



Architecture and Human Rights

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ABSTRACT

This article investigates on the concept of space, its production, use, and change processes, and uncovers the interrelations between social and spatical practices. Based on Lefebvre's concept of the Right to the City, the article discussed two main spatial rights: the right to oeuvre and the right to appropriation. To justify these spatial rights on the ground of legal rights, a comparison method is used in this article and three main legal documents is set against each other. These documents are: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 'World Charter for the Right to the City' and the 'European Declaration of Urban Rights'. As a result of this comparison 22 universal norms are identified. These norms and the awareness regarding them and their ethical and legal background can empower social / spatial activism and be used for performing and evaluating spatial practices.

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1. Introduction

The scope and the limits of the field of architecture, as an academic discipline, go beyond the profession of architecture and embrace all spatial studies and spatial practices which are multilayered studies and practices of diverse actors and stakeholders and are not mainly under the control of architects or the other related professionals (Sadri, 2018). Here, spatial studies and practices also are not limited to the process of space production, but its various forms of use and change.

A clear understanding of the concept of space, its process of production, use and change, provides basis for understanding spatial rights and eventually the relation between architecture and human rights.

2. The Concept of Space

The study of meaning and etymology of the word space and words with the meaning of space in other languages, builds a ground for the conception of the processes of its production, use and change and its connection with other concepts such as rights. The word space in English is derived from the word spāitium in Latin and means extension and distance in width and length (Marchant, 1948). In the Dictionary of Philosophy, three different explanations is given for the word space. The first one, which is similar to the meaning derived from its root of spāitium, is the situation of emptiness and nothingness. The second definition which also describes the

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