

Shifts in public open space notion by new landscape contexts

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Abstract:

The nature of cities underwent a big change starting from industrial revolution to nowadays. Besides, the life style and expectations of city-dwellers and the open space usages have been changing constantly by globalization and technological developments. Public open spaces also have been under the influence of all these dynamics. Furthermore, the transformation in the theoretical framework of 'landscape' also helped to emerge a new type of public open space characteristics during last three decades. Together with the new perspective of landscape, new concepts rose in the design of public open spaces.

The study doesn't only aim to draw attention to significant changes in the notion of city and public spaces and also addresses the effects of the new urban landscape contexts on changing public open spaces. Within this scope, the study first defines the reasons behind the changing city and public spaces, second explains the landscape and its new contexts, and third describes new types of public spaces in urban landscapes reviewing the literature of the public space and landscape theory in last three decades. In the conclusion, the paper summaries the key issues mentioned in the study and try to give clues for urban and landscape design practices.

Keywords: *Public open spaces, contemporary city, urban landscape, new landscape contexts.*

1. Changing traditional city notion

All changes throughout human history affected cities and it caused them to be identified in different meanings at different times. The urban structures of the prehistoric periods shaped by agricultural activities and animal husbandry evolved substantially within a long period of time. However, this change accelerated by the inventions, the process of enlightenment, the industrial revolution and the advancements in science and technology in last few centuries.

A great transformation occurred from the agricultural settlements to the cities where trade was a prevailing activity in by the effect of changing economic and social structure over time and hereby, the current economic

restructuring started to define the social and physical structure of cities (Ovacık, 2010).

The mode of production and the economy have been a great role in the evolution process of the cities. The rapid mechanization starting with the industrial revolution brought a new production notion which aimed more production with the planned labor. Due to this new capitalist mode of production, the traditional urban structure began to evolve (Keleş, 1990).

The cities underwent a big change at the end of the nineteenth century with the effect of rapid industrialization, mechanization and the migration from rural to urban. In the first half of the twentieth century, modernist architects preferred to create cities in a universal perspective which was away from ornamentation, romanticism, locality, traditionalism (Harvey, 1990). Moreover, after the Second World War, the development of cities spread out the surrounding settlements from the city centers by the improvements of a number of industrial branches such as automobile, shipbuilding, steel and thus the cities underwent decentralization. The industry was a key issue for the urban development, and the improving transport facilities and automobility led to urban growth with economic activities (Kaygalak and Işık, 2007).

Due to the postmodernist viewpoint, the importance given to the development of individual identities also affected the way of understanding the city. Thus, individualism and entrepreneurship went into prominence in the second half of the twentieth century and the high-rise blocks and custom-built housing began to fill the cities. "The collage city" which was pluralistic, organic and the combination of differentiated spaces took the place of the zoning style planning (Harvey 1990).

According to Utkutuğ (2002), the rapid development of information and micro electricity technologies and the transition to the information society generated a more powerful revolution beside the Industrial Revolution by twentieth century. The changing forms of communication by technology influenced the places, distances, buildings and cities, and enforced them reconstruction. To sum up, considerable concepts in today's cities are communication, information, accessibility and technology. Laçiner pointed out (1996) that the first Industrial Revolution was the transition to the machine age by the using engines and machines instead of manual labor, whereas the second Industrial Revolution is the transition to the information age by the computing technology.

At the end of the century, the speed of communication increased thanks to the satellite communication systems. By this way, the time became independent from the distance. Furthermore, the power of national governments has weakened economically by the emergence of neo-liberal state idea. All these developments supporting the concept of globalization have caused to spread out the urbanization processes throughout the world and helped it to quicken (Ovacık, 2010). Additionally, the obstacles for the capital stock were disappeared by the falling of the political blocks in the last quarter of the century. Henceforward, the most important concepts in the New World Order were the globalization, the capitalism and the economy. By these reasons, the twentieth century with the major changes in the social structure, economy and politics was the turning point in case of the transformation of the cities.

The cities in the cycle of the capital directing by international financial institutions and global companies have come into prominence as the catalyst of the production and the economic development (Urban Age Conferences, 2007). The only way to develop the cities themselves in this capitalist system attracts the international capital (Ovacık, 2010). This new order has re-shaped the urban networks and urban spaces.

Today's city has a dynamic structure constantly changing and transforming. It is a relational information area which is multi-directional, ambiguous, and changeful and unrestricted. Actual cities are beyond perceiving just transportation networks, buildings, parks and rivers (Çaldaş, 2010). Defining the present city is used no longer the phrases such as metropolis, metapolis¹, and transurbanism².

2. Changing public open spaces in contemporary city

The definition of the city, managing its problems and the organization of urban public spaces changed depending on the new way of life and the new habits in last few centuries. The city and the society are in constant interaction and this situation influenced the urban spaces. The city which is the place of diversities and freedoms throughout history has expressed the ideological differences, the cultures and the social diversity in public space (Bilsel, 2004).

The great change in the cities as the second half of the twentieth century transformed also the urban open spaces. The public spaces diversify in the metropolis of today. Currently, the most of the open public spaces in European cities have the historical continuity and a traditional design character. These places are an integral part of the public life as well as the urban life. However, the major problem of these places having a certain enclosure and a particular tradition that they has a well-defined usage (Sasen, 2006). Even though these places are still the appropriate spaces for the rituals, exhibitions, festivals and performances, they cannot provide the intense social relations and interaction (Sennett, 1996). Although they are in the classification of public space, they do not fit the ideal open public space with their defined functions and keeping under control most of the time.

Current urban public spaces not only should achieve the actions such as social interaction, meeting, and communication but also should provide to be formed and to be transformed by public. According to Lynch (1990), 'events' determine the boundaries of a place. This cycle transforms and makes sense of public open spaces (Şenel, 2002).

The relations of production and consumption change all the practices of everyday life in twenty-first century global cities. These new relationship systems redefine cities and their formation. Contemporary city is a consumption place. The city is a multi-consumption platform that the different consumption mediums are consumed consecutively on. Urban open spaces are continuously transformed by this kind of consumption understanding (Banerjee, 2001). As a result, cities strive to be places hosting much more experiences inside.

3. Shifts in urban landscape context and the effects on changing public open spaces

The strong shifts in the theoretical debate of 'landscape' in recent decades also have helped to emerge a new type of public space characteristics under

¹ 'Metapolis' defined in *The Metapolis Dictionary of Architecture* as "the reality beyond the traditional metropolis". It is different from the common metropolis. Metapolis contains metropolis and it is a new kind of generation comprised from unstable places and relations. It is a formation generated by similar dynamics in global scale and different circumstances in local scale (Gausa, 2000).

² 'Transurbanism' is a term that consists of person experiences of all media sources, digital culture and mass communication and transformation of city with the reaction of these experiences (Yalçın, 2006).

the influence of globalization, technological developments, urban regeneration projects and privatization policies. Together with the changing of the cities' nature, the expectations and the life styles of citizens, the new viewpoint to landscape highlights new concepts in the design of urban open spaces.

Especially in the last thirty years, the concept of landscape has undergone a more serious transformation than ever before. Alex Wall, noted in "*Programming the Urban Space*" (1999) that, in recent times, the term landscape no longer referred to prospects of pastoral innocence but rather invoked the functioning matrix of connective tissue that organizes not only objects and spaces but also the dynamic processes and events that move through them. In this article, Wall does not refer to 'landscape' defined as 'urban surface' as simply planted areas, parking lots and the empty space between buildings. Neither should the use of the term landscape be limited to wholly green, natural, or recreational spaces. Instead, the extensive and inclusive ground-plane of the city defines the 'field' that accommodates buildings, roads, utilities, open spaces, neighborhoods, and natural habitats. This is the ground structure that organizes and supports a broad range of fixed and changing activities in the city. As such, the 'active urban surface' is dynamic and flexible (Wall, 1999).

By the globalization process, the problems all over the world as a result of suburbanization and excessive urban growth have achieved to unify design professions in a common ground. The design professions began to discover new landscape-oriented approaches that consist of mainly ecology and relation with nature. In this period, many designer and planners often expressed the need to understand the landscape in their projects and discourses, and they started to develop new design approaches combined with ecological content particularly in the early 1990s. Thus, the most of the works by the end of the century have this kind of holistic point of view developed by the interdisciplinary communication of professions.

The contemporary design contexts as a result of the new holistic viewpoint that even embraces urban infrastructures and the dramatic changes in the traditional urban space concept in the last quarter of twentieth century led to transformation in urban open spaces. We have experienced a serious transformation from the well-defined historical urban spaces surrounded by buildings that have a certain organization, enclosure and geometry to the modern empty spaces of undefined form modeled by the environment conditions it is in contact with.

The second factor that cause to the transformation is the change by contexts such as *flexibility, ambiguity, temporality, spontaneity, events, activities and programs* that were observed in open space living as a result of the change in urban dynamics in the 20th century. The new generation has different needs and this in turn necessitates the creation of open spaces conducive to new usages and contents.

The art trends of the 1960s and 70s are in fact among the elements that prepared this transformation. Minimalism, Conceptual Art, Performance Art and Land Art have knocked down the traditional relation between the art product and the spectator. This was done by taking art works outside the gallery atmosphere and appending them to the exterior space and focusing on the space perceived between the spectator and the object rather than on

the object itself. 'Experiencing' the object rather than its importance gained importance (Scherr, 1996).

The 'everyday urbanism' approach that began to be talked about at the end of the 90s and that was another factor of the transformation had an agenda that contained these concepts. Compared to the 'new urbanism' that emerged ten years before, it is a trend that is interested in a less normative and ordinary life and its dynamics. It favors variety, temporality, synchronization and lack of harmony. And also improvisation and adaptation methods rather than physical design and planning and is the most open-ended and flexible of urbanism trends (Kelbaugh, 2008).

The quality and success of new urban spaces designed in the last ten years of the 20th century is more the result of the 'dynamism', the richness of the activities and the number of experiences it offers to the users rather than its physical characteristics.

One of the rising points of these concepts was the competition for Parc de La Villette in 1982. In the projects for La Villette designed by Tschumi and Koolhaas, the postmodern ideas such as 'open-endedness', 'uncertainty' and the new role of landscape as a layered, non-hierarchical, flexible, strategic and primary medium for postmodern urban planning were presented (Waldheim, 2002). For this reason, these competition projects in the first two places caused to significant shift in ideas of that period (Figure1), (Figure 2). The argument of these two projects is that the landscape enables 'program change'. Tshumi and Koolhas argued that the landscape was important because of generating a model for urban program change (Waldheim, 2009).

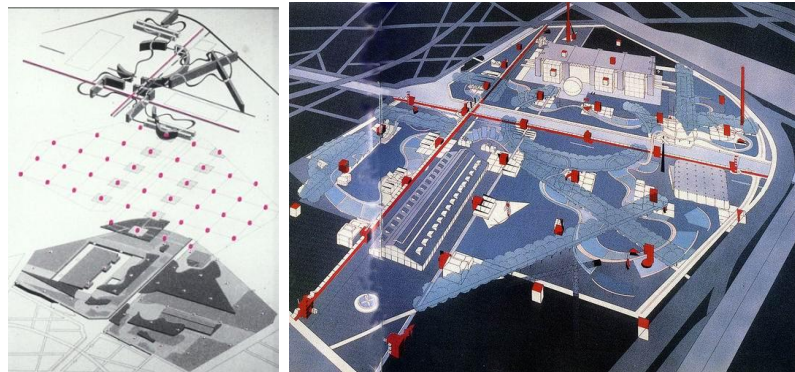


Figure 1. Parc de La Villette by Bernard Tschumi (Url-1), (Url-2).

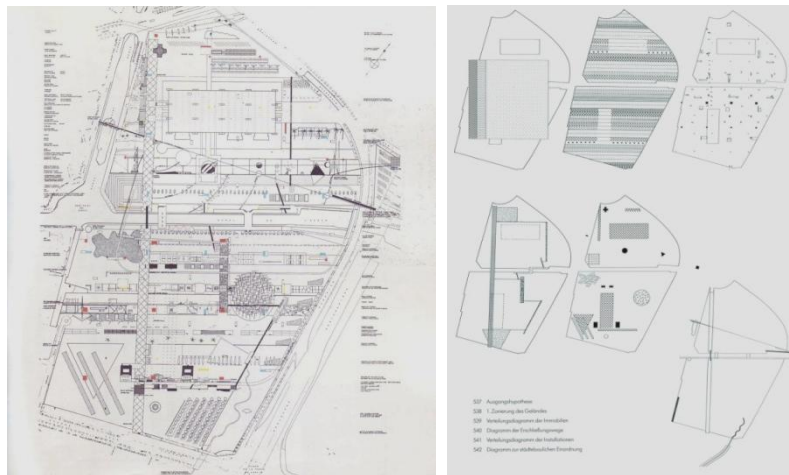


Figure 2. Parc de La Villette by OMA-Rem Koolhaas (Url-3).

Tshumi (1983) argues that the twenty-first century modern city dwellers differ from the nineteenth century's and the parks of the twenty-first century must be different. Today, the landscape architecture integrates urban activities, infrastructure and architecture and it is a city model that non-hierarchical, layered, flexible and strategic. Tshumi and Derrida (1983) claim that architecture, landscape, planning, ecology, engineering, social policies and political processes should consider together and associate in the urban scale projects.

³ *Schouwburgplein (Theater Square): It is an interactive surface requests an active usage from its users. A flexible urban square was designed to provide temporal exhibition, variable uses, daily and seasonal changes and offer possibilities for spontaneous activities (Url-4).*

⁴ *Tel Aviv Port design introduces an extensive undulating, non-hierarchical surface and as an open invitation to free interpretations and unstructured activities. Various public and social initiatives – from spontaneous rallies to artistic endeavors and public acts of solidarity – are now drawn to this unique urban platform, indicating the project's success in reinventing the port as a vibrant public sphere (Url-5).*

⁵ *'The Gates' is a temporary installation project realized by Christo and Jeanne-Claude in Central Park in New York City in 2005 had a great economic contribution to the city.*

This new set of values facilitates the creation of flexible spaces that allow temporary exhibitions, various usages, daily and seasonal changes. It is a matter of designing a contemporary urban open space that does not conform to the traditional urban square and where spontaneous activities can be organized. It is an interactive surface that answers the request of its users for an active approach and can offer them various 'experiences' with the architectural, landscaping elements and flexible activity areas it contains (Figure 3)³, (Figure 4)⁴.

The city is a dynamic structure interacts with users and changes by this interaction. The contemporary city has restarted to product itself with new concepts during this changing. In this context, the installations in a different scale and in different environments offer a wide range of experiences to citizens and enrich the urban life in cultural sense. Artistic creativity is used not only in the creation of cultural products but also for the transformation of city to a successful demonstration and for the marketing of it (Figure 5)⁵.

The success and quality of today's new urban spaces is more the result of the 'dynamism', the 'richness of the activities' and 'the number of experiences' it offers to the users rather than its physical characteristics.

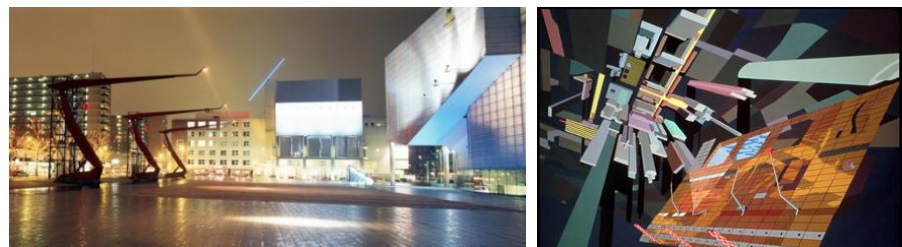


Figure 3. Schouwburgplein in Rotterdam designed by West 8 (Url-4).



Figure 4. Tel Aviv Port public space regeneration in Tel Aviv, Israel designed by Mayslits Kassif Architects (Url-5).



Figure 5. 'The Gates' project by Christo and Jeanne-Claude in Central Park, New York City in 2005 (Url-6).

4. Conclusion

Public spaces are the inevitable components of cities in case of many aspects such as physical, social, cultural, political, symbolic, psychological,

economic, aesthetic and ecological. The rising interest in public open spaces in recent decades has caused to an important development in the quality of contemporary urban open spaces in cities (Figure 6) (Akkar Ercan, 2007).

Public spaces change form continuously in today's city. A new environment has emerged that private and public spaces unify and the boundaries are ambiguous. This new phenomena should understand and it should be accepted that it forms our daily life. Instead of equipping public sphere with the images of artificial intimacy and serving nostalgia, designing according to changing dynamics of city and urban open spaces would be more appropriate.

The dynamics of everyday life have crucial for today's city with offering experiences to citizen. People experience metropolis and the experiences form the metropolis. The activities and events realized with the participation of users give vitality to urban spaces. The current urban spaces turn into a perceptible communication venue by means of this kind of social activities and the art.

Urban transformation is directly related to daily life. The new urban experience emerged by this transformation of daily life has a flexible and unstable structure. This situation keeps the city alive, because the city is an open, live and hybrid system (Gausa, 2000).

We should enrich the ways of experiences for reaching the multi-dimensional layers in our relationship with the city. In this context, contemporary art works such as installations and temporary artworks are the enriching mediums to gain experiences. These mediums allow of new urban experiences each time.

In this sense, the contemporary approaches and the new definitions in urban landscape context in last thirty years provide a major contribution to the design of today's ever-changing urban open spaces and help them form in a positive way and increase their urban quality. The concepts such as *flexibility, ambiguity, temporality, spontaneity, events, activities and programs* in the design of open spaces are based on the fact that landscape contains dynamic and often unpredictable developments (Vroom, 2006). Every new generation has different requirements and the contemporary public space now needs to be defined by the strengthening of short term or temporary activities. This phenomenon is inherent in the century we are living in. Spontaneously developing, flexible uses and events in which there are no imposed programs or activities, enable urban open spaces to converge with present day urban dynamics (Wines, 2006).

In the last twenty years a seriously different transformation from its historical roots occurred in the design of urban open spaces. All through history, the conventional, traditional open spaces were areas designed according to a defined organization and geometry, had limits, were physically surrounded by buildings and offered users a totally public, passive and predetermined agenda (Scherr, 1996).

However, according to the new paradigm referred to as the 'activity or event space', the contemporary open spaces must be created according to an approach that is contrary to the traditional organization. The borders of these spaces are undetermined; they are not shaped according to a predetermined organization. The feature that shapes them is people's activities (Scherr, 1996).

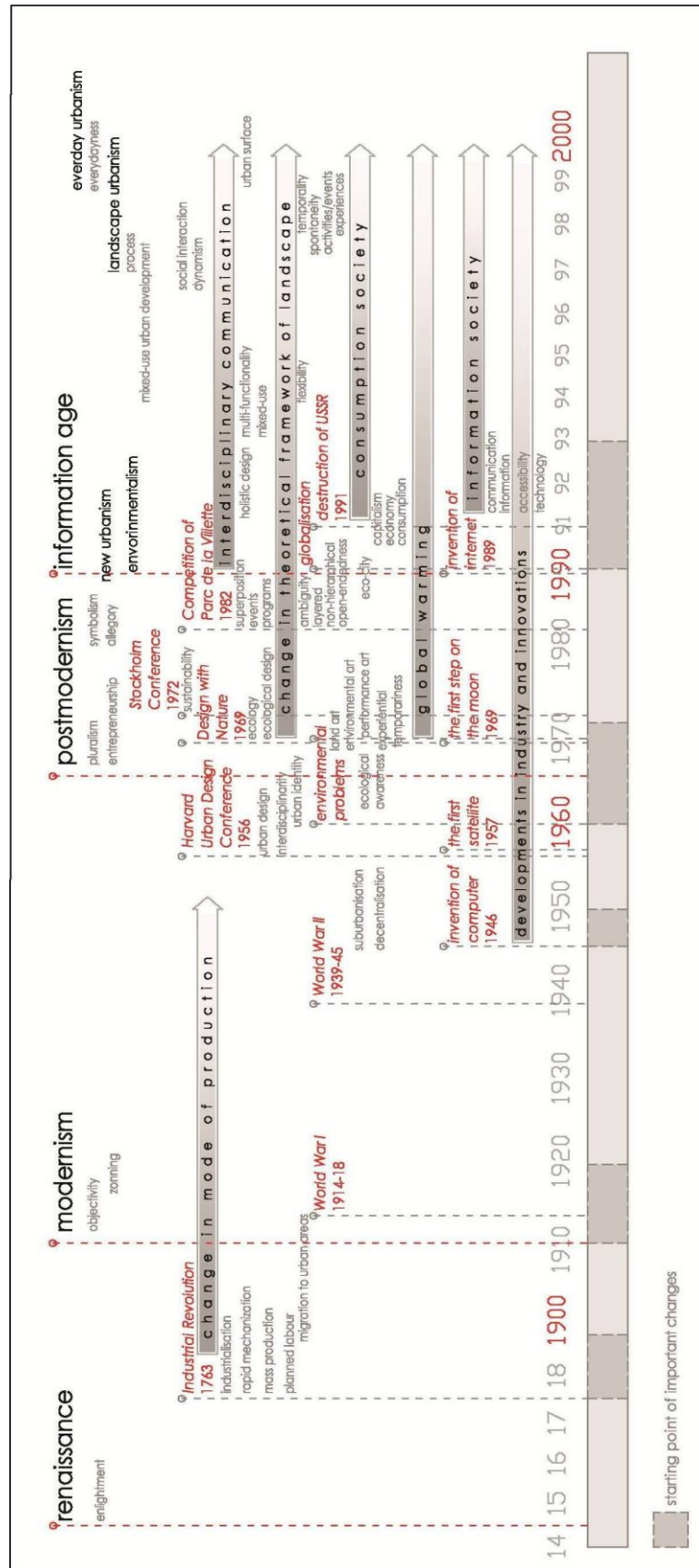


Figure 6. The diagram that shows the process of changing public open spaces.

The approach that includes this feature which derives from the dynamism and variability of landscape allows the possibility of spontaneous events and activities due to its more flexible formation that focuses on contemporary urban open space life and urban dynamics. It contains an intensive and flexible program that changes with time rather than fixed, constantly repeating programs.

The success and quality of new urban spaces is not related to its physical shaping but to the flexibility and abundance of events and activities and the perceptual response of the contributors. This is the result of the change of paradigm in culture and art. Changing life styles are transforming urban open space design.

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- Url-6 <http://christojeanneclaude.net/projects/the-gates>

Kamusal açık alan anlayışında güncel peyzaj içerikleri etkisindeki değişimler

İnsanlık tarihi boyunca yaşanan her dönüşüm kentleri de etkilemiş, geçmişten günümüze kentlerin farklı dönemlerde farklı şekil ve anlamlarda tanımlanmalarına sebep olmuştur. İlk çağlarda tarımsal faaliyetler ve hayvancılığa bağlı gelişen kent yapısı, uzun bir zaman dilimi içerisinde büyük değişikliklere uğramıştır. Ancak bu değişim, son birkaç yüzyılda icatlar, aydınlanma süreci, sanayi devrimi, bilim ve teknolojiye gelişmeler, iletişimin ve bilgi akışının hızlanması, yeni üretim anlayışı ile gelen kapitalist üretim biçimi gibi sebepler nedeniyle çok büyük bir hız kazanmıştır. Değişen iletişim şekilleri, mekanları ve kentleri yeniden yapılanmaya zorlamaktadır. Bu nedenle günümüz kentlerinde öne çıkan kavramlar artık kapitalizm, ekonomi, iletişim, bilişim ve teknolojidir. Teknolojide, toplum yapısında, düşünce sisteminde, ekonomi ve politikada büyük değişimlerin olduğu yirminci yüzyıl, bu sebeple kentlerin dönüşümü açısından bir dönüm noktası olmuştur. Ortaya çıkan bu dönüşüm, kentsel ağları ve kentsel mekanı yeniden şekillendirmiştir.

Günümüz kenti, dinamik ve değişkendir. Farklı katmanları içerisinde barındıran muçlak bir yapıya sahiptir. Bu nedenle güncel kent, binaların, yeşil alanların, alt yapı sistemlerinin, ulaşım ağlarının ayrı ayrı algılandığı bir bakış açısının çok daha ötesinde anlamlar taşımaktadır. Özellikle yirminci yüzyılın ikinci yarısı itibariyle kentlerde yaşanan bu büyük değişim, kamusal açık alanları da dönüştürmüştür. Kent ve toplum sürekli etkileşim içerisinde olduğundan kentin geçirdiği değişim süreçleri, kentsel mekanı ve kamusal açık alanların organizasyonunu da etkilemektedir. Gündelik yaşam pratiklerinin değiştiği, bu bağlamda bireyle toplum arasındaki ilişkilerin ve kentin yeniden tanımlandığı bu sürecin sonucu olarak, kentler giderek daha fazla deneyimi içerisinde barındıran yerler olma çabasında dırlar.

Küreselleşme süreci sırasında tüm dünyada görülen kent dışı alanlara doğru yayılma ve kentlerdeki aşırı gelişme sebebiyle çıkan sorunlar, tasarım ve planlama mesleklerini ortak bir paydada birleştirmiştir. Tasarımcı ve planlar, projelerinde ve söylemlerinde sıklıkla *peyzajı* anlamının gerekliliğini ifade etmişler ve bu bağlamda, *peyzaj odaklı* yeni tasarım yaklaşımları ve içerikleri geliştirmeye başlamışlardır.

Son otuz yılda peyzajın kuramsal çerçevesindeki güçlü değişimler, yeni kamusal açık alan karakteristikleri ortaya çıkarmıştır. Kentlerin doğasının değişiminin yanısıra, peyzaja olan bakış açısının değişimi kentsel açık alanların tasarımına yeni içerikler ve yaklaşımlar getirmiştir. Çağdaş kamusal açık alanlar, yeni peyzaj içerikleri yoluyla dönüşüme daha kolay ayak uydurmuş ve günümüz kent yaşamının ve kentlilerinin

beklentilerine daha kolay yanıt veren mekanların oluşumuna büyük katkı sağlamışlardır. Belli bir düzen ve geometriye sahip ve çevre binalarca kuşatılarak iyi tanımlanmış bir karaktere sahip tarihi kentsel açık alanlardan, biçimleri tarifli olmayan, etkileşim içinde olduğu çevre koşulları tarafından şekillendirilmiş modern boşluklara doğru büyük bir değişim yaşanmıştır.

Tüm bu süreçler ve etkileşimler bağlamında, günümüz kentsel-kamsual açık alanlarının tasarımında *esneklik*, *muğlaklık*, *geçicilik*, *kendiliğindenlik*, *olaylar*, *aktiviteler* ve *program* gibi kavramlar yönlendirici olmaktadır. Bu yeni değerler dizisi, geçici sergilere, farklı kullanımlara, günlük ve mevsimsel değişimlere olanak tanıyacak şekilde tasarlanmış esnek mekanların oluşumuna olanak tanır. Geleneksel kent meydanı anlayışından uzaklaşarak, spontone etkinliklerin gerçekleştirilebileceği çağdaş bir kentsel açık alan tasarımı söz konusudur. Barındırdığı mimari, peyzaj elemanları ve esnek aktivite alanları ile de kullanıcılarından aktif bir yaklaşım talep eden ve onlara değişik deneyimler sunabilen interaktif bir yüzeydir. Yeni nesil farklı ihtiyaçlara sahiptir ve bu da yeni içeriklere ve kullanımlara açık kamusal alanların oluşumunu gerektirir. Peyzaj da günümüz tasarım ortamında bu yeni içerikler ve ihtiyaçların oluşumundaki en etkin roldeki kavramsal araçtır. Waldheim (2009) bu kavramların çıkış noktalarından biri olan Parc de La Villette yarışmasındaki ilk iki sırayı alan Tshumi ve Koolhas projeleri ile ilgili yorumunda peyzajın öneminin, program değişikliğine olanak tanıması olduğunu söylemektedir. Tschumi (1983), *“Bugün, 1982’de ne biliyorsak bilelim, 2009’da yanlış olacak çünkü bu kentlerin işleyiş biçimi değil, programlar sürekli değişir”* demiştir. Bu nedenle B.Tshumi ve R.Koolhas, peyzajın güzel olduğu, yeşil olduğu ya da havayı ve suyu temizlediği için değil, kent programının değişimine bir model oluşturduğu için önemli olduğunu savunmuşlardır (Waldheim, 2009).

Günümüzde özel ile kamusalın birbiri içerisine geçtiği, bütünleştiği, sınırların belirsizleştiği yeni bir ortam söz konusudur. Çağdaş kentsel açık alanların başarısı ve kalitesi, artık fiziksel özelliklerinden ziyade bu alanların esnekliği, dinamikliği, eylemlerin ve aktivitelerin zenginliği ve kullanıcıya sunduğu deneyimlerin miktarı ile ilgilidir. Kent, geçirdiği değişim esnasında yeni tanımlanan kavramlarla kendini yeniden üretmeye başlamıştır. Varolan kavramlara ek olarak yeni kavramlarla kendini yenilemektedir. Mevcut yeni yaklaşımların içerikleri farklı olsa bile, göz önünde bulundurulması gereken nokta, ‘peyzajın’ tüm bu farklılıkların yarattığı fırsatlar çerçevesinde kentleşme ile ilgili gerçekleri anlamak için özel bir anahtar niteliğine sahip olması ve kenti tanımlamaya yardımcı bir unsur olduğudur. Geçmişe özlemi tetikleyerek sunulan, kamusal alanın sahte samimiyet görüntüleriyle donatılması yerine, değişen kent ve kentsel mekanın yeni dinamiklerine göre tasarım yapmak daha yerinde olacaktır.