

(In)visible State Violence on the Capital City: Transformation of Urban Space

Pinar Cobanyilmaz Ozturk

*Research Assistant and PhD Student in Middle East Technical University, Department of City and
Regional Planning, Turkey
p.cobanyilmaz@gmail.com*

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In a general term violence is “the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual against oneself, or other person, or against a group of community, which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation” (WHO, 2002)¹. In addition to this certain definition, we may also interpret violence as destruction of values and memories of a community by impositions and ignoring whole rule sets in order to reveal power and reconstruct a new society under hegemony. Urban space is the main tool for implementing such kind of a violence and it refers both visible violence that includes changing of physical space within functionally and imaginary, and invisible violence that implies shifting meaning of space.

After hundreds years existence of Ottoman Empire, establishment of Turkish Republic in 1923 was a starting point of the new civilization era. As being the capital city of Turkey, Ankara was chosen the main spatial representative of republican ideology. The new ideology which refers to modernization and bases on democratic principles started to spatialize itself by constructing the new city. In this sense, evolution of the city from a small village to a metropolis shows an extraordinary contextual and historical example which comes until today. Within the construction process of the city, we can mention two main spatial representatives of republican ideology. The first one is Atatürk Boulevard which appears as a certain spine of the

¹ World Health Organization, *World Report on Violence and Health: Summary*, 2002

city. This spine operates as a connector of historical and contemporary parts of the city, and as a constructor of new community by including public facilities that enable social interaction. In this term, this spine refers to publicity within meanings and functional, imaginary characteristics. The second one is Atatürk Forest Farm which intersects with the main spine of the city and expresses agricultural production as the crucial and traditional economical sector of the country.

However, for a decade the city has been getting through a changing process by losing existing spaces in terms of function, image and meaning. As most of us know that neo-liberal urbanization policies in most of metropolitan cities around the world is the dominant approach which focuses on exchange value of urban space, even though, in Ankara case production and reproduction of space has also additional connotations. The state interventions on urban space within a revanchist attitude creates both new physical environments that refers to consumption and rent based economical purposes and new meanings that eliminate the essence of existing spaces and impose hegemony.

In this context, this study aims to reveal how the new state implement (in)visible violence by intervening space both physically and meaningly within these two representatives of republican ideology. In this term, firstly, overall transformation of Atatürk Boulevard and Atatürk Forest Farm in last decade will be mapped to draw a general picture. Secondly, by choosing a few specific cases their transformation processes in relation to function, image and meaning will be discussed within a critical assesment by considering the place of planning in these processes.