THE NEW URBAN MEMORY

Memory is defined as the mental faculty of retaining and recalling the past experiences. It is the act or instance of remembering, recollection. In psychology, memory is defined as the ability to store experiences and learned information with their relations to the past in mind as a result of a conscious process. Perceptual knowledge which changes with different cultures effects or social environments are stored in memory. Memory is an individuals' characteristic; societies can not "own" memories but can determine the memory of the individuals. (Assmann,2001).

In a similar way, Connerton suggests that societies impose individuals a kind of a frame that allows setting their memories in a meaningful place by mapping virtually. This mapping takes place in a mental context that is provided by the society. (Connerton,1999).

Although a society does not have a memory, we can talk about existence of a "social memory". In other words, values belonging to the past-experiences of a society can be defined as an important characteristic of social memory. When compared with social memory, collective memory has a wider meaning. A collective memory can appear concerning a family, a group or universe. Boyer, in his book The City of Collective Memory (1994), declares that the city can be defined as a fact of collective memory. (Yücesoy, Gökbulut,1999).

From the point of these determinations, we can consider the urban memory as a kind of collective memory that is constituted by individuals' experiences within the place itself and through its history and social environment.

The experiences of both habitants and observers have effects on urban memory. In this paper, we consider the "urban memory" not only through the social memory of habitants, but the collective memory of people who experience the city.

We should focus both on these experiences and physical circumstances. It can be observed that, the lost of urban memory occurs when there is major change in physical or social environment. A change in physical environment (disasters, great fires, etc.) is one of the facts that cause discontinuities and urban memory loss. However the societies can also break this continuity creating a renewal of urban memory through social, economical and political changes (like immigrations). Formation of urban identity requires achieving sustainability without interruptions in urban memory.

The aim of this paper is to draw attention to the new urban memory; which contains the perception of new but not original images that are produced in globalization process. In this paper, we would like to discuss the urban memory from a perspective where it is reformed dynamically with new but not original images perceived by individuals in a globalizing world rather than analyzing the experiences of the habitants.

Memory is reestablished dynamically. What we refer "new urban memory" is not a memory formed by new images, but new references where memory links images which are detached from their places and no longer be considered as "new ".

In this paper, to explain the formation of new urban memory, it is a necessity to mention about the *memories, imaginability* and the *cultural changes*. Globalization is a process in which these topics can be discussed in new perspectives, so we would like to focus on these titles in order to interpret "the new urban memory" that can be criticized today.

The memories

The urban memory establishes relations with the past by knowing the history of the city and of its societies in connection with today. *"Urban Meaning" depends on the long term development of the city".* (Robins,1997)

The experiences and information formed in social memory are embodied in the city. Halbwachs states that "the city is the locus of the social memory". Individuals of the society create a strong image while experiencing the city. (Rossi,1982)

The memories, as the traces of previous events are kept in memory, which establish relationships between past and today through individuals and city, by exposing the images of one's personal experiences. There is also another important fact concerning the constant change of the built environment: rebuilding the buildings, monuments, reshaping the squares and streets, changing the names of streets and equipments so often cause breaks in urban memory.

The space becomes the projection of time by transforming the time in order to make the moment possible. Physical, perceptual or conceptual space leaves a trace in memory and any experience of built environment can only exist within these spatial images. "Therefore, the space becomes everything, because the time has no ability to animate the memory". (Bachelard,1996)

The imaginability of the city

The imaginability of the city and the power of creating a strong image depend on the relationship between the observer and city and on the features of the environment. In the formation of an environmental image, the features of natural and artificial environment are important. As more of these features become indifferent, less strong images are generated and imaginability of the city seems to be decreased. While these features of natural environment give the city its character by shaping its settlement, the features of the artificial environment help the imaginability of the city with elements in scales of settlement, architecture and equipments.

The environment presents differentiations and proposes superiorities and relations. The observer selects from what one sees and configures them according to his aims and needs. Different environments support or resist the creation of the image. (Lynch, 1998),(Kepes, 1996)

The image of the city can provide a more secure space for today's world, where the goods and symbols can be produced independently from place. Harvey claims if the image of the city is produced polyphonic and harmonic, it can increase the feeling of social solidarity and tendency of attachment to space. (Robins,1996)

However, according to Featherstone, it is about the identities of a "spaceless place" where the traditional meanings of culture is discharged, adapted, copied again and renewed and reshaped permanently. The common feature of spaces is the cultural disorder and the stylist eclecticism. It is a city that consists of museums, thematic parks, shopping malls and where spending spare time and consumption is appreciated as a way of life. (Robins,1996)

The imaginability of the city is not only about the strong images of the city, but also is about the capacity of our perceptions. Our perceptions do not give feeling of "space" when they over pass the limits of our capacity. Mazzoleni states that we can not consider metropolis as

"spaces" anymore, because its dimensions exceed the limits the habitant's perception tools. Seeing, which is the widest tool of sense, is torn down. It is mostly the visual field that defines the city dimensionally: metropolis does not have a panorama anymore, because its body overflows beyond the horizon. As the eye has lost the role of controlling in metropolitan aesthetic, the ears, then the nose and skin have gained the same importance again. The metropolitan cities' field of sense is both visual and beyond visual: and that is the aesthetic field of the city". (Mazzoleni,1996)

Globalization and cultural memory

The globalization is the perception of the world as a whole space. (Robertson,1999). The cultural, economic and political dimensions of globalization have different affects on the formation of urban identity. In this process that is called globalization, the circulation of capital is fastened and spread extensively, and with the speed in technology, and information, time and space became more intense. (Yıldızoğlu,2003). One can experience both the place he exits and the place he observes with communication technologies. This condition of experiencing different places "at the same time", is described as the time and space compression.

Today, the cities, regions or countries are not borders for the fastened circulation of capital, products or symbols. Robins claims, the cities become more equal and the urban identity is more weakened, so the cities should be marketed in order to gain different features. The characteristic of city and its identity is about varying products and its culture is supported by marketing. (Robins,1996)

Two parallel production systems are important for a city's physical life. One of them is the production of space in which the interference of cultural meanings and capital share the same duty. The second is the production of symbols that gives a flow to trade changes and a language for social identity. (Zukin,1999). In a way, we can say the city is a store for the stable products of previous productions. The built environment is constructed with a certain technology and a certain production system. (Harvey,2003) As the industry is globalized, neither any kind of technology, nor any production system has an obligation to have relationship with "place".

Since the technologies of transformation, information and production systems are developed and became international today; any kind of products and symbols can be found almost in every society and in every where. It is almost impossible to find a relation between these symbols and products and a certain society or a certain period. The built environment that they formed has lost its connection with the past. In this mesh of symbols and images, the memory should be more selective in order to perceive the difference. Rather than representing a different environment, the imaginability of a city will depend on comparing similar environments,

This *new urban memory*, which is constituted by the ones who experienced the artificial environment without any traces of the images of the past and memories, is momentary. While experiencing today, the new urban memory considers the temporary features, rather than lying to a deep past or a far future. Since the features of artificial environment are ordinary and indifferent, the new memory would be directed to the features of natural environment where the city is located or, it would pick up the cultural traces and symbols of the city.

What is more important in globalization of the culture is the transportation of symbols not the goods or the products. Waters emphasizes this by saying: *"the exchange of the goods makes it local, the exchange of the politics makes it international and the exchange of the*

symbols makes it global." (Tomlinson,2004). We should question again how the globalization of the culture affects the relationship of the urban memory depending on the cultural memory between the "place". The interaction of cultures which are not separated with borders anymore, determines descriptions of new identities. Today, there is a only few cultures left that are limited by "place"; while in societies before modernity, the "place" has a more limiting and depending role for economy, knowledge and culture. (Crang,1998). Depending on this, it can be said that, the effect of "place" on construction of the cultural memory has weakened.

The New Urban Memory

This paper discusses how imaginability of built environment is changed in globalization process and how "the new urban memory" is formed by new perceptions of images produced in this process. We determined the following issues for discussions concerning the new urban memory:

- The new urban memory is limited with very small fragment of time. It contains neither images of past nor memories.

- The new urban memory is set upon temporality, which retains the continuity of the change, rather than continuity of the place. The circulation of trade goods is developed by eased transportation and the circulation of symbols is increased by communication technologies by globalization. Today, we can observe a crowd of symbols that are produced independently from "space" used in built environment have no relation to the history of the city. The urban memory fed with these symbols will be set up independently from the historical development of the city. The features of the "place" concerning the natural environment maybe more distinguishing rather than that of the built environment for the *new urban memory*; as the memory will perceive the difference first and more quickly. If the built environment is not shaped according to topology or climate of the place, or does not reflect the production way of the society or the period, "imaginability" of the things will be decreased.

- The symbols used in global world create the copy-paste cities, which have no relationship with the "place". Rather than its continuity, the habitants of the copy-paste city should experience the temporality of the built environment. The consumption societies pumped by globalization could only be satisfied by an environment that renews itself constantly. The relationship between the whole and the part, which is a determining factor of urban aesthetic and the evaluation of objective and subjective critics, will be differed.

- The new urban memory would be more picky in order to orientate in similar images and symbols without getting lost. But this selectivity increases the speed instead of increasing the quality of urban life.

- The habitants of the city, who have the new urban memory, will be orientated by the references of natural environment and/or with cultural traces because the nature and human being will show a slow change in a long time when compared with the change of the built environment.

- The alternative perception of time causes the necessity of placing the lost values of man who is trying to give meaning to himself and the place that he lives. The lack of connection with place and the loss of meaning decrease the quality of urban life. Therefore in order to enhance the urban quality and to build meaningful

environments; a design approach which has the interaction between disciplines should be followed. The new urban memory could only be set up with this interaction in natural, built and cultural environment.

References

Assmann, J.,(2001), *Kültürel Bellek*, İstanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları.

Bachelard, G., (1996), *Mekânın Poetikası*, İstanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları.

Connerton,P., (1999), *Toplumlar nasıl anımsar?*, İstanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları,

Crang, M., (1998), "Place or Space", *Cultural Geography*, London: Routhledge,

Harvey, D., (2003),*Sosyal Adalet ve Şehir*, İstanbul: Metis Yayınları.

Kepes, G., (1996), "Kent Ölçeğinde Dışavurum ve İletişim Üzerine Notlar", *Cogito, Kent ve Kültürü*, İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları

Lynch, K., (1998), *The Image of the City*, Massachusetts, The MIT Press

Mazzolleni, D., (1996), "Kent ve İmgelem", *Yitik Ülke Masalları, Kimlik ve Yer Sorunsalı*, İstanbul: Sarmal Yayınevi.

Robertson, R., (1999), Küreselleşme, toplum kuramı ve küresel kültür, Ankara: Bilim ve Sanat Yayınları

Robins, K., (1996), "Kent Tutsakları, Postmodern Kent de Ne ola ki?", *Yitik Ülke Masalları, Kimlik ve Yer Sorunsalı*, İstanbul: Sarmal Yayınevi.

Robins, K., Moley, D., (1997), Kimlik Mekânları, İstanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları.

Rossi, A.,(1982), *The Architecture of The City*, New York: The MIT Press,

Tomlinson, J.,(2004), *Küreselleşme ve Kültür*, İstanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları

Yıldızoğlu, E., (2002), "Dünyada ve Türkiye'de Küreselleşme", *Çevre Tümdür*, İstanbul: Bağlam Yayıncılık.

Yücesoy, E.Ü., Gökbulut, Ö., (1999). YÜCESOY, "Kentsel Tasarımda 'Mekansal Kimlik' Tartışmaları Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme: Mekansal Kimliği Okumak", *I. Kentsel Tasarım ve Uygulamalar Sempozyumu*, İstanbul: MSÜ Şehir ve Bölge Planlama Bölümü Yayını

Zukin, S., (1999), *The Cultures of Cities*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford.