

An International Symposium on

# PEOPLE, PLACE & DEVELOPMENT

*[Homme, Lieu & Développement]*

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## PROCEEDINGS



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**The Duality Of Evolution And Revolution In The Relationship Between  
Architectural Environment And Social Structure: Turkey**

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**1. INTRODUCTION**

On the earth, human beings, by living in different regions, are affected by the peculiarities of that region, with the structuring affects of culture form and physical environments. These socio-cultural characteristics always influence all the products which include the architectural products and being affected by them.

Throughout history, human beings have had the tendency of evaluating their knowledge and skill, etc. every type of accumulation in order to evaluate their personal or social development. However, now, with gaining the dimension of this tendency associated with universal values as a formation of architectural environment consciousness striving to bring it to light are being improved. In order to support these efforts, on one hand tending towards increasing the numbers of people who are using scientific, technologic improvements and inventions on the earth, on the other hand by the assimilation of values coming from past, forming the need and the demand to make use of them. These may assume another dimension to our life and an additional standard to the quantity and the quality of our products.

The subject, that we are hoping to contribute to the realising stages of the thought that is presented above, the role of evolutionary and revolutionary processes in social changes, is the analysis of the problems created, and in time their contribution. In order to explain the subject, Turkey is taken as an example. It is aimed to present a multi-directional relation system of this example, the place of Turks will be summarized in the historic panorama.

## 2. HISTORY OF TURKS

The roots of all societies are fused with each other in history. For instance, today what we call Hungarians and Finns, originally are the Turkish tribes which migrated from central Asia to Europe from the North. They became Christian. In the same way, some people first passed to America from the Northern part of Asia and now constitute the indigenous American. So these can be claimed to be Mongolian.

The Tribes which departed from Central Asia by turning towards the East, coming to Anatolia, South to Iran, India, Arabia, firstly lived as nomadic, then as settled order, and after a while they followed Islam. Safavi in Iran, Babür in India and its surroundings, in Anatolia and then in Mediterranean, Ottoman Empire and civilisations were constituted. In XVI-XVII centuries, in Anatolia, the golden period, the period of the tulip, in which the most sophisticated art forms were created.

In the construction and environmental structure of countries, parallel improvements took place according to their socio-economic levels. These civilisations improved very slowly and drew back in time. European civilisation began to rise. This process, always parallel to socio-political and economic changes, in the duality of being the director and being directed, includes very slowly improving evolutionary changes. However during XIII-XIV. centuries, the Gothic period and the Renaissance (the product of positivism) all differently effected the change and the development of levels of societies.

Sudden and extreme changes are caused by revolutions. Although they have different scales of impacts, these impacts could be seen on social or on physical environments. The occurrence of Lutherism, the French Revolution in 1789, then, the Atatürk Revolutions which started in 1919 with the Independence War in Anatolia are different examples. Among these, the Atatürk Revolutions have special importance with their content and essence. Because, with the others, the formalist approaches came after the function. But Atatürk approached the subject with formalism, functionalism and cultural aspects all together at the same time. With this methodology the speed of improvement becomes maximum. Today it is easy to see that Turkey is a leader in democracy, with her social and physical environmental standards, among all other Moslem Countries.

During IX. century, the Turks' presence was felt in the Islamic World. New architectural assimilations took place during Tulunlu, Akşitler, Karahanlılar, Harzemşahlar, Gazneliler, and Great Selçuks periods. These have peculiarities depending upon old traditions, and responding to the new necessities.

This spread from Mesopotamia to Egypt. Until now, Mosques are dominant in group buildings. In the 1250's Moslem theological schools, or Tombs became dominant in building.

The Turks became densely settled in Anatolia in the sceond half of the XI. centuries. During primary years, because of the influences of local and foreign impacts, any kind of unity was impossible. After XIII. Century, this became realised.

Due to the economic conditions of Ottomans' peak period, the architect Sinan, realised a great construction organization by incorporating all the material and technology of that period. While this powerful image of the Ottoman becoming immortal through an architect's achievements, nobody cares about the addition of these works to the social structure or how the people feel who use the spaces, what confidence do they have in state and government. In reality, the architectural value of the products originated from economic and military power of the period, in reply to this, the realisation of these projects add extra power to the system too. (picture. 1)



Süleymaniye Mosque Istanbul-Turkey

picture. 1

XIX. century, nearly declining period of Ottoman, non-muslim architects in the same society, architectural sythesis have no superimposition with this century's social structure. Although the effect of the West on the changes of plans can be seen, it is not possible to follow a new structural understanding outside the new building typologies..... during this period, monumental religious buildings were still not the focus points in classical Ottoman cities, that's why there was a necessity for new foundations in Ottoman-Turk architecture (Sözen,p.345- p.351)



### 3. EVOLUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN TURKEY BEFORE REPUBLIC

The Ottoman Empire, in the life period from establishment to dissolution, covering very large lands and so many different ethnic societies, has given endless freedom in religion, behavioral aspects, traditions, customs and social affairs not only to Turkish society but to the all other societies too. For this reason, they had the chance of following all of the cultural accumulation belonging to neighbouring societies as well as their own culture. This situation caused multi-directional, very colourful physical results. They did not find their candidates only from Turks, but if they found any successful specialists during any stage of building, they gave them responsibility. For example, the Armenian Balyan Family produced many buildings and mosques.

The standard of building, especially in housing, designing, use of material, and detail depends upon the socio-economic position of the owner. During the peak period, for upper classes, working and living spaces are placed in same building. The Konak (government house) idea changed in XIX. centuries.

In XIX. century, as a result of new bürocracy which came with the Tanzimat period, state office works were taken from Konak and transferred to city center, to new state office buildings (Tekeli, p.881)

### 4. REVOLUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT DURING REPUBLIC PERIOD

During the last years of the Ottoman Empire, due to the economic problems, building activity was very limited. One or two were influenced buildings which by foreign architects had no specific standard, as if to exemplify this chaos. Under these circumstances, parallel to European Trends, very slow evolutionary improvements continued in and around the Palace.

The decline of the Ottomans and Independence War created new spatial needs. During this period, instead of building the Konaks and mosques, realising the government offices and mass housing projects were serious problems for the new leaders. Because of the impact of the Atatürk Revolutions, there were basic differences in socio-economic structure. The results of people's perception of themselves as free individuals, instead of being Padişah's subjects, were very important. But feeding the system with construction materials, finding labourers, or even architects was very problematic. After a short transitional period, Atatürk wanted to prepare governmental improvement and a reconstruction plan for Ankara by the German architect Jansenn. (picture.2)





Modernist building, Ankara-Turkey

picture. 2

The architect wanted to find out whether this plan could be applied properly or not. Atatürk was angry. But the problem was not the physical realisation of this plan, but total application, that is all the socio-economic, psychological aspects of the plan were considered too. After 74 years, it is very sad that people are arguing about science, whether it will cover all of the inventions (so called Turkish expression " Bilim" ), ie. the creative side, or only the learning of knowledge ( so called Turkish muslim understanding "İlim" ). The first one is the universal understanding of science, that's why we agree on that. This is also closer to art and architectural accumulations.

Between 1919-1950 the ideals of Atatürk were applied at specific speed. Even during the period of the Minister Of Education, Hasan Ali Yücel, established " Building Production System By Applied Education Process ", the original total system name was " Köy Enstitüleri ". This system added very important content to Atatürk's approach brought by his revolutions. By this system human beings and produced spaces have proper coexistence characteristics, so that human beings will gain an optimum happiness in his built environment, because they act very close to the builder (designer, constructor etc., thereby creating no problem).



Cultural Center, Ankara-Turkey

picture. 3

During this period, very interesting Multi-Purpose Halls, School Buildings, Mass Housing Projects were constructed. The other important fact was that economic decisions were affecting the environment very positively. For instance, mass transportation systems, railway or waterway systems were very successful.

Factories, and important infrastructures were realised. In each case, people adopted and supported the whole system.

But after 1950, the system lost its original characteristics, and now we face many serious environmental problems. For instance, physical contamination of environment by buildings or built elements. (picture. 4)



Mass Housing Istanbul-Turkey



Residential Environment Adana-Turkey

picture. 4

how much we can think multi-dimensionally about universality. Humanism, positivism, etc. values are essential values for the world and humanism, separately, or together, as a relation: system, they are the basic stones of universality. We must try to understand these in order to run the system. That is, this important fact is the foundation of all the defects which have happened between environment and architecture in Turkey. A society which looks only inwards, concentrates on its own values, closes its eyes to the universal structures and outside influences, and overvalues its own contribution, will accelerate the process in the wrong direction.

This system may create all of the other positive features. For instance, democracy takes its basic standards from these roots. Societies which do not care about the human being, do not stand as protector to their as a lover, would do are the societies which have no identity. Since we can not study the developments, we are not able to cope with the missing parts or correct the mistakes.

In this case, on the theoretical or practical sides, first of all architecture must renew itself, regain all of the artistic values and standards (which we think are all lost), and by this process, it can re-gain a universal standard.

A very important subject, that we have to present here, is the understanding that freedom, as the freedom of application of all personal wishes, can be considered as private enterprise or democracy. Because people living together in a society do not know that real freedom is the consideration of personal rights as parallel to social rights during all the planning, designing and utilising activities of that society. This wrong approach still exist in Turkey in 1994. For instance, one can smoke right in a minibus, having no air-conditioning, with a 15 seat capacity, but the other 14 people can not having their no-smoking rights; this is called FREEDOM and DEMOCRACY. Now, lets consider the problems of an architect, who can show respect to other buildings, environmental elements and the environment, with his knowledge of humanity, form, mass, proportion, aesthetics, etc. The sharp and shocking side of this problem is that many of these people respect universal standards and values and yet they miss them, even though they have strict demands. But the only missing point in this process is that they do not think about why they are not able to have these opportunities although they are very close. Sometimes in a living unit, one may have very nice living conditions with interior decorations. But in this case the client also has no sensitive reaction to the polluted environment, and does not feel discomfort about this atmosphere.

Under the above circumstances, the lack of architectural demand discourages architects, because people do not understand and realise that architecture, ~~is~~ the only profession which can provide solutions to these complex problems.

## 6. CONCLUSION

In any society, the fact that social improvements affect the physical environments and vice versa is normal. If this process is only connected to evolutionary processes, the improvement is multi-directional and positive, but the changes are very slow. In the case of revolutions, changes are sudden and rapid, but because of having no socio-cultural adaptation, it is hard to talk about reliable buildings and utilisation of these buildings. In this case, we may think of attaching importance to the optimum points between these two parameters during the architectural design processes. In addition, we must think that assumption of the addition of occurred physical environment to social education and culture, and keeping the stimulative level difference at a normal (not much, nor less) optimum level may answer the question.

Particularly, in developing countries, when making plans for improving the physical environment, study of the above explanation may immediately bring a new different way to accelerate improvements and we may have a new tool.

It is clearly seen that our age is a communication age. Tourism, transportation, press and publication, etc. all these, diminish the dimensions of the world. All national values change their places with universal ones. As for us, in our time, architecture, as a profession, must also give up all of its national values, and give up insisting on employing chaotic national design concepts and understand that all of them belong to future generations of the world: their place belongs to nature. They have to prove this to the whole of humanity by their new products. But they can keep and improve traditional tastes in order to improve the multi-coloured and dynamic standard of architectural design characteristics.

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