The Role of Public Health in The Reproduction of Public Space

Seçil Gül MEYDAN YILDIZ[1]   Hazal Ilgın BAHÇECİ BAŞARMAK[2]   Asım Mustafa AYTEN[3]

Abstract

The city and urbanism are directly related to the production of publicities and public space. Public space has been one of the most important parts of cities as areas where social change takes place through social communication and interaction throughout history. These areas, like cities, have never shown a static feature; they have constantly changed and transformed by being affected by the social, economic and political conditions of the age. An important pillar of the spatial change and transformation process specific to the city is the creation of land use decisions for public and private spaces through urban administration and planning. It's essential to be prepared and cautious for any kind of disaster in the land-use decisions. Even though earthquakes are the first thing that comes to mind when natural disasters are considered, the pandemic process caused by The New Type of Coronavirus (2019 nCoV) presents the risks that can be caused by an infectious disease outbreak. Reorganizing public spaces as secure spaces by forming spatial thresholds became an obligation to protect public health and to decrease the risks as much as possible when providing urban security. At this stage, the problem of considering public space usage with regards to design principles from the legal and administrative aspects has emerged. The transformation process of the density concept and spatial thresholds affect the land-use decisions within public space and design principles. In this study, the effect of the pandemic process on urban administration and planning is discussed through public health, public space and spatial threshold concepts.

Keywords: Public Space, Urban Planning, Spatial Threshold, Public Health

Kamusal Mekânın Yeniden Üretiminde Halk Sağlığının Rolü

Öz

Kent ve kentsellik, kamusallıkların ve kamusal mekânın üretimi ile doğrudan ilişkilidir. Kamusal mekan ise tarih boyunca toplumsal iletişim ve etkileşim yoluyla toplumsal değişimin gerçekleştiği alanlar olarak kentlerin en önemli parçalarından birisi olagelmiştir. Bu alanlar, tıpkı kentler gibi hiçbir zaman durağan bir özellik göstermemiş; yaşanılan çağın sosyal, ekonomik ve siyasal durumlarından etkilenerek sürekli değişip dönüşmüşlerdir. Kente özgü mekânsal değişim ve dönüşüm sürecinin önemli bir ayağı da, kent yönetimi ve planlaması aracılığıyla kamusal ve özel mekânların alan kullanım kararlarının oluşturulmasıdır. Alan kullanım kararlarında her türlü afete karşı hazırlıklı ve ihtiyatlı olunması esastır. Ülkemizde afet denildiği zaman ilk akla gelen deprem olsa da Yeni Tip Coronavirüs (2019 nCoV) ile yaşanan pandemi süreci salgın hastalıkların yaratabileceği riskleri ortaya koymaktadır. Halk sağlığını korumada ve kentsel güvenliği sağlamada riskleri en aza indirebilmek amacıyla mekânsal eşikler oluşturarak kamusal mekânların güvenli alanlar olarak yeniden düzenlenmesi zorunluluk haline gelmiştir. Bu aşamada kamusal mekân kullanımlarının tasarım ilkeleri açısından yasal ve yönetsel boyutlarıyla ele alınması sorunu ortaya çıkmıştır. Yoğunluk kavramının ve mekânsal eşiklerin dönüşüm süreci, kamusal mekânda alan kullanım kararlarını ve tasarım ilkelerini etkilemektedir. Bu çalışmada pandemi sürecinin kent yönetimi ve planlaması üzerindeki etkileri halk sağlığı, kamusal mekân ve mekânsal eşik kavramları üzerinden tartışılmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kamusal Mekân, Kentsel Planlama, Mekânsal Eşik, Halk Sağlığı

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[1] Assoc. Prof. Dr., Yozgat Bozok University, Department Of City And Regional Planning, secil.meydan@yobu.edu.tr; ORCID: 00000-0001-9869-4159
[2] Assoc. Prof. Dr., Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University, Department Of Justice Administration, hazal.bahceci@hbv.edu.tr; ORCID: 0000-0003-3967-0960
[3] Assoc. Prof. Dr., Abdullah Gül University, Department Of City And Regional Planning, mustafa.ayten@agu.edu.tr; ORCID: 0000-0002-4464-6204

Introduction

Infectious disease outbreaks, a type of natural disaster, became one of the spatial problems to be intervened during the urbanization process. The pandemic process reinforcing the necessity for the reconsideration of the city management associating with natural disaster management systems made it an obligation to restructure the public space to preserve public health. (Şengün and Meydan Yıldız, 2017, p. 185). At this stage, the standards that local managements look for in spatial regulations and urban design principles started to change.

A new urban lifestyle and a new style of management were started to be taken over that blend the protection of local values from the garden city movement, which gained importance towards the end of the 19th century, to the ecological city; sun city, healthy city, calm city, smart city models with city models that advocate for the development of the local lifestyle with information technologies (Keleş and Mengi, 2017, p. 43).

It's clear that the problems in the production and the execution process of the zoning plans increase the fragility when it comes to disasters in Turkey. All of the legal and administrative regulations in regards to people, environment and society are regulations that affect the city and the zoning plans either directly or indirectly (Meydan Yıldız, 2018a, p. 118). The standards in spatial planning put forward by the Construction Zoning Law no. 3194 and relevant bylaws started not to fulfill the configuration process of the changing and transforming World order and the way of public space usage anymore. In Turkey, who is in a developing country position, the relationship between urbanization, development and demographic structure is progressing irregularly. The main principle that the local management units have to satisfy and are responsible to execute within the urban planning system is to provide the opportunity for the residents to live in a healthy and balanced environment and to improve the individuals' environmental rights according to the public welfare principle (Keleş, 2004, p.46).

Land use decisions of urban structures are formed via urban planning within the urban spatial change and transformation process. It is essential to be prepared and cautious for all kinds of disasters in the land-use decisions. In our country, earthquakes are the first thing that comes to mind when natural disasters are considered. However, the pandemic process caused by the Novel Coronavirus (2019 nCoV) presents the extent of a disaster that can be caused by an infectious disease outbreak. It is necessary to address the private and public space usage from the legal and administrative extent when it comes to decreasing the risks. In this study, it is aimed to evaluate the concept of spatial threshold according to the current legal standards by examining how the

results created by the COVID-19 pandemic, which took the whole world by storm, changed all structural balance upside down. Additionally, another aim of the study is to identify the spatial thresholds that local managements have to execute for the changing and transforming world order and to present the design principles that they will have to implement according to this through a thorough examination.

I. The Importance and Features of Public Space

1.1. Public Space

The city and urbanism are directly related to the production of publicness and public space (Keskinok, 2019). The public place has been one of the most important pieces of cities as the place where social communication and interaction take place and therefore where the social transformation happens. These areas, just like cities, have never shown stable characteristics; and have constantly changed and transformed getting affected by the social, economic and political state of this day and age. Even though urban public spaces are evaluated more from a community aspect as places to bring people together, for encounters and meetups; according to the progressing meaning of the word "public" within the historical process, the term also has political content. This content also forms the basis for the debates about the differentiation between public space and private space.

1.2. On the Meaning of Public Space

The fundamental condition for urban planning practice, which is the fundamental tool for the production and formation of the city, to be successful; is to take public benefits into consideration. It's important to give meaning to the term "space" within this framework.

According to Aristotle, who is the first to address the difference between private space and public space, all citizens belong to two existential planes: a personal plane of his own (idiom) and a public plane (koinon) (Bookchin, 2014, p. 80). The term "public" here corresponds to two different facts related to each other. The first meaning of the term is "everything that appears, can be seen and heard by everyone within the public space". The second meaning of the word "public" is "contradictory to being personal, a common world for everyone that brings everyone together" (Arendt, 2003, p. 50).

We see that one of the most concrete definitions for "public space" belongs to Weber. Weber (2012) described public space as "a space open to every single individual without any discrimination such as cultural, religious and even social status differences". Public space indicates "households where vital necessities are met" (Uzun, 2006, p. 14). "Public space is created by man, but private space is a state of mankind" (Sennett, 2013, p. 138).

Habermas (1995, p. 62) sees public space as "a part of our communal living where some

kind of an area similar to public opinion can form within itself". From this standpoint, public space is a space for meeting, debating, agreeing and activities apart from the government and governmental bodies; providing tools that are necessary for citizens to use their freedom. Habermas states that public space is a place-specific to the bourgeoisie. It is the place where we comprehend the democratic structure of the society because it is where the political and social demands show up. The bourgeoisie publicness of Habermas is rejected by Oscar Negt and Alexanders Kluge. They state that public space is "a proletarian place where the challenges are resolved with non-combatant ways" (Negt and Kluge, 1993, p. ix).

Ancient Greek "polis" (city) lifestyle is situated at the focal point of Arendt's conceptualization of public space. According to Arendt, public space is "an area that is open to everyone, where all individuals as citizens come together and move together in harmony without any restrictions (Arendt, 2003, p. 71). Public space is the space of "freedom". Because "being free carries the meaning of being away from the inequality that lies within the authority relationship and entering an area where neither the governing nor the governed are present" (2003, p. 71).

Sennett's public space is a more materialistic place because it includes tangible areas such as streets and squares. According to Sennett, public spaces are the spirit of the city and the carrier of the democracy; and they are important tools to restructure the city transforming it from physical, social and symbolic aspects. However, with the development of capitalism, public spaces which were places where the heart of the city used to beat and the citizenship emotions used to develop; gained a function that allows room for motion and lost their unique meaning (Sennett, 2013, p.36).

The spatial triad introduced by Lefebvre to explain the social production of the space might be a guide to comprehend what the contents of public places are. This triad that Lefebvre uses to investigate different layers of a space is made up of perceived space, conceived space and lived space (Lefebvre, 2014, p. 38). The perceived space is the tangible space that is seen with the eye which is within the environment that we live in. The conceived space comes appears after a mental endeavor, and it's an intangible space designed and produced by an expert. The social space shaped from the combination of the perceived and conceived space and that gains meaning with individuals' experiences is the lived space (Lefebvre, 2014). The lived space is an irreplaceable element of social life, and that's why Lefebvre states that there is a direct relationship between the production of urban space and the production of social relationships. This close relationship between urban spaces and social life directly brings us to the term "public space". The lived space is a direct intersection of community and urbanism, it is a space that promotes the formation of public space, which includes real public spaces within itself by nature.

Public spaces can be divided into two groups as internal and external spaces. Urban

internal spaces becoming widespread and irreplaceable for urban living happened after the industrial revolution. Spaces where people come together within the urban space and create an accumulation such as coffee shops, bookshops or clubs became the focal point of the modern urban lifestyle; and took an essential role in fulfilling necessities such as the search for the social representation of individuals within the city and gaining prestige and status related to the space thanks to the multifunctionality that these spaces have in the urban daily life (Aytaç, 2007, p. 208, Tekeli, 2011). External public spaces are spaces such as streets, squares, parks, marketplaces and plazas. These areas develop within the natural course of the historical process or they are developed by the public authority, which are open for the usage of all individuals that follow at least the bare minimum when it comes to social rules (Uzun, 2006, p. 15).

The city is a space of coexistence because a common life is shared from specific points of view. The existence of real public spaces within the city to ensure coordination and unity is extremely important.

The features of public spaces are as follows:

• They play an important role when it comes to the formation of urban heritage and urban identity.

• They are usually strong elements of cities in terms of architecture and aesthetics.

• They are an important part of public education with the interaction opportunities that they create between different people.

• They speed up the development of society.

• They help balance the psychosocial tensions by satisfying the entertainment and leisure time necessities of the individuals of the society.

• They create an economic value added within the urban development process.

1.3. The Development and Transformation of Public Spaces within Historical Process

Within the historical process, it is seen that public spaces occur and continue their existence according to different needs. The functions of public spaces differentiate depending on this. We come across the first examples of public space in the Ancient Greek "polis" cities. While acropolis, a place which was a citadel and additionally a gathering place, showed public space characteristics in the early period; agoras started to become the focus of the public lifestyle during the late period. Agora, usually as "a marketplace or a square surrounded by public buildings and porches, which has the function of being a popular or political meeting place, also where important events occur" (Uzun, 2006, p. 16) is in the public center position of the city.

The public spaces in the Roman era are plazas and forums. Plazas are common spaces within the city with both commercial and social functionality. The main space that comes forward

with the feature of being public within the Roman cities is the "forum", which is the new and changed version of the Ancient Greek "agora". Even though forums are common places where commercial and social life happens just like plazas, they differentiate from plazas with the formality that the surrounding management buildings bring. Within the forums, which make up the core of the cities, both official and religious buildings are situated and they also have the function of being marketplaces. During the Roman period, the forums became places for entertainment for the citizens by turning into places that connect circuses, amphitheaters and "odeon"'s surrounded by temples. Forums not being areas for deliberation anymore in such a way means that the public space is losing is democratic power (Gökgür, 2008; Meydan Yıldız, 2018b).

In the Middle Ages, the function of the public space took shape within the frame of feudal relationships that were prevalent within the period, of course. Therefore, the perception of publicness of the period is directly related to the collective production relationship of the feudal system. For instance, the land that belongs to the commune is processed collectively, the fountain open for common use, and the marketplace are public. During this period, due to the fact that the religious and administrative institutions were situated in closed spaces; the castles, cathedrals and monasteries were surrounded by walls. Besides, the city entrance gates are important public spaces as well. These walls usually open to markets, and make up areas where people come across each other and do shopping (Gökgür, 2017, p. 4).

It is not possible to mention the public as an area that is separated from the private space and as an area on its own especially within the feudal structure of the society in the late middle ages. During this period, the description of the princes' seals as "public" presents that sovereignty is represented in a public way and that publicness became an indication of some kind of status. As an inevitable result of the structure of the society before the bourgeoisie, the person in the feudal lord position embraced this position in a way open to the public and presented himself as the representative of the highest power. Today, this lies behind the requirement for the representation of the authority belonging to the political power at the highest level by the head of the government (Habermas, 1995). By the end of the 18th century, institutions that Habermas calls "representative public places" such as the church, princes and nobility; and the feudal authorities made up of statuses will be broken into pieces and bourgeoisie publicness will show up.

In the 14th and 15th centuries, the Renaissance caused a new understanding of the city to occur. During this period when the city was considered a stage; within the cities that were planned with a certain geometric layout, important public areas were also started to be structured in a geometrical way. Great squares that were designed in an organized way took the place of the naturally formed squares of the middle ages, and these squares became important public places of

the period, becoming the center of city life. "In geometrically planned cities, the streets are connected to a center and they are symmetrical according to that. The cities develop and grow depending upon squares, main roads and public buildings. During the Renaissance, main roads form monumental perspectives. The urban composition created by the squares and monumental structures is carried through from the center outwards (Gökgür, 2008).

The understanding of publicness and -naturally- also the public spaces of the Baroque period, starting with the 17th century, differentiate from the Renaissance period significantly. Palace parks, which occurred from the mid 17th century onwards and spread all around Europe in a short time, are important public places of the period. These parks, built to surround the Baroque palace, acted as a curtain between the palace and the outside world according to Habermas (2003). In this period, public places were seen as areas that demonstrate the power of the authority, broad pavements bringing the "military feature" into the forefront and large streets were opened (Gökgür, 2017, p. 4).

18th century is an important landmark in terms of publicness and the city. In this period, a quite rich public lifestyle started to emerge especially in the biggest cities in Europe. For the most part, the base of the relationship of urbanism and publicness underlies the important role that the urban space undertakes in the formation of the 18th century European public. In the growing cities of the period, the start of developments of various social networks free of the direct inspection of the kingdoms triggered the resolution of the traditional social structure in Europe; and this was the start of important changes and transformations in all aspects of life.

Public space, gaining its real function with the 18th century, started to change and get absorbed as a result of great reforms that broke out at the end of this century, and the fundamental change that the rise of industrial capitalism caused in the opinion on public and private places. Three main factors had a role in this change. The first one is the relationship between the public life in the big cities and the 19th century industrial capitalism. The second one is the emergence of a new secularism understanding that affects the interpretation style of people when it comes to the foreign and the unknown, 19th century onwards. The last one is a power that comes especially from the structure of the public life and turns into a weakness later on in the *ancien regime* (Sennett, 2013, p. 36). 19th century capitalism created fear and anxiety in people via dissatisfactions created by large urban transformations such as privatization and knocking boulevards, highways and districts down; and in time, the term "family" was started to be seen as a way to be protected from these uncertainties (Sennett, 2013, p. 37). Thus, as private places started to become shelters for people, the outlook on the public space in cities also started to change. During this period, "people, using family relationships as a measure, instead of seeing

public space as a limited cluster of social relationships similar to the Age of Enlightenment, they started to see the public lifestyle as a miserable life from the ethical perspective" (Sennett, 2013, p. 37). The city life is still like a theatre stage; however, the citizens are not actors on this stage anymore but they are only there as a passive audience. During this period when individuals tried to resist the overstimulating system of modern life with their urges originating from the fast-paced urban life; an artificial individualism started to emerge via the differences between individuals when it comes to signs, symbols, fashion or personal kookiness (Harvey, 2003, p.77-80). From that point on, the main concern of each individual is his own ego, and getting to know oneself is not a tool but a purpose. With this new way of thinking that caused important changes to happen in the understanding of public area/ space, investing in personal feelings and passive observation came together, and getting out into the public area/ space turned into a personal and passive experience (Sennett, 2013, p. 42).

In the 20th century, beyond just being an economic system that organizes the relationships of production and consumption, capitalism turned into a cultural reality that also organizes daily life. The change in the relationships of production and consumption affected the practices of daily life in the cities significantly with the accelerating scientific research about the organization in production. During this process, consumption no longer being an activity that is carried out to satisfy vital needs, and turning into an indication of status and identity; resulted in all areas of daily life getting surrounded by consumption activities.

Personal and public relationships also losing their spontaneity due to personal identity being identified with consumption products, also brought a transformation within the places where public relationships are made. Standardization of consumption products that are made by serial production also started to show itself in the establishment of public relationships and the organization of the public space (Vural and Yücel, 2006, p. 99-100).

This period, which is also seen as the start of modern urbanism, is actually also the start of the disengagement of public space from its traditional style. With the acceleration of the industrialization process, as the economic activities in the cities were divided into groups as "industrial zones" and "commercial zones"; on the other hand, the advancements that took place in the transportation opportunities caused the housing and workplace relationship to get gradually disconnected in the cities, and the industrial city models that were presented in the 20th century occurred within this framework. In the "Industrial City" model presented by Garnier, pedestrians were especially considered important, and the idea to spare a significant amount of areas for green areas and pedestrian areas were defended. Again in 1933, in the Athens Charter developed by Le Corbusier which includes the principles of modern urbanism, traditional public places were

degraded into areas for roaming, pedestrianization, shopping and exhibition. Thus, public space was turned into an area for movement where free spaces are designed with a simple sense of equipment or into a cultural heritage area. In Le Corbusier modern city, skyscrapers took the place of "corridor streets" that embody historical elements and squares (Gökgür, 2017).

The public space perception of today became blurrier than ever before in history, with public spaces getting controlled and occupied by natural persons or institutions within the process of the production of urban place aimed at creating added value (Bahçeci, 2018, p. 124). The public space installation, articulated with capital dynamics, points out to a new public space directly related to the capitalist production and consumption relations, extremely far from the setting of freedom and democracy that many philosophers lay stress on. During this period, the cities which became a part of the consumption/ marketing mechanism and an essential element of advertising campaigns, take shape with the interventions of administrators as an unavoidable result of marketing strategies; and postmodernist urban design principles which are dominated by a mostly superficial style start standing out. On the other hand, even though the increase in internal public spaces as a result of the changing perception of public space seems to have increased the comfort level, it can affect the liveliness of urban living in a negative way by changing the order of preference in public spaces. In an era like this, public spaces are essential for the continuity of social communication (Uzun, 2006, p. 17).

II. Public Space Usage and Spatial Thresholds Reshaped With The Pandemic Process

2.1. Changes on Spatial Structure on Urban Scale

Everything has been swiftly changing and transforming in our age and consequently, cities have been taking their part in this transformation process. This transformation is based on the nature of those cities as well as their competition with other cities. The pace and space of this global-scale change can influence all spatial structures.

Problems on the local level can lead to national, regional and even global scale problems and hence, there emerges the need for creating new policies accordingly. In our current global setting in which the population has reached 8 million, the devastating global-scale problems that we are facing are mostly natural disasters and epidemics. Fighting against such disasters is amongst the responsibilities of the states, international organizations and even non-governmental organizations.

One of the abovementioned global scale problems in the current setting is COVID-19 which emerged for the first time in Wuhan city of China according to the statement of the World Health Organization. This pandemic which has shaken the entire globe has so far affected over 9 million people and 479133 people have lost their lives (World Health Organization, 2020). The

entire world has still been struggling with this pandemic and social, economic and administrative structures of all states have been directly affected.

Humankind had faced disasters throughout history and has searched for ways to deal with them and they continue to do so. States have taken various precautions against disasters that directly affect the public health, and they have been warning their citizens against it. This problem which is defined as a pandemic is actually a situation that requires taking extraordinary precautions and necessitates crisis management. In this framework, there are lots of responsibilities that have to be assumed by central and local administrations.

Turkey declared its first case on March 10, 2020. After the detection of the first case, Turkey started to take a series of precautions against COVID-19. Some precautions taken by Turkey can be stated as follows: canceling face-to-face education in primary & secondary schools and high schools, canceling sportive competitions, implementing a ban on entry and leaving the country, closing shopping malls to prevent mass gatherings and canceling entertainment & art activities. In the face of this situation which affects all sectors socio-economically, a series of legal and administrative decisions have been taken with consultation of the Science Committee which is directly working with the Ministry of Health of Turkey.

The Public Health Law no. 1539 which came into effect on 24.04.1930 foresees a number of laws and sanctions on public health and on the use of space-environment especially in the times of such epidemics. The Public Health Law has been implemented by the central administration. Besides, the above-mentioned Law also includes articles on the local administrations which will implement the stated rules and regulations on the local level (RG. 06.05.1930/ 1489). Especially in our country, the central administration is in a position to enact laws and controls them while local administrations are in charge of the implementation of these laws on the local level. The Ministry of Interior can monitor and control local administrations through the Directorate General of Local Administrations within its umbrella.

According to the daily data shared by the Ministry of Health, the number of daily cases and casualties were relatively low from March until the beginning of June thanks to the precautions that were implemented in the country. Since the low number of cases is perceived as the success of the policies implemented by the states all over the world, it is clear that the lockdown period, closing or restricting many public areas such as cafés, cinemas, theatres and parks, and spending lots of time at homes have played a significant role in achieving this success. As of 1 June 2020, many restrictions have been partially lifted in accordance with the age groups and people have been allowed to come together and to use public areas in accordance with some rules. Keeping the physical distance, wearing masks and maintaining personal hygiene are the

top-ranking rules amongst all. In so doing, people have started to use open areas, recreational centers and resumed their daily physical activities such as walking and riding bicycles.

It is obligatory to create social distance control zones which remind spatial thresholds so that citizens can sustain their daily life activities and adopt the new rules as a culture within society. Accordingly, new thresholds should be created. Therefore, acts of manner in accordance with the distance between activities emerge and the spaces where these activities take place become a tool that reduces risks in social life.

Taking the warnings of the World Health Organization and the Ministry of Health into consideration, keeping the pandemic under control by respecting the hygiene rules and not infecting others, and in so doing, reducing the number of daily cases is the priority. On the other hand, instead of communicating in person, using technological tools for all sorts of activities and tasks has become more and more widespread. All sectors within the economic arena have started implementing their activities online swiftly and in a rational manner. People have even started to communicate with each other through online platforms instead of coming together in person. Building social networks in this way shows that space and time do not matter any longer.

Space and time which defines and limits public space on spatial threshold are replaced by the phenomenon and incidents which are taking place in parallel with time. This situation shows that space can be redefined according to the acts and activities of people regardless of the location. On transport systems, it is clear that personal transportation will be intensified due to the social distance control and that spatial thresholds will contribute to the sustainability of transport systems in cities.

Since the industry sector which was the main dynamic of the cities in the 20th century has been replaced by the infrastructure of information technology, all urban infrastructure and superstructure systems of the 21st century have been replaced by smart city systems.

It is inevitable that we will see its reflections in urban management and planning in near future. Instead of dividing cities into different functions and densities with the modernist urban planning prevalent in the 20th century, new and more sustainable city models in which different functions are used all together, space and time are used more efficiently have emerged. This structuring type also improves with the development vision that envisages to reduce the traffic congestion between housing and workplace, and city center and suburbs and to create more sustainable and smart cities.

This situation sets for the use of the land in the most sustainable way rather than the approaches adopted by traditional planning. In this framework, it is clear that cities and spaces within cities should be reorganized and new public spaces should be designed in which the

networks will gain importance.

The increased mobility within cities and between cities necessitated the restructuring in this framework. In this context, spatial settings in which physical and social distance rules are important and the rules to be implemented after the epidemic have developed a new spatial threshold concept. It has become evident that, with the end of lockdown and re-liberation of people, every spatial structure and setting in cities should be re-planned, re-designed and implemented according to the people of all ages and cultural level. In this context, the importance of public space has also become more evident.

Public spaces that are the focal points in urban lifestyle have transformed into potential infection risk areas which should be used much more prudently in the face of the pandemic. The importance of housing and private areas has increased, and they have assumed new functions.

House which is originally not designed as a "center for production" had turned into a place where daily tasks are activities that have been carried out. Within this framework, houses in which people met their daily needs earlier can now enable households to conduct all their daily activities and tasks via information technology tools, and it has been diversified and transformed with the new services it can provide. While this situation changes interior dimensions, sizes and functions of the house, it also alters center-housing, workplace-housing concepts and their relation with social and technical infrastructure systems. Additionally, housing will no longer be designed only for living purposes, yet it should provide infrastructure and feasible conditions for work, as well. Additionally, re-thinking and re-designing urban density management will be key for the survival of cities and citizens during the epidemic (Arkitera, 2020). It has been observed that the post-pandemic process would turn housing into structures that have fewer floors, with less density, more balconies and wider windows.

Cities have started to exist with spatial thresholds that secure physical and social distance. These thresholds have entered as a description in urban management and urban planning which regulate the social distance in public spaces such as squares, parks, recreational areas, bazaars markets, bus stations and even in elevators in apartments and set boundaries between "safe" and "unsafe" areas.

Spatial thresholds form spaces of freedom, the boundaries of which have been determined and defined. While social and physical boundaries created in living areas due to the pandemic have created changes in the spatial design process, similar changes will have to be seen in the locations of the city furniture put on public squares and areas, and the detection of locations for facilities intended for recreational activities, sports, entertainment, etc. Since the focus of such a discovery will be the spatial qualities rather than the concrete space itself, special threshold is

developing as a concept that catches the spatial dynamics of freedom (Stavrides, 2016, p. 11).

2.2. Public Health

Public health is a field of study which emerged 18th century onwards during when the workforce was disrupted by the illnesses of the working class who were living under adverse living conditions and in poor housing, which later on led to taking a series of measures since it also affected the lives of the citizens. The first regulation to this end was enacted under the name of "Public Health Law" in the United Kingdom. The extent and the content of the public health concept, which has been developed to protect the physical and mental health of individuals throughout history, has developed with the emergence of cases that concern the public as a whole.

"Public health approach intends to protect the health of all segments of society. This approach plays a vital role in detecting the epidemics, preventing their spread and creating public policies to take them under control" (Yıldız and Uzun, 2020). Therefore, in cases where the standards and facilities of health services are inadequate, especially during epidemics, the public health approach becomes an urgent public problem.

Public health also includes taking preventive precautions for individuals before they get infected by infectious and dangerous diseases specified by the World Health Organization. To achieve this goal, it is emphasized that all health services should be evenly and equally presented to the public. Additionally, making health services accessible for all people living in urban or rural areas regardless of their nationality or religion is another goal. This situation envisages to prevent health services from being perceived as a meta only and to provide services according to the development level of the country.

III. Urban Planning Standards, Public Health and Spatial Threshold

3.1. Local Managements and Decisions on the Urban Land Use

During the urban spatial change and transformation process, the decisions made on urban land use through urban management and planning is of vital importance. Risks related to the protection of public health and ensuring urban security should be lowered to a minimum. At this point, the necessity to tackle the use of urban spaces by taking legal and administrative dimensions into consideration comes to the forefront.

The Municipal Law no. 5393 that came into force in 2005 and the Metropolitan Municipal Law no. 5216 that came into force in 2004 confer duties and responsibilities to the municipalities as decentralization units related to meeting the needs of local people (Mengi and Meydan Yıldız, 2017, p. 488). Local government units are in charge of providing such services as public works, water, sewage systems, transportation, urban infrastructure, urban information systems, environmental health, cleaning, solid waste, park, green areas, housing, boosting activities related

to culture, art and tourism as well as enhancing the economic and industrial structure of that local unit.

Local government units should carry out their duties and responsibilities related to spatial regulations according to the Construction Zoning Law no. 3194 and with urbanism laws and principles stated in the relevant bylaws. Those principles concentrate on public welfare, public health and security (Keleş and Mengi, 2019, p. 27-29). The Construction Zoning Law has been regulated in order to ensure the housing and settlements around housings to be in conformity with planning, health and environmental necessities. Urban planning is prepared in three different planning structures according to the space where are located and their objectives: "Spatial Strategy Plans", "Landscaping Plans" and "Zoning Plans".

Planning stages are made from small scale plans on the upper level towards big scale plans on the lower level. These are stated as follows, respectively: Spatial Strategy Plan, Landscaping Plan, Land Use Plan and Zoning Plan. Local administrations are responsible for making local physical plans. Local Physical Plans are divided into three parts: Land Use Plan, Implementary Development Plan and Specific Targeted Plan. Specific Targeted Plans are detailed plans which may vary in accordance with the scope and content. The following plans fall under Specific Targeted Plans: "Conservation Development Plans", "Specially Protected Environment Area Plans", "Tourism Intended Development Plans", "Coastal Planning", "Development Plans in Agricultural Areas," Development Plans in Industrial Zones" (Organized Industrial Sites, Technology Development Areas, etc.), "Development Plans in Catchment Basins", "Village Layout Plans", "Rehabilitation Development Plans", "Bosporus Development Plans", "National Park Plans", "Wetland Development Plan", "Cluster Housing Plans", "Development Plans for Privatization", "Urban Transformation Plans" etc.

Urban planning which is prepared to protect and enhance physical, environmental, historical and cultural values, to support sustainable development at country, regional and city level and to create healthy and secure environments with high quality of life must include certain features during the creation phase (Meydan Yıldız, 2018a, 120). General basis and procedures regarding these plans which bring along land use and structure decisions are as follows: 1) they are made for public welfare, 2) they are a whole structure with map section, planning notes and planning reports, 3) they direct law level plans including necessary details for the said level, scale and purpose, 4) upper-level plans are plans which set a spatial target for lower-level plans, which guide them and set principles for them, 5) implementation cannot be made by taking measures from spatial strategy plans, landscaping plans and master development plans. Every plan should be drawn on an existing map according to its own scale. They cannot be obtained by enlarging or

downsizing plans with different scales, 6) Protecting and enhancing natural, historical and cultural values is an absolute must. Traditional patterns should also be protected, if any, 7) Improvement decisions are made in plans to enhance the structural and environmental quality, 8) data regarding natural disasters, geology and nature is taken as a principle, 9) Megaprojects which require decisions at country or regional level should be taken into consideration while making spatial strategy plans or environmental plans, 10) These plans are made in conformity with the existing or nearby plans. Plans to be made near areas which require protection are made in a way to observe the sensitivities of those areas (RG. 14.06.2014/ 29030). Housing zones and their density, working areas and social structures and technical infrastructure elements amongst those activities are major elements in structuring decisions.

The Spatial Plans Bylaw that falls under the Construction Zoning Law no. 3194 categorizes living areas in density as very high, high, medium and rare in urban planning. The density indicator chart and diversity set a hierarchy according to the urban morphology and identity. Very high-density housing areas comprise 601 and more per hectare, high-density housing areas comprise 301-600 persons per hectare, medium density housing areas comprise 151-300 persons per hectare, low-density housing areas comprise 51-150 persons per hectare and scarce density housing areas comprise 50 or fewer people per hectare. In our country, central areas and areas with high revenue possibilities are highly populated while the density drops in peripheral suburban areas where a unique silhouette of the cities arises (Meydan and Emür, 2013, p. 54-56; Keleş, 2004, p. 121-124). This structure presents an urban model that may develop in a linear way, with single or multiple centers, with a grid or smear structure and which may vary according to natural or unnatural thresholds.

In accordance with the Spatial Plans Bylaws, the walking distance can be raised in residential areas where the gross population density is less than 100 persons/hectare, in dispersed rural settings, in places where there are no residential areas or in cases where there are natural or unnatural thresholds which prevents access to those functions. Zoning plans are made by taking various elements into consideration such as walking distance, green areas, access of the population to health and education services, topography, density, natural and unnatural thresholds and the current structure of that area. In construction zoning plans, "playgrounds, open playfields, children's parks, family health centers, nurseries, primary schools and kindergartens should be within 500-meter walking distance, secondary schools should be within 1000-meter walking distance and high schools should be within 2500-meter walking distance, approximately." (RG. 14.06.2014/ 29030). Additionally, religious places such as small mosques should be within 250-meter walking distance and medium scale mosques should be within 400-meter walking distance

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(RG. 14.06.2014/ 29030).

The central parts of the city, which is the core, are the main points of work, recreation and social life. Buildings of public institutions, social centers, squares and green areas are major elements that shape these parts. City squares that have been designed as the indicators of urban dignity and power are the principal subjects of the public spaces. Since ancient times, public spaces have been used as an area where democracy has been built, exchanges of views have taken place and executions, celebrations or religious rituals have been performed. (Meydan Yıldız, 2019, p. 301). Apart from being the centers of open markets and bazaars, all different social classes have gathered there to rest, to meet and to spend leisure time.

In an urban plan which is designed according to the rights of the citizens and the principle of public welfare, all people should enjoy equal, secure and just rights; and there is no place for social discrimination or insecurity. Public squares which should be built in a way that individuals from all different social classes should easily reach in terms of location detection and design process, should also be in conformity with the urban principle developed by Kevin Lynch (1960). Lynch explains the quality of the public squares in accordance with the following principles 1) liveliness (healthy environment), 2) soul (locality and identity feeling), 3) conformity (the adaptation ability of a place), 4) access (access to people, activities, resources, places and information), 5) control and security (control and security of the environment with a sense of responsibility).

Public spaces are for common use where citizens meet their needs of resting, recreating, meeting and gathering. Public spaces are designed by taking public welfare, public security and public health into consideration.

The design process which represents urban identity, social structure and lifestyle is one of the stages of urban planning (Çınar Altınçekiç and Kart, 2000, p. 118). Design principles have a value through its harmony, conformity and rhythm with the natural, unnatural and social environment which represent the urban culture. This process is more important in public squares which represent the core of the city (Bütün Tekin, 2016, p. 9).

Public places that are used commonly by all social classes can also transform into a crime scene that increases the infection risk of epidemics. For this reason, the access distance of urban facilities and their distribution should be diversified. Standards regarding spatial planning which are outlined in Construction Zoning Law no. 3194 and its bylaws are amongst the important outcomes of the pandemic process when they cannot meet the structuring process of the transforming world and the use of public spaces.

3.2. "Threshold" as a Focal Point in Public Space

Public spaces are structures that have been transformed in functions and forms throughout history and dynamically changed according to socio-cultural, economic and political elements. When we examine the development of the spatial structure that defines the urban space and that takes its representation power from location and time, urban thresholds gain importance.

According to Stavrides, thresholds create the conditions of entry and exit. At this stage; persons, places and objects create the conditions of entry and exit via thresholds, takes its time for the entry process, directs and attributes meaning to it. That is why thresholds are described with rituals which aim at controlling immanent places of passing to the other side (Stavrides, 2018, p. 65) Urban thresholds define the nature and meaning of social boundaries as well as spatial boundaries. (Stavrides, 2018, p.77). Thresholds that regulate the social distance in today's pandemic are defining secure borders.

Figure 1. Social Distance Thresholds at Recreational Area (Url-1)

Figure 2. Social Distance Thresholds at Train Station (Url-2)

Figure 3. Social Distance Thresholds (Url-3)

As seen in Figures 1, 2 and 3, different countries have different solutions regarding the use of common areas. Thresholds that are shaped according to the necessities of daily life constitute the spatial response of the fight against pandemics. Threshold spaces are definitively and severely separated from each other although they have different features in cities. It has been observed that places are separated from one another through various thresholds according to the lifestyles of those places. Urban identities that live in urban spaces require and the common sense of belonging are displayed in places where all experiences of being in public dominate. Therefore, the presence and sustainability of public spaces within cities are of major importance. Thresholds that aim at securing health and hygiene conditions after a pandemic and enhancing the life quality should be defined and implemented. Especially new thresholds should be defined in public spaces with

standards and guidelines of these thresholds and they should be presented to users. Developing common, flexible and feasible design examples by taking the ideas and suggestions of people of every age group is of great importance in order to define thresholds convenient for diversified cultural processes.With these thresholds; the places, their size and their standards should be defined within the framework of the rules to be obeyed by users. In this context, the importance and role of public spaces have gained more importance after the pandemic since public spaces are commonly and freely used by all people. New thresholds should be defined and implemented for those spaces. Especially, nature protection zones and green areas should be integrally and systematically designed within cities and those areas should be used by everyone equally and evenly. Threshold examples from different spaces that build social distance are presented below.

Conclusion and Evaluation

It has been known throughout history that public places, by their nature, are composed of places that are continuously protected and used by the public in which different activities have been performed. The high quality of life of cities depends on the characteristics of the public places that they possess. Therefore, the protection of public places in cities in developed countries is of major importance.

Public places function as places where people gather and meet. The pandemic has caused changes in the living practices and cultures of citizens. Central and local administrations should take economic, environmental and socio-political reflections of this pandemic period since the use of public places urges the users to change their behavior patterns due to the newly set rules and standards.

Central and local administrations had to take various precautions due to the pandemic that hit the entire globe. Turkey has also taken a series of decisions within the framework of laws and regulations in order to protect public health through the Ministry of Health and the Science Committee which is composed of academicians due to the pandemic which has affected all areas of life and economic sectors since mid-March.

Although new regulations made on a legal basis have helped the situation come under control to some extent; central administrations, local administrations and non-governmental organizations have a lot of duties and responsibilities during this period. Changing strategies on public space use and recognition of spatial thresholds depend on the accumulation of knowledge, production of knowledge and the feasibility and control of their relationship with spaces by the authorities. Since mainstreaming of cultural changes depend on changing the habits, it should not be forgotten that this may also create a process "that will take time, create reactions and even lead to a crisis" (Meydan Yıldız, 2018b, p. 174). To prevent this, smart design technologies that are in

conformity with universal design principles should be applied.

In the new world setting, which has been hit by the pandemic, new standards on urban spaces should be considered and implemented according to the effect and power of the pandemic. It is very clear that the only way to liberation is to move within the boundaries of these thresholds. On the other hand, it is highly probable that we will experience a lifestyle where these thresholds will be an absolute must, obeying the rules of social distance will become a way of life and these thresholds will be a part of social acceptance in the upcoming years.

It is clear that pandemic has started to create an important threshold for public spaces. Within this framework, developing user-friendly, healthy and sustainable designs that will enhance the quality of life and ensuring the adherence of these standards by local administrations is very important. These could be applicable to both public and private areas. Especially in outdoor places such as streets, squares, walking areas, resting areas, parks and nature protection zones; standards should be created for the use of places, signing plates should be put and these should be observed by people. Reducing the access distance values implemented in the zoning planning system and increasing the number of green areas, community health centers, playfields and small squares in neighborhoods in accordance with the density of the population has become a must.

Consequently, the pandemic has created an opportunity to reconsider the use of spaces in cities and to create designs that are flexible, innovative, technology-oriented, modular and adaptable.

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