

THE ECONOMY POLITICS OF MODERN INTERIORS IN TURKEY: THROUGH MATERIAL USAGE EXAMINATION

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ABSTRACT

This research is based on the economy politics of modern interiors in Turkey through the lens of material usage in the architectural realm by examining magazines. "Economy politics" is a term that refers to the field of interdisciplinary and economic factors and political policy that creates a group of relationships. The term and field itself are influenced by political decisions and economic systems. In terms of understanding the economic principles such as production, distribution and consumption processes is fundamental to comprehend the economy in general. For the field of the built environment and modern interiors, economy politics examines the interplay between economic principles, such as building materials typologies, new production methodologies, distribution ideologies, and services. This is another political process that shapes an inner economic value, regulation, and outcome. With the help of this study, modern interiors and built environment, in general, are the influencers of market dynamics, design values in terms of spatial context, and societal values. In addition, needs and tendencies can become readable material in chronological order which can not be found in the historical context. By examining these sources, one can understand how modern interiors have influenced market dynamics, design values within spatial contexts, and societal values. The study of historical periodicals allows for a chronological understanding of the evolving needs and tendencies of the time. This information provides valuable material to comprehend the development of modern interiors and the broader built environment within the specific historical context.

Keywords: Economy Politics, Modern Interiors, Early Republican Era, Materials, Building Materials.

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TÜRKİYE'DE MODERN İÇ MEKÂNIN EKONOMİ POLİTİĞİ: MALZEME KULLANIMI ÜZERİNDEN BİR İNCELEME

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ÖZET

Bu araştırma, Türkiye'deki modern iç mekânların ekonomi politikğine, mimarlık ortamındaki malzeme kullanımını inceleyerek odaklanmaktadır. "Ekonomi politik", disiplinler arası ve ekonomik faktörlerden beslenen ilişkiler grubu temsili bir terim olarak kabul edilebilir. Politik kararlar ve ekonomik sistemler bu kavramsal çerçevenin belirleyici etkenleridir. Üretim, dağıtım ve tüketim süreçleri gibi ekonomik prensipleri anlamak, genel olarak ekonomiyi kavramak için temel öneme sahiptir. Yapı üretim ortamı ve modern iç mekânlar da temel ekonomik bileşenlerle doğrudan ilintilidir. Malzemelerin ekonomi politikği, ekonomik prensipler ile malzeme tipolojilerinin tüketim normları, yeni üretim metodolojileri, dağıtım ideolojileri ve hizmetler arasındaki etkileşimi incelemektedir. Ekonomik değerler bütünü, düzenlemeleriyle birlikte yeni yaklaşımları şekillendiren başka bir politik süreçtir. Bu çalışma, modern iç mekânlar ve yapılı çevrenin ekonomik belirleyicilerinin anlaşılabilmesi amacıyla gerçekleştirilmiş, mekânsal bağlamda tasarım değerlerinin ve toplumsal değerlerin belirleyicisi olan ekonomi politikği değerlendirmektedir. Yapısal ihtiyaçlar ve eğilimler, tarihsel bağlamda bulunamayan, kronolojik sırayla okunabilir bir kaynak olarak bu çalışmayı oluşturmaktadır. Kaynak incelemesi ile modern iç mekânın belirleyici malzemeler, mekânsal bağlamdaki tasarım değeri ve toplumsal değerler içerisindeki dönüşüm süreci kapsamda yer almaktadır. Çalışmada süreli yayınlar incelenmiş, gelişen ihtiyaçların ve eğilimlerinin kronolojik olarak anlaşılması olanaklı hale gelmiştir. Bütüncül veriler ışığında bu araştırma, modern iç mekânların ve yapılı çevrenin tarihsel bağlam içindeki gelişimini anlamak ve kaynak oluşturmak yönünde literatüre katkı sağlar.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ekonomi Politik, Modern İç Mekân, Erken Cumhuriyet Dönemi, Yapı Malzemeleri.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The study aims to analyze this process as a whole, the data about a type of material, written/visual document which gives the information and suggestion of usage, and the manufacturer/distributor who brought to the country through architectural magazines. Thus, the holistic knowledge of the era can hint at the era's common materiality tendencies, limitations, and socio-political aspects. The data analysis contains three major explorative headlines and assigns an additional perspective to modern interiors that refers to economic factors, political ideologies, and societal values.

In the study, while the beginning of the Early Republican Period is discussed intensively, the political, cultural and technological developments that changed towards the 1980s. Within the scope of the study, specially selected examples from written and visual materials were focused on in order to understand the common preferences of individuals and actors who produce architecture. The governmental policies are also related to the construction parameters directly likewise to the urban realm. In the urban realm, modern interiors and built environments themselves are representative elements of the nation of the heart and political ideology. This is not an ending process in momentum that they are generating each other, giving feedback endlessly. Similarly, construction strategies and material possibilities are constantly evolving. Therefore, each material experience in the built environment means adding a new layer to the existing one and requires an economic expansion for the construction industry.

The construction industry and material usage are dependent on the economic factors that need investment, and import/export policies. In the Early Republican Era, these conditions were so limited due to the local and global cold war and economic situations. The limitation of market demand and the construction industry's capabilities in the Early Republican Era in Turkey were a conclusion of a lack of technical expertise and infrastructure, and limited access to new materials. This data is collected by the help of periodicals such as *Arkitekt* and *Mimarlık*. These periodicals cover a wide range of topics including opinions, advertisements, and interviews with prominent architects, and provide knowledge of mainstream design, and materiality approaches were held both local and global scale.

'Economic politics' (Feldman, 1982) typically refers to the intersected field of economic policies and political decisions. That is also referring to governmental, political or decision makers. Economic politics is also a term that can be assumed to formulate and implement various policies that impact a local economic structure, performance-based distributed sources. It covers a range of issues, including taxation, governmental income and outcome, trade policies, and social welfare. For Karl Marx (Çev. Selik, 2015), the term is an economic science, that involves investigating production dynamics in a bourgeois society. Local scale economic policies are generally sharing a common interest such as economic growth, decreasing unemployment, controlling inflation and income inequality. Governments use economic policies to achieve various goals, such as promoting economic growth, reducing unemployment, controlling inflation, and addressing income inequality. The decisions made in economic politics can have profound effects on construction industry and material usage. In Turkey, During the Early Republican Era, these dynamics were significantly constrained by the global cold war and economic conditions, limiting both market demand and the capabilities of the construction industry. The restrictions were a result of a lack of technical expertise, insufficient infrastructure, and restricted access to new materials. This

information is derived from a variety of visual and written sources, including periodicals, photographs, and ephemera. The data contributes to a comprehensive understanding of diverse topics, encompassing opinions, advertisements, and interviews with prominent architects. This approach not only enriches the discourse on mainstream design but also provides insights into materiality approaches on both local and global scales.

In the early years of the Republican Era, figurative and literal steps were taken. Especially, structural development was coming to the fore as an ideal capital city establishment with Ankara. Despite the challenges of economic growth and stability an urban development strategy and idea was emerged and initiated. In contrast to the traditional structural background and initiation includes outnumbered foreign architects and less numbers of local architects were actors in the action. According to materiality, this structural realm can be defined as an institutional process shaped by the dynamics of being a country that had passed through a war. In this context, the 1930s architectural environment was directly affected by new management and systemic foundation and their aspects.

The architectural environment and production methodologies are also dependent on the import possibilities and industrialization of the goods. Through a modernization process of the architectural environment, a modernized industry was prominent and mandatory. In terms of the realization of the building materials industry, there was one step that the new Government implemented that needed to. The legislation of 'Teşvik-i Sanayi Kanunu' was continued fifteen years after its implementation¹. That law focused on the idea of land providing and enhancing the idea of new establishments. Thus, the governmental authority had also provided tax exemption for some of the structural, building materials. For instance, there was no import tax charged for materials that were not produced at all or at a minimum level in the country. About the period Prof. Afife Batur had quite explorative ideas by examining one of the important actors of the Era (Batur, 2003) . With her monographic book 'Kimliğinin İzinde bir Mimar', she aimed to avoid clichéd generalizing architectural history discourses and to address the architect's production conditions and production styles. That monographic approach intends to clarify the era's production methodology in detail as well. Thus an interconnection of narrative and the architect's personality, works, and building concepts became tangible pieces of evidence. In that sense, Batur mentioned actor's material usage by considering their technologies, and construction organizations

2. 1926-1928: INITIATIVE PERIOD OF FACTORIES

In 1925, Sanayi ve Maadin Bankası, Industry and Mines Bank of Turkey was established. The great importance here was either operating factories but also providing loans to them. In addition, the structural industry was also affected by private initiatives and local producers. As a result of these institutional developments, the first private initiatives for the construction materials industry emerged in the Republic era in 1926. Among the most significant initiatives were the establishment of the Kurt Cement Factory, Bakırköy Cements Inc. in Istanbul, and the Ankara Cement Factory, in 1928, the Magnesite Brick Factory in Konya, as an initiative of Turkish Cements Inc. can be highlighted.

¹ According to the legal documents 28th May 1927, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk contributed and spread the enlightened idea of economic growth for that period.

From 1923 to 1930, in terms of external economic relations, there wasn't a holistic approach to empower industrialization primarily based on the Treaty of Lausanne. Custom and trade policies were held and yet they weren't put in a protective position. The visual sources lead to the information that in the building materials sector, foreign credits remained very limited. As seen in a decade, a continuous trade deficit existed. Due to conditions that complicate the management of an independent foreign trade policy, imports have not been fully brought under control. According to the results revealed by a study, during the years 1920-1930, foreign capital constituted 75% of the total paid-up capital of joint-stock companies established in that period (Demirer, 2007). Private foreign capital investments, primarily in sectors such as mining, sequentially contribute to the formation of cement, food, textiles, and monopoly materials. The prevailing belief until now was that there was a significant reaction against private foreign capital in the early years of the Republic's establishment. However, the actual development did not follow this pattern.

Foreign capital was generally welcomed for various reasons. Between 1923 and 1930, the foreign capital that entered the country came primarily from Germany, France, England, Italy, and the Netherlands. As seen, the network of companies in operation, especially in sectors like mining, cement, food, textiles, and monopolies, has become increasingly concentrated. One can make a general assessment of the period in terms of external economic relations, the weight of foreign trade has been dominated by Western European nations. Particularly due to the conditions outlined in the Treaty of Lausanne, foreign trade could not be fully brought under control. Private foreign capital has also been actively involved on a large scale. As a result of the failure to make the necessary investments in the industrial sector, the country found itself in a situation where it was exporting raw materials and agricultural products to Western European countries.

3. 1930'S: STARTING AN INWARD ECONOMY

Approaching the 1930s, one can observe an increasing weight on foreign trade, particularly in various minerals. Firstly, privileges granted in the Treaty of Lausanne until 1929 were being abolished (Özkardeş, 2015). As a result for one decade, it was likely to see some customs and restriction regulations on imports. Structural demands have been raised, especially since traders have increased their import possibilities. For that reason and the demand rate, there was a growing trade deficit. On the other hand the 'Great Depression' years were a shock for global scale. Local currency had also significantly decreased. That might cause a fosterization of the idea of local development.

With the expiration of the provisions of the Treaty of Lausanne, customs duties were increased (Gordon, 1928). This increase aimed to enhance the protection of the industry against external factors. It is essential to evaluate the developments in Turkey during the 1930's from this perspective. The Year of 1931, In the Arkitekt Magasine, Architect Macar Oğlu Sami was discussing the activity of 'designing' and the conditions of production, criticisms of why local architects cannot 'establish good work,' stating that employers turn to contractors and prioritize cheap labor. Additionally, it is mentioned that architects are constrained in the context of design².

² It is contextually understood from the original text that.

4. 1933-1940: INDUSTRIAL PLANNING APPROACHES AND LOCAL AWAKENING

In response to the devastating effects of 'Great Depression', Turkey emerged the idea of a statist economic policy. That policy was about planning the economy within its sources which belongs directly to the Government, state itself. As a governmental intervention to the periods' economic conditions, the First Five Year Industrial Plan implemented. That was a program that was adapted from the Soviet Union financial program (Özder, 2017). Especially, previous efforts about financing, leasing, and operating activities related to the factories gained loads of strength. Large-scale textile factories in Kayseri and Nazilli were the interface of brilliant initiatives, in Sümerbank. Paşabahçe was another initiative that made history related with modern interiors. From the perspective of building sources, producers a series of investments were realized under the headline of construction. During the First Five-Year Industrial Program, a general assessment can be done. A positive balance has emerged in foreign trade, and the importation of consumer goods has decreased.

This could also mean that there is a gradual increase in the mobilization of materials needed for interior space or construction or local producers. As the Second World War approached, one might observe a shift in foreign economic relations towards Western Europe once again. Aiming to minimize the effects of the Great Depression that emerged in 1929 and implementing protectionist and inward-looking policies that would continue until the war years, these policies, in alignment with the tendencies of the architectural environment of the time and the Republican ideology, also brought significant developments in construction activity.

With the war period, domestic policies regarding structural materials and development strategies were changed and the industrial program was disrupted. This situation, led to challenges for the building materials industry, which began to rely on imports again. Between 1939 and the beginning of the 1940's, the import of construction materials due to the war and the inability of existing factories to obtain spare parts, coal, etc., led to the industry facing very difficult conditions and intermittent production.

Despite efforts to establish a national industry under interventionist policies, and the establishment of new factories and facilities, the construction activities and the required construction materials in the 1930s could not be met a fulfillment of expected local production. Designing the interior space and the firms in the field of spatial design and furniture during that period mostly come from Levantine-origin families. 1940's written statements about architectural realm and productions, Architect Sedat Hakkı Eldem's quote about the period was so important. The text's headline is 'Towards A Vernacular Architecture'. It can be understood from the text that sufficiency in economics is a part of the fundamental component of the life source of architectural production too (Eldem, 1940).

The general policy of the country It must be stated immediately that in recent years, the principle of "self-sufficiency" has rightfully taken a significant place in every branch of our activities. Based on this principle, we pay particular attention to the use of local materials for various needs. When economic reasons and obstacles exist, it is quite natural to resort to foreign countries. However, despite this, such applications are more likely to occur in certain branches, such as the needs for machinery and heavy industrial materials. These materials are either of a special nature (Special)

or cannot be produced as they are not included in our industrial program, so they are imported from abroad...

It has played an active role in many changing periods for the local development. The way to local development is through education. Some of these can be mentioned as the opening of Village Institutes and the initiation of an active intellectual process by local architects and interior designers in the field of design.

5. EDUCATIONAL BASIS AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT PERIOD

The establishment of the Decoration Department within the School of Industrial Fine Arts which was located in İstanbul in 1914 marked a significant milestone in the advancement of modern interior design and furniture design. The roots of the educational era emerged in 1882. Since then, the institution, which primarily provided education to boys, later started to provide education to girls as well. This development occurred amidst the school's reorganization efforts, which were aligned with the early Republic's push for Westernization and modernization, following a period of dormancy due to the impact of the war. In 1924, the school underwent a name change to the State Academy of Fine Arts, and a new branch called 'Dahili Tezyinat' was established under the Decoration Department. This branch was later renamed 'Dahili Mimari' in 1929 and was led by Philip Ginther, an Austrian immigrant. Ginther played a pivotal role in training numerous students with a Western design approach until 1937. Notably, one of the standout students during Ginther's tenure was Decorator Nizami Bey (Yaver). In 1932, an article titled 'Dahili Mimari' was published in the Arkitekt magazine, showcasing the projects undertaken by Nizami Bey, who had been sent to Paris for training by the Academy four years prior. The modernization efforts of the academy are often attributed to the presence of foreign faculty members, with the year 1933 being particularly significant due to socio-political developments in Germany. The dismissal of faculty members under the National Socialist regime and their subsequent invitation to the academy are seen as new educational opportunities in the literature. These developments are closely intertwined with a series of movements that reflect the ideological framework of the early Republic Period and its essence for Westernization.

Leopold Levy (Department of Painting), Rudolf Belling (Department of Sculpture), Ernst Egli, Robert Vorthözer (Architecture), Phillip Ginther, and Louis Sue (Decorative Arts) are recognized as pioneers in providing educational opportunities at the academy. In the latter half of the 19th century, their contributions played a crucial role in shaping the academy's educational landscape. Selahattin Refik Bey gained recognition and praise for his interior and furniture designs in the new institutions as part of the nationalization movement that began with the proclamation of the Republic (Tosun, Özsu, 2014). Thus, he became one of the sought-after designers for the aristocratic class of İstanbul. It can be assumed that Refik's furniture store, situated on Anafartalar Avenue, in Capital, Ankara which became the daily shopping center with the majority of stores located there, played a significant role in this context. In terms of due to mid 1950's, he designed and worked a lot of interior projects. Such As, The Office Space of Atatürk's, İş Bankası Head Quarter and etc. Not only one but many of them arose during that decade. In the literature some of them could not be seen with their works. Localised furniture producers appeared and centered in some regional areas.

During the early 1950s, there were three or four furniture makers in İnegöl. The most famous among them was Mehmet Güryıldız. Mehmet Güryıldız was born in Mostar (Yugoslavia) in 1903. At the age of 20, he moved to İnegöl in 1923 along with his brother Ahmet and other family members and settled there. He specialized in custom-made furniture (Kahraman, 2018). People from Istanbul and Bursa would come, place orders, and wait for more than a year. That means the untold stories were also found through researchs. These recordings are important because they contributed and educated many of the craftsmanship at that period. Especially in the field of wooden craftsmanship, the techniques are unique. These techniques were continue in that localized origins and transferred to the carpenter to carpenter. The wooden panelling systems, the type of the technique of varnishing is so specific to that period, and it belongs to the masters of the time to such an extent that in that era, there were few regions and producers where such products could be obtained. In visual archives, the materiality and common usage of the materials can be seen and traced. The use of gomalak varnishing technique on wooden panels and chairs is a wonderful example of the craftsmanship and attention to detail during that era.

The other kind of interior component, surface implmentation was also the agenda at that period. During this period, the use of tiles and mosaics in interior spaces will begin with the formation of new firms. Surface implmentations which were really the fundamental of the quality of an interior space led a different and well knownd producer now, Gorbon İşil.

Rebii Gorbon was an important actor and he established a company with a group of architects and engineers in 1947 with the aim of developing the building materials sector. While there wasn't much information about the activities of this company, it is evident that Gorbon's ideas for the development of the materials sector predate the establishment of Gorbon Ceramics and encompass a dimension beyond modern ceramic design, focusing on the use of ceramics as a building material. Additionally, Gorbon's travels to study various ceramic facilities in Europe and his personal exhibition in 1956 at the Beyoğlu Olgunlaşma Enstitüsü Gallery highlight his interest in the production of art and ceramics (Yuzer, Cephaneçigil, 2021). The establishment of Gorbon Ceramics Factory in Levent in 1958, supported by the Industrial Development Bank, marks a significant step, particularly in the production ceramics.

In terms of education, the furniture production industry has made a unique contribution that has helped to differentiate the educational background of interior components. This contribution has led to the distinction between interior design and industrial design programs, which are now known by two different names.

In Turkey, the development of modern furniture design and production dates back to the period of 1950-1970. This phase was led by idealistic designers who studied and expanded through the sector from the Istanbul State Academy of Fine Arts. They adopted the craft-oriented production style of Bauhaus and emphasized the use of local materials within the limited material scope. In the early 1950s, three artists from the Academy, namely Sadi Öziş, İlhan Koman, and Şadi Çalık, started creating designing furniture using locally available materials. Due to limited sales of modern furniture, especially in Istanbul they had been constrained by financial difficulties. The initiative named as 'Kare Metal' due to their work with square sectioned metal profiles (Der. Şumnu, 2023).

6. CONCLUSION

In conjunction with the establishment of the Republic, the concept of modernization, which encompassed various aspects of society, culture, economy, and politics, brought about profound transformations in all spheres. The notion of transforming into an industrialized nation, which was at the core of this radical modernization endeavor, manifested itself most prominently in the realm of architectural production and cultural milieu. Consequently, cities throughout Anatolia, notably Ankara, witnessed the emergence of symbols of modernity such as industrial facilities, community centers, healthcare and educational structures, as well as contemporary residential complexes.

However, due to limited resources, the government could only allocate a small portion of these resources to the development of the building materials industry, thereby largely leaving this sector to private initiatives. During this period, as the existing industry proved inadequate and heavily reliant on imports, the private sector saw a surge in initiatives aimed at supporting local production and producers, facilitated by the Teşviki-i Sanayi Law.

Consequently, private initiatives became the most influential players in the building materials industry, exerting significant influence over the market. The effects of the liberal policies implemented in the mid-1940's, which replaced the statist policies of the 1930s, and the subsequent growth of the economy, markets, and imports, became tangible primarily in the 1950s, particularly in relation to the building materials industry and associated construction activities. Through this study, it endeavored to outline a comprehensive framework that extends up until the 1950's and shed a light to the prospect years ahead.

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