

The role of political power and ideology in the formation of city aesthetics in the Turkish and Central Volga Regions in the 18th and 19th centuries

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This study aims at examining the reflection of political power and ideology into the formation of cities- that is say, the formation of city aesthetics- in Turkey and in central Volga region with dense Tartar population, both of which are within European cultural region. It is probable to see certain similarities between the life styles of the two communities, which have been fed by the same cultural sources. Therefore, the similarities and differences between the settlement locations of both communities will provide effective data for potential comparative studies.

The cities chosen for the comparative study of the two communities, which are the subject matter of the research, are Kazan- the capital city of Tataristan, Istanbul- the capital city of the Ottoman Empire, and Ankara- the capital city of Turkish Republic. However, some other cities from both communities are also occasionally included in the study so that exemplification might be more effective.

Throughout history it may be observed that city image is created mostly (or even only) by political institutions. When the city is handled as a human created object, everything that has been accumulated so far is considered to be the indicator of its improvement. Yet, political preferences may not be ignored here.

The aesthetic structure of a city, which may be regarded as the object of nature and the subject of culture, is composed of architecture. Monumental buildings firstly are the artistic buildings of a city at the same time. They are firstly described in those aspects and are the values stronger than memory and the environment. Ruling powers have benefited from art and architecture as an ideological vehicle for centuries. Thus, power has been reflected into locations both in city dimension and in the dimension of buildings.

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Since Anatolian cities have been exposed to continuous invasions for centuries, they have castle-city structure. Cities located in a fortified area generally near a running water has an internal castle where palace and administration center are present and an external castle in which trade and house fabric surrounding the internal castle. External walls surrounding city, and thus fabric of settlement are turned into city doors in places where ways providing connection with other cities are present. With the increase in population in time, city settlement started to surge out of city. In the historical process, Anatolian cities showed development according to the importance of geography in which they were located (reason such as being on the trade routs, being in a fortified place etc.). However, although this old city fabric in cities of our day (castle-city structure) was not been able to preserve their walls in many cities, they still continue their existence. Fundamentally, the basic element shaping Anatolian cities since Seljuks has been Friday Mosque (Cuma Câmî) of the cities. Seljuks constructed a Friday Mosque at first in the cities they settled after 1071 Malazgirt Victory. Each city had a Friday (Cuma) (grand) mosque. In Seljuks, Grand Mosque (Ulu Câmî) has two meanings for a city: firstly, it is a prayer place; secondly, it is the chairmanship council. Minbar of Grand Mosque is sent to cities by Islam khalif. In addition, names of khalif and sultan are commemorated in Friday khutba. For this reason, Grand Mosques have a political aspect. Grand mosques being the focal point of Seljuk cities comprise public areas for people in the cities with its internal and external courtyards. These mosques are the gathering places of community coming together for Friday prayer. Thus, there are not squares in cities of Anatolian Seljuks as in European cities. Gathering places of people is the backyards of grand mosques. Madrassas, education institutions are very near mosques. Külliyes are social complexes consisting of mosque, madrassa, bath and tomb, and serving for public. Trade and settlement units are present near these places. Other than grand mosques, neighborhood prayer rooms which are also prayer places are available in the city. These small mosques also have smaller backyards in comparison to grand mosques where neighborhood residents come together.

This city structure of Seljuks continues in Ottomans. Urban fabric is completely organic. Formation of streets is carried out in compliance with typography data. Dead end streets are very common. Houses' position in parcels is carried out in complete accordance with their functions. There are not any structure cutting light, sun and view of another structure. Development of city in such a way occurs naturally for the most part. Although there are not any legal liabilities originating from administration, each structure is remarkably respectful for another. There are not any restriction enforced by central administration in terms of architecture of structures such as how to make plan schemes of houses and their fronts. However, public buildings having an important role in public works of cities such as külliye are generally constructed by the order of sultans and/or high level public authorities. Since these structures are built by Hassa Architects Club which is responsible for general public works of the country, they comprise the architectural style of the Empire.

City of Istanbul had been the capital city of Ottoman Empire for almost 500 years from the date in which the city was taken from Byzantines in 1453 until 1920 when the Republic of Turkey was established. Home office of the country was transferred to Ankara with the proclamation of the republic. It goes without saying that Istanbul had never been a city only a single society lived in. According

to Henri Prost, the historical city is definitely a European City¹. Changes caused by city fires from the middle of 19th century turned Istanbul into a city constructed with buildings and houses built in western-style. Great streets, tramways, modern public buildings were already available in the city. Especially, Beyoğlu and its periphery known as Laventan region in which non-muslims lived was already a European city with its gridal urban fabric architecture and social life.

Ottoman authority' conventional attempts of "Modernization" of urban fabric which formed in Empire's capital city through centuries by taking west as the example can be dated back to Sultan III. Selim period (1789-1808). Although, the renovation movement started by III Selim aimed at revision of Janissaries and establishment of Nizam-ı Cedid army, this movement was spread to other fields of Empire in later periods. As a result of these initiatives increasingly continuing in Sultan II. Mahmud (1808-1839) period and especially in the years following the proclamation of Hatt-i Sharif (Tanzimat Fermanı) (1839), some urban changes were seen in Istanbul. However, in spite of a lot of activities such as opening of Beyazıt Square, broadening Divan Way, reconstruction of gaps in the city caused by fires with a geometric fabric, coming into force of Tunnel between Karaköy and Beyoğlu which is the first metro of city, turning Horse Square (At Meydanı) into park and arrangement of some new parks, until Republic period, city was not subjected to a integrated planning with its center and periphery. In fact, this situation is not an application unique to Istanbul, capital city of Ottoman Empire. It not possible to mention urban planning put into effect by Empire and applied in other Anatolian cities out of Istanbul located in rural areas.

Westernization movements started in Istanbul caused some kind of movements in other cities always taking Istanbul as an example. Public structures (such as government offices, schools etc.) imitating European architecture were constructed also in Anatolian cities other than Istanbul.

Kazan which is the capital city of Tatarstan today was the capital city of Khanate of Kazan in the middle age in VII century. City was annexed into Russian territory in XVI century by Russian Tsar IV. Ivan. Later, Tatar population was evacuated out of city and they settled in the coasts of Kaban Lake near Kazan. Two settlements were integrated after developing between XVIII and XIX century. Development of Tatar and Russian cultures continued in the integrated city. However, Russian culture taking its power from force exercised control over Tatar culture in some fields. In XVIII and XIX centuries, Russian influence dominated formation of the city. In XVIII century Tsar I Peter stated great reforms, thus city and its architecture were reconstructed with these westernization reforms.

City plan of Kazan having gridal system and taking European city model as example was verified in 1768. Thus, a gridal city fabric which never corresponded to organic fabric was envisaged upon organic fabric. In fact, dating from XVIII century, new city fabric and architecture were applied in many Russian cities by ignoring old organic fabric with the will of political power. Cities were formed according to the new plan, architecture of constructed buildings were constructed in compliance with structure plans and frontal arrangements sent from central administration.

¹ Pierre Pinon, "The Urbanism of Henri Prost and the Transformations of Istanbul", From the Imperial Capital to the Republican Modern City: Henri Prost's Planning of Istanbul (1936-1951), Istanbul, 2010, 73.p.

In Anatolia, however, in XVIII century, there was not a city formed by the will of central administration, whose plans were verified officially and formed according to these series of events. Nevertheless, new structuring triggered by westernization movements was formed in the periphery of city fabric, not upon old organic city fabric. Old and new fabrics integrated sometimes. Castle-city structure explained above are generally located on heights as in cities of Ankara, Bursa and Harput because of their typographic structures and perceived as crowns of cities. Town located and developing near it is referred to as **New Town** in most Anatolian cities. However, this created the dilemma of old city-new city in our cities.

Ankara, the capital city of Turkey, had a ratified modern City Plan only in 1929. Efforts of new administration to create a contemporary capital city have opened architectural activities in Ankara to foreign architects beginning from 1926-1927. Especially, some of the architects running away from Nazi Germany came to Turkey. The enthusiasm to be opened towards in terms of application and professional education also dominated in architecture as in all fields. The First National Architecture Movement continuing since Constitutional Monarchy will die down and give its place to a new movement lead by European Architects².

According to Jansen Plan which was verified in 1932 and envisaged a housing development, without interfering in Old Ankara too much, behind Yenışehir Kavaklıdere where civil servants live, Tandoğan, Bahçelievler axis and Cebeci defined as east and west points were designed as worker neighborhoods. This approach envisaging the formation of green axis passing across the city in east-west direction had the objective of developing Ankara into a garden city or a beautiful city with a middle-low density. The first constructed public buildings had the characteristics of both conventionalism and modernism. It is seen that while foreign architects applied modern architecture, Turkish architects followed a more conventional line with the effect of I. National Architecture Movement.

Kazan, the capital city of Tataristan today, was the capital city of Kazan Khanate in the Middle Age in the 7th century. The city was annexed to Russia in the 16th century by Ivan the Russian Tsar. However, the Russian culture, which owed its strength to political power, influenced Tartar culture in several fields. Tsar Peter I performed great reforms in the 18th century, and the city and its architecture were re- shaped through those westernization reforms.

The XVIII-th century in Russia began with the Peter I the Great reforms and passed through under the sign of the common and manifold Europeanization. First of all this process has concerned the town planning and architecture. The authorities intruded the principles of regularity with resoluteness and wide range always distinguishing the Russian administrators.

Regularity has meant laying out the geometrically correct net of straight and wide streets and the conformance of their red lines by carrying out the houses and other erections the fences and gates included. The architectural expression of the regularity meant the monotonous and European stile of buildings and giving all them the stone view. To that effect there has been sent about the specially worked books of samples ratified by the emperor. The residents were

² G. Tankut, *Bir Başkentinin Omarı* Ankara: (1929-1939), Ankara, 1993, p.101.

obligated to use these facades on construction. Peter's innovations did not extend further the capitals – Moscow and Saint Petersburg inter his vivos. Europeanization of the majority of the Russian provincial cities began only in the reign of Catherine the Second.

The regular plan of Kazan was ratified in 1768. And at the end of the XVIII-th century the city evolved from the Middle Ages into the epoch of New time. The chaos of curved streets of the old city gave place to the regular system of streets and squares. But the squire was habitual planning element for the Russians because the church stood about it while the Muslim tradition did not know squares except market places. And so a new Yonusov squire appeared according to the regular plan was built up with dwelling houses and it has never been used as a public space³.

The essential departures from the administrative directions took place during the realization of the regular plan. The departures during the process of regulating were not great but expressive. Contrary to the approved plan there were saved the some irregular streets of the old Tatar sloboda which had the importance for Tatars. First of all it was the main street on which two stone mosques were situated. And just here the houses of the rich merchants were settled. According to the tradition the mosques were situated at the intersections of the main street and the lanes, and these lanes were also left and straightened.

The Europeanization of the buildings proceeded the most painfully. The Tatar traditional planning corresponded with the Muslim way of life. The inner space of the homestead was fenced of the street by means of household erections and the house was situated in the heart of it. According to the new rules the house had to be carried out on the line of the street, and just this caused the people's resistance. And as a result of legislative norms and ancient traditions struggle the compromise planning decisions appeared. As before the house was hidden at the mid-portion while the erections of housewifery has being placed along the red line of the streets⁴.

But on the whole the building up of the farms corresponded to the legislative demands and the Tatar blocks in the XIXth century slightly differed externally from the Russian parts of the city.

Kazan authorities had to report about the number of buildings and even fences built by one or another sample.

In a general sense transition to the eclectic architecture expressed the confession of private life's relative independence from the state directions. This confession was especially important for Kazan because the private life of the part of it's population was based on the Islam principles. Thus the Tatar and the Russians used the same sample facades because they were obligative⁵.

Consequently the Kazan samples represented the original form of adaptation of state norms to the local conditions being the reflection of the social order and

3 Nugmanova, G. "Russian Architectural Ideology Of The XVIII-XIX-Th Centuries And Muslim Tradition" In Kazan, Kazan, 2007, p. 1-2.

4 Nugmanova, G. *ibid*, p. 2-3.

5 Nugmanova, G. *ibid*, p. 4.

not the national one. The peculiarities of the Muslim organization of life space were taking into consideration by means of planning.

The ideas of the main properties of the Space and Time, the dwelling as a refuge, the own territory where everybody creates his own way of life invisible for outsiders and independently of neighbors are common. Talking about the differences one can analyse the different degree of demonstration of the same features, the difference in way of life and worship only but not the difference in psychological archetypes. Therefore the difference in dwelling architecture of Russians and Tatars of that time is slight and hardly perceptible. The differences are the following.

First of all it is the tendency to settle compactly and apart. This purpose was mostly achieved in the Tatar sloboda. Just therefore the rich and patriarchal Tatar families preferred it. For example, in 1840-1841 almost all Tatar merchants lived in Tatar sloboda. At the same time the Tatar population nearby the Russian Sennaya squire consisted of bourgeois.

The following peculiarity of the Tatar dwelling conception is the tendency to hide the family life as much as possible. It is clear that such aspiration was typical for other nations but it was expressed to a greater extent in Tatars.

Both of these peculiarities did not lead to any architectural consequences. They could be realized in those architectural forms that were suggested by the Russian authorities. Therefore the Russian and The Tatar areas of the city were analogous. The differences concerned not the architectural forms but planning of the plot and the house⁶.

Indeed, considerable westernisation movements were available in both the cities of central Volga region with intense Tartar population and in Anatolian cities selected for exemplification from the 18th to the 20th century. While the formation in Russia was performed via the control of political authority and with force by disregarding the previous city texture, the formation in Turkey was conducted without much forcing, by respecting the previous city texture and not by disregarding it. Moreover, as in the case of Ankara, the height of the buildings surrounding the citadel and its environment was restricted in order not to prevent view of the area from the city through the approved city plan.

⁶ Nugmanova, G., *ibid*, p. 5.

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