Understanding The Historic City*

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Özet:

Bu yazının konusu çağdaş bağlamdaki tarihsel kentin geleceğe ait tasarım sorununa yeni bir perspektif önermektir. Kent yapı çevresinin kompleks bir biçimi olarak mimarlık olgusunun ortasında yeralır. Yazının temasını oluşturan 'çağdaş bağlam' ve 'tarihsel kent' birbiriyle uzlaşmaz görünen temel olgulardır. Farklı sistemleri temsil eden bu iki kavram nesnel olarak da farklı yapıları tanımlar. Bu farklılık kentsel doku ve görünümde bir ikilik olarak ortaya çıkar. Bütünlüğünü ve giderek de mimarî kimliğini yitiren tarihsel kentin geleceği önemli bir tasarım problemidir aynı zamanda. Bu yazı tarihsel kente yapılacak her türlü müdahelede tasarım belirleyeninin kentin kendi içsel kuralları olması gerektiğini iddia eder ve bu kuralların keşfini sağlayacak bir yöntemin çerçevesini önerir.

Summary:

The primary aim of this paper is to develop a new perspective in the contemporary urban design problem of the historic city. It will argue that the city is not an object of ideological and economic choices but rather the subject of architectural phenomenon. In this sense one of the main differences between the pre-industrial and modern city is the role and appearance of architecture. The lack of architectural quality and duality appears because of discontinuity in the intrinsic rules of the city building itself which are the result of accumulated architectural culture of its society as its maker and user. This paper is based on the argument that new interventions in those ancient cities should follow their own architectural rules, which can be grasped by careful analysis of the urban structure.

Anahtar Kelimeler:
Tarihsel Kent, Modernlik, Koruma, Anlama
Keywords:
Historic City, Modernity, Conservation, Understanding

1. *Introduction*[1]

Contemporary civilisation has witnessed a remarkable urbanisation experience since the beginning of the industrial revolution. Evidently the situation will continue in the future. The current urban phenomenon is the result of modernity, which disregarded the historical relationship between man and his physical environment in the process of city making. The radical rupture between the past and the present occurred as a result of the dominant ideology of the era. This is the modernity which stimulated an absolute belief in the 'progress' and the 'new'. The assets of the past became 'old' and have been subjected to death. The collision between the 'old' and the 'new' has caused catastrophic environmental problems in varying degrees in different countries. The cities in the developing countries, however, have much influenced from this tension between old and new. Their contemporary city panorama is characterised by dilapidating historic urban settlements, 'modern' pieces inserted into the urban fabric and unhygienic squatter area; as reflected in the present image of many of them, such as Istanbul. We argue that among many problems, the degradation of architectural quality and vision, accompanied by the dilemma of cultural identity, is one of the major aspects of those historic cities. This situation is a part of the greater problem; that is the question of urban design in the context of contemporary cities, most of which have a historic urban core. In fact the question of design is inseparable from its parameters and determinants which are its raison d'etre and a potential source of creative inspiration. Therefore, one of the most important reasons for the failure of the contemporary city is the radical changes in the selection of design motives. But more fundamentally, the problem lies in the approach to them.

Seemingly, the problem of urban design cannot be tackled by merely restoring surviving pieces of historic urban fabric, as is the current tendency which is mostly formal, stylistic and superficial. We assert there is a need to understand the true architectural values and inherent qualities embodied in the buildings, walls, streets and garden of the historic urban space.

This is necessary if we are to avoid possible imitations of past forms and their further destruction. Our claim is that the historic urban fabric should be a source of inspiration rather than an 'object', a 'model' or a 'setting' for any intervention in its fabric. This would revive the authority of architecture in designing the city. Accordingly, this paper focuses on the idea of accepting the historic urban environment as an inevitable architectural design data to be able to shape its further development. A framework for a method of understanding its architectural merits is a necessary step for this aim.

2.0. Change, Creation and Destruction

There has been much criticism generated that the contemporary built environment has failed to provide an adequate quality of living environment; physically and physiologically. Questioning this phenomenon demonstrates that many fundamental transformations have taken place in the world of epistemology, as well as the economic, political and social spheres, following the Enlightenment period. City space as the platform of man's socio-economic, social and cultural activities has reflected these changes. Old cities have experienced radical changes in their structures and identities since the 19th century, known as the industrial era. The economic base of this era, the industrial mode of production, has introduced new relationships and added overwhelming formations to society and to the built environment. The industrial revolution can be accepted as one of the most significant turning points of mankind during which working conditions, life styles, notions of urban design and the production process of the built environment have drastically changed and are still changing at an ever increasing rate.

This has transformed the urban form having an impact on the role, duties and responsibilities of architects and architecture. The new task of architecture, with its transcended and revolutionary character, was superimposed on ancient cities, as a new formation of the city, distinguishing itself from the past. Le Corbusier said "In the field of industry, new problems have presented themselves and new tools have been created capable of resolving them" *(Le Corbusier 1946, 250)*. Walter Gropius, the confirmed German modernist, supported this attitude, being strenuously against allowing the study of traditional architecture to influence the theory of modern design *(Collins 1965, 35)*.
He asserted that the study of the history of architecture makes no contribution towards the evolution of a contemporary theory of architecture. He added that, "When the innocent beginner is introduced to the great achievements of the past, he may too easily be discouraged from trying to create for himself" *(Collins 1965b, 2)*. This approach towards history was generated within the Bauhaus, a pioneer institution for the development of modern architecture at the beginning of the 20th century. These ideas combined with the birth of industrial production, resulted in techniques and materials being proposed and promoted in order to invent new architectural forms to serve the ever developing industrial culture. Therefore, since the city can be viewed as the materialized expression of social, economic, political and cultural structures of a society, it is possible to suggest that the new thinking established a new system "...of dealing with the physical environment" *(Anderson 1982, 109)*.

This new thinking came to be called the Modern Movement, it was exposed to and the expression of the pressure of capitalist

development, in which economic and political motives and criteria for design dominated the urban fabric. The city in that brief period was perceived as a machine. Different social and commercial functions had to be organised and land parcelled out into zones, with the aim of supposedly more efficient working *(Le Corbusier, 1971)*. In the 1930's, Le Corbusier, one of the main movers in the International Congress of Modern Architecture (CIAM) proposed that the city was a "Business and residential centre" *(Le Corbusier 1971, 162)*. He defined the city population according to their relation to work. This became the major criterion in urban planning which we now believe seventy years later, has had disastrous consequences. According to CIAM, the city was separated into zones for dwelling, recreation, working and transportation **(2)**. This theory was later applied to a number of existing towns causing the devastation of their urban fabric. Several large scale urban projects were built in accordance with this new understanding of role of the city during the Nineteen-Forties, Fifties and Sixties, in which segregation of the city fabric was achieved **(3)**. The identity and the structure of the city, being planned for the production-distribution-consumption cycle, was relegated to a commercial one *(Tafuri, 1980)*. All these inventions were reflected in the plan of the city, as well as to its third dimension, which has provided one of the main visual elements in our perception of today's city. The New York skyline, it was pointed out by Montgomery Schuyler, the American architectural critic in the nineteenth century, "... was not an architectural vision but it does, most tremendously, look like business" *(Rykwert 1989, 4)*.

Thus, the main emphasis on the functional needs of the city, together with the displacement of mankind and his social relationships as the focal point of architecture, has disconnected man's direct relationship with his environment. This has resulted in the individualised and fragmented structure of many modern cities, as well as the estrangement of the humanbeing to his built environment in which he has been a maker, user and beholder. Schulz *(1980, 23)* agrees with this view stating that man "...is an integral part of the environment, and that it can only lead to human alienation and environmental disruption if he forgets that". Furthermore, the abstract formal order of the modern object introduced a new vocabulary initiated by rational and geometrical rules, realised by advanced technological equipment and inspired by its function. Modern vocabulary consists of a set of elements which are generally, minimalist and abstract. Modern architecture replaced the tradition of symmetrical composition of the previous period, with abstract, formal compositions that were self-contained and interlocking *(Harvard Architecture Review 1984, 8)*. Being complete within itself, it became detached from the maker and user and also from the city. They were not a part of this experience of man, whose position was assumed to be relative rather than absolute in relation to his architecture. Thus the debasement of man from the central position of the production process of his environment has caused the negation of the essential property of the city.

In addition, dependency on local sources and conditions have changed due to technological progress and transfer. This has helped to cause a somewhat deceptive freedom in relation to the global city structure. Indeed, while culture was the main determinant to the form of the

2 *For Le Corbusier (1971: 162) the city dwellers are divided into three categories. Firstly, citizens of the city are those who work and live in it. Secondly, suburban dwellers are those who work in the outer industrial zone and who do not come into the city; they live in the garden city. Thirdly, the mixed sort are those who work in business parts of the city but bring up their families in garden cities.*

3 *This had an impact mostly on the dwelling zones which were stacked into high-rise buildings while other functions remained on the ground and therefore, dwelling isolated from the public space.*

4 *Argan's definition of the historical city as the preindustrial city will be accepted in this work because as he argues, "Radical changes in scale, structure, function and social composition of the city took place with industrialisation, therefore, it is evident that what is meant by historic centre is the urban entity that existed prior to the industrial age" (Argan, 1975: 18)*

5 *With Pallasma, culture is "An entity of facts and beliefs, history and present, material realities and mental conditions". And "It proceeds unconsciously and cannot be manipulated from outside" (Pallasma, 1991: 110). In short, culture is a human's way to live. It is the response of human nature against facts, happenings and conditions of Nature.*

pre-industrial city (4), technology has become the major factor in shaping the industrial city. This, we believe, has resulted in the decline of a sense of place; with the disappearance of a sense of time previously provided by a strong local culture (5). All this in turn has helped to give a sense of an increasingly flattened present without depth, continuity and plasticity of our sense of time *(Pallasma, 1991)*. The absence of these identifying senses in contemporary cities, may be seen as a misunderstanding of the industrial era as the beginning of a new epoch, rather than a continuation of the past. Perhaps the intention of the Modern Movement was actually to interrupt the continuity of the past, which was seen as totally inadequate and even unnecessary to the production of cities for the new era.

Another criticism of the architectural qu-ality of the modern city focuses on fundamental changes in building typology. This criticism was asserted by Argan (1963), and later by Rossi (1966), Panerai (1980) indicating the mutual relationship between building typology and urban morphology. Argan, opposing the deterministic thinking of the modern era which gave emphasis to the functional aspects of the city, states that, "In the historic city, buildings have been formed more for their morphological configurations than for their functional uses" *(in Bandini 1984, 75)*. Accordingly, Rossi *(1991, 60)* attempted, in his work Architecture of the City, to show how, "...function alone is insufficient to explain the continuity of urban artifacts". Panerai shared a similar approach. For him, through the 19th century the existence of the pre-industrial types and the emergence of new types are seen as a simultaneous phenomenon **(6)**.

The new buildings were a necessary aspect of the intended means of production. Buildings of previous periods were indirect, implicit design products. However, new industrial buildings were ideological and supported directly the means to form the new built environment within the context of industrialized society. They caused radical changes in the layers of typology and thus gradually in the city as a whole; gradually changing the function of the city to a place of work. The present crisis of the modern city as seen by Panerai (1979), is rooted in the severe break between building types and urban morphology.

The negligence shown towards the existing urban fabric, which actually means the negligence of time, place and social motives of a city, has resulted in a decline of the city's entirety and gradually its identity. Respectively, a special emphasis was given to the spatial qualities of pre-industrial states of European cities by numerous architects, such as Krier, L (1984), Krier, R (1982,1988), Alexander (1972, 1987), Rossi (1991, 1983). This has been accompanied by criticism in other fields, particularly in philosophy. It is striking that the `modern' side of the world, as well as the `Other' *(Gledhill 1989, 109)* have experienced "...an implosive loss of faith in the progress of 'civilization' and a corresponding explosion of new cultural movement, from cults and religious revival to primitivism, a new traditionalism, a striving for the re-establishment of a new culturally defined identity", which in turn led to an increasing "...national and ethnic fragmentation" and "...an exponential increase in cultural-based political movements" *(Friedman 1989, 246)*. Such thinking resulted in a major shift in focus

from the developmentalism and materialism of the 1950s and 1960s to an increasing culturalism and primitivism from the 1970s *(Friedman, 1989)*. Today, the major themes emerge in the form of culture as text, culture and identity, ideo-logics, culture and history, supported by a relativistic point of view. Thus, the critical discussion about modernism has generated two major ideological discourses; post-modernism represented by Lyotard, Foucalt and Deleuze & Ghuttari; and cultural traditionalism as "...search for roots in the past or for models from the periphery" *(Friedman 1989, 248)*. They both criticised modernism because it is opposed to nature and culture which in turn caused Man's self-conscious, "...to destroy his past and control his future" *(Friedman 1989, 247)*. Rationality and developmentalism are the dominant principles in the structure of modernism which understands modernity as the cultivation of the new. Accordingly its culture is based on individual liberty, whilst traditional society was dominated by its past *(Friedman 1989, 252)*.

This paper argues that the characteristics, previously discussed of modernity and its elements became alien to the extant city. Therefore the application of alien models and institutions, while disregarding the local conditions and the existing urban fabric, have resulted in deterioration and have caused an inharmony and collision within the area. This in turn has caused a decline in the overall architectural quality of the city. The architectural quality of the pre-industrial city, is hidden in the urban fabric, where architecture not only forms the city but is also formed by the city. The mutual relationship between the city and its architectural language demands that the design principles (in the production

process of built environment) need to be derived from the pre-industrial fabric, which is the architectural product of that place, time and society, with its own spatial and aesthetic values.

3. *Understanding Historic Urban Fabric*

A city can be defined as a complex system constituted of different structures and relationships built up through an incremental process. Every one of these structures represents a sub-system such as social, economic, political or cultural. However, architecture forms the life in the city and its image; that is its personality. Architecture brings into being all these overlapping entities according to time, place and society. It has the task to grasp different parameters and embody them in the physical, man-made environment as the cultural manifestation of a society. In other words, architecture links these entities and provides a place to act in during the process. The architecture that contains these sub systems itself forms a structure, a system of relationships between time, place and society on which one can base an argument. Accordingly if architecture is a structure, its products are also representative of this structure and their quality lies in the way this fabric is assembled. Therefore to grasp the underlying principles of an urban fabric the first need is to understand the way this structure is actualized. In other words how the elements have been combined. A method based on the formal qualities of the city would easily mislead us in seeing how the urban elements relates to each other, focusing merely on the urban elements themselves which are temporary. Therefore a method of understanding we argue, should be based on the relationships that is in architectural terms, spatial qualities and the structure which is permanent.

[6]*For example in England, starting from 1820, as a result of industrialisation, mode or shares of land property changed radically. This led to the scale of projects being much bigger. Accordingly the scale of finance, design and construction activities concentrated on terrace housing or streets, rather than a single houses or a building. Standardised houses joined to the organisation of the terrace or other rows which formed the urban parts of another typology, within the new urban scale (Panerai, 1979).*

[7] *For example Filippo Brunelleschi (1377 - 1446) designed the dome of Santa Maria del Fiore in Florence, Italy. From the point of view of technical construction, as a completely new thing which later transformed the traditional methods of work. However, it is well known that before the construction of the dome he went to Rome to study the fabric and proportions of the ancient city walls (Argan, 1969: 25).*

At this point, the concept and content of the system needs to be clarified in order to introduce the approach of this study. System, according to Wittgenstein, is something in which all the parts point towards one another, in which premises and conclusions mutually support one another. However a system cannot be presented all at once *(Brand, 1979)*.
He argues that "All testing, all confirmation and disconfirmation of a hypothesis takes place already within a system...our knowing, our belief; form a system, a structure" *(Brand 1979, 9)*. Hence a system depends upon the principles on which it is based and it can therefore be criticised, analyzed and hopefully understood within the scope of those intrinsic principles.
It can be said that a system is implicit in every argument and that there is no validity to arguments outside of a certain system. In other words, if one speaks about an element or a fact belonging to a particular system, the invention and the language of this argument needs to belong to the same system. An individual thing therefore, has values only within a system, where it is a constituent element of the whole. Similarly, for Tagore *(1926, 5)* the truth of this world "...is not in the masses of substance, not in the number of things, but in their relatedness". Thus, nothing can be defined by itself nor has a value of its own, but rather in relation to the others and to the whole. Individuals being related to each other form a structure; a system where every element can be defined accordingly.

Therefore, the very essence of a system is the relatedness of the elements among themselves and also to the whole, which in turn creates continuity. Accordingly, continuity is a structure, therefore is self-evident of its being and also an

inevitable phenomenon. Continuity in the historical process shows that previous structures were always the reference for creating the contemporary ones, often as a reaction to existing structures by improving or opposing, but always within the relationship [7]. This can strengthen the continuity which also initiates the relational structure. So that everything stands against a background of a totally relational system and is contained within it. Continuity which can be seen as the dynamic memory of a city, is crucial to the identity and consistency of the urban fabric of a particular place.
Proposing the historic urban fabric as a 'resource' for new designs and yet avoiding the imitation of past forms, requires us to understand the role and meaning of creativity in the process of designing for the 'contemporary'. The nature and emergence of creativity in psychology, is not mysterious, but is dependent on human characteristics being indispensable to human development; therefore is "...culture bound" *(Gage and Berliner, 1991)*. Thus, cultural structure determines human behavior that in turn forms the cultural artifact. According to Piaget's theory invention of the new in an existing built environment, is only possible by understanding the already in-place system. Thus creativity, although in its essence means originality, is already much determined by the existing structures.

Concern about our historic urban fabric is inevitably tied up with our concern for our cultural identity. Identity can not be created from the beginning, but once it exists it can be preserved and enriched. The sources of enrichment derive from a 'historical sense' which according to T.S. Eliot "...involves perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its

presence" *(in Venturi 1977, 13)*. And thus it compels a man to produce (write or build) not merely in his time but with a feeling for the whole of the related culture. Thus, as Eliot expresses "No poet, no artist of any kind, has his complete meaning alone" *(in Venturi 1977, 13)* but within the identity of their cultural system. The historic built environment, the paradigm of a cultural system, can be understood as an already established part of the identity, especially of a particular city and therefore it to be preserved and enriched. It is the actual place where our cultural personality becomes significant and the stimuli for further designs. Conservation basically does not respond to the question of how to design the new buildings which is, in our view, the crucial problem of the present and future in particularly developing countries where new design is accompanied by the notion of cultural identity. In an attempt to understand the essence of an urban form it is necessary that the endeavor be based on the local conditions and resources which related to the production process of the built environment. Each town draws on a special architectural history that should not be reduced to a general model. It is argued in the field of archeology that, "...local knowledge can be gained from a real past, the excavation of which forms the only authentic path to cultural identity" *(Rowlands 1989, 37)*. A similar attitude may be represented in the architectural field by the suggested methodology of reading the city to grasp its knowledge. Reading the urban fabric can be seen as a tool for "...reactivation of local knowledge" *(Rowlands 1989, 37)*, which appears as an important means to resist the hegemony of 'outsider' form. Local culture and identity spring from "...local knowledge as an authentic, i.e. true,

source of creating a sense of difference " *(Rowlands 1989, 37)*. This, the sense of difference, is indispensable part of an identity which generally lacks in the modern city.

One can argue that the historic urban fabric needs to be analyzed in order to reach its knowledge and devise the rules. However, we deny that these rules are hidden. They are explicit and evident to a person who lives in the same system. It starts with people and gradually leads to society that gives the shape, maintains and transforms it.

Architecture is not a mysterious activity but has a function in creating a human `indoor' environment. But in recent times, because of the break in the culture between pre-industrial and industrial periods (as well as in the urban fabric) the knowledge of our historic cities is unknown to us, just like the old method of making tiles or mortar is unknown. That is why, its rules are `hidden'. Therefore the initial step is to reestablish this connection between urban space and man, in order to reach to historical correlations between the object, its makers and its users. In other words, render the city dependent on people again, just as stated by Nicias to the Athenian soldiers on the beach at Syracuse; "You are yourself the town, wherever you choose to settle...it is man that makes the city, not the walls and ships without them"*(Rykwert1989, 23)*. This can be achieved first of all by careful analysis in order to understand its `essence'. The historic city is not a repository of old codes and forms of bygone times, but is an architectural product of its society. This inner logic of the historic city needs to be continued for the integrity and harmony of structure. Clues and parameters for integration of new designs are provided by

the fabric itself. Therefore, grasping its 'essence' which is initially the 'architecture' of the urban fabric is crucial for creating the new. Essence is taken here not to mean the forms, masses, voids or social and cultural motives, but the blended result of all these elements. The essence of a structure or a system (and historic urban fabric represents a system) lies in the `relationships' among its elements. This is because the elements, their form and content can be changed in accordance with the changing parameters of time, but the way of their being related gives the essential character to that of the city. Therefore deciphering this relationship that is the architecture of the city through careful architectural and historical analysis **(8),** would be the way for reintegration with its system.

Conservation of historic urban environments has a crucial role in the realisation of architectural context. However its contradictory nature, as well as its potential to be exploited for economic benefits reduces its reliability and validity *(Appleyard 1979, Hewison 1987).* Besides, the ever changing nature of the built environment forces the conservation of many historic areas to be turned into sites of tourism and mere surface restoration. Therefore the responses to the problems of today, should prevent the further destruction of these areas but at the same time should influence and control the transformations according to the architectural qualities of the area. Here the question occurs as to how one can transform these areas and by what architectural vocabulary? What is the stimuli of the new inventions? We suggest that at first, the system of historic urban structures needs to be understood and that any intervention to the fabric should show

respect to its system. This in turn will help to keep the continuity and harmony of the particular place but at the same time transform it. At this point, Jean Piaget's *(Wittrock 1987, 71)* model of knowledge acquisition supports this argument; that ***understanding is invention***. In other words, you invent your understanding of a thing which also to some extent suggests the subjective character of knowing and understanding.

Thus, the understanding of urban fabric becomes crucial for future `inventions'. The method of understanding then becomes the important issue to be developed. However, understanding in the case of historic urban fabric requires an initial preparation, that is reading the fabric, in order to make the fabric `legible'. This is deemed necessary because the system in which the historic urban fabric was developed and the system in which we are now, differs dramatically. With Wittgenstein, if one speaks about an element or a fact belonging to a particular system, the invention and the language of this argument needs to belong to the same system. In this case the reader in the present time and the object (belonging to pre-industrial period) to be read belong to different systems.

It is a question of interpretation. Architecture in a sense is a universal language in its essence. It is the common ground of all man-made physical environments. Schulz *(1980, 4)* supports this view by stating that, "There are not different kinds of architecture, but only different situations which require different solutions in order to satisfy man's physical and psychic needs". Architecture encompassing both, can be applied and reading becomes possible.

4. *Outline for a Method of Understanding*

Following the argument about the reason for and the necessity to see the historic urban fabric as a design source for the new form of a city, we will give emphasis to understanding its structure as the core of any intervention[9] . One can state that the city is a network of relations among various elements which may be classified broadly, as architectural and institutional, both of which guide the production of the built environment. Architectural elements relate directly to the material form of the city, including natural environment encompassing climate, topography, landscape and available construction materials. Institutional elements relate to man-made factors for and by which the material existence of the city has been formed including cultural, economic, social and political aspects of the society. The selection of urban elements, which needs to respect local data helps to clarify the determinants of urban forms in each case and can only be realised by historical and architectural analysis. Architecture being determinative, is recognisable as the architectural culture of the society which includes general understanding of architecture, the role of the architect, the training process of architects, craftsmanship, and traditional technology. A blend of these determinants, each with different degrees of influence at different times, defines urban form. The real need is to discover the architecture that expressed all these parameters and resulted in an adequate and identifiable urban form. To achieve architectural understanding applied in a particular urban structure, a method should aim at recognizing the architectural considerations that can only be grasped by the analysis of various relationships among urban elements.

The activity of historical research[10] will tend to observe the conceptual unity due to, "...the interpretation of artifacts is an intricate activity, inseparable both from the place of artifacts in cultural systems and from our theories of culture of time and interpretation of the artifact in the context in which they are made" *(Anderson 1982, 109)*. Thus one can see the production process in the context of time which prevents the reduction of the town to a mere material object or agglomeration of historic forms. The architectural research and analysis aim to clarify the process and the way of articulation between different urban elements in order to understand the whole. It will mainly deal with the buildings and spaces between them and their architectural, spatial qualities. These analyses are not only in terms of style, technique and material (which are mainly representative of their time) but rather in terms of their place within the city, their relation to each other and their surroundings such as landscape, topography, orientation and positioning of a monument or a street pattern. This can only be made by the analysis of the town's growth process where the spatial relationships were set up according to the architectural considerations in the formation of the built environment. These rules can be determined from the articulation of solids and voids which make up the city. The sources of architectural analysis are the information derived from historical survey and the existing old urban elements themselves. However, these two kinds of research are not separated, on the contrary, architectural analysis is always accompanied by the historical. Local data is important and as only architecture has the necessary universal quality, the selection of a particular place to apply this approach is essential. It can be any place

[8] *Such an anaysis to establish a method for 'reading' and 'understanding' the historic fabric withspecial reference to Eyüp, the Holy Shrine of İstanbul, was the subject of the author's doctoral research at the University of York, U.K.*

[9] *There has been considerable effort for the analysis of pre-industrial urban form to decipher the laws underlying urban qualities of those cities (Alexander 1972, 1987; Castex & Panerai 1971, 1979, 1982; Berardi 1971; Hillier; Herdeg 1990). The method of analysis of an urban form presents increasing concern for the historic city generated by Italian architects since 1950s. It has gradually emerged that the most persuasive and informative method appears to be the analysis of the relationship between building typology and urban morphology initiated by Aymonino (1985) and Rossi (1991) based on Argan's (1963) view and later by Castex & Panerai. However these were based on form and type that help to see only the formal relationships, but not the spatial dimensions, which also involve function, plus social, cultural, economic and environmental factors and architectural culture to express them.*

[10] *Sources of historical research differ according to each case. There are three major sources for the analysis of urban form: i) Recorded history which includes archival documents such as manuscripts, property deed records, engravings, drawings, maps, photographs, chronicles and travelers' accounts, secondary sources related to the urban past of the town (ii) Physical sources which refer to existing structures of old urban texture with its buildings, open urban spaces, landscape. There are two kinds of physical sources: firstly the structures at ground level which are examined by architectural survey; and secondly, the remains at the underground level which are examined by the archaeological research. iii) Oral history including ethnological evidence, such as folkloric data. These may not explain directly the material characteristics of its urban form but they can be useful for understanding the patterns of life style and perception of the town by its citizens, in turn providing clues to understand social qualities of urban space.*

which contains pre-industrial urban fabric that has been disrupted by modern planning interventions.

There are, in our proposal, three main stages of the analysis: 1. identification, 2. reading, 3. understanding. The first stage called identification, is to investigate the apparent image of the town, in order to provide the essential criteria which influenced its urban character. This is accomplished by exploring the characteristics of its place, the meaning of its name, its origins and its historical and architectural significance. The main focus of the analysis in its second phase, *reading*, will concentrate on the physical structure of the town. Firstly, its *growth process*, secondly its *urban elements* will be explored. The concept of reading refers to a method that aims at deciphering the architectural system of the town's urban structure through an analysis of its formative elements. Accordingly, in the first phase, looking at how the town has generated will enable us to see the articulation of the different urban elements and its evolutionary process. Historical data dealing with time and place, such as archive documents, drawings, maps, photographs, historians' and travelers' accounts will be drawn on. The analysis will not just emphasise the urban form by classifying the elements according to their type and form, but rather according to their contents, relationships and their role within the urban form. Here we recognise two basic urban elements; architectural and institutional. Their classification will help us to understand the logic underlying the articulation of different elements by looking at the relationships between the built areas and the remaining open spaces. These relationships are represented by the combining elements that help the

articulation of spaces and essential for being an identifiable structure. Therefore we divide architectural elements into three main groups, *built structures* (solids), *spatial structures* (voids) and *the combining elements*.

Built structures can be investigated according to different themes of classification, for example according to their composition, status and function. The former are grouped as a complex of buildings, such as a neighborhood or market or a single building such as a tomb or house. Buildings can also be classified according to their status, such as private buildings (mainly houses) and official buildings (mainly religious and social). Another classification can be undertaken according to the function of these buildings such as social, religious, commercial, residential and infrastructural. All these built structures needs to be studied, measured and carefully recorded to produce an 'architectural map' of the historic urban form, from which 'understanding' can be grasped. Spatial structures are taken to mean here open spaces between buildings, which can be a street as a common public space or the garden of a house as a private open space. Therefore they can be classified according to their status of being common open spaces where people meet for various reasons according to the function of the space (street, square, recreation sites-gardens, meadows) or a private open spaces which symbolise a particular family or other group of users. A special emphasis should be played on *combining elements* which have a crucial role in the urban space as articulating agents of the built and unbuilt spaces because they represent the tangible quality of the relationship between the two. They can be

classified as structural (walls), visual and spatial (greenery), social (squares), functional (fountains), visual and symbolic (landmarks). To merely study the architectural elements however, is not sufficient to understand the urban system; it is also necessary to examine the institutional elements. The significant ones are those involved with the economic and administrative aspects; the means (architecture and its organisation) by which these come about, together with their social and cultural purpose in the city need to be investigated. Firstly, it is necessary to clarify the institution which affects the way land is used, as well as the business codes of building organisation. Secondly, the administration of the urban system and its production and maintenance is to be examined. This includes the decision making process in which administrator, client and architect are involved. Thirdly the institution responsible for making the city should be investigated. In this regard architects played a crucial role. This leads to investigate the role of architecture, the training process of architecture, craftsmanship and use of traditional technology.

The last stage of the analysis is the *understanding* which means a synthesis of the whole architectural system of a town to reestablish the original schemata. Pursuing these hierarchical relationships, first through the macro urban system and then through the relationship between the urban form and its elements, will help to understand the main architectural characteristics, such as its scale and dominant features. Accordingly, the role of architectural elements can be classified by analyzing the complex elements, monuments, the proportions and scale

between various elements, rhythm, the hierarchical order of the spaces, the massing of buildings, space as vision and the role of the natural environment. The major aim of this method is to suggest that the analysis of urban form needs to be shifted from its formal qualities to its spatial ones. In other words from their formal relationships to their spatial relationships, in short from *form to space*. The method proposed will help to grasp the town's architectural essence in order to transform it according to its own system by this means it is hoped to generate creative new designs rather than imitations. It is also hoped that by giving emphasis to the historic urban fabric, it will not be used as a 'model', but rather as an 'inspiration source' from which to plan future urban environments.

The connection with the present and this 'past' architectural quality is necessary to achieve an autonomous identifiable urban form.

5. *Conclusion*

Consequently, this paper suggests that existing historic urban fabric itself is the inspirational source of new designs and for that, at first step, its architectural structure needs to be understood. Accordingly the proposition of this paper is that historic urban fabric has a great importance for the future of built environment not as a conservation area but as an inspirational source for new designs. Therefore, understanding the essence of its form is crucial. It is hoped to generate creation rather than imitation. It is also hoped to emphasize, that historic urban fabric is not a `model' for future environment but is a `resource' of great architectural value in it. The method of grasping the essence needs development. Building on the argument this study

proposes that a satisfactory urban quality can be reached through a method of **reading** and **understanding** the spatial structure of the built environment. Once accepting the authority and responsibility of architecture in creating the urban space, the remedy for its contemporary problems may be found again in architecture which follows the political choices of its society unless it initiates and evokes its own polemics. This is, indeed, a necessary task for those who have responsibility for producing, maintaining and using the built environment. However, architects have a special task, to understand its present and past and to project the future form of the city. Therefore, there is a need to develop an architectural and historical approach to read and understand an urban form, both to criticise its present and suggest its future. This approach would be a possible answer to the problem particularly in the developing world where development desires overwhelm both any attempt to deal with the quality of the urban environment, as well as cultural identity and autonomy. The necessary connections between the past and future can be established to achieve a unified, autonomous, adequate and identifiable contemporary urban form. Although historically the built environment has been a reflection of the culture of its society we are in an epoch of history in which cultural structure itself has been disrupted and confused needs of redefinition. An identity cannot be established from the nothingness, or created all at once. Any surviving authentic cultural identity can only be restored or enriched. Only then the integrated and harmonious cities may be recreated. And only then may **architecture** appear in the cities. However the next question arises namely how **understanding** can be applied as a design source, how one can work with it. The

response must come from practising architects who design in these cities, since the responsibility of making the city lies with architecture [1]

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