

EFFECTS OF MEDIA (URBAN) SCREEN ON BUILT ENVIRONMENT IN PUBLIC SPACE

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ABSTRACT

Urban screens ask for urban language in new way of designing public space. Media screen is not only a technological challenge, but they change our perception and experience of our daily used architectural environment. The focus of study is on changing citizens' perception of architecture and public space in a digital age by using media screens in the city. The view of local environment was changing with this kind of elements. Urban screens could play an important role in the perception of locality and neighborhoods. By connecting an urban screen to web (internet), the culture of local people might change in to wider view. These kinds of elements can be utilized with cultural content and create the local identity in this global age. However, nowadays urban screens, mostly use in a context of commercial information and a kind of communication medium.

Digital technology bring us many aspects in our life , for example in public space we can see plasma screens exposed in shop, LED screen in squares , information display in billboard about transportation , large scale urban screen for advertisement and media façade on buildings. This kind of exposing information to pedestrian could do with many tools; one of them is used urban screen in public space.

This subject studied, based on the case study (Kyrenia, North Cyprus and Istanbul, Turkey) and support with theoretical approach and the projects about the examining this type of screening in public space that did these before in New York and Tokyo. During the recent years, media have applied more and more from private and semi-public spaces into public city space. This study examines the relevance of urban screens and public space. The wider context including related aspects of users' perception in a public space, and interrogated about media content and effects of these content to citizens mind, relation between advertisement and local culture in public space. Urban screens already combined aspects of lighting and graphics in the built environment, in this study the questions given in the questionnaires are focused on citizens and specific characters' of the locations. These locations have small media surfaces compared to previous media screens and media façades, which are studied in Times Square and Tokyo. The groundwork on Times Square is mainly

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discussing the dialogue between geometrical structures and image, information and ornament and their affects on the changing of the function of the architectural surface.

Key words: Media urban screen, Public space, Advertisement in cityscape, Today citizen's perception

1. INTRODUCTION

The role of media screening in our perception and experience of contemporary urban environment needs to be examined in a matter of public space. In this approach, the gap of research in this area can be clarified better by some questions such as:

Is it possible for citizens to handle all the public messages (like news, commercial, and...) and the contents they are exposed?

Are citizens satisfied and pleased with existed these big screens and advertisements in their environment?

How the public spaces have been potential for that much advertisement and media screens?

In this approach, we should consider the shift in culture in the transition to a media culture in psychological subject as much as its technological matter. Today, use of media screens in public space influence architecture in a way of transforming from form of buildings to perceive these as an image. The research problem and gap of this topic could be expressed in these questions: How, when and in what specific locations in urban landscapes, screens can affect people's perception and experience? In addition, it can be argued which the media screens are gradually starting to dominate the visual cityscapes even more than we would like to admit and see them everywhere. Moreover, how urban culture changes with this sort of media?

A focus point of this study is on changing current citizen's perception of public space by using media screens in the city in contemporary built environments. The research has been restricted to the perception of pedestrian from public space in a matter of screening.

The sentence of "the cityscape – our picture of the city – is rapidly becoming a city of picture." (Kolhonen 2005) Reflects that screen world, in a future might be argue in an approach of visual and technological pollution of urban space.

Future cities might be efficiently covered with advertisements and screen billboards. The main difference between the traditional perceptions of the city elements is that the city includes the permanent elements like buildings, streets and squares, however at the present time advertisement, urban screen and large-scale posters have a temporary character and cityscape can have a temporary character too.

"The great obsession of nineteen century was, as we know, history: with its themes of development and the suspension of crisis and cycle, with its preponderance of dead man and the menacing glaciations of the world...the present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space. We are in epoch of simultaneity: we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and far, image and movement, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed." (Manovich 2006)

This research is based on the examined and observed public space in two case studies. To support the related issues in a theoretical section, define public spaces and architectural discourse with emphasis in media façade projects.

It is possible to divide the main topic in to two main divisions; first one is the technological and the second is the philosophical section.

“Paul Virillio see the new developing “pervasive architecture style” of screens covering high-rise facades as electronic Gothic. He refers to the narrative of Gothic church windows, which were aimed to affect people’s moral behavior. Immersion and its effects on the audience will be increased by the “perfect” incorporation of screens in the architecture of the urban landscape.” (Struppek 2006) In mentioned research area where the use of electronic images in architecture has been discussed, we can turn to Robert Venturi in his book, “learning from Los Vegas” as well. His approach in this book could be “an electronic display is not optional addition but the very centre of architecture in the information age.” (Foucault 1967), the media screen can bring the daily news in outdoor public space. In the metropolis city, most of the citizens do not have enough time to watch the news in the TV. They spend their time in transit and traffic. Urban screens can exhibit the information that we need as daily news like newspapers headline, Weather, air pollution, money exchange rate and advertisement.

In addition, connected screens could serve as an exchange platform between the inhabitants of various cities. “Hole in Space (1980), one of the early projects of this rather connected the people walking past the Lincoln Center for the performing arts in New York City with people in Broadway Department Store in Century City (LA) thought a life-size television image.” (Struppek 2006)

This research is divided two main type of data collection. The first is a case study that is carried on in two specific locations: First one is in Turkey, Istanbul, Cevahir Shopping Center and the second is in North Cyprus, Kyrenia, Old Square near the Harbor. I collected information by a questionnaire, focused on pedestrian and local citizens; the study in the first part is base on the answers to the question that arranged in a questionnaire, that almost about the effects and attraction of the urban screen for people and their ideas about the risks of installation this kind of screening in future. By focus on public space, we front too much quality of space according to our situation in space like in driving space in a street or transport space in railway, airports or in shopping center and commercial spaces. By development of technologies, the new kind of space was produced to communicate in digital age.

The second section the (theoretical issues) focused on U.S.A, New York, Times Square and Japan, Tokyo, Shibuya District. This part talks about the universal visual culture in a metropolis city like New York and Tokyo.

2. CASE STUDY

Both two case study were examined according to the how screening can impact on people in public space, but the differences between the Kyrenia urban screen and Istanbul, Cevahir screen façade are: in Kyrenia the screen is located in a corner of square quite away from center of crowded. Nevertheless, in Istanbul the screen

façade location is exactly in a center of crowd and near the entrance of the shopping center, and the scale of the screens are different from each other.

2.1. North Cyprus, Kyrenia, Old Square near the Harbor

“Kyrenia (Greek: Κερύνεια, Kerýneia; Turkish: Girne) is a town on the northern coast of Cyprus, noted for its historic harbor and castle. The center node of the town is the old harbor, the harbor is currently used largely for pleasure craft, and the buildings are now mostly all restaurants, with outdoor tables along the water. The harbor is particularly busy during the summer season, which is when it is greeted with mass loads of tourists. The castle at the east end of the old harbor is a very spectacular site and within its walls, there is a twelfth century chapel showing reused late Roman capitals. The main features of the exterior of the castle are the huge round towers built by the Venetians in 1540 ADs.” (URL 10) With explanation about the character of the town, it is acceptable to say that Kyrenia is mostly famous for tourist attraction. In the location of the study (old square) most pedestrians are tourists, but I focus on local people that they work there or come to square for chatting with their friends or to read newspapers. This square is mostly used as a public space for local people. I questioned about their occupation and age in both locations of study in Kyrenia and in Istanbul. The age average of people that filled the questionnaires is, around 70% less than 30 years old and around 30% more than 30. The occupation: such as student, police officer, architect, theatre actor, cooker, taxi driver, banker, Manager and mostly university students. Moreover, people who filled the questionnaires were randomly selected. The questionnaires were filled on 11 Dec 2008 in Kyrenia. The questionnaire was prepared in English and Turkish. The questionnaires included age, location, occupation and nine questions. Quantity of people who filled the questionnaires here (Kyrenia) were seventeen.

2.2. Turkey, Istanbul, Cevahir Shopping Center

“Istanbul (Turkish: İstanbul; historically, Byzantium and later Constantinople and Stamboul) is the largest city of Turkey and the third largest city in the world. The population of the metropolis more than tripled during the 25 years between 1980 and 2005. Roughly, 70% of all Istanbul population lives in the European section and around 30% in the Asian section. Istanbul is a very famous city due to the historical monuments but nowadays many modern buildings, constructed in Istanbul. One of the most popular shopping centers in Istanbul is Cevahir Mall (2005) which is the largest shopping centre in Europe.” (URL 11) In Cevahir shopping center, two different façade views exist. First one in day and the second one at night, I examined the night view of the screen façade.



Figure 1. Cevahir Center (Photo: URL1)
Figure 2. Cevahir Center (Photo: URL 1)

The questionnaires filled on 20 Nov 2008 in Istanbul. In both case study data collection method is the questionnaire and observation. Thirty people answered the questionnaires.



Figure 3. Cevahir Shopping Center (entrance), (Photo: author, 2008)
Figure 4. Kyrenia, Old Square (Photo: author, 2008)

The next step for analyze and comparing the answers in questionnaire is making a bar chart for each question in both locations. For making the bar chart, calculation method is like this: how many people had the positive opinion about this screen? The results are exhibits in percentage. For example, in this question, is this large screen attractive for you? First and second columns show the Kyrenia result, third and fourth columns show the Istanbul result for this question. (Fig.5) Afterwards for evaluation of this bar chart prepare another bar chart (Fig.6) as a comparing two results:

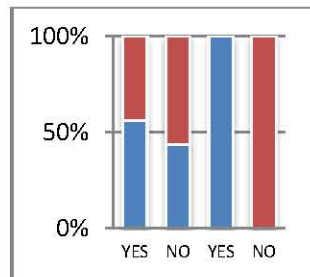


Figure 5.

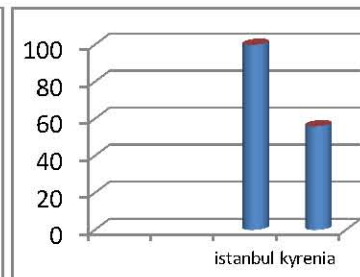


Figure 6.

If we compare the outcomes of Kyrenia and Istanbul about the first question, we can see: 100% in ISTANBUL and 56% in KYRINIA are interested in this media screen.(Fig.6)

In a next question, Does media screen create a new form of architecture or simply apply for aim of Advertisements? (Fig.7) Bar charts indicate around 70% of people conceived that used of urban screen in a city, mostly for advertising purposes in these locations. Nevertheless, in an issue of study in this topic (nature of urban screens), they should be place to usage in a creative way as a modern way of architecture representation. In question: Did you get information from this screen? (Is it useful in built environment in public space?) (Fig.8)

First column displays the percentage of positive answers in Kyrenia and the second one display the positive answers in Istanbul.

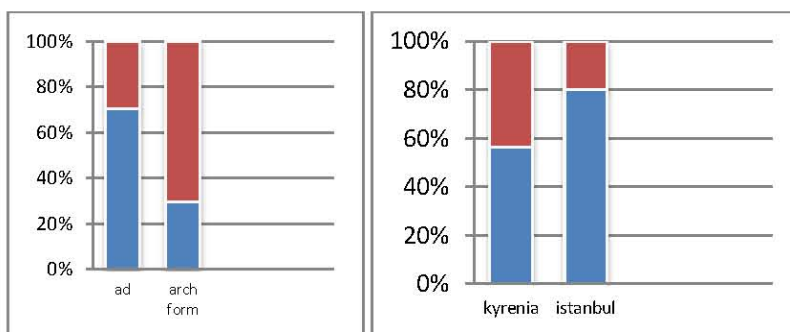


Figure 7.

Figure 8.

In this step of research in these locations the questionnaire has got, a little modification according to nature of public space, for example in Kyrenia referred to an old square, Which one do you prefer to see every day? Square with this screen or without the screen. (Fig.9) and In Istanbul, the same question changed for Building common façade or Media Screen façade.(Fig.10)

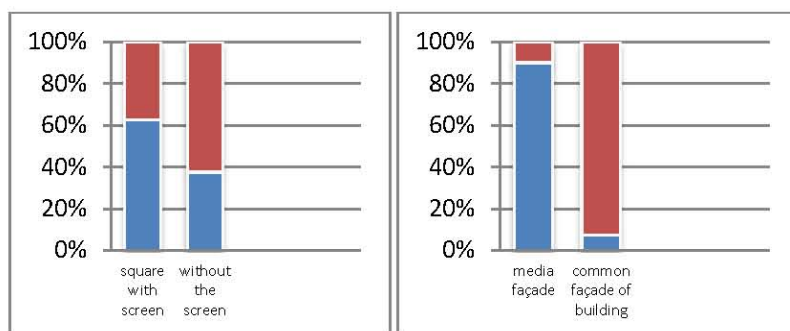


Figure 9.

Figure 10.

Then, continued the process up to end of nine questions in the questionnaire form. At the end of this evaluation in all questions, the people in Istanbul are more

satisfied with utilize urban screening in the city than people in Kyrenia. In few questions, both results are very close to each other. For example, in a question: Are these advertisement effects on you to buy these brands? In both columns, the positive opinions are around 45% in both locations. (Fig.11) In the chart in Figure 12, the question is about the how media screens can effects on the senses of citizens, or their feelings about modern face of public spaces in city.

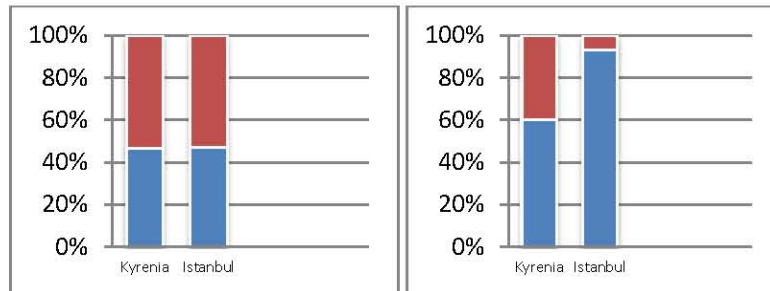


Figure 11.

Figure 12.

Has media screen become our modern urban monuments? (Modern symbol in built environment), (Fig.13) The last chart (Fig.14) for evaluation is overall for nine questions in case of agreement of utilize urban screen in public space the chart shows result in Istanbul 92% and in Kyrenia 57%.

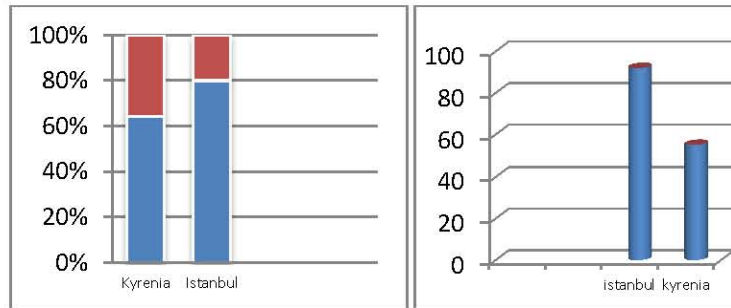


Figure 13.

Figure 14.

3. SCREEN WORLD

“Public space is the city’s medium for communication with itself, with the new and unknown, with the history and with the contradictions and conflicts that arise from all items. Public space is urban planning’s moderator in a city of free players.” (Slaatta 2003) “Urban Screens are defined as various kinds of dynamic displays in urban space that are used in consideration of a well balanced, sustainable urban society – screens that support the idea of public space as space for creation and exchange of culture. Their digital and networked nature makes these screening

platforms an experimental visualization zone on the threshold of virtual and urban public space.” (Struppek 2006)



Figure 15. Times Square, New York, view of LED boards (Photo: URL2)

Figure 16. Beijing, China, Three creative LED screen (Photo: URL 3)

Although historically built environments usually covered with decoration, texts and images, the phenomenon of the dynamic multimedia information in these environments is new. “Large-scale screens in urban settings suggest new possibilities and challenges for city authorities and regulators, architects, advertisers and broadcasters as well as for cultural creators and producers. Urban screens establish new sites for the negotiation between commercial, public and cultural interests.” (Auerbach 2006) In this approach of combination of architecture and media design, we can say that buildings are turning into becoming media infrastructure.

3.1. Times Square: (New York)

The study for Times Square is not purely in a matter of screening, but it takes in to consideration so many different approaches, Social, technological, cultural and urban context issues. New York City has several generations of urban planning and architecture with Art Nouveau, Gothic Revival, Art deco and at last modernism.



Figure 17. Times Square (1880), (Photo: URL 4)

Figure 18. Times Square, New York (Photo: URL 5)

Nowadays Times Square is looked like the world of electronics urban screens and neon signs. Turn to the book learning from Los Vegas by Venturi, which he argued

the dissolve architecture structure in a world of screening and sign, the Times Square is a live symbol of this.

In an urban fabric of Times Square (as a symbol of Americans culture) dynamic and moving images in screens, sense of interruption between past and future, somehow change the sense of this square as a public space in to virtual and fantasy. The character of the space is more related to contemporary consumer culture. Screening, in an urban architecture of Times Square is main feature. "New urban guidelines are to be big, bold, high-tech and imaginative." (Maradia 2002-2003)The architecture of Times Square looks ordinary but the affects of the urban screen, advertisement billboard and commercial messages make a new way of communication. The critical question about Times Square that was opened the door in much research area is, how will the urban subjects receive and experience the new site of postmodern culture and how the architectural elements in a public space used as kinds of messenger of the companies messages.

3.2. Shibuya District:(Tokyo)

City advertisement that uses any kinds of tools for representation in a cityscape is mainly for people on the move. The position of advertisement and screening information in a public space directly related to the movement of the people.

In Japan today, especially in Tokyo, the non- places (the people that always move from one place to another) have become an important setting for this metropolis city. The attraction of urban screen in a correct position shows us that the people in this space have no chance to look away.



Figure 19. Shibuya District (Photo: URL 6)

Figure 20. Tokyo Street (Photo: URL 7)

The design of these screens always incorporated in to the surrounding environment in a way that seems natural for observers. This is an important feature of media facades in Tokyo. Another critical point in this area, in a installing of this media façade is the display and the building should merge, if the designer want to have a natural view of this kind of façade. It is up to creativity of designer and architect to be fined a professional way for this merging process. In Tokyo views of the urban screen, there is another item exist. That one is in Japanes version of the urban screen, utilized of these screens for non-commercial purposes as art, education or entertainment.



Figure 21. Tokyo Street (Photo:URL 7)

Figure 22. View of Tokyo (Photo: URL 8)

Furthermore, has a main role to represent Japan in all around the world. They are famous for using technology and high-tech equipment in many fields of their life. New research in a subject of screening in Japan nowadays, is inventing unusual media screens. Extensive use of an urban screen in Japan today, might be related to hold an ancient methodology that they used in Zen as an ancient philosophy. Now in a cityscape with urban screens, they followed this philosophy in a main idea of Matters of Virtuality.

“The virtual phenomena in the sense of potentiality are not opposed to the real space. In addition, differs fundamentally from the concept of the possible. They believe that real (physical) and virtual phenomena are much belonged together. They make physical space into a data space: Then extracting data from it. Converting data to visual is the main point of this approach.” (Demidenko 2007)

This idea investigated not only effects of media urban screens in a citizen’s perception, but play with imagination and fantasy like some examples of these screens in Los Vegas.

4. CONCLUSION

The conclusion here, after evaluating both case studies, is an interpretation of the field study that investigated in this research and supported with the research that did it in advance. According to the number of questions in the questionnaires, that filled by citizens in both Kyrenia and Istanbul, that the results are indicated in the bar charts(Fig. 5,8,10,11) all positive reactions about this type of screening in public space in Istanbul was more than Kyrenia .Furthermore, the character of location that these screens are use in public space also affects their acceptance. When urban screens are located in shopping center or in crowded parts of the city such as city center, the attraction of this urban screening is more than the old and historic parts of the city. Because in historic part or in town and small city (like Kyrenia) people come to public space such as parks or gathering place to rest, read a newspaper or to chat with their friends. There is not more attraction for urban screen in this kind of spaces in a town. More than 95% of people, who filled in the questionnaires in Istanbul, agreed with the use of this modern element in the city. They feel better when they see the development of the public space in the city. (Fig.12)

This kind of screening is beginning of the using new technology and electronically effects on the built environment or first step of to have a modern city and modern life. In addition, using this kind of new materials or new technology for façade of buildings can be a problem for architects to design a façade in not only a traditional style, but also use new material and new technology for design. In Istanbul as metropolis, the bar chart shows that around 90% of citizens who filled a questionnaire in Cevahir Shopping Center had positive opinion about the screen façade. (Fig.10)

After the data evaluation about Kyrenia, as a small town, even though the location of screen is in the historical part of the town, citizens were pleased with the view of the square. It concludes that the urban large screen did not spoil the sight and sense of historical character of this square.



Figure 23, 24, 25. Kyrenia, Old Square (Photo: author, 2008)

At the end, around 65% of people in Kyrenia and 80% of citizens in Istanbul agreed with the installing these screens in future. (Fig 13)

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