

ARCHITECTURE OF BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES. CREATIVE CONCEPTIONS OF ARCHITECTURAL ACTIVITY

DOI 10.25987/VSTU.2019.3.43.008

UDC 72.03

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NATIONAL IDENTITY AND ITS CONTRAST WITH THE WESTERN MODERNITY IN THE CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE OF TURKEY

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Statement of the problem. Because of geographical position and location in the middle of West and East and also the different historical empires that it has had, Turkey has always been affected by a variety of cultures and is thus a spring of dichotomies. In this paper, first we will review the descriptions of the tradition and modernity and then we will move on to examining their contribution into architecture. Next, we will have a quick look at Turkey and its contemporary social and political history as well as tradition and modernity in its architecture and by focusing on the classification of Turkish contemporary architecture, the sixth assortment of this classification which contains the buildings after 1980 will be investigated.

Results. As tradition and modernity can be predominantly seen on cultural and religious buildings, in this paper for case studies some cultural-religion buildings which fit the aims of the research and study the mentioned factors on these buildings have been selected. This indicates that not only in contemporary architecture but also in society and culture of this country, identity, tradition and modernity are most important facts that with a designed and programmed management have coexisted and interacted.

Conclusions. The results of this research shows that Turkey, as a modern country which has an ambition to keep its identity and traditions usually seeks to insert the physical symbols of two styles together and as well as to keep the semantic and conceptual meanings of both tradition and modernity in its contemporary architecture.

Keywords: Tradition; Modernity; Contemporary Architecture; Cultural-Religious Buildings; Turkey.

Introduction. The contrast of modernity with tradition in some countries such as Turkey depends on different conditions and factors. The political, social, economic and cultural revolu-

tions that happened and are still happening in these countries create the conditions to accept or reject the modern life or at least let some especial aspects penetrate the society. Sometimes this can conclude meanings and concepts of a new ideology and as well as contain both physical and sensation aspects. In the form of architecture, as the main factor of culture and art of a society, the traditional countries in the East usually have sought to keep their original sense of architecture and embraced some modernity factors besides their original architecture. Surely, the amount of tradition can be more than modernity but in some countries in the West, attempts have been made to keep their classic and modern architecture united but separated by some new ways of designs. Turkey, as a country which has been halfway between the West and the East, has faced the challenge of how to keep tradition and modernity besides each other both in the country and also in architecture. The way of addressing these issues during different eras has been varying with more and more changes in the contemporary period. According to the above mentioned points, it seems that before focusing on the tradition and modernity in Turkey's latest architecture, it is better to study the main descriptions of these two words first and then to compare them against the context of the architecture of the Eastern and Western countries and finally by having a quick review on contemporary events of the Turkish history, to investigate its effects on the architecture.

Descriptions of Tradition and Modernity. Before the survey of tradition and modernity in architecture, it is better to focus on the descriptions of tradition and modernity which theorists have on the meaning of these two words.

Tradition means transition from one generation to another [1]. In fact it is the attendance of past in future [2]. Tradition can be as a manner or method, it can be equivalent with an old thought or keeping the current position [3] and totally it is a mentality which is accepted in a society and can include more than one generation [4]. Tradition is a timeless and constant factor which has a historical continuity and it is related to the religious beliefs of a nation. It is a series of creeds, beliefs, opinions and repetitive procedures which can be created over time and upheld as social and national values. Plurality, conservatism, variation, resistance, keeping the current positions, superstition, originality, destiny and religion are some of the main components and factors constituting tradition [5].

On the other hand, the descriptions that have been presented for modernity are plentiful and even in some cases conflicting. It has been believed that modernity is the victory of human thought and defeat of traditional beliefs. According to this, modernity is a collection of cultural, political, economic, social and philosophical complexes. Many theorists believe that modernity is a way of today's life [6]. Modernity is the era when its main character is a

ceaseless conversion [7]. In fact, the foundation of modernity is on the mutation of the human's look on himself and the world around [8].

The modernity is a dipole theory and puts the modern society against the traditional society and without presenting any comprehensive description, it acknowledges the Western society as the modern one and introduces the third-world countries as the traditional ones. According to this theory, in the third-world countries there are some barriers that bar the development. Some of these barriers are old superstitions and increasing population numbers. Thus, this theory searches for the internal reasons to justify a delay in a society [9].

The Challenge of Tradition and Modernity in the Architecture of the East and the West.

According to the descriptions of tradition and modernity, these two can be studied in architecture in two sections: the semantic, i.e. meaning, section and the physical one. The main factors of the first section can include sensation, meaning and conceptual symbols of a culture which have been presented in the form of architecture. The second section contains some other factors such as composition, materials, aesthetic aspects and main functional elements.

On the other hand as our case study and the region that we are looking at is Turkey and as we are also talking about the East or the West, it can contain many different countries with various cultures where the meaning of tradition can vary as well, we chose the East traditions and civilizations which are similar to the ones in Turkey. In this case the Islamic countries which from traditional aspect can be similar to our research can be studied and also from the West architecture some countries which are similar to modern meaning of our research have been chosen. Thus, first we will focus on the tradition and modernity in the architecture of some Islamic countries in Tab.1 and then we will study the same case for some Western architecture in Table 2 and finally we will have the related conclusions for Turkey [Table 1—2].

By comparing these two tables, we come to this conclusion that in East and Islamic architecture tradition and modernity usually mixed more sensory and thus conceptual and the amount of tradition factors seems more than the western modernity but in the Western countries the mixture of tradition and modernity occurred completely separately. Hence it was easier to separate the building into two independent parts but in the first case this mixture occurred more semantically. These two cases were chosen, because the architecture of our main case study is more similar to these two cases. Now, before moving on to the tradition and modernity in the architecture of Turkey, first we will present a brief overview of Turkey and its contemporary history and architecture and then we will come to the tradition and modernity in its cultural-religion buildings as our case study.

Table 1

Tradition and Modernity in the Architecture of Islamic Countries







No.	Tradition and Modernity in the Islamic Architecture	Conclusions	
		Tradition	Modernity
1		— Islamic Ornamentation	— Modern Spacing
		— Traditional Instruction	— Modern Furniture
		— Traditional Geometry	— Modern Atmosphere
			— Modern Materials
2		— Traditional Ceiling	— Modern Material
		— Traditional Form	— Modern Colour
		— Traditional Space	
		— Traditional Sensation	

Table 2

Tradition and Modernity in the Architecture of the Western Countries

No.	Tradition and Modernity in the Western Architecture	Conclusions	
		Tradition	Modernity
1	 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Classic Ornamentation — Traditional Instruction — Traditional Material 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Modern Spacing — Modern Form — Modern Atmosphere — Modern Materials
2		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Classic Elevation — Traditional Material — Traditional Space — Traditional Sensation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Modern Material — Modern Colour — Modern Form — Modern Space

Turkey: National Identity Crisis and its Contrast with the Western Modernity. There are three main factors that we should pay attention to while focusing on the identity of a country like Turkey with its regional and historical identity, religion as its moral and belief identity and the Western liberalism as a philosophic reference with its economic, political and its cultural functions [10]. Considering these three factors, religion can be more im-

portant than the other ones because it has a direct relationship with tradition which interacts with the country itself. The religious nationalism usually opposes autarchy and prevents foreign effects on a country [11]. But in the Turk nationalism the main question is the one of which of these factors were more important and how foreigners had an effect on this country in this particular period.

In fact the Turkish nationalism started as a literary attitude. Around 1860 the Young Ottoman Movement was created and in their literary meetings they tried to ban the Persian and Arabic words from the Ottoman literature, which was how the Turkish nationalism got underway [12].

In the late 19th century, most of the states which were subordinate to the Ottoman government had got a sense of national identity and by organizing their own national movements sought to gain their own independence as well. On the other hand, the Turkish nationalism was about to originate by the time that not only was the Ottoman Empire going to collapse, but there also seemed no more land left for the empire as a national unit [13].

One of the main problems that prevented Turkey from having a particular national identity was a variety of powerful and independent little governments in the country and as a result of the republic announcement in 1923 by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and his works such as disconnecting with the past, the new system of education, changing the clothing of the society and the alphabet from the Arabic to Latin, there was a big revolution for beginning and proceeding of the modernity in the country, the one which was completely coming from the West and had some contrasts with the traditional beliefs of its people [14].

Turkey and Its Contemporary Architecture. Turkey, a land where the East and West meet, produced architects who created magnificent architecture during different historical periods such as Seljuk, Ottoman and different phases of the Republican period.

After the 1960s, the contribution of Republican Turkish architects was not limited only to the local level but spread abroad as well. Many distinctive buildings in the categories of religious complexes, diplomatic enclaves, exhibition pavilions and cultural centres were designed and constructed.

The assessment of the architecture of a specific time and place necessitates the understanding of the contextual developments that lay its foundation. As a result of the modernist and nationalist endeavours of the nation-state, the attempt for the construction of a new “Cultural Identity” in the Republican context witnessed a “Cultural Tension” stemming from the inherent “Cultural Polarity”. Especially in such a context of “Peripheral Modernization”, the “Cul-

tural Polarity” was more effectively formed by the presence of the dichotomies between “National” and “International”, the “traditional” and the “Modern” or the “Eastern” and the “Western” attributes [15].

The great Ottoman Empire conversion to a national republic with its historical record, which contains different nations and traditions, was a radical change. Against the backdrop of this fundamental change, besides political, cultural and social ones architectural movements were also being created [16].

Some of the Turkish architecture critics such as Afife Batur in the book *“The Abstract History of Turkish Architecture in 20th Century*, divided the processes of Turkish contemporary architecture into six different time periods:

- 1 — The First Years, The Transition Period (1923—28);
- 2 — The Modernists Period (1929—38);
- 3 — The War Years (1938—50);
- 4 — The After War Period (1950—60);
- 5 — Searching for the New Styles (1960—1980);
- 6 — Disconnection and New Styles (1980—).

In the first period, the most important policy was the functional investment and the making the Ankara as a new capital city of the country. The modernist period was the time of Modern Europe and the start of the designs and residential buildings based on the modernity ideas and thoughts. Because of the war during the third and fourth periods, the economic conditions of the country were not so good and native materials started being used in construction as a result. Psychological effects and monumental architecture were also going to become more common during these periods. In the fifth and sixth periods the society got an opportunity to experience the Neo-Ottoman, Western Modern and Islamic architecture as well as the other styles that were on the rise in the country back then. Thus, the architectural society was in search of new styles and ways which could meet all of the country’s needs and challenge tradition and modernity. Our main research case study contains the latter period, but before proceeding to this section, it seems more appropriate to talk about tradition and modernity in the contemporary architecture of Turkey first and then about how the recent projects have been affected by this case.

Tradition and Modernity in the Contemporary Architecture of Turkey. Because of the geographical position halfway between the West and the East and also different historical empires that it has witnessed, Turkey has always been a spring of dichotomies and challenged

limitations caused by foreign cultures which have had lots of effects on the country resulting in the international mutation to social and scientific developments.

By the French Revolution of 1789, the glory of the Ottoman Empire had vanished and the government was starting paying more attention to the West and its modernity. One of their first connections with the West was a commercial contract that the government signed with Europe. In 1939, the government had another important contract called “Tenzimat” which was a correctional one in order to develop and update the government’s plans and programs to create a functional atmosphere in economy and education [16]. That was the first comprehensive program laying the foundations for the European organization of Turkey and the first step of modernization [17].

Foreign pressures and no domestic and inner solidarity in the first decades of the 20th century caused the country to plan and manage a new union ideology. Thus, in the second decade a new movement was created which was called “The First Architecture Movement”. It sought to present a new architectural model showing the historical majesty of the Ottoman Empire besides the modernity symbols of the West. To reach this aim and make this plan functional, some Turkish architects and teachers of the first architecture movement such as Kemalettin Bey and Vedat Tek who were educated by European schools and teachers started to teach in architectural schools of Turkey. On the other hand, some of the European architects and teachers, especially Austrian ones, were directly invited to the country thus introducing modern thought and the cube architecture into the country, which had a dichotomy with the national and Neo-Ottoman style of the country [18].

Tradition and Modernity in the Sixth Assortment of Contemporary Architecture of Turkey (1980—). As it was mentioned, the contemporary architecture of Turkey in the recent years has been in search of new styles. These new styles needed modernity and on the other hand, tradition and national identity was the main factor and will always be in this country for the reasons mentioned above. According to the descriptions that we presented of the meaning of traditions as well as tradition and modernity in architecture, it was said that the tradition could be studied in different aspects and one of these them is religion and as the main religion in Turkey was Islam, traditional architecture can also be affected by this. For all of the above reasons, the main case studies of this research are cultural-religion buildings which can be seen to influence religious tradition in the form of architecture.

After searching and studying our main subject we chose two different case studies which have different subjects and were designed in two different countries keeping the traditional archi-

itecture of Turkey as well as the modern architecture of the West besides each other. In fact in these case studies the architectural design should be a bridge between the religious tradition of the Turkish culture and the 'here and now' of the 21st Century. A balance between tradition and modernity is the key to achieving a good symbiosis, from which the suitable solutions can emerge and become a reflection of the new generation of users. Extensive studies have been conducted to achieve the desired balance between the Islamic idiom and modern context in these case studies. Attempting to create a contemporary building which is founded on traditional Islamic architecture principles such as the geometric principles, transitions of inside and outside spaces is not so much about the ornamentation, but more about the Islamic symbolism that plays a part in the design.

Case Study One: Turkish Cultural Center in the Netherlands. Architects: Atelier PUUUR. Location: Doetinchem. The Netherlands. Architect in Charge: Furkan Köse. Area: 1.900 sq. m. Year: 2013. Photographs: Milad Pallesh (© Archdaily.com).



Fig. 1. Turkish Cultural Center in the Netherlands (the exterior) (© Milad Pallesh)

The municipality of Doetinchem together with the Turkish foundation organized a closed design competition, which was won by Atelier PUUUR in 2007.

The J. F. Kennedylaan is an important ring road of the city, which is part of a series of green areas and public buildings. The compact construction volume with a small footprint leaves a sufficient space on the terrain for a green environment to strengthen the green routing. This zone with big trees also functions as a buffer between the adjoining backyards of the neighbours of this residential area. The sunken court withdraws a large parking facility from the street view and will be used for festivals and fairs [Fig. 2 and 3].



Fig. 2. Turkish Cultural Center in the Netherlands (the exterior) (© Milad Pallesh)



Fig. 3. Turkish Cultural Center in the Netherlands (modern materials) (© Milad Pallesh)

The T. C. C. is oriented toward Mecca, which was turned into a quarter to the adjacent urban structure and referred to as Kaaba. There is an orientation to the street and to the sunken court. This angular displacement is applied to give the area a unique character. There is a gradual transition from public outdoor to indoor areas. The interior also forms a series of open and public spaces to places with a more private and intimate character ending with the most intimate place, i.e. a prayer hall. The social/cultural program connects to the street level with the main entrance of the building. On the sunken square side there is the second entrance. This gives the building an all-sided approach and therefore it has no back sides. A detached symbolic minaret and accompanying imam house will be realized at a later stage.

The fifth division — the five pillars of Islam — can be found in multiple scale layers, for example in the columns in the colonnade at the entrances. Interior of the building is divided into three rings, the outer ring forms the supportive and additional program, the inner ring the main pro-

gram, which are separated by a colonnade serving as a traffic zone. The vertical articulation of the facade is a guide to the sky and makes the building seem taller. The brickwork facades in the original bond are referred to as Islamic floral patterns. The desired elements such as identity and recognition can be experienced from the perspective of both cultures [Fig. 4].

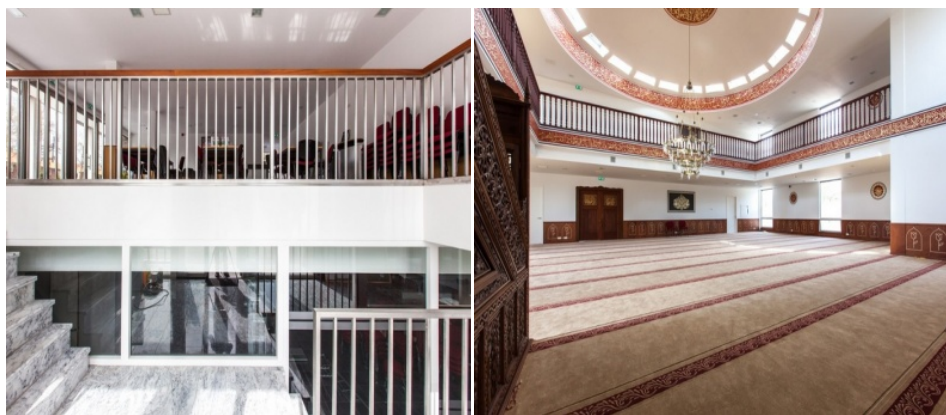


Fig. 4. Turkish Cultural Center in the Netherlands (the interior) (© Milad Pallesh)

Case Study Two: The Sancaklar Mosque in Turkey. Architects: Emre Arolat Architects. Location: Istanbul, Turkey. Architect in Charge: Emre Arolat. Area: 700.0 sq. m. Year: 2012. Photographs: Thomas Mayer – (© www.archdaily.com).



Fig. 5. Sancaklar Mosque (the interior) (© Thomas Mayer)

The Sancaklar Mosque located in Buyukçekmece, a suburban neighbourhood in the outskirts of Istanbul, aims to address the fundamental issues of designing a mosque by distancing itself from the current architectural discussions based on the form and focus solely on the essence of religious spaces.

The project site is located in a prairie landscape which is separated from the surrounding suburban gated communities by a busy highway. The high walls surrounding the park on the upper courtyard of the mosque depict a clear boundary between the chaotic world outside and the calm atmosphere of the public park. The long canopy stretching out from the park becomes the only architectural element visible from the outside. The building is located below this canopy and can be accessed from a path from the upper courtyard through the park. The building blends in completely with the topography and the world outside is left behind as one moves through the landscape, down the hill and in between the walls to enter the mosque. The interior of the mosque, a simple cave resembling a space, becomes a dramatic and awe-inspiring place to pray and be alone with God. The slits and fractures along the Kiblah wall enhances the directionality of the prayer space and allows the daylight to filter into the prayer hall [Fig. 6 and 7].

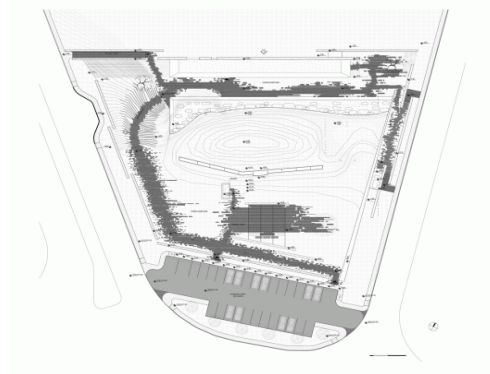


Fig. 6. Sancaklar Mosque (site plan) (© Thomas Mayer)

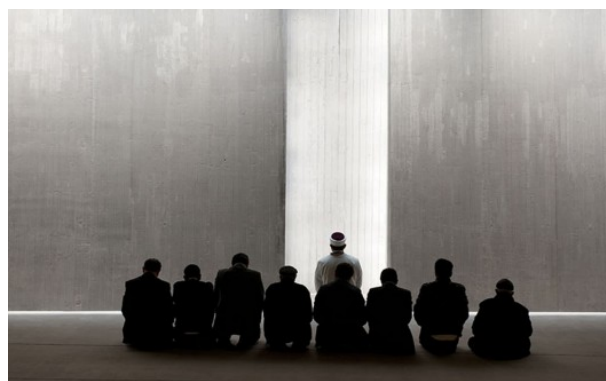


Fig. 7. Sancaklar Mosque (the interior) (© Thomas Mayer)

The project constantly plays off the tension between man-made and natural and tradition and modernity. The contrast between the natural stone stairs following the natural slope of the

landscape and the thin reinforced concrete slab spanning over 6 meters to form the canopy helps enhance this dual relationship. On the other hand, the interior design and Islamic traditional symbols are mixed with modern space and geometry [Fig. 8].



Fig. 8. Sancaklar Mosque (the exterior) (© Thomas Mayer)

Conclusion. In this paper, first we reviewed the main descriptions of tradition and modernity which were presented in relevant theories. Then, we focused on the combination of tradition and modernity in the architecture of some Islamic countries in the East and some Western countries in Europe. Next, by reviewing the contemporary history, culture and society of Turkey and its architecture, the assortments of its contemporary architecture have become clear to us. The sixth and the last assortment looked for new models and styles of architecture and according to the needs of nationality and modernity as well as religious traditions two different case studies in two different locations and styles were chosen. The results of the research show that Turkey as a modern country trying to keep its traditions usually seeks to insert the physical symbols of two styles together as well as to preserve the semantic and conceptual meanings of tradition and modernity beside each other.

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