovenian media in the context of very local reporting, obliging them to focus on narrow, local themes in order to reach a sufficient number of readers.

Online news media have combined with the proverbially geographically very local Slovenian media, thereby partly affecting the status of journalists. The growing importance of online news media is an important factor that has led to a reduction in the readership of printed newspapers (Ministry of Culture, 2014). The status of journalists in Slovenia has changed due to various factors, including socio-economic trends, flexibilisation of employment, dispersion of media sources for readers, reduced funding for investigative journalism and others. Notwithstanding the various factors that have affected journalism, the rise of online news distribution has clearly altered, i.e. reshaped, the 'landscape' of employment possibilities and relations within the media space in Slovenia. The contours of this trend can be observed in data from the Agency of the Republic of Slovenia for Public Legal Records and Related Services (Ministry of Culture, 2015) that show a decreasing number of freelance journalists between 2008 and 2014[3].

Simultaneously with the rise in the number of online news and the changed status of journalists, the shift to online media has increased readers' opportunities to react to reporting on transformations in their local environment. In the context of Slovenia, the shift toward online news media has partly combined with the transition, i.e. the transformation of the spatial planning system. The system of spatial planning in Slovenia underwent huge transformations after the change of political system and transition to a market economy in the 1990s. The abandonment of the former planning procedures and rapid transition to a new planning system together with an unconsolidated legal structure led to situations in which each stakeholder in spatial planning formed their own interpretations of what was permitted in localities. In an analysis of spatial practices in Slovenian cities after the 1990s, Kos and Gosar (1998: 28–30) notice that the Slovenian spatial planning was characterised by a "non-consolidated institutional structure" and "cross-level ambiguities and deficiencies". Consequently, Slovenia's spatial processes are hampered by "an informal political and legal culture" reflected in incremental and often dubious spatial interventions in local communities. Due to the unpreparedness of the spatial planning system, media reporting can have effects on different stakeholders. Particularly at the local level, if

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3 *The number of freelance journalists in the subsequent period dropped by approximately 40%, i.e. from 409 in 2008 to 247 in 2014 (Ministry of Culture, 2015: 18). There are also specific indices that allow us to relate this trend to "deprofessionalisation" and "impoverishment of journalism" (Vobič, 2015: 29)*

presented in a certain context, spatial interventions may still be confronted with "instinctive opposition toward the state or any formal interventions that are based on long and demanding legalization procedures" (ibid.). Local communities as one of the principal stakeholders in such conditions tend to perceive media reporting as an important factor which either solidifies or weakens their negotiating position regarding interventions in space. The consequence of these circumstances is numerous civil initiatives and local movements fuelled by the general distrust in official institutions and their representatives[4].

The media and local journalism also play a big role in the Slovenian context due to the relatively low level of public participation in spatial planning. The range of participatory strategies in Slovenia has not changed much in recent years. If we consider Arnstein's (1969: 217) "ladder of public participation in spatial planning"[5], participatory strategies in Slovenia mainly rely on conventional methods (e.g. exhibitions, public tribunes, various media reports etc.), which chiefly involve disseminating information to the public rather than the direct involvement of users (bottom-up) in the spatial planning process (Deželan et al. 2014, Uršič et al. 2015). In this context, the absence of adequate information or poor communication between the inhabitants and institutions that deal with planning on the local level puts more focus on public media and their local reporting. Such (mis)communication between formal authorities and local communities allows the local population to interpret spatial interventions in various ways. In this sense, local communities lean on information from the media to make the decision to support/reject a spatial intervention. Local journalism's great role in spatial interventions in local communities opens up the so-called "legality-legitimacy trap" (Kos, 2002: 21), where local residents may decide to sabotage specific, legally accepted democratic decisions on interventions in space due to low legitimacy, i.e. lack of informal support and opposition. Although legality seems a constitutive and formally necessary element of democratic decision-making, this does not mean that legality undoubtedly enjoys sufficient support from the local community for the implementation of these spatial decisions (Kos, 2002). On the contrary, specific legal decisions regarding interventions in space can be hotly disputed, which we believe can be detected in interviews with representatives of local communities, and through analysis of local reporting and readers' reactions on

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[4] *In the CIVITAS Elan research (Ursic et al., 2012), only 16.7% of the interviewees stated they trust the city municipality in the case of spatial interventions. On the other hand, the most trusted groups included experts (39.7%) and civil (public) initiatives (22.2%).*

[5] *Arnstein's ladder of user participation in spatial planning consists of eight basic levels, starting from the most to the least inclusive level. The eight levels include (from most to least inclusive): Citizen control, Delegated power, Partnership, Placation, Consultation, Informing, Therapy, Manipulation.*

online news platforms. The following analysis is intended to reveal various discrepancies in the perception of legality and legitimacy that forms in the interplay of online media, readers' reactions, and local communities.

Analysis of data and the methodology used

The intent of the analysis was to expose the ways in which online news report and provide readers' reactions concerning the urban redevelopment process in a selected area, and how local stakeholders perceive the exposed media context. Due to the complexity of the studied problematic, the analysis is based on four types of accumulated data. The sources include online news items from the Interactive Multimedia Portal MMC – Radio and Television of Slovenia, the comments on articles published on that platform, interviews with representatives of a civil initiative, i.e. local stakeholders, in the selected area and research studies, i.e. the CIVITAS Elan 2008 and 2012 public opinion surveys. The Interactive Media Portal (MMC) is one of the most popular news websites in Slovenia, which on occasion integrates television, i.e. video news posts, with published articles. In total, 27 articles appearing on that website in the period 2007 to 2015 directly related to the selected case of renovation of the Bežigrad Stadium were analysed. The articles were initially identified based on keywords inserted in the MMC search engine: "Bežigrad Stadium" and then in the second phase further filtered to include additional words like: "renovation, construction, civil initiative, spatial planning, heritage protection etc." Readers of the selected articles were able to leave their comments on the news website in order to express their views and opinions on the selected theme. Readers' interest in the theme proved to be significant and a large number of comments, i.e. a total of 1,328, had to be analysed. Due to the large extent of materials to be analysed, only one news website was considered in the research process.

The Bežigrad stadium is located i.e. integrated with the Fond neighbourhood, whose representatives openly opposed the renovation project. The interviews with representatives of a civil initiative in the Fond neighbourhood were based on an unstructured questionnaire focused on elaborating themes connected with media reporting on the renovation project. The interviews were performed with members of the core group of the Coordination Committee of the Fond neighbourhood, which includes three members (the wider group includes 17 representatives, one for each bigger apartment building in the area). These members were selected and supported by signatories to the "Basic document of inhabitants of Fond Neighbourhood" (Temeljna listina stanovalcev Fondovih hiš), which encompasses 17 apartment blocks and includes approximately 70% of the inhabitants and 95% of the apartment building owners in the selected area. The data acquired from

interviews and the news website were the primary source of research data, while secondary data included information acquired from the CIVITAS Elan longitudinal field survey performed in two time periods (in 2008 and 2012) in the area of the Fond neighbourhood. The data from this field research provided additional information, i.e. insights into the situation at the location of the study. Despite the limited analysis of news websites and interviews, the complementary data sources allowed a relatively coherent look into the research problem. Comparing data from various sources exposed some roles that media and local stakeholders play in the urban development process.

The main focus of the online news items analysis was to obtain an overview of readers' opinions on the activities of groups involved in the urban development process in the selected area. For this purpose, a very basic form of text analysis was applied. In the first phase, selected articles published on the news website were analysed according to discursive gestures[6] (e.g. compound categorisation, metonymy), which facilitate the reification of specific values and practices. Analysis of discursive gestures shows how easy it is to distort reality with the use of specific rhetoric mechanisms. In this relation, we searched for traces of rhetorical strategies used by article writers to achieve a certain level of either public approval, i.e. legitimisation, or disapproval of the project. The text analysis was not deep in terms of an intense coding procedure but used a basic 'soft' scanning technique to define the general position or the article in relation to the whole set of articles. In this respect, five dimensions, i.e. text elements (content and detail, vocabulary/complexity of the language, emotional/neutral tone, attitude/stance/bias of the writer, accompanying photos, illustrations, graphics), were taken into consideration on a basic level to identify the supportive/non-supportive position of an article. In our text analysis of the articles, these elements and discursive gestures were rare but still present enough to represent a kind of 'flashing light' warning that the texts are not completely transparent, i.e. neutral, and can be identified with a slight inclination towards one block of opinions or another regarding the renewal project.

In the second phase, comments on selected articles were analysed. These comments were analysed in more detail. While, in the first phase, the unit of analysis was the whole article and the general presence of discursive gestures, in the case of the comments each short statement was given a specific designation and analysed. After initial filtering, 690 (out of a total of 1,328) comments were excluded from the analysis as they were

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6 *Wallwork and Dixon (2004) describe discursive gestures as quiet reminders of the 'out there' reality of the world – a reality that, though humanly produced, becomes cast as a material fact. Discursive gestures may emphasise and inflect the content of the conversations that they accompany by "asserting a single state of affairs or partial state of affairs in a discourse world" (Polanyi in Reitter, 2003: 14).*

not directly linked to the redevelopment theme, i.e. not connected to the problem facing the local stakeholders and included many other issues of secondary importance for the research. In such cases, the debate shifted from the redevelopment project to, for example, the political situation in Slovenia, differences between sport fans in Ljubljana and Maribor, differences between sports clubs and so on. The comments in our case were given more attention than the articles as we were more interested in the readers' reactions and their potential influence on local stakeholders. The analysis of articles was used simply as an orientation point to see whether a connection exists between the type of article and the number and type of comments. As such, for selected articles the intention was to generally analyse the 'meaning systems', whilst in the case of the comments it was possible to denote whether the writers of comments give either strong (emotional) or reflective (explanatory) support/opposition for the urban development project. In this context, our methodological approach did not follow the conceptual schemes of certain authors who deal with discourse analysis (Fairclough 1995; Wodak 2001) but was developed as a combination of various approaches. To be correct, our methodological approach was not a discourse analysis proper but more appropriately text analysis that fits into the field of discourse analysis and could be identified as "pragmatic Text Analysis"[7] (Verschueren, 1995). Our basic intention was thus to establish an approach that in a simple and sufficient manner would explore and reveal the fabric of the meaning production in texts related to renovation of the Bežigrad Stadium in the Fond neighbourhood.

Case study analysis – renovation of the Bežigrad Stadium in Ljubljana

The renovation of Bežigrad Stadium is one of the most frequently discussed topics in the field of Ljubljana's urban development in the last 10 years. The reason for this lies in the combination of various factors that include the location of the project, the project's extensiveness, the interests of urban developers, the interests of the local community, a memorable, i.e. iconic, sport venue of national importance and the sensibility of tangible cultural heritage on the location. The stadium was built between 1925 and 1941 to a design by the architect Jože Plečnik for the Orel Society. Its raked seating, balustrades and stands reflect Plečnik's distinctive style. The

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[7] *Pragmatic text analysis is a derivative of pragmatics i.e. a subfield of linguistics and semiotics which studies the ways in which the context contributes to meaning. In this sense, pragmatics not only studies language but tries to combine other elements in its analysis (e.g. the context of the statement, re-existing knowledge about those involved, intent and other factors) (see Discursive pragmatics edited by Jan Zienkowski, Jan-Ola Östman, Jef Verschueren, 2011).*

stadium includes a memorial column topped with a statue, an entrance covered by a large canopy supported by a row of pseudo-Doric columns and is enclosed by a brick wall. The Bežigrad Stadium, also known as 'Central Stadium' was for a long period the main national stadium that hosted many important historical sports and social events. The place operated until the end of 2007, when the company Bežigrad Sports Parks (BSP) began preparing plans for the reconstruction and modernisation of the stadium and its surrounding areas. Quickly after the process of preparing the plans started, a number of conflicts between the stakeholders involved arose. The main focus of the conflict entailed different perceptions of renovation of the stadium's surrounding areas. The conflict gradually expanded to other issues (e.g. physical cultural heritage, height and volume of the planned buildings, noise etc.) and eventually led to the formation by local residents of a civil initiative opposing the project (see Table 1).

Table 1: TIMEFRAME OF IMPORTANT EVENTS CONCERNING THE CONFLICT
OVER THE RENOVATION OF BEŽIGRAD STADIUM

Year	Events, news, documents
2007	First news regarding possible renovation of the Bežigrad stadium
2007	April (26.4). The investor Jože Pečečnik enquires with the Institute for Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia regarding conditions for cultural protection in case of renewal project of Bežigrad stadium (Source: Institute for Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia - No. letter 74/2003-MAK)
2007	July (2.7). The Institute for Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia issues the conditions for cultural protection in the case of renovation of the Bežigrad stadium.
2008	February-March. Preparations for the formation of a civil initiative
2008	April (11.4). The Bežigrad district proposes a tender for an urban architectural competition at the location. (The letter code: 3529-134/2007-10-15216, 11.4.2008)
2008	April (22.4). Formation of the civil initiative and release of the "Basic document" of the Coordination Committee of Residents of Fond houses.
2008	August (7.8). The Coordination Committee of Residents of Fond houses notifies the Inspectorate of the Republic of Slovenia for Culture and the Media about irregularities in the issuing of a cultural consensus on the renovation project proposed by BŠP (Bežigrad Sports Park).
2008	September (15.9). The Ministry of Culture repeals the cultural consensus for the renovation's design concept proposed by BŠP. (Source: Ministry of Culture Decision No. 3510-56 / 2008/4).
2008	December (4.12). Call for an international competition for an urban and architectural design for renovation of the Bežigrad Stadium

Year	Events, news, documents
2009	March, April. International competition completed and rewarded projects exhibited
2010	April (19.4). At the 38th Council meeting of the City Municipality of Ljubljana (MOL) the "Draft ordinance on a detailed local renovation plan for parts of the areas of Bežigrad Stadium was adopted.
2010	June to 2011 August. The investor obtains various building permits.
2013	April. The National Environmental Agency (ARSO) rejects the project proposed by the investor, the company Bežigrajski sports park (BŠP).
2014	MOL leaves the decision on continuing the renovation project to the investor.
2015	October. The Ministry of Environment and Space confirms the denial of environmental consent for BŠP's renovation project.
2015	October. MOL prolongs the social contract with BŠP for the next two years.

Source: Interactive Multimedia Portal MMC – Radio and Television of Slovenia, 2015.

In the first phase, the structure of articles published on the news website from 2007 to 2015 was analysed. The articles were analysed according to the prevalent discourse used to either support or not support the redevelopment plan. For example, the articles revealing evident prevalent support for the redevelopment project were assigned level 2. In this case, an intense presence, i.e. permeation of discourse supportive elements, was found in the article's title, introduction, body and conclusions. Articles showing only slight support were assigned level 1. In this case, discourse supportive elements were noticed in only one part of the article (the article's title, introduction, body or conclusions). On the other hand, articles evidently not supporting the project were assigned level -2 and those slightly not support it level -1. Meanwhile, articles that could not be placed in either category were assigned level 0 and were perceived as quite neutral (see Graph 1). The text analysis only divided the articles on a very general level (according to the intensity of noticed elements) and assigned appropriate categories only in cases where the discourse of support/non-support was clearly prevalent in the title and the great majority of statements, opinions, views, rhetorical structures and other distinctive uses of language.[8]

The structure of articles provided on the news website showed quite a balanced distribution of opinions on the Bežigrad Stadium redevelopment project. In 2007, when the stadium closed and the first preparations for redevelopment began, the media platform published three articles, two of

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[8] *It is relevant to mention that the articles were also analysed on a basic level according to the source of information used in the articles. In 27 articles, the City Municipality of Ljubljana (MOL) was used a source of information 7 times, the investor 13 times, public institutions (e.g. Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia, Ministry of Culture, National Environmental Agency) 11 times, and local stakeholders, i.e. representatives of inhabitants, of the area 6 times.*

them showing a neutral view on the project, which is understandable given that in the opening period both the idea and the project plan had not yet been elaborated in detail. The theme and possible conflictive issues were as such not yet well defined and left relatively unopened. At the beginning of 2008, the first conflictive issues arose, eventually leading to a local residents' civil initiative being formed in April 2008. The news website followed the emergence of the conflict and gave voice to the stakeholders opposed to the project (e.g. local residents, cultural heritage experts). What followed in the period after 2009 was a constant exchange between voices opposing and supporting the redevelopment project, revealing quote an inconclusive position regarding the media platform's support/non-support in the conflict.

Graph 1: INTENSITY OF APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL OF THE REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT IN ARTICLES FROM THE SELECTED TIME PERIOD
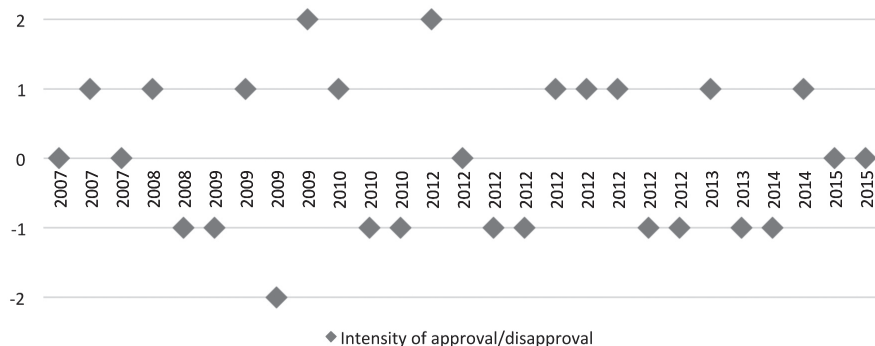
*In certain years more articles on the selected theme were published than in other years. Each article in the graph therefore has a specially assigned year of publication.

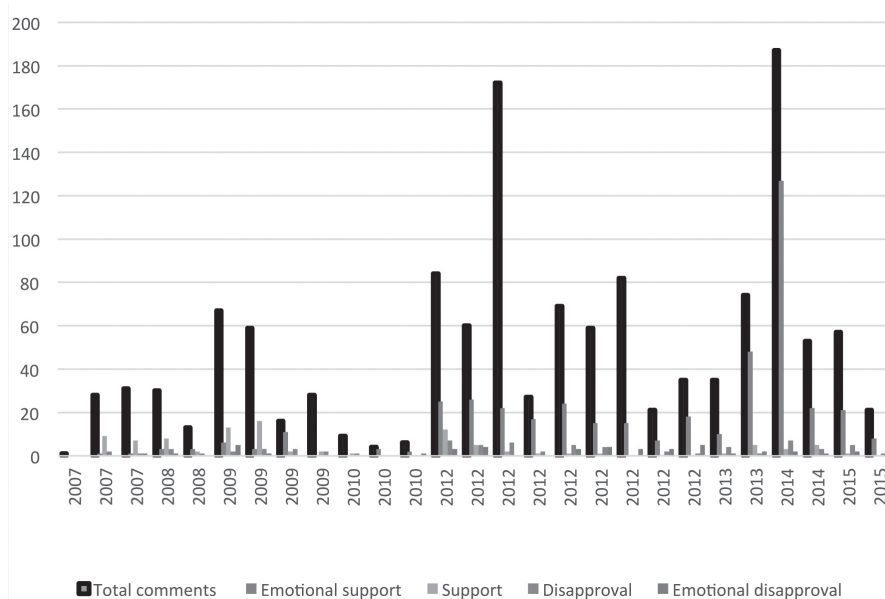Source: Interactive Multimedia Portal MMC – Radio and Television of Slovenia, 2015.

The website news readers' responses to the local reporting were surprisingly very divisive and relatively exclusive. It was expected that various groups of readers (e.g. supporters, non-supporters of the project) would, in the form of comments, actively react to the news website's local reporting provided by the digital media MMC - RTV. However, what was not expected are the results showing very distinctive use of the news website to express opinions on the redevelopment project (see Graphs 2 and 3).

*Graph 2: DIVISION OF ALL AVAILABLE COMMENTS ON THE NEWS WEBSITE
ACCORDING TO SELECTED CATEGORIES*
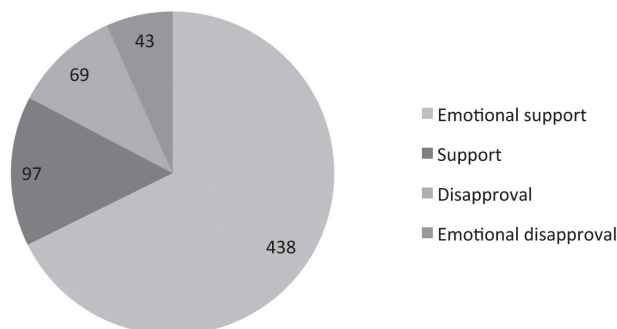
Source: Interactive Multimedia Portal MMC – Radio and Television of Slovenia, 2015.

*Graph 3: DISTRIBUTION OF COMMENTS BY NUMBER, TYPE (APPROVAL/
DISAPPROVAL OF THE REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT) AND SELECTED
PERIOD*

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Source: Interactive Multimedia Portal MMC – Radio and Television of Slovenia, 2015.

In general, most reactions of news website readers proved to be very supportive of the redevelopment project throughout the whole observed period. Moreover, the majority of reactions were very emotionally supportive in nature. Included in this category were all comments that did not stick

to a neutral tone and used semantically loaded words connected to happiness, anger, sadness, frustration, encouragement, anxiety to explain specific views or did not even provide any kind of justifications based on officially available data to explain the presented supportive opinion. Further, a large number of emotional comments not directly linked to the redevelopment project theme were immediately excluded from the analysis. Emotionally non-supportive opinions were noticed but represented a very small proportion of all available comments. In addition, use of argumentative speech, i.e. moderate rhetoric, based on officially available data to support the claims is very rare in general. Although rare, in comparison to emotionally very expressive supporters of the project, non-supporters of the redevelopment project relied much more on a moderate tone and often tried to resort to rational argumentation when discussing the problems on the news website (see Graph 2). A few examples of all four analysed categories are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: EXAMPLES OF FOUR CATEGORIES INTO WHICH COMMENTS
CONNECTED TO THE REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT WERE DIVIDED

Category	Example
Emotional support for the redevelopment project	"I personally have no doubt that the project will succeed, but only in Slovenia do complications with monument protection erupt AGAIN and AGAIN…" "You may be lucky that someone even looks at these ruins…" "What is not clear to you again? Do you live in the capital city or in the Triglav National Park…"
Support	"Plečnik was certainly a respectable architect of European calibre, but the stadium should not become an exhibit, it is in fact a construction that is intended for activities and not solely to be preserved as a cultural monument…"
Disapproval	"It will be difficult to build such a construction without affecting the statics of nearby areas and protected architecture…"
Emotional disapproval	"What an architectural freak…" (Slo: kakšna arhitekturna spaka) "You'll have hiccups after the gardens are destroyed, you lovers of concrete…" (Slo: Še kolcalo se vam bo po vrtičkih, betonarji omejeni!)

Source: Interactive Multimedia Portal MMC – Radio and Television of Slovenia, 2015.

The news website provider used a disclaimer noting that on the comments web page specific rules are applied to try to eliminate hate speech from the platform. This action pre-filtered the most radical responses to the presented local news. Still, some emotional expressions and rhetorical gestures which web-editors considered as non-offending to the public were allowed to be used. Notwithstanding the above mentioned, a large number

of emotionally charged comments were noticed. The very rare use of moderate and argumentative speech gives the impression that only a few people were prepared to establish an open dialogue in order to constructively approach the problematic. We may presume there was no real exchange of argumentative opinions on the news website and the rare argumentative comments did not provide a basis for an exchange of both sides' argumentative opinions. In this sense, it seems that in the selected case the news website gave voice to intolerance and emotional rhetoric, which prevailed over argumentative rhetoric or the moderate exchange of opinions. The few examples of moderate argumentative speech were each time quickly overwhelmed, i.e. embedded in the context of numerous emotional expressions, thereby preventing any possibility to develop a more constructive debate on the redevelopment project. This presumption was also confirmed in interviews performed with the core group of representatives of the Fond neighbourhood. The interviews clearly expressed that in the first phase of preparing the project (in 2008), the inhabitants tried to respond to both media reporting (by contacting media) and the comments (replying to other comments) made by media readers. After around one year, the inhabitants' response rate gradually began to decrease due to the prevalence of "sensationalist reporting by the media" and "too strong pro-project emotional rhetoric used in online comments" (Interviews, 2016). In response, the local stakeholders prepared their own website to represent their views (see Iztepač, 2009).

The analysis of the comments on the news website supports the description of events by representatives of local stakeholders and suggests that only specific groups like supporters of the project had a major say on the news website. Readers who supported the local residents' claims fluctuate when it comes to participating in the form of making comments on the platform. Instead of maintaining relatively symbolic, i.e. minority, opposition on the news website, non-supporters of the renovation project distanced themselves from the debate. Similarly, when asked specifically about the perception regarding comments on online news websites, the representatives of local stakeholders mention that:

> *Pro-project, i.e. supportive, commentaries on online websites proved to be extremely tiresome due to the very partial views and extremely emotional, on occasion even vulgar, rhetoric. As we do not have funds for our own PR (public relations) service to adequately warn or respond to such comments on online media, they obviously prevailed...*

It is possible to detect from the interviews that the local stakeholders, due to the evident low support among the general public, decided to choose

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other, more 'silent' and formal ways of action via lawyers and lobbying with formal institutions and media. The representatives of local stakeholders stated:

> *Frequent media reporting on the case required a lot of attention and effort from us to adequately respond or better say deny some of the inconsistencies and false information represented by various sources used by various media. Such circumstances were tiring us and gradually led to our withdrawal from the majority of the media and to concentrate on legal forms of action, where we currently support two civil (legal) proceedings on the issue of our neighbourhood.*

This sequence of events that led to the local residents' withdrawal can presumably also be detected in public opinion surveys that were performed in the area of Bežigrad stadium in 2008 and 2012[9] (Graph 4).

Graph 4: DO YOU SUPPORT OR NOT SUPPORT THE BEŽIGRAD STADIUM REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT? COMPARISON OF RESIDENTS FROM THE BEŽIGRAD STADIUM AREA AND FROM OTHER AREAS OF LJUBLJANA (IN PER CENT)

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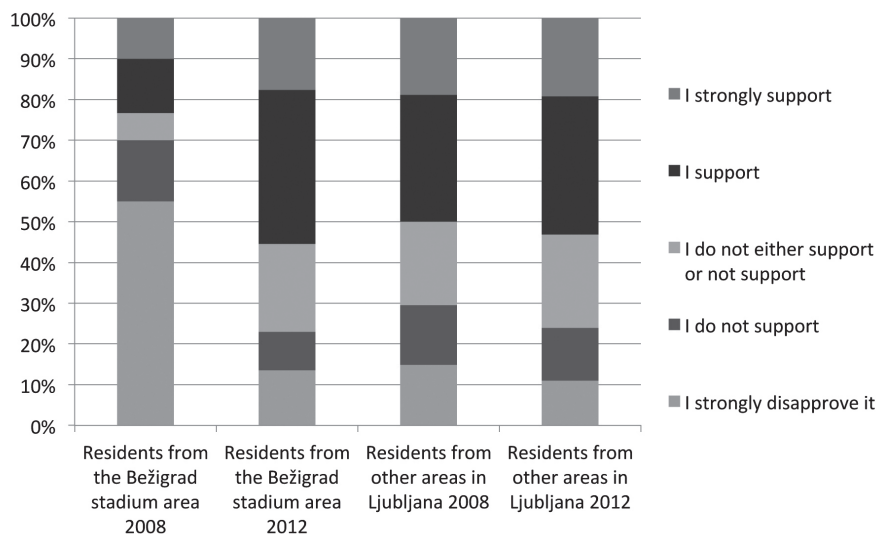
Source: CIVITAS Elan, 2008, 2012.

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[9] *The semi-structured questionnaire from the CIVITAS Elan survey was performed in Ljubljana on a sample of 1,053 interviews (in 2008) and 1,219 interviews (in 2012). The area of Ljubljana was further divided into smaller areas, one of them being the Bežigrad stadium area. It comprised the sample of 60 interviews (in 2008) and 74 interviews (in 2012).*

The opinion of local residents living near the Bežigrad stadium regarding the redevelopment project is at the start of the project planning quite opposite to the opinion of residents of Ljubljana of whom a majority supported the project in 2008. In 2008, more than 55% of residents in the vicinity of Bežigrad stadium disapproved of the redevelopment project. Four years later, the situation had changed dramatically. Similarly to the analysis of the news website and its comments, we may speculate that the local inhabitants declaratively expressed opposition to the project in 2008 but later decided not to openly expose themselves due to the numerous and strong emotional responses from the general public and other Ljubljana residents. However, the local inhabitants' opinions continued to be presented on their own webpage "Iztepač" (2009), which became the focal point and, according to the interviews, also a legitimate point fort collecting opinions for the civil initiative Bežigraski stadion. In this sense, after their experience with the low support of the general public the local residents decided to openly practice a form of "declarative opinion" or so-called "passive activism" (Gladwell, 2010, 2011) and created their own channel of communication.

Discussion and conclusion

The analysed data suggest that in the case study of urban renovation in question online news media did sensibilise specific audiences that were interested in the urban development process. The reporting on the problematic drew attention from the general public which was mainly oriented to an improvement of infrastructure in the city but did not pay more attention to any collateral damage, which was the primary focus of the local residents. In addition, according to the interviews these differences between the general public and the local residents seemed to grow over time. Judging from the initially more present diversity of the online comments, it seems that as the project planning process continued through the years groups of readers not in support of the project began to self-censor, i.e. exclude themselves from the open discussion and exchange of opinions regarding the problems and conflicts involved in the redevelopment. The local residents opened their own website, i.e. their own channel for expressing opinion, and were active in searching for legal forms of opposition to the project. This claim is supported by the unstructured interviews performed with representatives of the civil initiative. The interviews suggest that, instead of open opposition which could further escalate the emotional reactions of the general public, the local residents decided to bond internally and establish different forms of hidden, i.e. covert, opposition to the project.

Another interesting element in the analysis of readers' comments was the very frequent use or better put emotional resort to 'urban ideology' when

commenting on the opposition to the redevelopment project. Opponents of the redevelopment were very often described as people with rural and "anti-urban values" (Uršič, Hočevar, 2007). Supporters of the project emotionally linked opposition to the project with groups which highly value lifestyles connected to small urban density, community isolation and the protection of agricultural land. Very often, elements of industrial progressivism were emotionally integrated, i.e. mixed, with urban ideology in order to stress the excessive protection of semi-natural areas and backwardness which obstruct urban progress.

It is important to stress that the presented study analysed just a portion of possible data. To form more reliable conclusions on the opinions and perceptions of the local residents and the general public, the data analysis should be extended to other news websites and online news distributors. To compensate for these shortfalls, the study used data from various sources that included both unstructured interviews with representatives of local stakeholders and public opinion surveys from other researchers (CIVITAS Elan 2008, 2012) in order to construct a coherent view of the situation in the field. To obtain a complete view of the discrepancies between various stakeholders in urban development and the use of online news media in these processes, the research should be extended to a number of cases embedded in very different spatial contexts. Nonetheless, the study presented through the use of multiple sources sufficiently described the role of different readers and online news media and the media activism of local stakeholders in a selected case of urban development.

The chosen case study suggests that online news media are opening up new possibilities for readers to express their opinions. Not only are online news media able to publish stories very quickly, but the format of digital media also allowed them in this case to add more details, i.e. by describing the specifics of the local context and combining it with more visual materials, making the stories even easier for readers to judge emotionally. More local details, more pictures and on occasions even videos integrated with articles allowed readers to develop greater empathy for specific parties in the story and express those emotions through comments on the news website.

The case analysis shows that readers can on occasion use argumentative rhetoric in order to support an urban development that is supposed to bring some kind of positive effects for wider society. At the same time, the collateral damage of the urban development for the local inhabitants that is shown in the specific news website articles is, in the form of readers' comments, not supported with the same empathy or with the same argumentative intensity. This raises questions about the "inclusion of various types of readers" (Nip, 2010) in the debate regarding urban development. In general,

the selected news website, using tools of local journalism in the analysed story of urban development allowed emotional rhetoric and intolerance of the expression of different opinions. This 'emotional burst' of opinions prevented any greater elaboration of the problems that could help increase the degree to which different groups of readers were included in the debate. Given the circumstances, a prevalently non-supportive 'climate' for the civil initiative was formed on the side of online news website readers that, according to interviews, distanced the local residents from replying to critical comments on the news website. Consequently, the interviews revealed that local residents decided to try new actions to obstruct the proposed urban redevelopment, which is evident from their proactive legal actions and the formation of the civil initiative's website that is regularly updated.

The analysed case study paints an interesting picture of the roles and influences of the general public and local stakeholders included in the urban development process. Contrary to the majority of cases in urban planning where general public opinion usually supports the activities of small civil initiatives, the selected case shows an inverted picture where the general public supports the investor in order to improve the sport infrastructure in the city and state. Similarly, the above-mentioned "legality-legitimacy trap" (Kos, 2002: 21) was in our case surprisingly inverted. Instead of local communities deciding to sabotage specific, legally accepted democratic decisions about interventions in space due to low legitimacy, i.e. a lack of informal support and open/hidden opposition from the general public, in our case the local community used legality and formal actions to prevent an urban development that was gaining in informal support, i.e. legitimacy among the general public.

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