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Experience of Post-Modern Historicist Architecture in Turkey

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Abstract

Post-Modern architecture and its historicism started to be practiced in Turkey since early 1980s. Post-Modern historicist practises of Turkey have specific features different from the Western examples with addition of its own historicist experiences of pre-modern and modern periods. Designing in historical or non-historical environments, direct and indirect uses of historical elements, historical references of the building elements, different uses of post-modern historicism in different types of buildings and meaning of Post-Modern historicist architecture in Turkey is examined in this study by means of examples.

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1. Introduction

Historicism, in general terms, is defined as “any approach which assumes that there is an inevitable course to human history, and insists that the individuals must submit themselves to that course”. In arts and architecture, a building or artwork which imitates the past styles is described as historicist [1]. Initial use of the term “historismus” in 1797 [2], puts forward the relation of it with modernity. Historicism in architecture emerges with different meanings and forms before, during and after modern architecture. It is the expression of contradictions of new conditions of 19th century modernity between seeking new forms and holding on well-known historical forms as it is the expression of identity during early and high periods of modern architecture. It is an opposition during post-modern period. It has a similar process in Turkey whilst post-modern architecture has a distinctive interpretation with different historic references and conditions specific to the country itself.

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The objective of this work is to put forward: specific features of post-modern historicist approaches in Turkey in terms of direct or indirect use of historical styles; relationship with historical and unhistorical environment; and historical references by means of analysing chosen examples.

2. Post-Modern Historicist Architecture

“Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture” by Robert Venturi and “L’Architettura della Città” by Aldo Rossi, both published in 1966, started a new period in history of architecture questioning the abstract language of modern architecture and defending cultural symbolism [3]. Venturi revived historicism once more again as his purpose was to bring back into the collective memory the architectural canons that had proved valid for many centuries [4]. Rossi used primary rational geometric forms similar to their historical uses depending on the idea that ordinary people did not understand the abstract expression of modern art [5].

Post-Modernism is the movement which uses and rebuilds historical elements directly or indirectly, seeks an answer to the admiration and consumption norms of marginal groups, benefits and influences from whole contemporary knowledge and transforms to unique rhetoric of history and culture by its elite representatives [6]. Practisers of Post-Modern influence has interpretations in different ways. There are three different approaches in Post-Modernism in terms of historicist practises. They are “direct historicism” and “indirect historicism” [7].

“Direct historicism” is the approach which repeats the historical language in exactly the same way, without including any interpretation. It depends on the direct imitation of historic forms and elements as they are frozen [8]. This type of approach is usually used either to harmonize with the historic environment or to revive the old in historicist manner in an unhistorical environment. “Indirect historicism” is the approach which analyses the historical styles and synthetizes them avoiding from direct imitation. Historic forms and elements are transformed with a mannerist manner in this approach. Mannerist transformations in indirect historicism are influenced by means of “humour” in the third approach [7].

3. Post-Modern Historicism in Turkey

Post-Modernism has taken place in expanding pluralist spectrum occurred with political, economic and socio-cultural circumstances in Turkey by 1980s as it has arisen with critics of modernism in the Western World in 1960s. Globalization, liberal economy, consumption culture, migration from rural areas to the cities and cultural degeneration formed the settings of Post-Modern culture. Post-Modern historicism in Turkey has occurred as a question of architectural and urban identity which referred to either regionalist, nationalist and religious styles, or identities of other cultures for the sake of contemporary and unique designs [9].

Post-Modern historicist approaches in Turkey are mostly practiced at the prestige buildings of private sector, tourism facility buildings and housing designs. Private institutions requested historicist designs in addition to their features such as being the big, the high and the shiny to be effective with noticeable and unique designs [10]. Post-Modern historicist designs of tourism buildings offered fantastic decorations for the ordinary tourists as an instrument of consumption without transforming their references of inspiration. Housing practices of Post-Modern historicism have been designed with historicist or regionalist elements on facades different from the original periods of the building envelopes. Some of the housing designs for high income groups have images of both Eastern and Western cultures by 1990s [9].

4. Case Study

In this study, 30 Post-Modern historicist examples have been chosen and examined. These examples have been classified according to the classification of historicism explained in the third chapter. Additional classifications have also been included while examining the buildings. By this context, names, architects, years and cities of the buildings; direct or indirect use of Post-Modern historicism on these buildings; location of the buildings by means of historic or unhistorical environments; and their historical references have been established as the titles of these classifications (Table 1).

Table 1. Use environment and reference of examined post-modern historicist buildings in Turkey.

Building	Use of Post-modern historicism	Environment of location	Historical reference
Yapi Kredi Bank Osmanbey Branch (Neset-Saziment Arolat, 1979, Istanbul)	Indirect	Historic environment (19 th Century Eclectic)	Ancient Greek, Roman, Neoclassical
Kervansaray Hotel (Saziment-Neset-Emre Arolat 1983-88, Bursa)	Indirect	Historic environment (Ottoman Bath-12 th C)	Seljuk, Ottoman
Kastelli Houses (1986) (Figure 1)	Direct	Historic environment (Late Ottoman pavilion)	Neoclassical
Reklamevi Building (Haydar Karabey, 1986-87, Istanbul)	Indirect, Humorous	Historic environment (19 th Century Eclectic)	Ancient Greek
Andas Bazaar (Merih-Nuran Karaaslan, 1989, Ankara)	Indirect	Non-historic environment	Anatolian architecture from Ancient to Ottoman
Altunizade Mesa Housing Settlement (A. Kazmaoglu, M. Cilingiroglu, 1988, Istanbul)	Indirect	Non-historic environment	Traditional Turkish houses
Garanti Bank Headquarters Building (Arolat Architecture, 1989-collapsed 2009, Ist.)	Indirect	Non-historic environment	Egypt, Ancient Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Ottoman
Klassis Resort Hotel (Sefik Birkiye, 1989, Silivri, Istanbul)	Direct, Indirect	Non-historic environment	Ancient Greek, Roman, Renaissance, Baroque, Ottoman, First Nationalist Arch.
Yuksek Ihtisas Hospital (Semra-Özcan Uygur 1988-90, Ankara)	Indirect	Non-historic environment	Global historical elements and materials
Eryaman Houses (Tuncay Çavdar, Ankara)	Indirect	Non-historic environment	Traditional Turkish houses
Shell Headquarters Building (N. Sayin, G. Avcioglu, 1991, Istanbul)	Indirect	Historic environment (Ottoman)	Roman, Byzantine, Ottoman
Ulusoy Kemer Holiday Club (Birlesmis Mimarlar-United Architects, 1991, Antalya)	Indirect	Non-historic environment	Traditional Turkish houses
Hotel Richmond (Hasan Ozcan, 1991, Istanbul)	Direct	Historic environment (19 th Century Eclectic)	Neo-Baroque
Spring Giz (Can Elgiz, 1990-92, Istanbul)	Indirect	Non-historic environment	Post-modern masterpiece
Hyatt Regency Hotel Taksim (Weidleplan GMBH, 1991-94, Istanbul) (Figure 2)	Indirect	Historic environment (Neoclassical)	Seljuk, Ottoman
Mercan Houses (Behruz-Altug Cinici, 1993-95, Istanbul)	Indirect	Non-historic environment	Seljuk, Ottoman
Kalsin Business Center (T. Yamamoto, G. Altuğ, 1995, Istanbul)	Indirect	Non-historic environment	Japanese architecture, Turkish Bath
Sapanca Seven Houses (Mars Architects, 1997, Sakarya)	Indirect	Non-historic environment	Local Traditional houses
EGS (Yalcin-Burak Saglikova, 1998-2000, Istanbul)	Indirect	Non-historic environment	Egypt, Roman
Irmak High School (Nevzat Sayin, 1999, Istanbul)	Indirect	Historic environment (Late Ottoman pavilion)	Byzantine, Ottoman
Sabancı University (CANNON, 1999)	Indirect	Non-historic environment	Ottoman

Table 1 - continue			
Building	Use of Post-modern historicism	Environment of location	Historical reference
Bank Ekspres Building (Sandy and Babcock International, 1999, Istanbul)	Indirect	Non-historic environment	Chicago School, Art Deco
Sabah News & Atv Studios (Mehmet Konuralp, 1999-2000, Istanbul)	Indirect	Historic environment (19th Century Eclectic)	Neoclassical, Neo-Baroque
WOW Topkapi Palace (Hasan Sokmen, 1999, Antalya)	Direct	Non-historic environment	Topkapi Palace architecture
WOW Kremlin Palace (Hasan Sokmen, 2002, Antalya)	Direct	Non-historic environment	Kremlin Palace architecture
Venezia Palace Deluxe Resort Hotel (Hasan Sokmen, 2003, Antalya)	Direct	Non-historic environment	Venice architecture
Mardan Palace Hotel (Hasan Sokmen 2008, Antalya)	Direct	Non-historic environment	Neoclassical, Neo-Baroque, Empire
Alacati Tas Evler (Cenker Illeez, 2006, Izmir)	Direct	Historic environment (Aegean regional)	Regional architecture
Bosphorus City (Evrenol Architects, 2007, Istanbul)	Direct	Non-historic environment	Traditional Turkish houses
Mimar Sinan Mosque (Muharrem Hilmi Şenalp, 2012, Istanbul)	Direct	Non-historic environment	Ottoman
Tuscan Valley (JZMK Partners, AE Architects, 2015, Istanbul)	Direct	Non-historic environment	Tuscan architecture

9 Business, 9 tourisms, 8 housing, 2 education, 1 shopping, 1 health, 1 religious buildings or settlements have been analysed in this study (Figure 1, Figure 2). 18 of 30 buildings are indirect examples while 10 are direct, one both direct and indirect one is indirect humorous. 9 of the examples are in historic environment. Historical references are Ancient Greek and Roman, Egypt, Renaissance, Baroque, Neoclassic, Chicago School, Art Deco, architecture of different European regions (Russia, Venice, Tuscan), architecture of distant cultures (Far-East, America), pioneering Post-modern historicist buildings, ancient civilizations of Anatolia, Byzantine, Seljuk, Ottoman, First and Second Nationalist Architectural periods and local regional architecture.



Fig. 1. Kastelli Houses.



Fig. 2. Hyatt Regency Hotel Taksim.

5. Results and Discussions

As Post-Modern historicist examples in Turkey are examined, it is determined that there are some specific features in the context of direct or indirect use of Post-Modern historicism, location of the buildings by means of historic or Non-historical environments and their historical references. Results of the table have been interpreted by cross evaluation.

These features can be summarized as below:

- “Direct or indirect use of Post-Modern historicism” and “location of the buildings”: direct use of Post-Modern historicism in historic environments is practised to harmonise with historic environments or as part of restoration projects. Although direct and indirect examples are located in both historic and Non-historical environments, it is seen that indirect use of Post-Modern historicism is more common in historic environments. Both direct and indirect use of Post-Modern historicist elements can be seen in Non-historical environments.
- “Direct or indirect use of Post-Modern historicism” and “historical references”: It is examined that various historical references are used without exception for both direct and indirect use of Post-Modern historicism.
- “Location of the buildings” and “historical references”: In historic environments, there are different approaches about the use of historic references. The reference is mostly the historic environment the building is in. It is remarkable that there are examples which other historical references have been used different from existing historical environments. In Non-historical environments, it is seen that a wider range of historical references have been used. Direct imitation of a significant historical building, another historicist or pioneering post-modern historicist building and eclectic use of elements of different historical styles are the distinct approaches. It is also seen that foreign architects referred to the historical elements of their own cultures.

6. Conclusions

Post-Modern historicist architecture of Turkey has some specific features while having some common features with the rest of the world. Indirect use of Post-Modern historicism is a common manner in historic environments. Both direct and indirect use of Post-Modern historic references can be seen in Non-historical environments. In historic environments, the reference is mostly the historic environments the building is in. Historical references have been used more freely in Non-historical environments. Various historical references are used without exception for both direct and indirect use of Post-Modern historicism. It has a variety different than other countries added with nationalist movements and local and regional architectural references.

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