



Problems in Creating Social Space and Suggestions for Their Solution: The Case of Nicosia, the Last Divided Capital City

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Cities are the architectural and social constitutions as a whole, being shaped by the demand of the community. It is also this demand that maintains a continuous change of these constitutions. People as the main users of the city are the focal point in handling with the issues of functions associated with the content of this whole.

As a natural motive, people need to get together, meet, communicate, and socialize. This fact has been evaluated and taken place at the centre of configuration of the city all throughout the history. The first examples of cities developed as a result of such motives of getting together have been the Agora in Greek city planning and the Forum in Roman city planning. The mentioned meeting spaces have been developed, changed and transformed within time. These activity areas, or social spaces that can be considered to be central to the logic of city configuration, do take place in the configuration of cities; either previously in the ones having master plan, or naturally in the ones that do not have a master plan as a result of community's behavior and need.

The social spaces mentioned above have taken place in Nicosia, which has been the capital city of Cyprus for more than 1200 years. They have taken place naturally, without any master plan. The walled city of Nicosia have been accommodating marketplace, official institutions, banks, many other functions and buildings from Lusignan, Venetian, Ottoman, and English periods, together with house buildings. The increase in number and change in structure of population, developments in technology, and changes in lifestyles of the public lead to adaptation of the city; and the old city sprawled outside the walls to develop and ease the life of her inhabitants. The Dereboyu Street, which is formed on the main axis taking reference from the walled city, overtook the city center functions due to the unplanned development. While doing so, a constitution far away from the concept of social city space has been configured.

Formerly, the district was composed mainly of houses. The street have been undergone many changes in terms of reuse issues regarding the existing functions. The houses have been turned into spaces of other functions. Especially the houses on the main axis have been turned into shops, restaurants, cafes, and the like. This change has been a quick and unplanned one. While some of the buildings have fully completely transformed into another functional space, some have been changed partially.

Especially car park; physical deficiencies of buildings in terms of the fulfillment of the new functional requirements in reuse applications; undefined, insufficient, and undersigned roundabouts that have to undertake the meeting space function are leading the list of the negative aspects of unplanned developments for the city of Nicosia. The areas of meeting, or the social spaces, are taking a very important place in the psychology of the community. This study aims at handling with the subject of social space within the frame of the problems stated, and developing suggestions in search for the betterment of them.

KEY WORDS: Social space, Cyprus, Nicosia, city, planning, community psychology