SPATIAL AND CULTURAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF SYMBOL REPLACEMENT IN ISTANBUL

Introduction

With the effects of new actors and changing economic life spatial demands are differed. Communities and cultures, which were discrete in the past, are in search of common values, because of the shift from homogeneous towards heterogeneous structures. The common value creation aim and the spatial demands of the new economy conclude with debates like standardisation of cultures and loss of unique identities. Prestige buildings and flagship projects, which are designed by the same architects, consumed by the same users, also seem to be similar in shape and are good examples of this problematic.

With the enhancement of economic value, cultural symbols are loosing their unique meanings. In this context, sustained local symbols are replacing with symbols which are created for marketing spaces. "Local" is started to generate spaces which are assimilated with global values. These spaces are the battlefield of authentic values which are the result of cultural heritage and global values. Battle between the standardisation of place and protection of authenticities causes disintegration. When we examine the successful marketing implementations, even the process should exist as the displacement of negative image with positive image, it is processed as the displacement of local values with "global values".

This paper aims to identify the effects of image replacement process on cultural heritage in Istanbul case. Within this evaluation process that concludes with disintegration between individual, the society and the city it is essential to examine this problematic in three interrelated subtopics namely; "transforming culture and symbol systems", "metropolitan man and alienation" and "symbolic economy and image replacement".

In the context of above mentioned three subtopics, we are emphasising disintegration concept in the integration/disintegration discourse which is one of the main core issues of planning discipline.

Transforming Culture and Symbol Systems

In this section, the interactions/relations between human, culture (formed by human) and symbol systems will be examined also considering the effects of today's globalization process on these concepts in a theoretical manners.

Definitions and Some Basic Properties of Culture and Symbol Systems

There are some various definitions on culture. One of the most known and widest of these definitions was stated by Karl Marx. His definition could be formulized as "Everything formed by human against the nature". But regarding to the specific theme of this paper, it would be more useful to designate some definitions in which culture is discussed as a result of social heritage and seen as a whole symbol system.

According to Sapir (1924), culture, being a social heritage and combination of traditions, could be defined as the unity of tangible and intangible components of practices and beliefs which we learned through a social process that determines the structure and relations of our existence. And also Calwin Wells (1971) defines culture, as an accumulation of knowledge (transferred from one generation to another) and stereotyped forms of behaviours. In other words according to Wells, culture is the entire social heredity.

White (1949) designates culture, being a totality of symbols and symbol systems, as "An organization of tangible components, behaviours, thoughts and emotions that form of and also based on symbols."

According to Ernst Cassirer (1944) human is a symbolizing animal (animal symbolicum). In other words the most distinctive feature of human is his capacity/ability of symbolization. From the same point of view it could be argued that human can not live without symbolizing. Symbol is a sign that signifies any specific object (thing). A symbol has two components namely signifier[1] (form) and signified[2] (content). Barthes (1970) remarks that signified changes while signifier stays.

Symbols do not tell us what to mean, but give us the capacity to make meaning. Symbols are often defined as things "standing for" other things. But they do not represent these "other things" unambiguously. Rather, they "express" other things in ways which allow their common form to be retained and shared among the members of a group, whilst not imposing upon these people the constraints of uniform meaning. Most symbols do not have visual or physical expression but are, rather, ideas. This may make their meanings even more elusive (Cohen, 2004).

Explaining the "value" concept, it is very useful to remember John Carman (2002). We can examine the man made environment (urban space) in two titles namely *"symbolic value"* and *"use value"*. The man made environment which is being produced by a particular culture, has a symbolic value. If the man made environment is a common cultural heritage, it could be sustained even it is not being used today. "*Use value*" could be related to economic aspects. If the loss of function (besides loss of symbolic meaning) happens in the space new intervention can cause transformation of space (See Figure 1) (Seçilmişler, 2006).
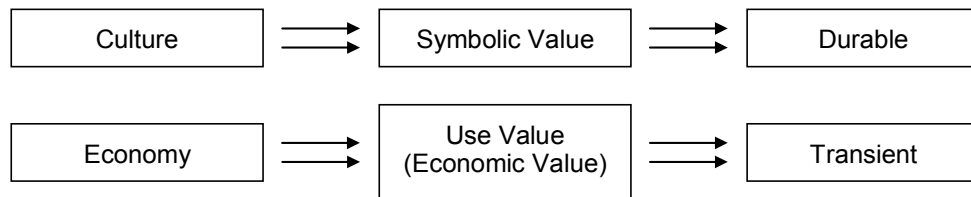

Figure 1 Value concept in urban space.

From a metaphysical perspective symbol expresses the invisible. According to Durkheim, materialistic expression of social and common emotions (social life itself-religion, language, clothing, myths etc.) is symbolism. In this context Durkheim argues that emotions accepted by the majority are symbolized and becomes stable in the society and by this way the individual emotions convert into communal (Hançerlioğlu, 2000).

Cultural Change

Cultures are always in a process of change. The velocity of cultural change differs according to eras and regions. Bozkurt Güvenç (2005) lists the below mentioned concepts while explaining cultural change[3].

- Enculturation
- Diffusion
- Acculturation
- Culturation
- Culture shock

- Trans culturation

- Assimilation

Cultures are selective in terms of what they accept from the cultures of foreign societies. When two different cultures contact they also start to interact (Wells, 1974). Within this interaction process transition of some cultural elements, depend on several internal and external circumstances. When some circumstances change, the saturation provided by traditional solutions also reduces and changes. New requirements occur in the society and they are carried into intellect. In order to answer these requirements some attempts and corrections are developed by the relevant society and new constitutions are formed (Güvenç, 2005). In this process some components of a foreign culture could be accepted easily while some could be definitely refused. In today's globalizing world, this cultural interaction process is intensifying. In this context it must especially be noted that dominant culture forces the local (cultures) to leave their unique (distinctive) values and to homogenize (Wells, 1974). As a result of this global-local tension, recently acquired values whether cause disintegration in the society or widely accepted, according to the selection capacity of the society. In this point it would be useful to clarify the concept of selection. Some arguments of Umberto Eco could be helpful to explain why society accept and sustain some values. According to Umberto Eco (1980), in the context of social selection capacity, values which have even only one of denotative and/or connotative functions, are accepted or sustained. In other words a culture accepts or sustains any value only if it is meaningful or/and functional. Transference of the social codes in a society will definitely be helpful to make the sustained values more meaningful.

Global Cultural Imperialism and Global Symbols

Acculturation process (one of the components of cultural change) gains a special meaning when cultural change concept is evaluated within globalization process. Information and telecommunication technologies that are developed with the technological revolution effected the diffusion of national cultures on the one hand and extended the dimensions of cultural interaction between the societies on the other. In other words globalization increases the efficiency of the acculturation process. So it will be meaningful to emphasize the strong relation between the technological revolution-globalization and cultural imperialism concepts. Today some could easily access several critiques about the global culture and symbol system which tries to dominate local cultures, also parallel to developing information technologies. Bozkurt Güvenç's critiques on this subject could be summarized in his below mentioned expression.

 "Today, in terms of history of culture, there is no pure culture on the earth... even in the smallest, closed national societies the biggest part of the cultural content is received from the foreign societies or these societies are under threat of attack of stronger cultures which aim to dominate the others." (Güvenç, 2005; pp. 288) In this context especially in various nation state metropoles one could easily observe spatial reflections of symbols of global culture (this process also has an economic aim which will be explained in the relevant subtopic on symbolic economy in detail).

It is almost impossible individuals to alienate to the society and social structure in the case that social codes could not be transferred and selective solutions are not developed. In the following subtopic the alienation between individual his society and city will be explained.

Metropolitan Man and Alienation

In this section, starting from the 19th century, a brief explanation of the relation between individual, society and economic life (in industrial city and modern metropole) is given concentrating on Georg Simmel and Karl Marx's arguments without a chronological order and alienation is described as a main problem of urban life.

According to Simmel, instead of reacting emotionally the metropolitan person reacts primarily in a rational manner which means that mental processes orient the actions of metropolitan person (This property is called as intellectualism by Simmel). He puts the biggest problem of modern life in the following statement.

"The deepest problems of modern life flow from the attempt of the individual to maintain the indepence and individuality of his existence against sovereign powers of society, against the weight of the historical heritage and the external culture and technique of life. This antagonism represents the most modern form of the conflict which primitive man must carry on with nature for his own bodily existence" (Simmel, 1903, pp.85).

Being different from a small scale or rural settlement inhabitant, metropolitan type of man carries the below mentioned features;

- Intellectualism,

- Specialized (division of labor),

- Reserved,

- Necessitating to be different,

- Freedom (individuality) (Simmel, 1903; Gerlach and Hamilton, 2004).

Intellectualism is the main feature of both the modern (metropolitan) city and the metropolitan man. Most of the social and economic actions are depending on this intellectualistic attitude. As Simmel stated, this attitude could be seen as a protective organ against the unpredictable and uncalculatable external (emotional) world on the one hand, and has a strong relation with the money economy on the other. Punctuality, calculability and exactness are some other important properties of metropolitan life which could easily be connected with intellectualism and money economy.

With the 19th century a labor division (specialization) could be observed in (modern) society, by which every individual became unique and also much more dependent on the others. This metropolitan man is (or has to be) reserved because of the scale of the settlement and (reducing the) enormous number of probable daily contacts. Such a reserved attitude could be finalized with freedom or/and alienation. Also this metropolitan man has to be different from the others in order to be successful and tends to get the attention of the community by this way (Simmel, 1903; Gerlach and Hamilton, 2004).

As one can easily see (modern) metropolitan life is founded on two dominant factors namely intellectualism and money economy. The importance of money economy and it's close relation with intellect was summarized by Simmel with the following statements;

"The metropolis has always been the seat of money economy because the many-sidedness and concentration of commercial activity have given the medium of exchange an importance which it could not have acquired in the commercial aspects of rural life. But the money economy and the dominance of the intellect stand in the closest relationship to one another. They have in common a purely matter-of-fact attitude in the treatment of persons and things in which a formal justice is often combined with an unrelenting hardness. The purely intellectualistic person is indifferent to all things personal…Money is concerned only with what is common to all, with the exchange value which reduces all quality and individuality to a purely quantitative level" (Simmel, 1903, pp.87).

Another important feature of modern metropole could be observed on the relation between the producer and consumer. These two sides have no face-to-face relation with each other. In other words production is done for the whole market without any contact.   Such an economic life and individuality causes a real alienation between the individual, his product, the production process and whole specialized sub-groups of society.

In this point it is very useful to remember some arguments of Karl Marx on alienation (Alienation gains a broader meaning when it is thought in a retrospective manner. In order to clarify this concept some could relate it to main revolutions (See figure 2). According to Marx, industrial society is a system that produces and consumes goods unconsciously and causelessly, in which individuals replace their subject of existence with objects. In such an unhealthy society individual (worker) is alienating to the product, production process and even himself. He is alienating to the product because it (the product) is a result of a baseless effort. He is alienating to the production process because he is producing for the others without the cognition of others' role in this process. And he is alienating to himself because he is replacing himself with the object and loosing his (real) reason of life (Marx, 1844).

Neolithic Era *John Zerzan*   Agricultural Revolution

Human alienates to nature (Agricultural Revolution),

Human alienates to human; creation of "the other" (woman-man),

19th century *Karl Marx   Søren Kierkegaard*   Industrial Revolution
            Albert Camus,   Jean Paul Sartre

Human alienates to his product (the product is a result of a baseless effort.),
Human alienates to the production process (he is producing for the others without the cognition of others' role in this process),
Human alienates to himself / his existence (he is replacing himself with the object and loosing his (real) reason of life),
Human alienates to society

20th century *Daniel Bell   Alain Touraine*   Technological Revolution

Human alienates to space (he is trying to live in a world in which production and consumption processes are tend to detach from space (e-trade, e-governance etc.).

Figure 2 Historical Background of Alienation[4] (Özügül, 2004)

And if we try to interpret today's metropoles (most of which are under effects of globalization), after the technological revolution, individual is started to alienate to space. Because he is not only assigning his existence to objects which he doesn't know how and why they are produced (and consumed) but also another important characteristic of today's individual is defining himself over his consumptions. In other words consumption (connecting with fashions) is a tool by which individual defines himself and his identity (Hall, 1998). And cities are arenas of this process in several dimensions (spatial, economic, social etc.).

Also it is possible to find some similarities between metropolitan man's features and today's globalizing cities. Competitiveness, creativity, city marketing, innovative milieu, symbolic economy are some of the relatively new concepts of recent urban planning agenda (gaining importance within the global competition environment). And all of these concepts have a strong relation with especially "intellectualism" and "being different".

Symbolic Economies of Cities and Image Replacement:

As an urban policy, *city marketing* emerged as a result of structural changes in the economy, in 1970s influencing not only the economic structure itself but also the physical structure. The economic structure which emerged after 1970s is explained together with de-industrialization process and the growth in service sector, growing importance of the information and technology sectors and globalization of production activities, capital, technology and cultural flow. These trends and developments have caused the competitive environment among cities to speed up significantly. Changes in characteristics of international relations destroy traditional differences between national and international policies. On the other hand, important shifts taking place in the economy; art and culture become more connected to the

economic life. This new situation burdens new responsibilities especially on local governments as regards the development of cities. Local governments have developed new strategies and policies in order to ensure economic development and improvement and keep in step with national and global flow.

In order to compete effectively places develop various marketing strategies. Because of the need to attract tourists, factories, companies and talented people, as well as find markets for their exports cities adopt strategic marketing management tools and conscious branding. (Rainisto; 2003) In this process culture and image become tools to attract target groups to the city. On the other hand, in marketing, customer's needs and preferences are important. To create attractive space, spatial preferences of target groups are becoming key elements for the regeneration. (Hall, T.; 1998)

In the post industrial economy and globalising world, cities are trying to attract potential investors, talented workforce and tourists. For this purpose they are using some strategies, like creating image. Tim Hall (1998) states that, industrial history and the process of deindustrialisation created image problem for industrial cities. According to him, negative image of industrial city comes from, heavy, dirty, dangerous, polluting, rough, working class activities. The post industrial city in contrast, is associated with the new, the future, the unpolluted, consumption and exchange, and the worlds of leisure as opposed to work. As image assumes ever-greater importance in the post-industrial economy, economic development is driven by programmes of place promotion. Cities emphasise not only their business opportunities but also their lifestyle activities. Good place to live as well as a good place to work.

With the increasing importance of image cultural consumption gains a particular role as the most visible aspect of a largely invisible and service based economy. This role of culture and cultural consumption becomes the essential tools of promoting cities as cultural hubs for the economic growth. Therefore cities adopting culturally led urban development strategies. This regeneration process of cities causes shifts in taste, fashion, global events, cultural consumption and built environment. (Miles and Miles; 2004) Additionally, cultural consumption has become more complex with the globalisation process. The new consumption pattern named as "globalized consumption" by Miles and Miles. According to them contemporary cultural consumption uses the spaces as well as objects of culture.

"The concept of symbolic economy is related to this culturally coded form of consumption, though not identical to it. While the purchase of cultural goods denotes a self-image on the part of the purchaser, so too does the construction of a citiy's image as a hub of fashion, film, art, or music. Or, equally, perhaps the image of vibrant place with an array of designer bars, restaurants, and night life is a way to position that city in global markets for financial services, advertising, media, public relations, and tourism – all industries in which the product is either invisible (in the sense of the abstraction of money in an electronic accounting system), or highly visible but non-substantial." (Miles and Miles; 2004, pp 52)

Commodification of art and symbols is not new concept. Beginning of the process goes back earlier. But what was new was the mass production and mass consumption of art, made possible by technological developments (Hall, P. 1998). With the reproduction of work of art, the symbols of common values represents in the globalised world. The competition of global cities triggers commercial uses of values. Tepper (2002) emphasizes that important shifts are clearly taking place in the economy and influencing art and culture about connection to the economic life.

The main aim of imaging cities becomes symbol replacement and it causes loss of identity, not gaining new identity. Additionally, this differentiation process causes alienation. Because of the need for creating attractive living atmosphere, new lifestyle codes destroying the old one. Cities, especially global cities, are becoming the stages of global symbols. For example; with the loss of open/public spaces, with building new shopping malls on these areas, the modern metropolitan man (citizens of Istanbul) becomes "no where man".

Image Replacement in Istanbul

Rapid growth of Istanbul causes rapid changes in symbolic system of the city. Globalisation process creates new symbols and images in Istanbul (See Picture 1).
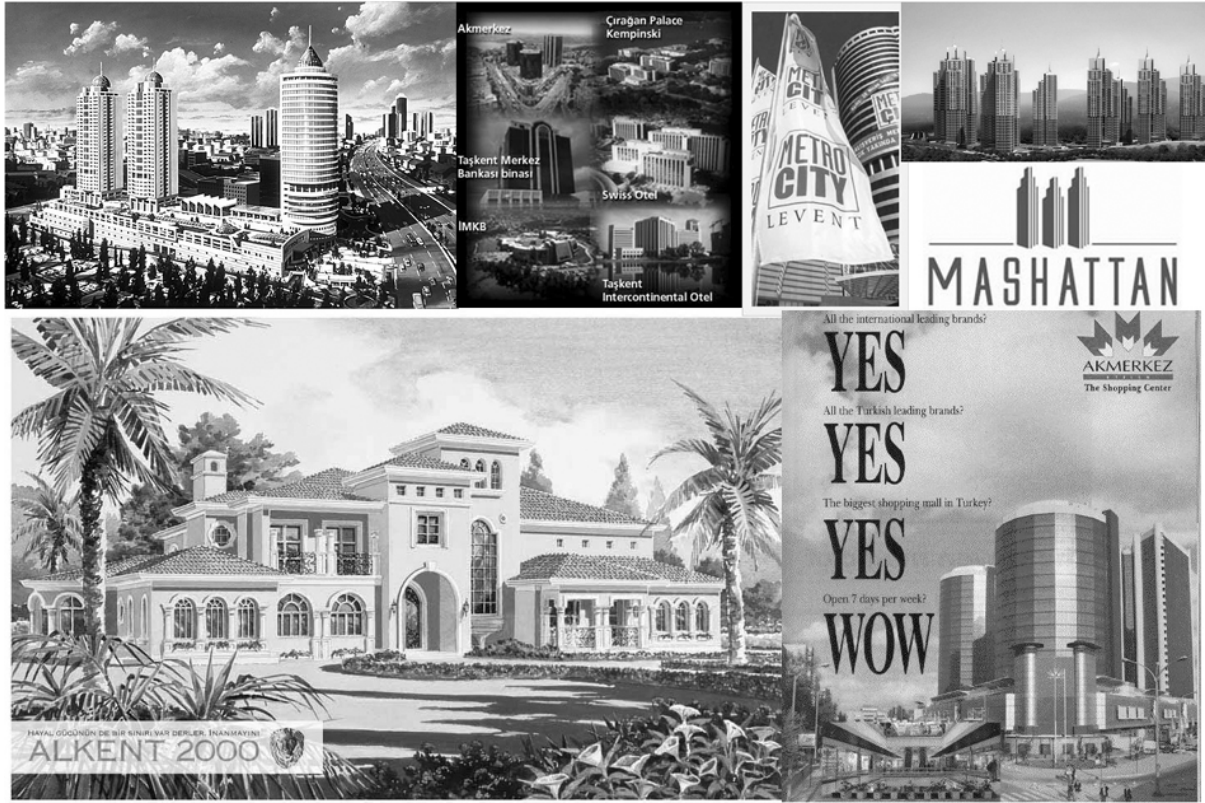
Picture 1 Advertisements of new shopping malls, gated communities and skyscrapers in Istanbul

Main characteristics of the rapid change and unbalanced growth could be seen in different scales and functions;

- Istanbul's crowded population could be named as "cultural mix". Because this *alienated subgroups of society* just live in the same metropolitan space without solidarity and togetherness conscious.

- As a result of living in gigantic built area, citizens of Istanbul's do not identify themselves as an Istanbuler.

- Global competition between cities, forcing Istanbul to have a global image. There are some components which are below mentioned, represents themselves in urban space. They also differentiate life styles. Addition to this, it is interesting that most of them are using English names.

    o Shopping malls (Akmerkez, Metro City etc.)

    o Gated communities (Mashattan, Kemer Country etc.)

    o Office Towers

- Before industrial revolution the symbols of urban space much more related with beliefs and the structure of feudal society. These symbols are being preserved in cultural heritage context. But in today's global world the symbols of economy are more vital than the symbols of previous. Additionally, the symbols of cultural heritage gains economic value (with the increasing importance of heritage industry and cultural industry). In this context, replacement of symbols could easily be observed in globalising Istanbul.

Conclusion

The claims, concepts and arguments which are discussed in this study, brings us a list of below mentioned conclusions.

- Transformation of culture and symbol systems is unavoidable. The essential point here is how local communities could react this process. In this context, selection ability of societies is a vital aspect in terms of accepting/rejecting and sustaining/loosing cultural assets.

- Within the acculturation process, unbalanced relation between cultures (if one side is dominant) ends with disintegration.

- Besides, lack of the selection ability of society forces individual to face a threat of alienation. Alienation causes disintegration between whole components of society. In other words, alienation is fragmentation of a society into its smallest unit (individual). Therefore this process concludes with a whole disintegration between individual, his society, products, production and consumption processes and institutions of society.

- One of the solution arguments about alienation emphasizes an individual attitude. This attitude could be summarised as "being a part of social conformity without being entirely under control of society".

- In the globalizing period, both local and central authorities develop various projects for the future of Istanbul in order to improve the position of the city at the global scale. Seen as the focus of these prestige investments all around the country, Istanbul is in fact experiencing both positive and negative results of this rapid project development process. The common point of these new projects can be expressed as "adding new image elements to the identity" which is a target to reach. Here at this stage we can see from negative results that there are certain points that are ignored.

Endnotes

1. Signifier is a tool of signified. (Barthes, 1964).
2. Signified is not only "object" but also a intellectual design of the "object". (Barthes, 1964).
3. Changing whole society or some institutions cause cultural change as a result of combined cultural processes (Güvenç, 2005).
4. Figure 2 was prepared by Özügül from several sources; Touraine (1995), Marx (1844), Zerzan (2000).

References

Barthes, Roland (1964), "Eléments de Sémiologie", *Communications*, no. 4.

Barthes, Roland (1970), "Sémiologie et Urbanisme", L'Architecture D'aujourd'hui, no. 53.

Borja J. & Castells, M. (1997), *Local & Global Management of Cities in the Information Age*, Earthscan, London.

Carman, John (2002), *Archaeology & Heritage – An Introduction*, Continuum, New York.

Cassirer, Ernst [1944] (1980), *İnsan Üstüne Bir Deneme*, Remzi Publishing, İstanbul.

Cohen, Anthony P. (2004), *The Symbolic Construction of Community*, Routledge, London.

Kurtarır Erhan, Seçilmişler Töre, Özügül Mehmet Doruk; "Spatial and Cultural Impact Assessment of Symbol Replacement in Istanbul"; 42nd ISoCaRP Congress 2006 - Istanbul

Eco, Umberto (1980), "Function and Sign: The Semiotics of Architecture", *Signs, Symbols and Architecture*, editors Geoffrey Broadbent, Richard Bunt, Charles Jencks, John Wiley & Son, Bath.

Gerlach, Neil & Hamilton, Sheryl N. (2004), "Preserving Self in the City of the Imagination: Georg Simmel and Dark City", *Canadian Review of American Studies*, no 2, 115-133.

Güvenç, Bozkurt (2005), *İnsan ve Kültür – Human and Culture*, Remzi Kitabevi, İstanbul.

Hall, Peter (1998), *Cities in Civilization,* Phoenix Giant, London.

Hall, Tim (1998), *Urban Geography*, Routledge Contemporary Human Geography Series, London and New York.

Hançerlioğlu, Orhan (2000), "Simge", *Felsefe Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 6, Remzi Publishing, İstanbul.

Kurtarır, Erhan & Cengiz, Hüseyin (2005), "What are the dynamics of creative economy in Istanbul?", *Making Spaces for the Creative Economy* 41st ISoCaRP International Planning Congress, 17-20 October, Bilbao, Spain.

Kurtarır, Erhan (2006), "Global Demands And Local Needs Struggle: Using Istanbul's Unique Values As Image Components", *Global Places, Local Spaces* - Planning Research Conference 2006, The Bartlett School of Planning, UCL, London.

Marx, Karl [1844] (2000), "1844 Elyazmaları", *Yabancılaşma*, Sol Yayınları, Ankara.

Miles, Steven &Miles, Malcolm (2004), *Consuming Cities*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan.

Özügül, Mehmet, Doruk (2004), *Ekolojik Planlamada Kullanılabilecek Analitik bir Model Önerisi*, Unpublished Phd Dissertation, Yıldız Technical University, Istanbul.

Rainisto, S., K. (2003), *Success Factors Of Place Marketing: A Study Of Place Marketing Practices In Northern Europe And The United States*, Helsinki University of Technology, Institute of Strategy and International Business, Helsinki.

Sapir, Edward (1924), "Culture, Genuine and Spurious", American Journal of Sociology, no. 29, 401.

Seçilmişler, Töre (2006), "Sustainable Cultural Heritage, Sustainable Communities", *Global Places, Local Spaces* - Planning Research Conference 2006, The Bartlett School of Planning, UCL, London.

Simmel, Georg [1903] (2003), "Metropol ve Tinsel Hayat", *Modern Kültürde Çatışma*, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul.

Tepper, Steven Jay (2002), "Creative Assets and the Changing Economy", *The Journal of Arts Management, Law and Societ,* Vol. 32, No 2.

Touraine, Alain (1995), *Modernliğin Eleştirisi*, Yapı Kredi Publishing, İstanbul.

Van den Berg, Leo & Braun, Erik (1999), "Urban Competitiveness, Marketing and the Need for Organising Capacity", *Urban Studies*, vol. 36, no. 5–6 (January).

Wells, Calvin (1971), *İnsan ve Dünyası – Man in His World*, Remzi Publishing, İstanbul.

White, Leslie (1949), *The Science of Culture*, Grove Press Inc, New York.

Zerzan, John (2000), *Gelecekteki İlkel*, Kaos Publishing, İstanbul.