



Streets as Public Spaces: The Case Study of Bagdat Street, Istanbul

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Istanbul has gone through a very rapid change and transformation since 1950s. The growth in these last 50 years has shown strong acceleration entering the 21st century. When the effects of any change in public structure on physical environment and collective memory are considered, it can be seen that many changes have occurred physically, socially, culturally and psychologically. To make this fast growth in Istanbul metropolitan city more comprehensible, it is essential to understand the dimensions of change in the neighborhood.

The Bagdat Street region, having a housing pattern comprising apartments (which are known as planned and legal housing units) and established totally with government housing laws, has an important place in collective memory. In addition to the tidy characteristic, both Bagdat Street itself and the housing pattern that feeds and enlivens it, also show some degree of spontaneousness with various unplanned elements. This situation has strong relation with the fact that Bagdat Street is located on the Asian (Anatolian) side of Istanbul and not in the Historical Peninsula. The region has possessed a special location, yet at the same time it has been neglected by the society.

To begin this analysis of the region, firstly conceptual studies have been done. In the course of history, the dimensions of planned and unplanned city parts were analyzed morphologically, socially, perceptually, visually, functionally and temporally.

The aim is to study the role of a street in the relevant city part and in social life. As a result, it is concluded that streets which live as a social environment and which surround people and create a medium, should be described as "great streets." Thus, requirements and qualities for a street to be called "great" and perceived "great" have been identified. These requirements and qualities are physical, social and psychological. With this conceptual infrastructure, Bagdat Street and the surrounding patterns were studied and evaluated