Slow City Movement is an Utopia of Livable City?

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ABSTRACT

The Slow Food and as an extension of it, Slow City (Cittaslow) Movement is born when these disadvantages are posed by modernity and globalization. Slow city is a way of life that cultural richness and quality of life are preserved and defended in the city's local scale. Also, it is an urban model which may be prevented in the standardization of lifestyles to achieve the environmentally-conscious and tourism-based of local development. Thus, it is aimed to improve the quality of life in cities and opposed the homogenization of cities. Slow City Movement is adopted day by day in terms of societal, cultural and social needs and as a model of local government.

Slow city movement aims to create livable cities. It is important that how much of this discourse can be perform. This discourse contains similarities with the concept of "utopia" which was put forward for creating an ideal society and was effective for constructing the cities after the II World War. "Ideal urban designs" are asked for "ideal society" with design utopias that give the meaning of the conceptual contrasts of "Ideal location" (Eutopia) and "non-place" (Outopia). Does Slow City Movement, which suggests the new layout / space organization about the city and the society and approach from a critical perspective to the current plans, create the concept of "ideal city"? How will ideal societies and ideal spaces be meaningful and accessible when creating the ideal cities? In this study, the aims of creating livable city, similarities and differences of "utopia urban designs", which is developed as a design and a discourse, but not being successful in practice, and "Slow City Movement" are questioned. The main problematic of this study are how much the Slow City Movement performs the livable discourse and how much of it remains utopias.

KEYWORDS: Slow City; Utopia; Urban Design; Ideal City

1   INTRODUCTION

> *"A world map that does not include utopia is not worth to look at."*
> *(Oscar Wilde)*

Cities are social organizations that contain cultural, social and administrative structures for the people allowed to live in community and also are organisms with containing change / transformations. However, today's cities are evolving to "non-place" based on the speed and money economy that is dominated by the process of globalization and capitalist system.

Social and cultural structures pass radical changes from the local culture to the universal culture by breaking the boundaries of globalization fed by speed and consumption. A sense of belonging are positioned on the consumption patterns while removing at the forefront of globalization in the capitalist system and universality. Consumption is not only the product; it is the city that is the system as a whole. Consumption is no longer the requirements besides desirable and becomes a vehicle that reflects the person's identity. City now corresponds to the sum of desirable objects by offering to the user's consumption.

On the other hand, urban structures that are the first shelters of the people and cities shaped in, provide to destruction by caring about growth and development and occurring any way's permissible to increase production and consumption. Environmental destruction means to corrupt cities and human life. Population increases, energy resources are being exhausted, air, water and soil are polluted, drinking water, healthy food are available in hard, environment are taking sheltered deteriorating. Cities which have lost their natural environments with urban problems lost their cultural and social values in the globalization process. Improving the quality of life in urban areas, preventing the destruction of the environment and protection of cultural and social values should be among the priorities by protesting the claims to increase globalization and consumption. Cittaslow has emerged such a way of life that protecting and defending the place's identity and culture.

CittaSlow refers to "Slow City" that consist an Italian word Citta (City) and an English word Slow. CittaSlow, the union of cities, was born by the movement of Slow Food for preventing the standardization of the texture of cities, quietness and life style by globalization and eliminating the local characteristic (Miele, 2008). In this regard, slow life, removed the front of the local ones, are considered important in protection. Cittaslow is a way of life, which is protected and defended the cultural richness and quality of city life on the local scale (Miele, 2008; Radstrom, 2011). Stefano Cimicch, the first president of the movement, explains the aims "to create livable cities". Moreover he expresses that they study on the concept of an utopian city like "Italo Calvino and the architect Renzo Piano"(Polat, 2011).

Besides the words of the president of the movement, when analyzed the reasons to reveal the Slow City movement, goals and process, the concept of utopia contains similarities with "to create an ideal society" and to "the ideal of urban design". Does Slow City Movement, which suggests the new layout / space organization about the city and the society and approach from a critical perspective to the current plans, create the concept of "ideal city"? How will ideal societies and ideal spaces be meaningful and accessible when creating the ideal cities? In this study, the aims of creating livable city, similarities and differences of "utopia urban designs", which is developed as a design and a discourse, but not being successful in practice, and "Slow City Movement" are questioned. The main problematic of this study are how much the Slow City Movement performs the livable discourse and how much of it remains utopias. Primarily in this study, slow city movement and the concept of utopia and designs have been analyzed discursive and two urban designs were questioned to what extent is met in practice. In the last stage, slow cities that are more adopted every day and increase the number of members, are discussed to what extent ideal cities for utopian designs or people.

2   IDEAL CITY QUESTS

2.1   Slow City Movement as a Quest for the Ideal City

Slow City is an international union that does not want to be one of the homogeneous spaces by creating the globalization. Slow City is an international network, aimed to use Slow Food philosophy in the design and planning of small cities. Slow City exposes the goal of improving the quality of life in cities (Mayer and Knox, 2006; Radstrom, 2011). Slow City organizes in the form of an international union, has been recorded the principles under a regulation. "International Cittaslow Regulation" that consists 28 items and 5 additional documents refers to many identities and principles such as Cittaslow's inception, bodies, responsibility of members, membership fees and application of funds. Slow City is stated to be a non-profit organization in regulation. Aims are defined to support and spread the culture of good life via the quest for a solution to the city organization, tests and applications (Web-1, Web-2, and Web-3).

Slow City movement's organizational structure occurs an organizing committee that is responsible for deciding, a scientific committee that has the power to control in addition to specifying the main lines of movement and a secretariat that is responsible for all operational activities in both national and international network (Erten, 2009; Web-2). The member cities of CittaSlow aim to improve the quality of environment and urban fabric, promote the dialogue and communication between local producers and consumers, protect the environment, and promote sustainable development and food production with natural and eco-friendly techniques. For these purposes, cities have to set goals to achieve in 7 topics 59 main criterias and 3 specific conditions listed below and begin working in these areas (Web-2). These are the main 7 topics classified by criteria:

1. Environmental Policies
2. Infrastructural Policies
3. Activities for Increasing the Urban Quality Benefiting from the Technologies
4. Supporting Local Product and Production
5. Hospitality
6. Awareness
7. Supporting the Slow Food Activities and Projects

Improving the quality of life with slow life and minimum harm to the environment with self-sufficient should form the base of Slow City. Historical and cultural areas should be protected by respecting past, not changing them to the new, taking care the cultural approaches, not polluting the environment. Traditional structures and social justice should be considered as a protected area coming from the society's basic principles of life to supporting environmental and urban infrastructure. Each city have its own internal dynamics and a structure of life. It is just a kind of machine that has melting the wheels inside and not capturing the interventions such as adding, editing etc. However, each settlement, ideally as part of a whole, in accordance with basic principles of CittaSlow movement provides;

• production is primarily local, but globally connected
• quality is maintained by feedback, ratings and reviews
• mechanisms for public reputation are the principal means of social control
• 'real costs' – social and environmental – guide people's consumption (Alexander, 2002).

2.2   Utopian Designs as Ideal City Dreams

The word "Utopia" has become widespread by writing in Thomas More's book "Utopia" in 1516. More generates the term of "Utopia" by combining "topos" meaning to "place/land/country" in Greek, "eu" meaning to "which is perfect", "ou" meaning to "non-existence/not" (Reiner, 1963). This concept came from Greek origin, is a place description both non-existence and also perfect (Kumar, 2005). Utopia involves different terms such as non-existence country, imaginary place, earthly paradise, ideal space, ideal city and ideal community (Alver, 2009). Utopian proposals, developed as a result of the

deterioration of living conditions, aim to solve the current and future problems. The ideal community life is sought by suggesting new options instead of inabilities of established order and system with utopias. Design of ideal city and spaces are produced for ideal societies to improve today's and/or future's conditions.

Following Sir Thomas More's Utopia, Francis Bacon's New Atlantis and Tommaso Campanella's "la Città del Sole" are the first utopias to look for a way out for social crises. Each of them are closed and is no longer predicting to access the ideal one to excellence one, therefore these utopias are not allowed to change and not accept. In addition, utopia designs have continued against the depression brought about by the industrial revolution. To put briefly Robert Owen's "New Harmony", designing ideal city inspired from Fourier's Palace of Versailles, Edward Chambless' technological utopia "Roadtown", Ebenezer Howard's Garden City idea, Le Corbusier's famous Radiant City and Frank Lloyd Wright's Broadacre City (Cengiz, 2012 and Özgen, 2005).

The concept of utopia laid out in 1516, even though the concept of utopia and planning in architecture began by establishing the foundations laid by the top of Plato and Hippodrome with Miletus twenty-five centuries ago, came to life with the Renaissance, has reached its peak in the eighteenth century. Literary and conceptual works in many fields were produced from the Renaissance to the present day in order to move the society to a more secure future and happiness. Utopia has become in its' antithesis "anti-utopia", "antagonistic utopia", "dystopia" in the twentieth century (Demirkan, 2005).

If there won't be another era's utopias, humanity still live in caves, as miserable and naked. The first city's outlines were drawn by Utopians. Useful truths are derived from the rich dreams. Utopia is the basis of all developments and trial leading to a better future (Mumford, 2007). Utopia is a source of solace: although not have a true venue, at least have a peaceful area fantastically as they can be opened; opens the door to countries where life is easy, to large cities with boulevards and to spectacular landscaped gardens, although the way to get there has been a temporary dream (Harvey, 2011).

Most of utopias that can or cannot be mentioned are designed by architects and they are utopian city designs for the community's most ideal life. All are discussed in positivist rationality and are designed within the framework of formal logic of causality (Mumford, 2007; Kumar, 2005). Utopia is associated with both a non-place and a place where can be happy inside and is reminiscent of spatial forms, also emphasizes "terrestrial". On the other hand, it includes the concept of time by expressing idealized forms of social processes. Harvey kept these two approaches mutually exclusive in utopian history "Spaces of Hope" book and evaluated in two types as "the utopia of spatial forms" and "utopia of social processes" (Harvey, 2011; Yesilkaya, 2008).

Utopias of spatial forms enter into the field of architecture rather than with static formal recommendations, sociological utopias are based on temporal processes. Harvey mentions only a formalist utopianism's disunity and failure in the process of reality adaptation. In this context, the above-mentioned ideal utopias correspond to the spatial forms of urban design. Against formal design, they often take the ideal process design not to referring utopia and gives the name temporal process utopias. The reason for utopia's failure is the inability to position itself in spatial dimension contrast to a previous one. Harvey defends the dialectical unity of space and process utopia (Harvey, 2011). It is not surprising to witness that both form utopias and process utopias were not able to be successful in their own. Because neither form can be respond process' constant change or process carry any formal content. "Forms category is static. It cannot grasp "process"; real world is in the formation initially. 'Item' category is taken from the presence of objects' substance, cannot fit into mental and spiritual life, even in organic field there has as a down element (Cengiz, 2012).

3   CONCLUSION

Both utopias and also slow cities are seeking to missing, damaged and overcome obstacles. Therefore, they have a critical approach against the living time and social environment. However slow cities promote existence to heal and encourage good life. Cities are rewarded that have slow city

characteristics. However utopia makes a proposal to change the current dysfunctional problematic, proposes new build.

Slow City movement aims to create successful urban spaces for the world by reinterpreting urban regulations. Cittaslow is a process, not a result. Cities should have a philosophy that is more important to be aiming in continues development for human life rather than to fulfil all of CittaSlow's criteria. Because human life is in constant development and change. In this context, CittaSlow is a "quality journey" for city members. Slow cities have so important issues such as supporting local production and resources, increasing the slow life and sustainability, avoiding homogenization and reducing the materialist culture. Increase in traditional handcrafts, orientation to local producers and rise of tourism can be evaluated as advantages and disadvantages according to economic dynamics. Slow cities' consumption meta can be observed by reviving as a result of all economic activities, increasing of awareness and becoming a popular tourist destination. This movement covers limited area by not providing young population to employ and not being valid for the cities that have population over 50000. This approach has the ideal designs for small residential areas, but is inadequate for large cities.

Since the Age of Enlightenment, utopia which is in the nature of criticism against the existing order, they had pioneered innovative and socially oriented approach in many aspects of intellectuality; however, they had failed when they are transferred to real life. At this point, two different approaches are emerging as standing outside the system and standing within the system against the system. Classic utopian approach that failed in an attempt to stop outside the system, the current accumulation, everyday life and ignoring variables suggest only one correct solution. This approach is formal logic and the reason for the failure of classical utopia is precisely. On the other hand, anti-system ideology in the present system forms mutually opposed ideologies in conflict situation. This is precisely the idea of the development of dialectical logic is based on mutual conflict (Cengiz, 2012).

Starting from this point, it is right to evaluate the processes associating slow cities' dialectical utopianism. Not being applied slow cities' rules to major ones and inquiry of dialectics by combining space and time can open new horizons. On the other hand, nowadays, most of the debate about the world we live in is the point of "non-utopia". It can be said "clogged" situation in mentioned urban areas by not coming up innovations and coming up certain repetitions. The new utopia of clogged cities recommends to apply the slow city movement to major cities in the dialectic context.

Utopias will never be wiped out as the effort of changing world continues. Whether it turns into the antithesis of anti-utopia, against utopia, dystopia or dialectic, it will always continue. All of them desired a better, more humane, more equitable urban and community life as slow cities. No matter what is the result as Daniel L. Readon said that "end of the road arrives to pessimistic, optimistic trip will be more enjoyable". Slow cities are journeys for optimists in order to reach more livable places.

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