Abstract

Public spaces are not solely the products of planners and architects; they are produced by and within a society. As society keeps changing, so too does public space. Economic, socio-cultural and political dynamics have resulted in the emergence of three characteristics of contemporary public space: high-quality public space, diverse and secured public space, and co-produced public space. However, less research has been conducted on the characteristics of public space in a transitional context, whereby societal changes are far more dynamic in terms of pace and intensity. Thus, this research aims to investigate public space in a transitional context, specifically in relation to its provision and management. Teheran-ro in Seoul and the Mediaspree area in Berlin were selected for an empirical study as they have a history of rapid change. Teheran-ro underwent a process of rapid development after the Korean War, while the Mediaspree area also experienced radical change due to a programme of property investment after the fall of socialism and the subsequent German reunification. Multiple sources of data and research methods (i.e., comparative analysis, document analysis, expert interview and site visit and analysis) are used.

The findings suggest that even though the drivers of transformation in Teheran-ro and Mediaspree area are different, common challenges arise, especially the public sector's lack of capability to provide and manage public space alone. In response, in both cases, the public sector has engaged private sector entities – in the form of privately owned public space/s (POPS) – to share costs, rights and responsibilities regarding public space provision and management. Planning instruments used for the provision and management of POPS in both cases are identified and analysed. In addition, a number of POPS in Teheran-ro and Mediaspree area were visited, analysed and evaluated to better understand these planning instruments as well as their outcomes. The results are compared to identify the uniqueness of planning instruments

in each case as well as their strengths and weaknesses. Based on the results, the research makes a number of policy recommendations for cities undergoing radical change and facing high development pressure, which are therefore seeking effective ways to engage other stakeholders in public space provision and management.