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Discussion

ARCHITECTURE AS SPATIAL ORGANIZATION

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In the resurrection of LIVENARCH, my esteemed colleague,
the late Prof. Dr. Şinasi Aydemir, and I joined forces.

The fact that the two of us had solid individual sides that were very different simultaneously added strength to our strength.
He was a constructive person; I am sure he rested in the lights.

I dedicate this article to him!

Introduction

My book Spatial Organization (Gür, 1996), which I wrote long ago, became my most cited book on the Scholar site, where thesis and dissertation citations were not even recorded. Academics in my country needed my expertise in Environmental-Behavioral issues. I am happy to contribute significantly to society and the relevant sector. Here, I would like to update this topic.

I want to discuss the subject by mentioning its place in general architectural theory. First, I must emphasize that there is a theory of architecture. A discipline without a theory is not a discipline (Foucault, 1969). Theory in architecture is an organic, evolutionary discourse that describes practice and production, identifies the difficulties therein, and has a holistic structure determined by them. These feedbacks between architectural theory and practice form the basis of the discipline's development. The essence of architecture, which consists of structure, function, aesthetics, and meaning, is fed by interpretations such as model, type, order, form, form and style-attitude that it accumulates or creates in the face of various building needs and, of course, building and material technologies (Figure 1). These are indicated on the positive X-axis of my abstract diagram below. The main external influences, as indicated at the minus end of the X-axis, are usually social and economic structures, which are the mainstay of architectural power. Cultural and ethnic determinants indicate that different architectural conceptions may emerge in different geographies.

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As for the Y-axis, history testifies that architecture has always oscillated between reason and emotion: Rational periods are followed by emotionality, and emotional periods are followed by rationality; for instance, Postmodern Architecture follows Modern Architecture. Some tendencies in the postmodern era gave great weight to anachronistic-metaphorical interpretations; the diachronic-metaphoric movement almost parallel to it, approached the time faithfully, questioned various aspects of Modern Architecture and led to accelerated developments in fiction, technology, and communication. It should be noted here at the outset that architectural ethics is said to be closely linked to Venustas (aesthetics) and is a crucial component within Firmistas (solidity). Alberto Pérez-Gómez considers the two to be almost identical (Pérez-Gómez, 2006). According to him, if architectural fiction is aesthetic, it is ethical; if it is ethical, it is aesthetic... I am afraid I have to disagree. An aesthetic order does not always have to be ethical. It is possible to resort to some illusions to achieve functional and aesthetic results in architecture and interior architecture. For example, creating different effects by lighting different ways in a niche in a museum is permissible in architecture and interior design. For that matter and others, I preferred the Gurian Quartet to the mega concepts of the Vitruvian Triad (robustness, functionality, beauty): robustness, functionality, beauty, and *expressiveness* (Figure 1). The purpose here is to emphasize that there is no architecture without meaning!

The meaning of a space can be based on ontological, epistemological, or pragmatic. Or all of them... Thankfully, a scholar named Pierce proposed a pragmatic value of icons that also implies the meaning of an object (1982).

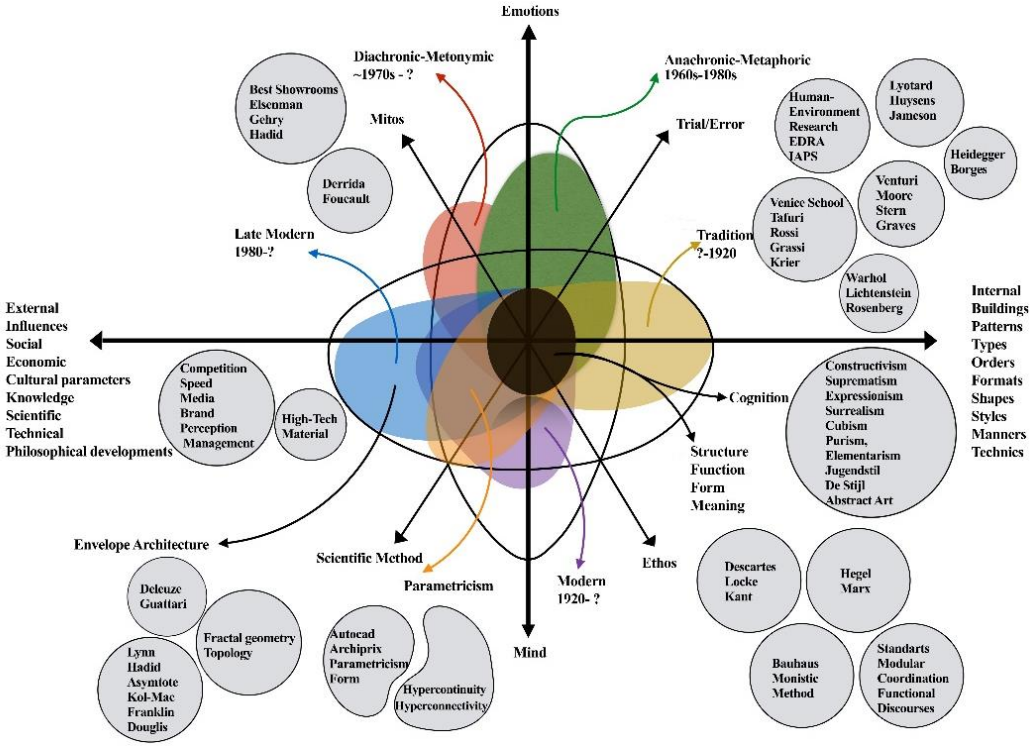

Figure 1. Architectural theory is a processual reality; its unchanging essence is firmitatis, utilitatis, venustatis, and denotatis (structure, function, form, meaning).

For human beings, the changing organization of space is much more critical than the diversifying aesthetics of architectural styles. Because one is only visual and maybe tactile, and the other is vital. Modern Architecture has overflowed the clichés of the past, showing all subsequent designers original and creative ways of designing and paving the way for relentless innovation. Constructing all kinds of spaces with any architectural design approach seems possible today. Digital paradigms have partially replaced the representation paradigms of Modern Architecture, and that is it. The only obstacle to limitlessness is concern for our planet and humanity. Naturally, these are severe issues. However, design tools are now so diverse and full of possibilities that... If we did not have that chance, there would be an essential problem for those who deal with these universal concerns. However, at the most critical point in this process, Foucault warns us again (Foucault, 1991): The concept of governmentality he describes means “the management of attitudes and behavior” or “the art of dominating,” which includes a wide variety of control techniques that make subjects manageable. Reflecting on architecture, it is necessary to approach technologies originating from the Global North, the possible consequences of which we cannot foresee, with common sense. Otherwise, sustainable solutions may be too expensive because of their techniques and materials; they can enslave! (Gür, 2024).

A Look Back at the Organization of Space

It has been almost 30 years since I wrote about the organization of space (1996). Since then, several important new concepts have emerged in architectural organization. One of them is the critical discourse of Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1945), who most radically concerns architectural education and practice: “We perceive, recognize, know individuals, communities, and places with our brains and bodies.” This discourse shifted architectural attention from our knowledge and ability to move and see to our bodily experiences and mental accumulations. The intellectual scope of architectural design has expanded, and the memories and experiences of the people served in the design of the environment, city, and architecture in the recent period have gained importance. Some architects considered some of these paradigms valuable and respected as design concerns. Some very recent young architects have evaluated this information in the digital design environment by setting parameters concerning bodily movements. More sensitive and talented people reflected their factual sensibility in their architectural designs (See: Sancaklar Mosque).

In addition to Merleau-Ponty’s discourse, what Norberg-Schulz (1962) and Pallasmaa (1996) advocated and wrote about human dimensions in architecture was not about ergonomic values but directly about real-life and ongoing human values. Norberg-Schulz revealed the world of human imagination with his unique research, clarifying how symbols refer to the world of values and ways of seeing. Pallasmaa’s (2012) emphasis was that visual perception alone is insufficient to experience architecture and that designs from this point can be meaningless. Man’s deep peripheral experience was a bundle of internalized sensations. Abel (2015) made an exciting addition to this intellectual accumulation with the concept of “extended self” by arguing that human mental and bodily sensations increase, change, and develop with

technological extensions since the media environment surrounding people affects human development and experiences.

Unfortunately, without understanding and interpreting Norberg-Schulz's valuable works, architects in postmodern times thought that they could reproduce the past, tried to carry the architectural symbols of the past into their buildings without internalizing them, and except for a few, they were not very successful visually. The eclectic Postmodern style could not build much on the dominant values and principles of the modern era in design and planning. The contextual approach is the improvement of this situation. On the other hand, not everyone fully understands human values, behaviors, intentions, and aspirations, which are the essence of phenomenological studies.

Concepts such as biophilia (love of nature), hyper-interconnectedness, and hyper-continuity, which are related to form rather than space, have been examined especially by Zaha Hadid and her followers and turned into structure and form (Betsky, 2018). As soon as it turned into a form, it froze because no matter how much it is discussed, the architectural space built with digital techniques directly limits itself as soon as it is built. The functional transformation of the inner compartments is challenging; it is almost impossible to make additions to the outside!

To illustrate, the Millennium Dome was the original name of the sizeable dome-shaped building on the Greenwich Peninsula in South East London, England, and it hosted a major exhibition celebrating the beginning of the third millennium. The exhibition was public from January 1 to December 31, 2000. The project itself and the exhibition were highly contested and attracted only half of the 12 million customers estimated by their sponsors; therefore, they were considered unsuccessful by the press. I saw it in 2006 when it was in shambles. All the original exhibit items had been sold or dismantled when I went, and Hadid did not exist anymore. However, the preservation of the dome was preferred, so the dome, with its external features, became a landmark. A behemoth that can be nothing!

Architecture and urban space are organized in line with specific needs and conditions. The history of architecture conveys this process by dividing it into phases and exemplifying it through buildings. These needs and conditions are determined by the arguments between the desire and potential of society to grow and expand in the face of industrialization, urbanization, and social stratification and the values attributed to man and his institutions. The craft of design and construction must be demonstrated through learning, awareness, and skilling.

Especially after the 60s, we believe that for the space to be produced at a flawless and satisfactory level, the architect should know the social-economic, cultural, political, and legal system in which he works and know which values of this system he serves. Knowing the user's worldview, values, and attitudes; mastery of static/dynamic anthropometric data; comprehending the processes of remembering, sensing, judging, and making sense; they need to recognize their characteristics such as status/prestige, identity/self, taste/meaning, and lifestyle. When analyzing the activity pattern of the building or environment, it is necessary to know that individual, physical, and interactive activities to be held in space and actions are different structures and require different sensitivities. For example, a type of building that serves a specific function should predict which activity will be considered dominant.

The space to be designed must respond to specific needs and purposes; space should provide physical comfort and geophysical and psycho-social security; function should be analyzed cognitively, as Kahn says, and the leading spaces that serve should be analyzed based on different standards and in a way that comprehends the energy of time (Scully, 1962). Spanish architect Ignasi de Solà-Morales, in a text on the “terrain vague” in 1990 (Solà-Morales, 1990,pp:122-24), said: “The architect, whose destiny is to give borders, orders and forms, should work on the flows, energies, new rhythms formed by the passage of time and the disappearance of boundaries in these critical areas, ignoring the oppressive and rentier forces on him, maintaining the perfection of the enlightenment tradition, but this time being planned-competent. Instead of studying form, one should study powers; instead of far, one should study the internalized, instead of optical, the haptic, instead of the figurative, the rhizomatic”. Interestingly, just as rhizomatic thoughts change throughout history, they can also change depending on the primary function of the building (Gür, 2023).

I like to refer to them as “connecting concepts," concepts that can be dynamic, flexible, adaptable, interpreted, and developed as the connection between people and space. Although the order of priority may change depending on the situation and conditions, it is possible to list these concepts as follows: Robustness, health, efficiency, sustainability, security (prevention of building accidents, protection against unwanted creatures and threats, etc.), psychosocial security (privacy, avoiding crowding, having a sovereign area, acquiring personal space, etc.), easy orientation (location and direction), easy access, focus/environmental, compliance with relative layout rules, appropriate equipment/equipment arrangements, density, dynamism, barrier-freeness, comfort, spaciousness, purposefulness, perceptibility, imaginability, symbolism, innovation, originality, voluntarism, stimulation, identity, contextualism-universality, developability, possibility and temporality. While some of these connection concepts enable the various functions of the space to be fulfilled in a good, correct, and beautiful way, they are also directly related to the physical structuring of the space (Gür, 1996). The organization of space is primarily concerned with the immediate and distant environment of a space element, with its whole and with all of the relations established by its parts among themselves. Depending on the organization of the space, the primary function of the building, and the meaning of this function, I described it as follows;

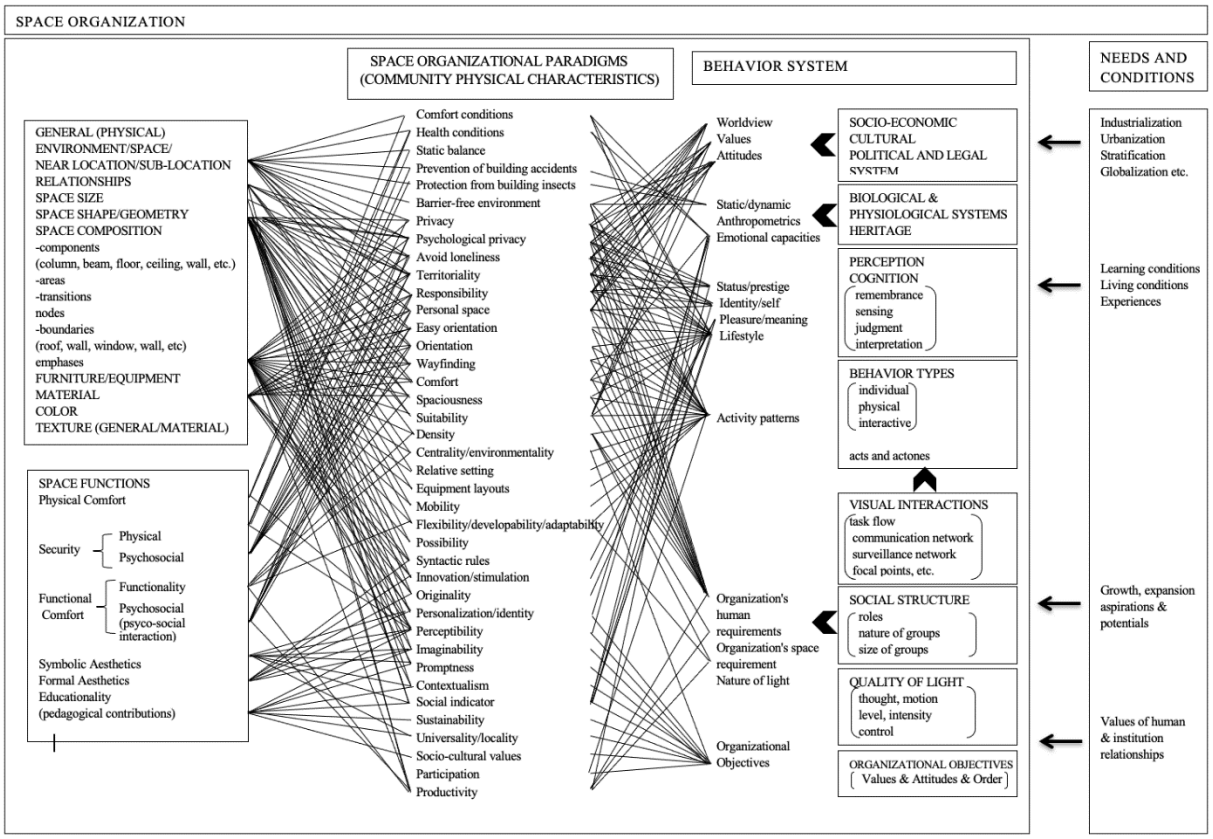

Figure 2. Organizational concepts of space as standard semantic codes of behavior and space (Gür, 1996; pp. 167, Table 1).

a. Site plan and ground floor plan/environment-city relationship,
b. Floor area form, the geometry of the section, and the structural solution,
c. Geometry and functional porosity and connectedness of all elements limiting the interior space,
d. Reinforcement and equipment assembly and geometry,
e. Basic values and geometry of architectonics, solution of connection points,
f. Flows, energies of all the above, new rhythms formed by the passage of time, and the disappearance of boundaries.

Space components (columns, beams, floors, ceilings, walls, etc.) contribute to the composition of the space depending on the technology and techniques from which they are manufactured. They perform tasks other than their primary duties in spatial architectonic spaces, such as walls, windows, doors, stairs, foci, nodes, regions, transitions, accents, and contours, which are essential in organizing space. The components of geographical space can be predicted as land or sea formations, geopolitical regions, geographical regions, urban-rural regions, underdeveloped-highly developed regions, and efficient-unproductive regions, depending on the purpose of the study. It is in the tradition of urban design to evaluate all the spaces between city buildings as outdoor or urban social spaces (Ashihara, 1750).

Nodal points are places where many different activities occur together in cities or buildings, hosting activities such as trade, marketing, promotion, launch, recreation, waiting, information, meeting, socializing, celebration, and transportation simultaneously. Most of these come to life

in the entrance areas of the buildings; in buildings, these are the foci within the task flow chart. Nodes can be in regional or sub-regional centers, transitions, and borders. In a Turkish bath, the knot is the navel stone in the center, while in a house, even the kitchen, entrance hall, and living room can take on this task. The boundaries of the nodes need to have the desired level of permeability, depending on the underlying function they host. In addition, nodes play an essential role in the identity of cities and buildings as areas where basic functions occur.

Regions, essential elements of space organization, can be defined as functional and structural; physically, socially, and symbolically, they can be distinguished from the whole. Boundary elements that determine zones in buildings include walls, railings, poles, elevations, material texture, and even colors. For example, foreground/background separation is a zoning and function-based in housing. Cultural zones in a university, such as auditoriums, libraries, sports venues, cafeterias, and cafes, are recreational-social zones, and the details in the organization are immediately noticeable.

As for roads and crossings, these are transportation networks that connect functional areas in the city and connect cities to the world's geography. Roads, bridges, tunnels, seas, rivers, airways, pedestrian paths, and the access networks they create are some of the features that make cities. For example, Kurosawa and Hillier (2001) examined access in grid and tree systems and argued that diagonal paths best achieve human relations. In the same way, buildings have a similar network system that connects the units horizontally and vertically. Various types of stairs and elevators, entrances, halls, lobbies, corridors, and even Turkish house sofas can be counted in this context. These space elements affect the space with materials and technology and their organizational roles.

The boundaries of urban space can be natural elements such as mountains, seas, and valleys, as well as workplaces, shopping malls, factories, universities, green belts, and even streets that are functionally limited to the city (Lang et al., 1980). The boundary elements present or created in the delimitation are as crucial as the region they delimit. They ascribe meanings, from privacy to the publicity of the area they demarcate. External spaces exist within natural, political, and structural boundaries or are structured to prevent functional conflict. Thus, they serve to ensure human comfort. Among all the borders, the most classic element is the walls. They provide visual, tactile, auditory, and light privacy. Solid walls undertake complete dividing tasks, while low panel walls indicate a division conducive to communication. Transparent walls, counters, and tellers are just polite threats. In addition to these, vertical circulation elements can also be considered obstacles or enabling elements.

On the other hand, focal pointers, such as the service counter, stairs, pillars, and panels, simultaneously act as a separation image, i.e., a dividing element. Apart from the main functions, such as lighting elements as focus indicators, flooring material as functional difference markers, and reinforcements as separation/invitations, depending on the design principle, they can organize the space for another purpose. However, great architectural revolutions emerge as significant typological changes that overturn the total "idea" and radically change the design idea and the organization of space (Gür, 2008).

To Conclude

How the space is organized is the most crucial feature of space that shapes and directs human behavior. It is even possible to manipulate how the space is organized and direct people to certain behaviors. Gropius (1943) said we should teach people how to behave. I once criticized him; why don't we give him what he wants and what he is used to? Now, I say that space has the power to influence, determine, and customize human behavior. So, should we give the user what he wants, or should we direct him to how we want him to behave? Can the design style of the space be a teaching tool for the user from either the global north or south? A group of young writers has been questioning this again very recently (Kabashi, Kaltrine, et al., 2023). This explains very well why I placed the meaning of architecture in that theoretical core. Architecture has meaning, it is crucial, and it can be manipulated. Needless to say!

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