

Hosgor, Zerrin; Yigiter, Reyhan Genli

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## The Role of Greenways for Cultural and Historical Continuity in New Urbanism: A Case Study for Halic

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**THE ROLE OF GREENWAYS FOR CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL  
CONTINUITY IN NEW URBANISM:  
A Case Study For Halic**

Zerrin HOSGOR, Phd Student (ITU)

Reyhan GENLI YIGITER Asist. Prof. Dr. (ITU)

Istanbul Technical University, Faculty of Architecture

Department of Urban and Regional Planning

Taskisla, Taksim, 34437, Istanbul, Turkey

Fax: +90 212 2514895

[yigiter@itu.edu.tr](mailto:yigiter@itu.edu.tr)

[hosgor@itu.edu.tr](mailto:hosgor@itu.edu.tr)

**ABSTRACT**

People form the cities with their values, tradition, custom, belief and especially religious buildings and they give some mental meanings to these physical spaces for ages. The negative effects of the urbanization caused to disappear this identity that was established by people. The societies that form the city must continue their lasting cultural interaction to sustain the cities' life. So, the historical buildings, transportation systems and public spaces which culturally imprint from the past must be sustained for cultural continuity. It is the main problem whether spatial continuity can help to sustain the cultural and urban continuity or it can't.

In the last two decades, the modern landscape planning concept that called "greenway" in 21<sup>st</sup> century, the planners concern this concept with the aims of the nature and culture protection that balances for both conservation and growth, sustaining cultural identity, creating livable environment and maintain open spaces in America and Europe. By enriching the existing green spaces and increasing their uses, helping to emphasize the values of the poor resources and linking them with each other, linear green networks rescue the communities from urban daily stress and density. The firstly aim of the study is to define the greenway concept that is useful for urban metropolis in global world. The result of the increase of the people's necessity of open space and park in the cities that the citizens spend lots of their time in them; greenway that is a special kind of linear landscape, represent the potential linking landscape features as historical/cultural, natural

and recreational. Greenways has become a tool to reach the natural life by providing linkage to housing and parks, by saving unique elements of the natural and cultural heritage that is important for public recreation in this century.

What is the main spatial organization to emphasize the culturally rich places? It will be researched that in which point does culture and spatial organization influence each other and how will Istanbul metropolitan city, which is historical city and tries to conserve their cultural and historical heritage, profit by this interaction. The research problem is to define the appropriate space organization for a local scale in Istanbul-Halic. The main purpose is to define the greenway like a solution and examine the feasibility of greenway that links the natural resources, parks, historical and cultural sites with each other or residential areas in some situations for Istanbul metropolitan city in which the green areas and cultural heritage are disappeared with urbanization pressure and globalization. It was concluded to emphasize Halic greenway plan like the beginning of the whole greenway plan of Istanbul for cultural continuity.

**Keywords:** postmodernism, globalization, cultural identity, new urbanism, greenway, connectivity

## **Introduction**

Rapid environmental change has been concomitant with economical growth and modernization of environment, landscape of the world has become more similar and less unique. The most major factor is standardization of social and industrial systems.(Kubota, 1990)

In this concept, the urban designer has to ask himself; what makes a good city? What kind of urban environments do we attempt to produce? What criteria do we use in defining a good city? There are three types of answers:

1. the great city adapts to new conditions,
2. a good city is beautiful, delightful, harmonious and legible to the people perceiving it: it conveys an image of the total environment
3. a good city plaits together old and new, respects the past of the city as well as its contexts. (Nevanlinna, A., 1990)

Cultural continuity is to constitute the true principles and strategies for developing the conservation policies to sustain cultural values, providing not only conservation but also usage of these resources. Culture stresses national differences and the identity of groups. Cultural identity term gained importance with the *globalization* that modernism wanted to create. When the cultural resources disappear, cultural identity vanishes. So, the lack of urban identity brings the monotony and sameness with it. The signatures of the city are abolished, the same architectural understanding dominate in every city. (Beyhan, 2004)

According to the new urban design concept, how will be sustained the culture and while conserving the city culture, how can we permit people to use these historical and cultural places? It is the main problem of this article. And it will be investigated the conditions of postmodern world, the situations of the others, cultural identity and new urbanism.

In the new urbanism concept, greenway planning is the most desirable planning process to sustain the cultural, historical and natural places and it gives opportunities to people to use these places.

### **Globalization**

If globalization refers to the process whereby world increasingly becomes seen as “one place” and the cultural changes which are thematized under the banner of the postmodern seem to point in the opposite direction by directing us to consider the local. In the present phase it is possible to refer to the development of a global culture in a less totalistic sense by referring to two aspects of globalization.

In postmodern world physical environment has been transformed and modified by the demands of economic politic and socio-culture of daily life experiences. We consume images in postmodernism, there are placelessness, themed environment, loss of culture. Globalization homogenizes cultures and considering globalization makes us more aware of the diversity of culture. In modern world as Baudrillard says that there is a virtual image in the world “we live in a world dominated by simulated experience and feelings and have lost the capacity to comprehend reality as it really exist.” We only experience prepared realities.

While homogenizing the world then, the media have also reinforced differences because they are assimilated differently, because they take the place of communal activities, and

because of the need they instill for distinction and for the preservation of one's own identity in the face of globalization.

Many of the trends towards the homogenisation of places relate to the creation of a global space through improved communications, both physical and electronic. To focus on Relph's work, he suggests that the spread of markets bringing distant produce, the increase of highways and mass transport have undermined the idea of a *locality*. These are not 'public' trends but 'mass' trends, not common standards developed in a locality by a community, but developed by designers and professionals. (Crag, 1998)

### **Culture and cultural identity**

One of the problem in attempting to formulate a theory of globalization as of adopting a totalizing logic and assuming some master process of global integration is under way which is making world more unified and homogeneous. Localism and a sense of place gives way to the anonymity of "no place spaces", or simulated environments in which we are unable to feel adequate sense of being at home. (Featherstone, 2003)

According to postmodernists there isn't an universal best culture, but there is a best culture for each individual. Difference and diversity are very important to postmodernists. Cultural geographers are studying the way how culture influences places. Through cultural geography, some new themes are introduced in Geography. Some examples are: race, gender, sexuality, language, subcultures and identity. That also means that meanings of space can be different for each other. Because everyone looks different to space, and also everyone use the space on a different way.

It is important to connect a link between culture and history and nature. The diverse and sometimes conflicting responses of people to environments point out that the importance of sense of place has more to do with the connections between the physical environment and people's activities and memories than physical dimensions only. The social and cultural systems in life have an immediate impact and reflection in the urban fabric. (Beyhan, 2004)

Cities are defined with their natural and man-made identities. While cities are defined with their social structure, living conditions, some of them gain identity with their geographic features such as Istanbul Bosphoros, the canals of Venice. Some cities are

mentioned with their buildings, constructions, parks and squares such as, Kremlin Palace of Moscow, Eiffel tower of Paris, Champ Eysée boulevards, Saint Marco square in Venice. And some cities are known with their socio-cultural features like Rio carnival and Venice waltz. Cultural identity is constituted from environmental and social identity and is described as a whole of the clear components that identify and differs from others. Culture comprises everything that is created by people and outside of the natural formations. (Beyhan, 2004)

Culture is what cities “do” best. The cultures of cities include ethnicities, lifestyles and images. Cities are sites of culture industries. Their landscape and vernacular are a call and response among different social groups: symbols making sense of time. Cities are identified with culture because they so clearly mark a human made sense of place and a human-size struggle with scale.(Zukin, 1995)

The globalization erase the cultural identity, cultural landmark. To solve the problem, it must be created the real living space where people comes together and share their experiences. In the cities where mobility was important, paths are the most important elements used to define the city image. So the paths that reached to cultural, natural and historical place are the defining elements of a city.(Yan and Morans, 1990)

### **New urbanism**

New urbanism emphasizes social relations and tries to create the public spaces which people interact with each other. Public space is influenced by cultural identity, social community and physical security. Creating a public culture involves both shaping public space for social interaction and constructing a visual representation of the city. Today the stakes of cultural reorganization are most visible in three basic shifts in the sources of cultural identity; from local to global images, from public to private institutions, from ethnically and racially homogeneous communities to those that are more diverse.(Zukin, 1995)

In the new urbanism, urban design concept emphasizes the people friendly design concept and it makes possible to create public spaces where people come together and experience the every day life. Creating compact, walkable neighborhoods with connected streets, sidewalks and street trees to make walking to work, to school, to the bus stop or

train station, or just walking for pleasure and exercise, safe, convenient and attractive, integrating offices and shops along with community facilities such as schools, churches, libraries, parks and playgrounds in to neighborhoods to create places to walk to and reduce vehicle trips are aims of the concept. (Walters and Brown, 2004)

Postmodern urban design encourages pedestrian movement and degree of control on cars in the city space, as against the modernist urban design which saw the cars as central to the city and concentrated on road-building activities. Postmodern urban design argues for a return to the city of streets, squares and low-rise buildings, as against the modernist vision of high-rise buildings in the parks. (Madanipour, 1996)

### **Greenways**

Contemporary urbanism has renewed the tradition of *flaneurie* to read the city from its street level intimation. So the pedestrian paths and walking are components of this concept. Amin and Thrift draw out the central metaphors of this new urbanism of the everyday. A new urbanism highlights the importance in the organization and vitality of urban life of transitivity, daily rhythms and footprint effects. (Amin and Thrift, 2002) In the post modern urban form pedestrian friendly roads are important. This emphasize the pedestrian walking. In 1990s, the new urban and landscape planning concept created by urban designer have lots of positive effects such as preserving historical and cultural elements, sustaining natural resources which are in threats on the city. The *greenway* is a linear open space established along either a natural corridor, such as a riverfront, or overland along a railroad right of way converted to recreational use, a scenic road or other route, any natural or landscaped course for pedestrian or bicycle passage, an open space connector linking parks, nature reserves, cultural features, or historic sites with each other and with populated areas. (Little, 1990) The root of the greenway goes back to Frederick L. Olmsted's "park way" in America and Ebenezer Howard's "garden city" terms in Europe. (Fábos and Ahern, 1996)

After the literature review, it was seen that cultural identity is the most important for the cities' future which is under the urbanization and globalization pressure. In this case, locality gains importance. It must be emphasized to experience the city and create the open spaces which people can socialize and continue their cultural structure. It is important to understand the histories of symbolically central public spaces. As a result of the negatives

of postmodernism and globalization, culture and cultural identity can be continued with the new urbanism concept principles.

Greenway concept is suitable to continue the historical and cultural places and provide public spaces where people come together and connect the cultural places which were forgotten. (Arendt, 2004) Istanbul metropolitan city is a city which confronts with lots of urbanization problems in its historical structure. It is remembered with accommodating different cultural groups, conserving their historical part and reflecting cultural features in the space and places. Especially Halic which is the first settlement for Turkish people, include lots of cultural elements such as construction and cultural groups. In the local scale, in Halic, for cultural continuity, the following criteria must be provided; protecting the local architecture, providing the balance between conservation and usage, sustaining the landscape and urban fabric, giving the infrastructure utilities, developing the transportation network, increasing the touristic attraction. Main target is to sustain and improve. When it is evaluated the conservation and development concepts, revision, management, improvement, rehabilitation concepts are came to existence. Providing the people's daily use of the area, designing the spatial organization that is against erosion of the people and vehicles, providing the suitable usage to physical environment, improving the protective strategies for environmental resources are the main points of cultural continuity in Halic.

For cultural continuity, it is important to define the cultural identity, cultural elements must be emphasized with a spatial organization in new urbanism and this organization will be the linear, give opportunity for people to experience the area in their daily and leisure transportations in the city, with this spatial organization people find places to come together and socialize.

### **Cultural continuity with greenways in Halic**

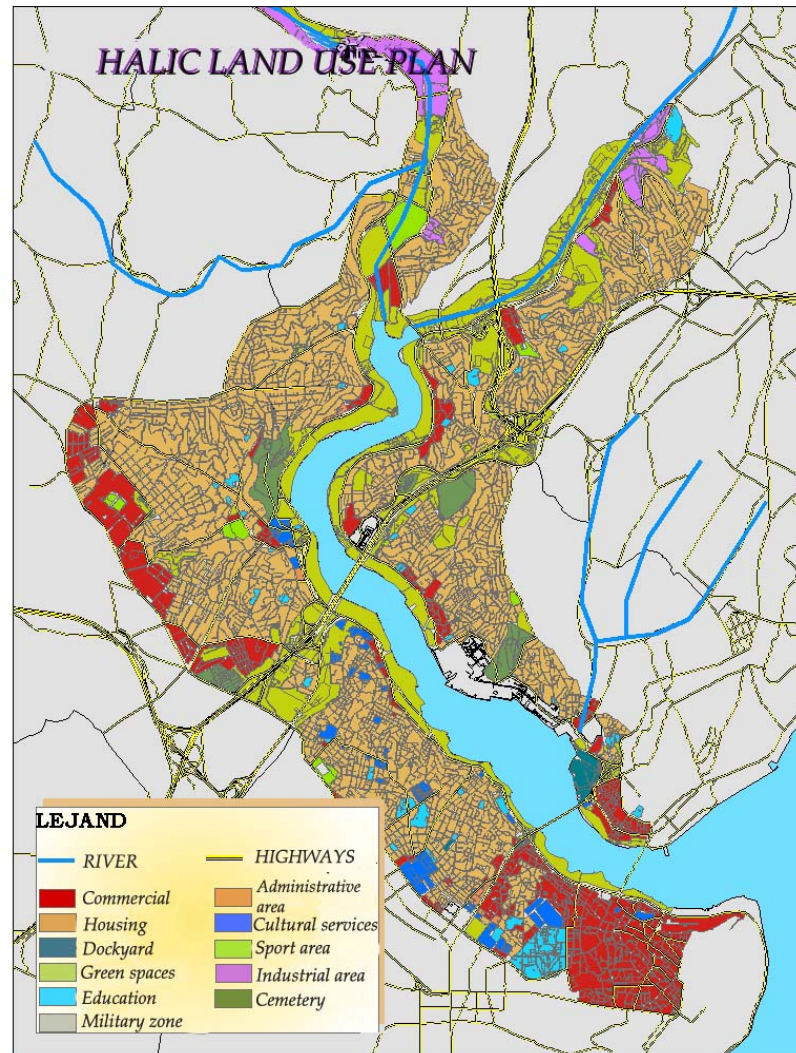
In global world some cities only reflect their cultural identities in their conservation areas. But it is a real that people mostly learn the historical and cultural knowledge by experiencing the city in their daily lives. So the greenways can provide this knowledge permitting people to use these areas. Istanbul metropolitan city has most of historical and cultural areas and some of them are preserved. Halic; -the study area- has lots of values for city history. (Table 1)



**Table 1; The values of Halic (Onem, 2005)**

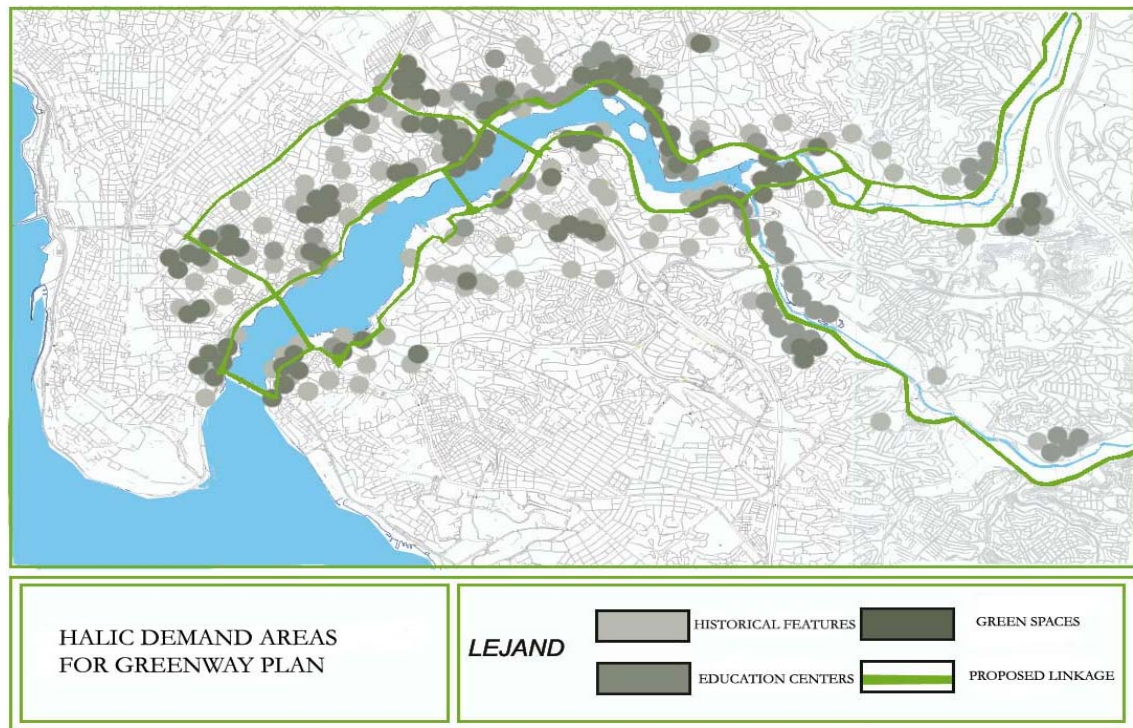
| <b>The features of Halic</b>  | <b>Value</b> |
|---|--------------|
| <u>In Byzantine period</u> ; to be the natural port and its nature<br><u>In Ottoman period</u> ; Sadabad recreational area  | Natural      |
| <u>In Byzantine period</u> ; churches and synagogues<br><u>In Ottoman period</u> ; mosques, palaces, old bazaar, industrial facilities, dockyards and city walls, | Historical   |
| <u>In Byzantine period</u> ; to be first settlement place<br><u>In Ottoman period</u> ; to accommodate different cultural groups                                  | Cultural     |

Halic is a inner Istanbul which connects two sides of Golden Horn such as Fatih-Beyoglu; Eyup-Galata and has every features that is belong to Istanbul (Eyice, 1982). It is evaluated the existing situation of the area to define the greenway plan for Halic. By this evaluation it has been defined the commercial, housing, cultural services, education centers and transportation facilities to understand the existing potential of the area for cultural and historical continuity.(Map1) (Hosgor, 2005)



**Map 1: Existing land use plan of Halic (Hosgor, 2005)**

Halic has been an attraction point for the city for ages. Its natural and historical features give opportunity for people to live the city and city history. And now in modern world it comes to be a museum area because of its historical and cultural structure. But it might be kept in mind, city lives still and people who live there must sustain their lives while protecting these places. So, greenways can be an alternative pedestrian transportation paths and public spaces where people use for recreation. An addition to these, greenways serve as a educational paths which gives historical and cultural information for city inhabitants walking in the street.



**Map 2 Proposed greenway linkage for Halic (Hosgor, 2005)**

The mostly demand areas are defined as the destination points of greenway and the roads which connect these areas are proposed the linear pedestrian friendly linkage for Halic. Proposed greenway plan can provide cultural continuity in Halic by linking people with natural areas, parks, historical and cultural areas and open spaces.

## CONCLUSION

Cultural places are becoming to be tourism potential in postmodern world. Istanbul metropolitan city also is under the urbanization, rapid urban growth pressure and according to this, historical and cultural features must be continued to the future as a cultural identity not touristic feature. And Halic has lots of identities which must be sustained. In the new urbanism concept, a richly developed and meaningful public culture presuppose an interactive relation between places, between street and house, between inside and outside, between different places, between different accessibility.

The private and public cultural practices of an urban population are threatened when the quality of life is reduced, by long distances between home and work, mono-functional and large scale land-use, lack of green space and urban space in which to meet other people. Cultural practices are enhanced when people can bring up their children according to their

values and beliefs, when they can take part in neighborhood activities as well as in important national celebrations, when they can develop self esteem and local identity. Cultural practices are inhibited by segregation and lack of tolerance between different groups, but are enhanced by neighborhood improvement, and attractive public spaces. They are supported when local democracy is respected, so that changes in local environments integrate people's ideas, knowledge and values.

The old small town centres in many countries have also proved to be good living places, with pedestrian access to work, shops, restaurants, and friends, as well as public transport to neighboring small towns and in metropolitan cities people need to live public spaces like those. So the greenways can give opportunities to use the public spaces and continue cultural features at the same time.

Finally, it may be noted that the old dichotomy Culture - Nature is no longer adequate. Today, when Nature is widely recognized as an important value in everyday life to be safeguarded for future generations, then Nature is more part of Culture than opposed to it. Instead, the real opposite to Culture in our time is when important values and beliefs are destroyed, for instance by greed, laissez-faire and indifference. Culture thrives when individuals, groups and civilizations resist the "who cares" attitude and work for things they believe in, such as environmental protection. Sustainable environmental development cannot be achieved without a sustainable cultural development.

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