



BOOK REVIEWS

Public Istanbul: spaces and spheres of the urban, edited by *Frank Eckardt* and *Kathrin Wildner*, Transcript Verlag, Bielefeld, Germany, 2008, 352 pp. ISBN 978-3-89942-865-0.

This comprehensive multi-disciplinary study focuses on the transformation of urban space in Istanbul and, to a lesser degree, Turkey more generally. Although it is intended to be a compilation of contemporary discussions on Istanbul rather than a complete survey of the city, it nonetheless can be evaluated as a crucial initial step in stimulating further discussions concerning Istanbul's recent urban environmental changes. Consisting of 17 papers that collectively form a detailed discussion of the construction and constitution of public spaces in Istanbul, *Public Istanbul* is organized into two parts: 'Contested spaces' and 'Experiencing Istanbul'. The first concentrates on geographical and sociological perspectives; the second is concerned with everyday life at the micro level. Four discussion themes are presented: 'Divided Istanbul', 'Experiencing Istanbul', 'Planning Istanbul' and 'Representation of Istanbul'.

Interpreting Istanbul as an essentially European metropolis, the book addresses the notion of contested urban space between the processes of globalization and local urban planning projects. Efforts to overcome such polarizations as between historical and contemporary, centre and periphery, local and global, and traditional and modern are emphasized. The spontaneous, informal growth of the city as a consequence of the conflicts between national politics and global competition is in this way brought out. In line with contemporary scholarly thought, urban space is not pictured simply as a static container but rather as a complex evolutionary entity subject to a broad variety of influences.

The book begins with a discussion by Eckardt of globalization and social transformation in Istanbul focusing upon the metaphor of the Bosphorus and Galata Bridges – two symbols of 'publicness' that link Europe with Asia. The following two chapters illustrate the city's transitional social maps by analysing Guvenc's *Istanbul's metropolitan area atlas* and the emergent process of gentrification which, as Yucesoy reveals, has led to a conflict regarding the notions of openness and accessibility of urban spaces in places such as Cihangir and Galata. In subsequent chapters a number of authors, including Alkan, Esen and Rieniets, tackle a variety of subjects of interest to urban morphologists, including living spaces, social expectations and social fragmentation, gated communities, the role of a new spatial typology, green spaces alongside motorways, and attitudes to historical heritage.

The second part of the book, 'Experiencing Istanbul', opens with Wildner's introduction to alternative perspectives on Istanbul. Ignoring what may be said to be the common perceptions of the city, for example its historic silhouette, its ferries, and its tower blocks within the CBD, Wildner instead focuses on such matters as population density, commodity flows, and communication and interaction. She does this by using research methods of an ethnographic type, thereby establishing a paradigm shift from a panoramic (macro-scale) conception to a street-level (micro-scale) perception of Istanbul. The subsequent chapters continue this analytical perspective in order to scrutinize Istanbul's socio-spatial dimensions. Taking the fragmentation of urban space in Istanbul as its subject, Aksoy's 'Istanbul's worldliness' focuses on the modernization policies of the peripheral municipality of Esenyurt. Here she argues that Istanbul is becoming a 'dual city' within which urban transformation is a consump-

tion experience in which a new lifestyle is brought about at the expense of a loss of diversity and plurality of life forms.

Next, attention is given by Riedler to the isolation and marginalization of temporary labour migrants in the late-nineteenth century with reference to associated spatial typologies. Discussing 'otherness' and its association with the shaping of urban space in Istanbul, Grabolle-Celiker evaluates the notion of 'the public' and how it permeates individual lives to different degrees through discourses of gender and identity. Similarly, Ozdil neatly portrays how one distinct social group, West African immigrants, create new spaces and new forms of social relations as a form of resistance to their exclusion from formal citizenship. Taking the issues of race and gender further, Prehl discusses the rapid gentrification of Hayriye Cikmazi where gypsies and unemployed migrants from East Anatolia used to live; and with reference to spatial codes of urban gendered cartography Cicekoglu explores the alienation of women in public space. The book closes with Bosch's chapter on 'Subjects that don't count: places that are not important', which introduces works from the realm of media art so as to probe issues of otherness and migration.

Though not directly intended for the readers and followers of, say, Conzenian morphological analysis, *Public Istanbul* lays the socio-spatial foundations of transformations of urban form. Despite its limited number of illustrations, it successfully highlights non-tangible motives that shape tangible aspects of the urban environment. With its strong references to aspects of philosophy, *Public Istanbul* skilfully bridges from the domains of sociology, economy, politics and urban history to those of city planning and urban design. Although at first sight it may appear to lack coherence owing to its breadth of subject matter, *Public Istanbul* is an important contribution to the existing literature on Istanbul's urban transformation because of its alternative insights and critical appraisal of spatial changes at the micro-scale. Therefore, for scholars who wish to cast light on the socio-spatial structure and processes that directly condition the form of urban space, or to unveil current events and recent historical developments in global centres in various parts of the world, this book is an excellent choice.

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From Zangan to Zanjan (in Persian) by *Kyoumars Habibi, Ahmad Pourahmad and Abolfazl Meshkini*, University of Zanjan, Zanjan, Iran, 2008, 394 pp. ISBN 978-969-8885-13-2.

From Zangan to Zanjan discusses several themes central to analyzing the evolution of cities. It also provides a historical analysis of Zangan in what is today the Zanjan Province of north-west Iran, in so doing explaining how this historic city has been transformed to its present-day metropolitan condition. For the authors the current state of Zanjan is definable through three structural/spatial layers within the city, 'old areas', 'middle quarters' and 'marginal districts', which together form the analytical bedrock upon which *From Zangan to Zanjan* sits. Partly based on Kyoumars Habib's University of Tehran doctoral thesis (entitled 'An evaluation of the rehabilitation of the historic core of cities through GIS: a case study of Zanjan') this book offers much original material on Iranian urban morphology and in so doing relates the development of Zanjan, a noted historic city in Iran, to both theoretical perspectives of urban design and urban development in practice.

Organized into seven chapters the opening chapter on 'The concepts of urban development' provides the reader with a background to the general ideas and strategies of urban planning and the management of historic urban places in the Iranian context. Explaining the process of urban change in relation to, for instance, the rise of modernity and national modernization, the chapter relies heavily on the works of various scholars to lay the foundation for subsequent analytical chapters. In the second chapter, 'Geographical setting of the city', the emphasis shifts to the geographical characteristics of Zanjan including its topography, flora, soil and geology, and climate, an element that greatly influenced the development of traditional urban form in Zanjan Province. Together the first two chapters offer general information concerning the physical fabric of the city and its development, and pointers are provided as to planning principles that have shaped the city in the past.

The third chapter, on 'Changes in the city's physical fabric over time', is the investigative backbone of the book and presents in detail the growth of Zanjan, a settlement originally located in proximity to an historic commercial road between the ancient city of Ray and the Azerbaijan border to the north. The first section of this chapter describes the nature and significance of the earliest images of