

The Effects of the Actions of Construction and Deconstruction on the Collective Memory of Istanbul as a Palimpsest City

E. F. Kocazeybek*

Özyeğin University, Graduate School of Science and Engineering, MSc in City and Architecture (Thesis), Istanbul

D. Yorgancıoğlu

Özyeğin University, Graduate School of Science and Engineering, MSc in City and Architecture (Thesis), Istanbul

Abstract:

Istanbul's status as a palimpsest city stems not only from its layered history, encompassing Roman, Byzantine, Ottoman, and Republican eras, but also from the continuous cycle of construction and destruction that shapes its urban fabric. This constant state of flux manifests in both physical and mental transformations driven by a complex interplay of physical, economic, social, cultural, technological, and political factors associated with modernization and globalization. This study explores the dual impact of major construction and deconstruction projects realized in Istanbul throughout mid- 20th and 21st centuries, analysing how they physically transformed the city and simultaneously altered citizens' memories of urban space. To understand the impact of industrialization and globalization on Türkiye, a timeline of related construction and deconstruction projects from the 1930s to the present is established, followed by a thematic analysis of periods that could be defined by certain breaking points. The analysis of the relationship between urban palimpsest and memory is based on the premise that memory shapes the future, not just preserves the past. In Istanbul, research shows that deconstruction is not solely destructive. It may also act as a generative force, triggering construction, transformation, and renewal, which create new urban spaces and new memories. A framework is proposed for inquiring into the dynamics of urban memory loss and formation, integrating past, present, and future temporal dimensions.

Keywords:

Urban Palimpsest, Urbanization, Construction-Deconstruction, Collective Memory, Istanbul.