



THE SQUARE AS A TOOL OF SOCIAL COMMUNICATION AND SOCIALIZATION

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Abstract:

Urban open spaces are among the most common usage areas of urban life in the historical process. It is the most effectively used element of the areas designed as open spaces in urban planning. From a sociological point of view, urban squares are positioned as an important "public space", which is used by the inhabitants of these regions for cultural, social, commercial or political purposes on special occasions, in short, where urban life comes to life. While urban squares were an important "urban life focus" that formed the personality and identity of cities in the process, they lost their original values when they were used as car parks at the point we reached. Urban space is the main means of integration of a city/city. Public "urban spaces" are places where people can transfer their cultural knowledge and learn again. However, in terms of defining the city, individuals; It is in these places that he gains the experience of being an urbanite as a result of their cultural identity, development and communication with others. Social movements, revolutions and even coups have become symbols in the city squares, and sometimes they have been the places where the rebellion of the societies and sometimes the entertainment reached their peak. Squares, which are the basic communication and interaction spaces before the period that we will call the development of technology and the communication age, have an important place in the history of countries and societies in terms of socialization. In this study, the importance of public spaces (squares) compatible with social life was investigated by evaluating the relationship between the urban environment and social behavior from a human perspective.

Keywords: communication, cities and squares, socialization

1. Introduction

Has the feature of being placed where social life can be reflected more than squares, which can be considered as a kind of "relationship center" where people can meet with

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each other, shop and spread their thoughts, ⁱⁱand squares, which will be accepted as the centers of cities, and streets and street structures, which are considered as elements of the city. One of the important characteristics of city life is the "random" and "involuntary" encounters. In every environment where individuals are gathered together, a social activity, mobility, in short, action occurs. From this point of view, "open public spaces", which are not closed spaces where individuals are together, constitute squares, specific points and historical arenas for social communication. These spaces are spaces that allow a large number of people to interact. ⁱⁱⁱ

These areas have physical and psychological functions that enable the user to have an emotional experience and create freedom by keeping the user away from the street and the flow of the street. In this respect, many squares in the world are called "freedom squares". Town squares are open and large spaces surrounded by important prestige buildings, often located at the nodal points of urban traffic. Although the word "area" is sometimes used instead of "square", the word "area" is still the first choice for more open places such as airports. Although the origin of the word is Arabic, now Turkish "square" has settled in our language. The British expressed the principles of planned settlement in their cities by using geometric terms such as " ^{iv}square".

The squares in the cities, especially the "agora", plaza, piazza, forum, and grand are expressed with definitions such as place or campo. The names of the open areas were also shaped according to the political environment of that day and became the meeting points where many functions were performed. With the influence of these political environments, squares have been used by people for various purposes, along with the transformations they have undergone over time. ^v

2. Urban Square

From its known history until today, squares have been used as versatile areas where the citizens or visitors can gather, have the opportunity to rest, and where people follow each other and convey what is going on in the city. Looking at today, it has been intertwined with heavy vehicle traffic, as it is all over the world, together with technological developments. They have lost their meaning and purpose of use in the past, albeit a little. In general, squares are classified into two main groups according to their function and shape. ^{vi}

ⁱⁱPınar Eraslan Yayınoglu and A. Filiz Susar (2008). City, Visual Identity and Communication. Umuttepe Publications, Kocaeli, p.10.

ⁱⁱⁱEbru Erdönmez and Altan Aki (2005). The Effects of Open Public Urban Spaces on Community Relations. YTU Architect. fac. e -Journal, 1, p.68.

^{iv}Yılmaz Ergüvenç (2007). City Squares (I). <http://www.kenthaber.com/Haber/Genel/Kose/yilmaz-erguvenç/kent--squares--i---/d7e7a647-0d51-4d48-9cd2-3429324b5f9a>. Access Date: January 15, 2022.

^vMehmet Nazim Ozer and Mustafa Asim Ayten (2005). Urban Squares as a Public Focus. TMMOB Planning Journal. 3, p.96.

^{vi}Mehmet İnceoğlu and Ayfer Uytuğ (2009). Quality Concept in Urban Space. YTU Architect. fac. e -Journal, 3, p.133.

2.1 Function of Squares

Function is essential to the liveliness of the square and is therefore considered equally important for its visual impact. 1st century BC Roman writer and architect Marcus Vitruvius wrote the following about the design of the square:

"It should be proportional to the living population so that it is neither too small to be used nor looks like a desert because of the population."^{vii}

In this context, which guides the behavior; it has features such as proximity, determination, accessibility and centrality. In line with this formation, environmental meanings, signs and symbols and the changing character of the space emerge.^{viii}

2.2 Shape of Squares

To date, many attempts have been made to classify the shapes a square can take. Paul Zucker proposes one of two widely accepted theories. Zucker divides squares into five categories in his research on squares:

- The "closed square", which is independent in itself,
- The "dominant square" is directed to the main building,
- "Nuclear square" created *around a center*,
- "Grouped squares" consisting of spatial units that are combined to create more vertical views,
- They are "amorphous squares" where there is no restriction.

3. Square in the Historical Process

The most common usage area in urban life has been urban open space from history to the present. City squares are the most effective elements used in urban open spaces. The city square is an important public space used by citizens on special occasions for social, cultural, political and commercial purposes, in short, an urban living space. From ancient times to the early days of the Republic, these places, which are the basic elements of cities, have always been an important part of city culture. However, in the accelerated development process that started in the 1950s, the city continued to grow and change its quality with the rapid urbanization experienced by Turkey.^{ix}

Squares under the pressure of economic rationality, squares, streets, courtyards, etc. of the Anatolian cities in the past. started to move away from its urban image. This situation reveals features without identity, without standards and aimlessness. The human scale and city culture, the consciousness of being an urbanite and the values, traditions and customs of living in the city have also started to move away from the spatial structure. For these reasons, while city squares have historically been important

^{vii}Ae., p.136.

^{viii}Erdönmez and Aki, *ibid.*, p.71.

^{ix}Ilknur Sertkaya (2011). City Squares: A Study on Adana 5th January Square. Çukurova University Institute of Science and Technology, Adana: Published Master's Thesis. p.11.

focal points of urban life that reveal the identity and personality of our cities, today they have lost their original values and become urban spaces used as vehicle squares or parking lots. The town square was a gathering place where many functions were performed according to the political conditions of the period, and people used the town squares for different purposes as they changed throughout history.^x

3.1 Ancient Squares

"Pylon" is known as the columned door; the courtyard would only open its doors to the public on feast days. This courtyard, where the public can come together, has been accepted as a "city square" in a sense. In this area, where the public was admitted, a god object or a reminiscent statue was taken out of the temple and circulated in the courtyard accompanied by officials, thus allowing ordinary people to see and worship the god and make a vow to anyone who wanted to.

When it comes to Hellenistic periods, squares arranged geometrically in terms of shape were used as areas where political, cultural and commercial activities took place. The "columned colonnades", called "stoas", located on the sides of the main roads, are also structures built for trade and cultural activities in the open air. In Rome, the squares called "forums" were used as gathering areas where people came together for different actions at the points where the main streets arranged in the direction of the horizontal and vertical axis vertically converge, again in a geometric order. Istanbul, the capital of the Eastern Rome (then "Constantinople"), the Roman road from the West "Via" Egnatia continues within the city wall with the name of "Mese" and passes the squares of "Arcadius" (Cerrahpaşa), "Bous" (Aksaray), "Theodosius" (Beyazıt), "Constantinus" (Çemberlitaş) and reaches "Hippodrom" (Horse square - Sultanahmet)) and "Hagia Sophia" basilica. Around all these squares, there were stoas, triumphal arches, statues, and monumental structures, which were almost the ornaments of the city.^{xi} While these structures or artistic sculptures that were built contain the messages given by the people, they also provided communication between the past and the future. This communication often followed a downward pattern from the management level to the public, and sometimes included the message of the people to the people as communication between equals.

3.2 Medieval Squares

Medieval age where roads come out in their cities while the squares have an organic structure, they do not have a certain geometric shape within the aesthetic and architectural structure of the city. It is located around the squares, and churches and just opposite the feudal lord's palace. In the middle of the square, elements such as fountains or statues were sometimes found, but these did not reach the monumental size.^{xii}

Squares have been used for different purposes apart from all cultural, commercial, in short, humanitarian applications. Especially in the dark period when religious

^x Sertkaya, *ibid.*, p.11.

^{xi} Erguvenc, *ibid.*, p.25.

^{xii} Sertkaya, *ibid.*, p.16.

oppression was at its highest in the Middle Ages, along with religious ceremonies, there were places where criminals were executed or punished in different ways in order to frighten the people. When it comes to the New Age, for example, after the French Revolution of 1789, the squares in France became the places where political executions were carried out by guillotine.^{xiii}

3.3 Square in the Renaissance

During the Renaissance, squares became large and majestic spaces with palaces and basilicas around them. In the middle of these magnificent squares, there are the monuments of the kings and princes of the period, especially the symmetrical harmony. The structures that were overdone in ornaments became images of religious power and the monarchical system. In 1536, Pope Paul III appointed the "Kapitolino" as the religious and political center of the city. The square, also known as "Piazza" of the Capitoline, was wanted to be arranged by ^{xiv} Michelangelo.

In the Renaissance period, the power of the ruling class was tried to be reflected in the space by using monumental structures, and cities started to grow with the addition of new parts. While the sculpture has become an important urban element in this new construction, the facades of the buildings have become characteristic. The understanding of the square and the importance given to the gardens increased, and the buildings built in the cities began to be designed together with these new open spaces.

As another important element, the new walls built for defense or protection began to take place in the appearance of the city in this new understanding of the city. Extensive work done in the future streets and boulevards, the landscapes created, periodical applications of the new urban aesthetic understanding have been toured. In this way, in the "roundabout" of the early Medieval period the urban aesthetics, which became evident with its roads, were replaced by more ostentatious buildings, boulevards and a new aesthetic understanding expressed by landscapes.^{xv}

3.4 Baroque Squares

Contrary, it was created with an elitist understanding. Particular attention is paid to the extension of the courtyard of the palace in the city, in a sense, in the squares of the period, which could keep the important parts of the city under control and connect them to each other in a suitable environment has become. In other words, cities belonging to the Baroque period Unlike other cities, while offering special opportunities to the privileged groups in it, the squares of this period were the city's exclusive It has turned into a space that appeals to^{xvi} the "class".

^{xiii} Ergüvenç, *ibid.*, p.28.

^{xiv} Ae., p.35.

^{xv} Diamond Erdogan (2006). Environment and Urban Aesthetics. Journal of Zonguldak Karaelmas University Faculty of Forestry. 9, p.71.

^{xvi} Sertkaya, *ibid.*, p.24.

4. Square in Turkish Cities

Unlike the urban structure and social life in Europe, there was a different structure and life in the Ottoman regions. The most striking difference in the social structure shaped by religious, ethnic and cultural differences can be counted as the prominence of the concept of district and neighborhood. The concept of the neighborhood is a structure that provides socialization and organization in small areas, and a social reinforcement network with close ties was created with many factors created by a guard, religious officer, notables and teacher of the neighborhood. The men of the neighborhood used to live in the square of home - work - place of worship - coffee house within walking distance. The relatively wealthy had horses, cars called cups, depending on their rank. Women, on the other hand, were not welcome to go out, and they could go shopping in the Grand Bazaar, albeit a little. This distinction also showed itself in the buildings and living areas, and the areas designated as harem-selamlık were separated with clear lines.^{xvii}

Neighborhood squares, places of worship, primary schools, coffee houses, fountains and wooden cedars called peyke were created by this way of life. Azan was expected to be recited on these sofas, conversations were held in coffee houses, and on special days and nights, lecturers, puppeteers, blackeyes and even bingoers would cheer the people up.

The centers where structures such as madrasahs, baths, soup kitchens and libraries are located in the areas of Selatin Mosques can be expressed as the city squares of the Ottoman period. In these facilities, classical architecture found itself with a geometric system. The most prominent of these and similar structures, which have become the symbol of the Ottoman period, is undoubtedly the "Süleymaniye Complex". Looking at the "Fatih Complex", the mosque was arranged as a prominent work, and the madrasahs around the square created a religious atmosphere. Italy's "San Pietro" Square" is one of the squares built with this understanding in Europe.

Apart from these structures in the Ottoman Empire, it is very difficult to talk about cities or city squares built in a geometrical order, where outward social activities were held in the "Western sense" accompanied by men and women.^{xviii}

"Theodosius Forum", one of the leading squares of Istanbul with many squares, is the area where "Beyazıt Square" is located today. The square, which was known as "Forum Tauri - Bull Square" until the 4th century, was later named "Theodosius Forum" in the Roman period. The "Temple of Jupiter" was located in the northeast of the square, which was surrounded by marble buildings consisting of churches and baths consisting of large columns. In the middle of the square, there was a column built in honor of Emperor Theodosius I. The column, with a statue of Theodosius I on top, was surrounded by reliefs of depictions representing the wars won by the emperor. The column survived

^{xvii} Ergüvenç, *ibid.*, p.39.

^{xviii} Ergüvenç *ibid.*, p.44.

until the end of the 15th century, and some parts of it were used in the "[Patrona Halil Bath](#)".^{xix}

In the western part of the forum, there was a "victory arch" made of marble brought from the Marmara Islands, with three passage corridors and an inclined structure. It is larger than the ones on the side of the passage corridor in the middle of this work, which was built to resemble another triumphal arch in Rome. Today, the street, which runs westward from the front of the Hagia Sophia Mosque, shaped the main line of the city in the past. This main street would pass through the "Arch of Theodosius" and continue towards Thrace and reach the outside of the [Balkans](#). The Victory Arch, which was heavily damaged as a result of various natural disasters such as the invasions applied to the city and earthquakes in the 5th century, and the ancient structures surrounding the square were destroyed long before the Ottoman siege and conquest of Istanbul.^{xx}

However, the concept of "square" in traditional Turkish cities and western __. The difference between the concept of square in understanding has been expressed from various perspectives. When we look at the traditional Turkish cities, it is historically important that the urban structures are not inward-looking, "closed" and urban space, due to the relatively "closed" social groups of the people, and consequently the perception of the square is not considered much expressed in terms.^{xxi}

5. Squares and Socialization

One of the most important features of urban life today is complex social relations. Some of the relationships are in the work environment, but most of them take the form of social interaction in the concept of urban space. Thus, the urban area plays an important role in the social development of citizens. Social interactions occur in these places. A social zone is defined and also the mechanisms of collective life are experienced. Thus, the lack of a suitable urban area can cause social ills in cities. Squares are one of the most important urban areas and have long been the context for the formation of social life.

The effects of rapidly changing monetary and social conditions have become increasingly significant in how individuals use and shape their environment. The urban population, in general, is greatly expanding and thus the physical structure of urban areas is always changing in negative ways. As the population expands, interest in infrastructure and equipment increases. Privatization and decentralization are two notable concerns over the ultimate fate of urban spaces and open spaces. Mamluk's determination on this subject would be quite appropriate:

^{xix} Theodosius Forum, (Online), http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theodosius_Forumu. Accessed December 11, 2021.

^{xx} Theodosius Forum, (Online), http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theodosius_Forumu. Access Date: 15 December 2021.

^{xxi} Sertkaya, *ibid.*, p.26.

"Increased mobility, communication technologies and globalization lead to the expansion of urban areas causing lifestyle changes, hence the use of public spaces ".^{xxii}

Public spaces are assumed to be an important part of urban structure and city life and turn into an advantageous component keeping the end goal in mind to advance regional cohesion. In this way, it is possible to think of open space as a component ready to advance progress and demands from the region, as well as having a characteristic capacity to create and maintain a sense of coherent local^{xxiii} centrality, ecological quality, and financial density and citizenship. Public spaces allow individuals to meet on seemingly neutral ground on regulated and impromptu roads, and to communicate with others within the entire community. While public spaces are combined with family relationships, social groups, nearby social associations and key gatherings, this can contribute to the bonding of groups by promoting blending.

Each society has its own characteristics for such urban public open spaces, each of these terms appealing to a typical point: the concept of the urban square "open space for public use". In this respect, city squares have a social aspect in the appreciation of their public dimension and a spatial aspect due to their physical organization. The urban square has often been an image of a system of social communication and majority rule. According to Lynch, an urban square is the "activity focus" at the center of dense urban areas. However, Lynch argues that an urban square is a type of urban open public space that focuses on the system of public spaces, provides a forum for both social and financial change, and provides a focal point for community expression. Lynch expressed his view on this issue as follows:

"...it will be paved, surrounded by high-density structures, and surrounded by or in contact with streets. It includes features to attract groups of people and facilitate meetings."^{xxiv}

Squares, which are public spaces, are spaces where different groups of people in terms of their class and ethnicity, gender and age are brought together through interaction and communication opportunities.^{xxv} In other words, the main element of public spaces is to motivate and rationalize, in such matters as "the formation of the richest quality of a multi-class, multi-cultural, heterogeneous society".^{xxvi} However, the traditional role of squares, namely their purpose of promoting commercial activities, should not be forgotten. Today, as in the past, there is a strong correlation between commercial activities and open spaces with a plan to take advantage of the inherent

^{xxii} Murat Mamluk (2013). Designing Urban Squares, (Ed. M. Özyavuz), Advances in Landscape Architecture, Rijeka: InTech , pp.513-530.

^{xxiii} Jordi Borja, Ziada Muxi (2003). El Espacio Público : Ciudad y Ciudadanía . Barcelona: Electa, p.80.

^{xxiv} Kevin Lynch (1981). A theory of good city form. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, p.25.

^{xxv} Ali Madanipour (1996). Design of Urban Space, John Wiley and Sons, England; 146-147.

^{xxvi} Stephen Carr, Mark Francis, Leanne G. Rivlin, Andrew M. Stone (1992). Public Space, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, V.3, p.11

benefits of places full of individuals. Moreover, public spaces can positively affect the economic value of the urban land that covers them.

6. Conclusion

Societies living in cities meet their social needs such as getting together, communicating, resting, socializing, having fun and so on. They need public spaces in order to meet their needs. As a public space, squares are an important element of the city, which enables the development of urban culture, especially with its physical and functional characteristics. However, despite all these real and historical features, the increase in the use of motor vehicles today, causes the areas used by pedestrians to disappear over time and lose their function.

The creation of urban squares, and the functional and spatial aspects of their use have traditionally been related to the main problems of architecture and urban planning. Because the landscapes it promises predetermine the architectural appearance of important parts of the city. The social relevance of the problem is due to the increased social activity of the population, which needs new forms of urban open spaces. Architecture and design theory aims to link social spaces with architectural structures by systematically understanding the latest technological changes and changes in human behavior. When we look at the western understanding, the square is integrated with urban life. In these squares, there are arrangements that allow people to meet and carry out various activities. The function and facade arrangements of the structures around the squares have increased the sense of belonging in people by making the spaces imaginatively defined. This situation, on the one hand, has caused communication between people with the squares where interpersonal communication takes place.

In the historical process, the squares carried the traces of the period and became the center of demonstration of political authority. Although it is known as freedom squares, the number of squares that have definitely left bloody traces in its history is not less. Concorde Square, where the French Revolution took place, Tiananmen Square in China, Red Square in Russia, and Beyazıt and Taksim squares in our country are some of these squares. These squares came to the fore with social events and were used as meeting, communication and communication areas in the periods when technology was not very developed in terms of communication.

For this reason, cities and their squares have their own unique identity. While this identity is accepted as having a social spirit, it appears as a symbolic expression of social mobility, freedom, loyalty, in short, belonging.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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