

Environmental Sustainability and Landscape Management

Editors

Recep Efe
İsa Cürebal
Abdalla Gad
Brigitta Tóth

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Editors

Prof. Dr. Recep Efe
Balikesir University,
Faculty of Arts and Sciences
Department of Geography
Balıkesir, Turkey

Prof. Dr. Isa Cürebal
Balikesir University
Faculty of Arts and Sciences
Department of Geography
Balıkesir, Turkey

Prof. Dr. Abdalla Gad
Environmental Studies and Land Use Division,
National Authority for Remote Sensing and Space Sciences (NARSS),
Cairo, Egypt

Prof. Dr. Brigitta Tóth
University of Debrecen
Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences and Environmental Management
Debrecen, Hungary

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Chapter 50

Assessment of the Relationships Between Urban Furniture and Urban Spaces

Elif SATIROGLU*

INTRODUCTION

Mankind has spent the effort to arrange the surrounding environment since old ages and established living environments / settlements like villages, towns and cities. Public spaces have been created in artificial environments in time and these spaces have been shaped / changed / diversified with various functional sections. Urban living spaces have then been established to meet social, communal, recreational, aesthetic and ecological needs of people. Such spaces with various functions, entire uses and items, especially with urban furniture serve for the benefit of public. Urban furniture can be defined in different ways. They are defined as fixed equipment and structures placed over the entire open spaces of the city for various open-space functions with indefinite users (Akyol, 2006). Urban furniture may include various items or body of items with several functional and esthetic purposes and they may range from information-communication boards to trash cans, from a stairway in a square to a statue, fountain or telephone booth.

CLASSIFICATION OF URBAN FURNITURE

Temporary Use: Use of a certain section of an outdoor space for a moment while passing through it.

Permanent Use: Use of a certain section of an outdoor space for a certain period of time by spending time in that space.

Functional Use: Rather than using activities for certain functions, the uses of functions exerted instantly while using the outdoor space are gathered under this category. The shared furniture used to meet the needs of people in urban public spaces provides more than one functions and may be used for multi-purposes. Such uses include:

- *Protective purposes:* Traffic lights arranging intra-city traffic flow, traffic signs, lighting items,
- *Resting purposes:* Sitting items,
- *Cleaning purposes:* Garbage cans,
- *Entertaining purposes:* Urban furniture placed in recreation sites and playgrounds,
- *Sale and shopping purposes:* Kiosks, ticket booths, vending machines,
- *Communicative purposes:* Telephone booths,
- *Accommodation purposes:* Shades, sunshades, bus stops,
- *Directional purposes:* Floorings, street plates, under and over passes,
- *Restricting purposes:* Fences, railings, walls, planters, tree base protections,

*Res. Assist. Dr., Ordu University, Agricultural Faculty, Landscape Architecture Department, Ordu, Turkey.

•*Informative purposes:* Billboards, square clocks,
•*Ornamental purposes:* Planters, statutes and waterworks.

CLASSIFICATION OF URBAN PUBLIC SPACES BASED ON URBAN DECORATION

Urban furniture can be classified as the items used to make urban life more pleasurable and meaningful and to create urban comfort and esthetics. Such a classification includes:

•Restrictors (persuaders, limiters, pedestrian barriers, traffic barriers and etc.),
•Sign and information plates (routers, positioners, information-communication boards, advertisements, posters, commercial plates, street plates – numbers),
• Under-cover items (stops, shades, pergolas),
• Lighting items (road illuminants, space illuminants),
• Sitting units (benches, chairs, sitting groups),
• Sale units (kiosks, booths, and etc.)
• Waterworks (decorative pools, fountains, water pumps, canals, fire hydrants and etc.),
• Other items (flag poles, trash cans, post boxes, public toilets, planters, ticket automats, bicycle parks, clocks, park meters and etc.).

THE SPACE CONCEPT

Mankind has felt the sense of space, reduced this sense into special units to protect themselves from negative impacts of nature and turned it into a specific space or place for him. The space created by mankind and imitated nature and its components constitute natural and artificial environments so called as "physical environment". However, this physical environment cannot be separated from the mankind encompassing and adding item to it and activities, in brief from the life so called as social and cultural environment (Yıldızcı, 2001). Although spaces can be gathered under different categories based on their physical attributes, each space is unique with environmental characteristics and impacts.

The space includes both physical attributes like material, shape, texture and color and hard-to-define cultural components created by the mankind in time (Tranck,1986).

All environments are composed of complex interactions of these four items. Reflections of the past and culture play significant roles in place acquisition of the space.

According to Roth (2000), spaces can be classified as physical, perceptual, conceptual and behavioral.

Physical Space; a space which can be imaged as a volume or easily be defined,

Perceptual Space; a comprehensive perceptible-visible space which cannot be actually quantified,

Conceptual Space; a space which can be defined in plan and easily comprehended by the user,

Behavioral Space; a space in which motion is on and actually used.

Although all these types of space are described in different ways, they are different expressions of the same space and used for description of both single and outdoor spaces.

In this sense, urban environments with both functional and physical quality

attributes are actual habitats as long as these space types are served to societies in a hierarchy and inflow.

Architectural space

The attribute stopping the structures from being three-dimensional masses should have a space. Architectural space can be defined as a zone physically separated by three restrictor items as of floor, wall and ceiling. Indoor space is the shaping of nature by the physical existence of these three items. Every architectural structure has an indoor space and contributes alone or together with the other structures to formation of an outdoor space (Öksüz, 2004).

Urban space

Urban space is a special definition of open spaces and directly related to architectural space which is basically the incarnational form of existential space. Although urban space and architectural space had similar meanings in the past because of continuity in between them, architectural space structurally and perceptively insulated with modernism and they gained the characteristics of being the space of independent structures (Öksüz, 2004).

The spaces in which common or individual needs are met and differentiated in time based on socio-economic and cultural structure of the society are called as "urban spaces". Urban spaces are the body of spaces in which 4 basic functions (accommodation, occupation, entertainment, transportation) of human life are implemented (Öksüz, 2004).

Successful urban spaces are usually the indicator of a quality life. There is activity, sensation richness, esthetics and vitality in these spaces. "Successful urban spaces" can be mentioned in cities hosting structures, urban spaces and urban furniture. Successful urban space is quality urban space. Quality urban space is the space allowing "urbanizing" which can be defined as urbanite. Urbanized mankind is an individual adopted urban-specific life style and behavior patterns, integrated with urban environment and has a compatible participation into urban life (Velioğlu, Araz, Tavşan 2003).

TYPES OF URBAN SPACE

Distribution and organizations of urban outdoor spaces in which daily life goes on vary based on social data. According to A. Rapoport; every city can be approached as an extension of special and social sub-systems changing with different gradation and fragmentation in them. This reflects the value system, life style and culture (Rapaport, 1977).

Urban outdoor spaces are the spaces in which all activities of communal life are carried out. These spaces can be gathered under four groups as of:

- Private spaces,
- Semi-private spaces,
- Public spaces,
- Semi-public spaces.

Private spaces

They are the spaces for the private use of a certain individual or a group. They can be structured or unstructured private spaces. Structured private spaces include construction spaces, business places, private agricultural, industrial, service and etc.

spaces and unstructured spaces include building plot, field, yard and etc. spaces.

Semi-private spaces

They are the spaces belonging to a structure, can be seen from outside, owned by an individual and visually benefited from the others. Front and back yards of a house, balconies of an apartment can be the examples for such spaces.

Although these spaces are under the private ownership, there is a social inspection over them. Semi-private spaces of cities are the spaces in which social activities take place, friendships are made and refreshed (Öksüz, 2004).

Public spaces

They are the body of spaces in which the activities required by the communal life take place, benefited from every age, gender or professional groups and sometimes are used in controlled fashion (Özaydın, 1989). Public spaces can either be structured or unstructured. Structured ones include service, management, industry, lodging, entertainment structures. Unstructured ones include squares, streets, parks and avenues.

Semi-public spaces

Ownership of these places belongs to either a group of urbanite or public administration. The responsible ones are the users and public administration. Yard, shared garden, parking lot, stairwell and etc. can be given as the examples for such places. Urban public spaces are the places in which urbanites meet and communicate with each other. People may need some special equipment in these spaces. This special equipment is urban furniture including floorings, sitting items, bus stops, planters, illumination items, telephone booths.

CLASSIFICATION OF URBAN FURNITURE BASED ON SPACES THEY PLACED IN

- Transition zones – Streets, pedestrian ways
- Squares and sections – Historical sections, new sections
- Shopping spaces
- Parks
- Playgrounds
- Sports sites

Transition zones – streets, pedestrian ways

Avenues, streets and roads are the routes over which people move on foot or with vehicles. Roads are the items providing mobility of urbanite and city between structure islands. They also serve a connection between various functional sites.

Streets should be spatial entities rather than being remainder spaces of structural occupancy.

Pedestrian ways are free of vehicle traffic and relatively occupied by the pedestrians or immobile vehicle traffic. These spaces serve to city people in physiological aspects (kiosks, teahouse, club etc.), sociological aspects (meeting and communication places) and economic aspects (shopping opportunities) (Fanusçu, 1994).

In large cities; pedestrian-oriented road networks should be arranged among intensely used spaces like bus stops, shops, schools, playgrounds, health organizations with the following characteristics;

• Arranged according to pedestrian flow, not detouring,
• Connecting the spaces open for public,
• Serving for more than one function (Kentsel Tasarım Kılavuzu Çalışma Gurubu, 1992).

Squares and resting places

Squares are the spaces from where urban circulation started and distributed, in which people gathered from the start of very first urbanizations to today. With the initiation of planned urbanization, squares have become the focal points of the cities and people usually gather in squares for social, religious, commercial or other purposes. These spaces constituted the most significant points of the cities surrounded with important buildings in time.

Squares can be furnished by corners with symbolic expressions, statues, waiting spots, educative spots, illuminated sections, special sections with square clocks, small verdant squares and inner courts.

The sections with historical identity

Historical places are shaped with cultural background of the society and constitute a bridge between the past and the future. They are cultural environments able to survive till today with their historical data, architectural heritage, traditions and beliefs. Historical environments pass architectural, social, economic, technological and cultural data of the societies, feelings, thoughts, trends, social life, experience and accumulations of the time of construction to the present and improve perceptibility of the cities. They are the crucial points in physical and social structure of the city and bring an identity and qualification into the cities and towns (Velioğlu *et al*., 1993).

The design of a new structure in a historical environment and design of urban furniture may not include the same perceptions. The new design either complies with the environment or contrasts with the environment or may imitate the forms already existing in the environment. The urban furniture to be used in historical places should comply with the environmental identity with regard to form, color, texture or material. In some case, although a harmony is achieved through creating a contrast, such furniture should not create a visual pollution or disharmony and special design should be used in those cases. Although some standard items can be used in those environments, most of the time special designs should be employed. Consistency in urban furniture to be used throughout the city will play a distinctive role in urban silhouette and identity. In this way, physical environment will be made more impressive and descriptive.

Presentation of new form perceptions for urban furniture design in historical places in an impressive fashion will only be possible through the interactions among the material, color and texture to be selected. While natural materials, stones, glass and metal are approved in historical places, use of plastic should be prohibited in such places. The urban furniture for collective use should especially be durable. Durability is considered in material and it is also quite significant with regard to craftsmanship in implementation phase. Urban furniture design and selection in historical cities require a visual harmony process. Beside the designs reflecting the historical city, use of new designs pointing out the cultural continuity will improve visual diversity and reflect the cultural richness. The material, color, texture and design to be selected in urban furniture design will improve stylistic value and will make the quality of historical

places more distinctive. The designer responsible for rearrangement or design of urban spaces should well-apprehend the requirements of the users for urban spaces and furniture, their values coming from the past and their expectations. Technological developments resulted in changes in region, city, urban space and urban furniture concepts and perceptions and confront the designer with new problems to be solved.

As to conclude, urban furniture design and implementations in historical places are quite significant issues. The basic determinants of such designs are as follows:

• Identification of own traditional / spatial language of the region (form – space relations are significant in this context),

• Having a function proper for the use of people,

• Having a long-lasting structure able to stand for long times,

• Having a style able to transmit a thought or an experience,

• Bearing the items representing the characteristics of the historical texture in which it exists,

• While bearing with all these attributes, being genuine and impressive (Güzel, Sözen 2003).

Shopping spaces

Shopping spaces are the physical places in which shopping actions go on and these places can be gathered under five groups:

• Open bazaars

• Roads with shops

• Areas surrounded by shops

• Department stores

• Shopping centers (Özdeş, 1975).

Parks

Parks may exhibit differences in size, functional diversity they hold and utilization frequency of equipage. They serve to urbanites in a broad range extending from a resting place of an apartment to regional parks outside the cities.

Parks can be classified in different fashions based on their sizes, functional diversity, area of affection and the population they served. The parks generally based on size and area of affection, are classified as regional parks, city parks, district parks, street parks and small parks or pocket parks (Oğuz, 1998).

Playgrounds

Playgrounds are diversified based on the growth stage of the children they served to, type of games they offered and furnished-unfurnished state and they all have different characteristics.

Child playpens: They are safe and small playing spaces with close supervision of the parents (entrance of the buildings, front yards and etc.) and serve especially to 1-3 years age group. They may be furnished with a small sand-box, simple climbing and sitting equipment.

Children play fields: They are unfurnished urban green spaces with varying sizes and distances from the houses based on the age group they serve (usually serve to children from 3-years to adolescent). They can be semi-private / semi-public (front yards, building block quads and etc.) and public (urban plot specially designed for playing purposes). They are unfurnished. Soft landscape items (grass, tree, shrub and

etc.) or ground roughness (hillocky and etc.) and artificial landscape items (partitioning cover items, and etc.) and flexible playing equipment can be used in the design of these spaces (Aydemir,2004).

Children's parks: They are furnished playgrounds serving for a wide range of age groups starting from two years extending to 10-12 years. They usually allow children to play imitation games without any rules. They can be classified as traditional and modern based on the functions of playing equipment (either single or multi-functions).

Traditional children's parks: They usually include common monotype static but safe playing equipment made of galvanized metal, steel or wood. Equipment does not allow different uses; teeterboard, swing, slide, swinging-climbing bars and rolling wheels are among this equipment.

Modern children's parks: They usually exist as an alternative to traditional children's parks, playing equipment has uncommon forms, texture, color and aesthetically please the eyes. They are generally made of fiberglass and wood materials with live colors and include turtle, fish, ship, statue and etc. attractive forms. The creative items in modern ones usually have 60% more than traditional ones. Such a rate is quite higher in imitation games related to creativity. The time spent by the children is higher because of diversity in playing opportunities. Opportunity diversity can be created through gathering various playing equipment with well-defined uses and through together design of well-defined or undefined (water, sand, and etc.) playing equipment (Aydemir,2004).

Adventure playgrounds: In such spaces, children test themselves about what can they do in a freedom atmosphere. They learn how to stand on their own feet and the responsibilities assigned to them with freedom through experience in these places (Bengtsson, 1972). Playing equipment can be soil, water, fire, wood, brick, canvas, fabric, paper, rope, automobile tires, nails, hammer, saw, shovel, hand barrel and etc.

Playing parks: Beside adventure games, these places include hobby activities (painting, model works and etc.) requiring calm ambient. They serve for the same age group with adventure parks, but children spend more time in playing parks (Allen, 1971).

Other playing spaces: Streets, pedestrian ways, even parking lots and similar public places have become inevitable flexible playgrounds in all cultures and ages (Aydemir,2004).

The design of playgrounds is finalized by taking the desires of child, family, society and administration, natural and artificial environment data, available budget, accessible playing equipment into consideration. Therefore, there isn't any ideal design, each playground requires specific solutions. However, following issues should be considered in playground designs:

• Playing spaces are social centers for children and they have essential furnishing. This furnishing includes easily accessible toilets, protected places from the wind and rain, sitting places, well-defined or undefined playing equipment / tolls / opportunities. Playgrounds serve an environment for mental, emotional and physical development of the child. Therefore, playgrounds should allow various child activities including social games, constructive games and physical games (URL,2001).

• Most of the traditional playing equipment (slide, teeterboard, swing and etc.) promote general motor activities and contribute to physical development of the body.

But they don't respond to other requirements. Game alternatives should be increased.

• Water, sand and construction materials are quite efficient tools to allow children to interact and corporate with each other.

• Playing items, equipment and tools should be safe both in material and design.

• The physical and mental characteristics of the age group to be served should be taken into consideration.

• There shouldn't be high fences, walls and etc. visual barriers between children playgrounds and activity spaces of adults.

Sports sites

Sport is a competitive leisure time activity requiring physical energy and skill. It is also a cheap, easy but a significant activity for character development of the society and treatment of physical and mental diseases. In relevant literature, sportive activities are classified based on the seasons they performed, whether or not they are organized (team sports – individual sports) and their origin (urban or rural originated). However, it is quite significant to classify sports based on characteristics like implemented within the city or outside the city, exercised either in open or closes places, whether or not requiring an arrangement and/or an equipment. Within this context, sportive activities can be gathered under six groups as of:

• The sports exercised at home or a sports center, either not requiring equipment or requiring limited equipment; aerobic, steps, and etc.

• The sports exercised in closed facilities and requiring limited equipment; wrestling, Far East sports, fencing, boxing, table tennis, weight lifting, body building, and etc.

• The sports requiring arrangements in city; jogging, skateboarding, rollerblading, cycling, fishing, hunting and etc.

• The sports exercised in open and/or closed facilities requiring special spatial furnishing in cities; football, basketball, handball, volleyball, tennis, shooting, golf, riding, ice skating, swimming, canoeing, go-kart, and etc.

• The sports requiring limited public furnishing outside the city; mountaineering, tracking, water and terrestrial hunting, rafting, and etc.

• The sports requiring furnishing outside the city; skiing, parachuting, and etc. (Aydemir, 2004).

CONCLUSION

Urban furniture is used intensively within the urban life and urbanites are in continuous interaction with this furniture. They are quite well-designed products belonging to whole urban space and used either individually or socially. The works of "Public spaces arrangements" initiated years ago in developed countries and have recently been initiated in Turkey. The objective of such works is to provide more livable environments for urbanites. Urban furniture is used to create more livable environments in urban spaces. Urban furniture provides contributions to spatial and areal dimensions of the city. Proper design, placement and maintenance of urban furniture are significant issues. Their functions are essential in urban life and order, therefore design, production and placement of urban furniture require an expertise and responsibility. The image to be created at the end of a certain arrangement should comply with and support the urban identity in one hand, serve for and ease the urban life and apprehend an esthetic value to urban places on the other hand.

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