



Emerging Urban Dynamics: The Making of Public Spaces in Bursa

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Industrialized Bursa, a former imperial city with a population over a million, has been a locomotive milieu for the rapid urban and architectural development. The city of Bursa constitutes a primary platform of urbanization for the medium scale Anatolian towns. Since the 1970s, the industrial city has welcomed the foreign investments, but, unlike Istanbul, there is no emergence of multi-national investments in the public field. With the geographic location close to Istanbul and the presence of transport alternatives, in particular, Bursa makes a difference: urban and social mobility reflecting the flow, the transfer and share of knowledge, information, finance, and people, have been primary dynamics of globalizing Bursa. On one hand, Bursa has searched for and developed an independent urban identity, on the other hand, with its location at the periphery of Istanbul, the emergence of the re-use of historical buildings and transformation projects, is similar to the metropolitan context of Istanbul. In Bursa, the emergence urban transformation projects is reminiscent of specialization of high capitalism witnessed in Western European cities, in New York in the 1980s and in London in 1990s, (Feinstein, Gordon, Harloe, 1992), and Istanbul in the late 1990s and 2000s, in particular (Keyder, Öncü, 1994). A normal interpretation of urban transformation in Bursa since the mid-1990s would be as straightforward market-led global investment attempt on a western pattern. While this paper is not rejecting this, it is suggesting that it has also to be seen in the light of an emerging new paradigm in Turkey, when while following the Western forms, they take on a particular inflection when they appear in Bursa. In the context of the re-use architecture, a new discussion of spatiality -visibility of projects- emerged. Spatiality (the making visible of the space of the city of Bursa to its inhabitants) has emerged as the ideological approach of urban transformation, in which the cultural, social and physical structure has been ignored. Emerging urban dynamics have paved way to new urban and architectural identities in recent projects, characterized by visibility, rapidity and the accumulation of capital, surrounded by a specific representational rhetoric. In this context, in the urban transformation projects, the nostalgia for the Ottoman past has been combined by a discourse of 'search of identity' for 'the remaking of Bursa as a trademark city' has raised crucial questions on the vision of the local administrations and the social actors. Having had concerns about the emerging social identities, new municipal projects use rhetoric of 'regenerating the lost identity'. Within this framework, our paper focuses on the recent transformation projects in Bursa (such as Merinos, Santral Garage and Hanlar), through a discursive reading of the visual and textual material. Terminologies have been classified as identity (endless search for a new identity), anesthetization (endless search for a 'new beautiful image' for the city), and historisation/historicism' (the making history as a visual source to set up an architectural stage) and have been given through visual and textural representations, and the re-mapping of new/renovation projects in Bursa.

KEY WORDS: Bursa, urban dynamics, identity mania, historisation, the making of a tourist city.