

An Assessment on the Effects of Urban Transformation to City Identity: The Case of Konya

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Abstract—Cities are at the center of a transformation and a changing process, due to many factors such as developing technological developments, migration, structures and environment that have filled their lives, changing lifestyles, social change and globalization. These changes and transformations are influenced by various factors such as local governments, social demands, and financial possibilities. While the cities are in the effects of these transformational activities, city identity is influenced adversely because of the negative effects of globalization and modernization that cause the tendency to homogenize everything and most of the cities lose their identities. Turkey's cities which are the homeland to many civilizations are also affected by those processes. This study's focal point is Konya as one of the most important historical cities in Turkey, which was the capital of the Seljuk and is now missing its identity. From this point of view, the transformation of Konya in the historical process is evaluated from the perspective of city identity. In this context, the effects on city identity like various urban interventions, architecture, planning and transformation projects of Konya is analyzed periodically.

Index Terms—Globalization, urban transformation, city identity, Konya, Seljuk capital.

I. INTRODUCTION

Globalization is defined as “The progressive decrease of people, ideas, money, goods and services in dependency of stated geographical space and that geographical space's existing rules” [1] is a politically and economically based concept in many different dimensions [2].

It can be expressed that the societies (are) degenerate(d) all material and spiritual values rapidly transforming into “homogenization” in the World by the image of “universalization” in today's conditions where the concept is nourished by the ideology of neoliberalism. However globalization is not a “direct imposition” on societies, but on the contrary, it is a fact that societies are somehow “attracted” by adaptation. So the effects in our daily lives of the globalization process that affects the world are become visible. In other words, almost every area is rapidly transforming and resembling from our workplaces, the lives across the streets we walk and shops [3]. The resembling process influenced particularly to cities that are the space of our everyday life. The most significant impact of globalization on cities is the loss of its originality and the change in their identities [4].

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Especially the tendency of homogenization observed in many social and physical elements such as pleasures, styles, lifestyles coming from the globalization causes the places where the historical and cultural identities of the cities are rapidly disappearing. In addition, cities are entering a global race on the road to becoming a global city. In this race, while the discourse of bringing up the unique and local values of the city, global cities are becoming the single type of consumption places of the capitalist world [5]. So a localization practice is observed in which the local values are destroyed as aimed and the city identities are ignored day by day.

A. Cities in the Impact of Globalization and the Identity of the Lost City

In general “identity” is expressed that any living thing or object in nature is unique from the others in various aspects, which is distinguished from one object to another one [6]. Besides “urban identity” is the difference of a city from other cities, its original character, and its originality [7]. This uniqueness in the cities should not be sought only in the context of plan or architectural structures. Culture, social texture, traditions, population structure, economic structure, religious beliefs and many other factors have influenced the identity of the city ever since.

Cities have continued their development and evolution as a result of their dynamic structures since they existed [8]. However this transformation has never been experienced in the form of “deindividuation”, it has been adapted in a way as long as it is lived.

On the other hand as a result of the urban destruction caused by the Second World War in the 1945 came to the agenda, external dependence emerging during urban transformation studies, the formation of similarities in lifestyles, the need for a single improvement and the uniformization of space textures, thus, the creation of single culture is in question. Despite these developments, with the introduction of the concepts of “locality, traditionalism and protectionism” in the 1970s, efforts to protect the identity of the city have also started [5].

It is also not possible to evaluate these processes independently of the welfare state. The Keynesian state, while contributing to the transformation of cities in some way, furthermore, urban conservation begins to be included on the agenda. However oil crisis in 1973 has also changed the sense of a state that has upset economic balances in the world. The reflections of this new concept of state, which has been minimized, have been clearly observed in cities.

Neoliberalism, which has been under the influence of the world since the 1980s and has never been so effective before has transformed cities recklessly and rapidly damaged urban

culture, urban values and the identity of the city [3]. In this process, efforts such as the implementation of large-scale infrastructure and urban transformation projects, transnational diplomacy initiatives for globalization of local and national capital, financial and strategic support for the dissemination of global urban and urban competitiveness projects, cultural policies for the creation of images and identities in line with this global urban vision in order to attract foreign capital and professional upper classes as “accumulation spaces” of cities, have appeared as applications that have marked almost all cities in recent years. In this competitive environment, governments are increasing their domestic and foreign debts in a hurry to attract more foreign capital to their country or cities, while falling into a debt dilemma and getting away from their identity in this way [2], [9], [10].

In particular, the building activities carried out by ignoring the original characteristics of the cities significantly damages the city identity. Both high-rise skyscrapers and material characteristics are considered to be social and material factors such as local culture and architectural heritage. That is why, with globalization, cities often lose their identities and become a homogeneous type [11] their silhouettes deteriorate and the memory of the city remains only in memories.

B. The Reflections of Globalization in Turkey

Since the 1980s, it is seen that private and state investments are increasingly directed towards cities in Turkey. This situation caused large amounts of resources primarily to investments in areas such as infrastructure, transportation, housing, and cities are no longer only small-scale interests and capital [12].

The city, which has historically been regarded as a “social field of struggle”, is seeking to be “operated” in a different way in this new process. This new formation, in a sense, aims to commodify urban common consumption vehicles and make them available on the market. In this process, it is seen that public-private cooperation has been established in order to remove the city from the high-rise areas, especially the most profitable production areas, and to make the areas of the private sector into profitable, high-rise areas with the development arrangements/changes of local administrations [13].

It should not be ignored that this situation includes threats such as the exclusion of large public sector beneficiaries from the city space, the removal of them from the city or the lack of sufficient share from social facilities. Therefore, this process is also the precursor of an inequality that has reached significant dimensions in urban areas. On the one hand, the urban areas which are brought to the service of large companies and upper-income groups by taking over the global capital and private sector through the erosion of the state and strengthening of local administrations; On the other hand increasingly impoverished, dilapidated neighborhoods they live in the middle class and the lower income groups, apartment houses, the slum areas and depressions, the former business and trade areas, has formed an overview of the city in Turkey [2].

The Great Marmara earthquake in 1999 was a turning point for the cities of Turkey which took its place in general from

globalization. The collapse of many buildings and the loss of thousands of lives brought about the fragility of the cities in the face of the disaster [14] and urban transformation has become an event that needs to be realized as soon as possible. In this context, the AKP government, which came to power in 2003, also drew attention to the risk of disaster in the cities and embarked on an urban transformation operation [15].

C. The Urban Transformation in Turkey

The urban transformation that has not been introduced throughout history and not implemented within a plan, subsequently it has become a turning point since 1980 with the introduction of concepts of globalization and sustainability [14]. This concept can be defined as an existing structure, a part of city and the function of creating the city such as this is transforming into a form that is different from the way that the relation with the city comes to the end or has an adverse effect on the city, or the buildings are destroyed and replaced with the needs of the city.

Urban transformation is made in various forms and is defined by different concepts according to its methods and purposes. Some of these include urban renewal, urban revitalization, urban resettlement, urban sanitation, conservation, reconstruction, regulation, cleaning, refurbishment and reconstruction by filling empty areas [16, 17].

Urban transformation activities in Turkey happened for the first time in the last century of the Ottoman era, the construction of fire sites in Istanbul started with the zoning studies. These studies are only physical and socio-economic situations are ignored [18]. These activities were supported by legal arrangements such as the Ebniye nizam-namesi (1848), the Islahat-ı Turuk and the Ebniye nizam-namesi (1864) and the Ebniye Law (1882) [19]. Over time, these interventions have encompassed a variety of transport road designs, including migration policies.

With the establishment of the Republic, Ankara became the capital city, new industrial cities were established for the newly established state. The first urban transformation projects of the Republic have been prepared for the population that will be changed for all these unplanned areas, zoning plans have been prepared for technological developments and for the restoration of the areas that have been worn after the war. Since the 1950s, the process of demolishing and re-structuring the wrong and illegal housing areas has started. While protection and renewal approaches were observed after 1980, it was observed that the selection of the areas to be transformed from the 2000s to the political character and the way to provide annuity cost were adopted and applied [16].

In Turkey for the last sixty years there are many unhealthy structures due to the unplanned, unhealthy and far from aesthetic perceptions. All these building activities have been carried out away from the idea of conservation by ignoring the historical background, identities, artistic architecture cultural and social values of the cities. Thus, in some urban areas are most likely poor, unqualified and unidentified buildings have emerged [20].

As mentioned above, the physical condition of buildings has emerged along with the earthquake, this has also brought

about the need to act swiftly for urban transformation. During this period, the AKP Government, which came to power with neo-liberal rhetoric actions, started to work rapidly in urban transformation all over Turkey. In this context, Law No. 6306 on the conversion of disaster risk prone areas areas was enacted in 2012 and large powers have been granted to the administrations carrying out studies on urban transformation. However, it should be noted that the studies have many deficiencies in the characteristics of the city Identity, Protection dogma and socio-cultural structure. Konya is one of the cities that receive the share from the transformation.

According to the law no. 6306, it is observed that the buildings evacuated in the Cappadocia (have a local identity) region and the buildings in the villages are used by the building owners to dismantle their stones and use them in the buildings they have newly settled, thus it destroys the existing texture unconsciously. This situation demonstrates that in transformation activities or displacement cases, it is necessary not only for the authorities to specialize in the protection of identity but also for the public to be aware of it.

The situation is not very different for Istanbul, which is at the top of all this. With the transformation activities, skyscrapers, towers are rising and the texture and silhouette are disturbed. Together with the cultural level, it goes down. The projects of transforming the slums made in the city wall are also the building groups formed by globalization which is way farther from the identity of Istanbul [21].

Unplanned migration and population growth are also seen in unhealthy residential and commercial areas in Konya. The urban transformation practices that have started in the country as a whole are also seen in Konya, and these unhealthy areas are often demolished and reconstructed in order to create healthy, beautiful, sound, functional spaces. However, the administrative management forces the inhabitants to move away from the place they used to live because they bought the inhabitants' houses by paying them a small amount of money. But unfortunately they can not afford to replace to the newly built houses because of their economic hardship. These newly constructed places are mostly bought for people who live in Konya and who have better financial situation.

Konya, a city with numbers of historical monuments in every corner, has been found worthy to be examined because of the fact that the city, which was home to many civilizations based on all these factors, has not been preserved in any planned manner until now, and many of its works have been destructed and destroyed.

II. KONYA: THE FIRST BIG CITY, ROMAN AND BYZANTINE CITY AND THE SELJUK CAPITAL

Konya city has been an important settlement center for civilizations since the Neolithic Age. The first settlement in Konya was in the Neolithic age, BC. (9000-5500). This period was followed by the Chalcolithic age (5500-3500 B.C.) and the early Bronze Age (3500-2000 B.C.) settlements. In general, the first settlements such as Çatalhöyük were observed during this period.

In the ancient times, the city maintained its strategic importance. With the development of the Roman period, the city was enlarged horizontally, but with the deterioration of

the security during the Byzantine period, the area outside the Alaaddin hill was destroyed. For this reason, the city of Konya during the Byzantine period, currently located in the city center consists of Alaaddin Hill. In addition, the remains of almost all of the structures other than the Eflatun Masjid are not very important for the Byzantine period because of the fact that they only survived until the 20th century.

Suleyman Shah, the founder of the Anatolian Seljuk state, founded the state in Konya in 1076 and he has read it there by the origin of independence. According to most historians, Konya is the first capital of the Seljuks [19]. In addition, the city had hosted Mevlana and this identity has continued even today. With the city being the capital, Turkmens started to settle here and with it science, art and culture have evolved and the physical structure of the city has changed. As a result, Konya experienced the most advanced and important times during the Anatolian Seljuk period. In the historical process, the Ottoman period also passes as a Sanjak.

The city was the capital of the Anatolian Seljuk State for nearly two centuries and the consequences of this are of great importance to the city. It is also home to many philosophers, religious scholars and philosophers, especially Mevlana from the philosophical point of view. It can be seen as a source of cultural and social activities as a result of the fact that it was the capital and hosted lots of wisdom in this period. The city is limited to the inner and outer city walls. The inner city walls are around the Alaaddin Hill, while the outer city walls are about 2 km in diameter, including the Alaaddin Hill center. The city is located between these walls and trade areas around the gates of the city walls. Because of the importance of trade during the Seljuk period, there are many trade buildings in and around the city.

Libraries were opened in Konya during the Seljuks period. In this period, great historical and cultural breakthroughs were made in history, literature, Philosophy, Art, Medicine, Cosmogeography, law and religion, and accordingly, madrasahs, mosques, libraries, tombs, fountains, castles, khans, baths, bazaar and bedesten, bridges, palaces were constructed. Because of these facts looking at the city of Konya, this is the biggest change in this period and its effects continue until today.

During the Seljuks period, the famous philosopher Mevlana was invited to the city and settled here. After that, Konya became the center of Science and gained a new identity. Those who heard that Mevlana had settled here started to migrate and caused the city to expand to the East beyond the city walls².

In the period of Anatolian principalities, as in the Seljuks, Konya's capital period continued and so as the cultural activities because the Karamanoğulları Principality had Islamic faith and Anatolian culture like the Seljuks, mausoleums, mosques and mosques continued to be built. During this period, the Turkish-Islamic city-neighborhood culture continued. Since this period is not long in temporal

² Today, when historical center and texture are examined, it is observed that the Mevlana mausoleum is the center of important roads, the environmental building is integrated with the dergah structure, and the mausoleum is not only a visitor center but also the historical center 22. Deniz, K., *Konya'da farklı üç kentsel mekanda kent kimliği üzerine bir araştırma*. 2004, Selçuk Üniversitesi Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü

terms, its effects are clearly scrutinized only in the repair of some structures.

After being conquered by the Ottoman Empire in 1397 by Yıldırım Beyazıt, the city continued its existence as a member state that had lost its previous significance. In this period, it is evident that monumental buildings such as mosques, fountains, and madrasahs were constructed in architectural approach. As from the time of the Seljuks, Mevlana's tomb is in the middle of the city and its surroundings are recognized as an important center.

As a result of the fire that took place in the city in 1867 and lasted for about three days, the development movements had become slow and steady. Zoning activities accelerated by the governors from the period of 1898 and many important buildings on the axle were demolished or tried to be demolished by combining them in large aspects between the station and Mevlana tomb [23].

A. Transformation of Konya from the Republican Era

By the time of the Republic period, many buildings and monuments were built in Konya and activities were carried out in order to bring the city to another level of prosperity. It is known that architects who were important for the period were invited to Konya to contribute to the construction of buildings. As it affected other cities of Turkey during this period, the movement of migration started from rural to urban areas in 1950, and transformed the urban identity of Konya.

In this period, the country is undergoing urban transformation in general. For Konya in 1930s, zoning activities started by architect Şehabettin. The first development plan was prepared by Asim Kömürçüoğlu in 1944. After this plan, other city's plans were prepared in 1954, 1966 and 1982 were in place [24].

The city's plans for land use were shaped in 1966. Although the Venice regulation (1964) was published and was accepted by Turkey in 1966, the concept of conservation was not integrated into the plan in 1966, but only on a single building scale [20]. Due to these decisions, the classical houses in Konya which constitute the texture of the City were ignored in the plans and the houses with gardens were replaced by an apartment building. In the 1990s, the number of apartment blocks has increased and the typical Konya residential houses had decreased very fastly [23]. This has led to the loss of texture of the city due to the lack of conservation of the historical center. Thus, a lot of damages has been done to the existing city identity. In this period, new streets outside the historical center were opened and new centers and axles were formed. With the new opening of these axles, the character of the high-rise buildings are seen. Additionally, the city was protected from the most imperative urban problem of Turkey, the slum, by the decision to establish slum prevention zones taken during that certain period of time³.

Since 1980's, the city, affected by the winds of liberal transformation in the world and in Turkey, has experienced an economic leap and added the feature of being the traditional "grain warehouse" to its "industrial city". This process enabled the city to be a stage for many improvements, from its employment structure to its contribution to exports.

Especially since the 2000, through various policies were pursued in the city, alternative identities are tried to be adopted. These are specifically tried to be created as a reflection of the policy preferences of Konya Metropolitan municipality. Physical identities such as model city in transportation, economic identities such as agricultural and industrial city, functional identities such as science and congress city center, historical and social identities such as cultural and historical city are created. However, the real meaning of these identities is still open for discussion.

III. ABRASION OF THE CITY'S IDENTITY IN THE SHADOW OF URBAN TRANSFORMATION IN KONYA

It is a living phenomenon that constantly changes according to the communities and periods that live on the city identity. Konya city has become a constantly changing and transforming city since it's also home to many periods and society. But globalization and changing social life together with the transformation activities life especially in the regions outside the historical city center, such as land speculation and modernization studies show that Konya is seen as a result of deterioration in identity, a homogenization movement, and even with it identity loss.

Urban transformation activities in Konya generally cover the renovation of the sedimentary regions within the city and it is observed that these areas are mostly residential areas. It is used as an auto industry zone and is a part of the city and activities such as the transformation of the area, which is currently being prepared for the project, are being carried out. There are also health and restoration works. In the historical city center, there have been some mistakes such as the destruction of the traditional structures or the destruction of them in the transformation activities that took place until the last years. Thus, the transformation of them from the traditional construction, or replica, the creation of buildings is against the scale of the woven structures. In recent years, however, efforts are being made to revitalize the historical city center and attract tourists. Some of these are restoration work of the historical Bazaar, which is known as the "bazaar of bedesten" in the historical center, restoration work of Mevlana and its environs, restoration work of Alaaddin-Mevlana axle facade arrangements, street health activities of Meng üç Street.

The conversion applications are applied in the historical city center and can be taken away from the land speculation because of its historical and touristic value. Thus, the concept of urban renewal, which is important today, aims to read the history of the place correctly, protect its identity and thus ensure cultural continuity [14]. From this point of view, there are urban transformation activities that have not been completed yet in the tumbling neighborhood of the city where Syrian refugees are mostly located in Konya. Meram Mayor Fatma Toru, who participated in the Fifth National Urban Transformation Congress organized in Istanbul, was awarded the "Municipality Incentive Award" which reveals historical and cultural texture through the urban strategy with his work in the gratitude district." [25]. With the restoration of the historical structures of this locality, it is aimed to complete the

³ The city is known as the only city in Turkey that does not have slums.

renovation of the structures which are compatible with the traditional fabric.

When looking at urban transformation activities outside the historic city center, it is possible to see that the aesthetic perception that does not match the identity of the city does not attach much importance to it and that it has a land speculation focus. The structures that are not compatible with any of the city's past to the present, even in itself, are extremely remote to the scale of people who have been careful in the past. There are also problems arising from the fact that the people who live before these practices do not have the material situation to live in that region after the application.

Another example is the stadium area where a new one is built in another part of the city due to insufficient capacity in the city center. This area was a building complex which incorporated certain images of the city's history, such as in swimming pools, tennis courts, indoor and outdoor sports halls, football stadium and many other functions. However, since a new complex is being constructed, it is obvious it may lose its prevalent function and generally is not cognizant of its new functions, but the demolition of the area has already been started. In other words, the area that carries the value of time for the people with globalization can be destroyed without any consideration. It is also filled with question marks as to what is the existing structure will be like when the train station building in the same area is inadequate because of the implications of the rails of the high-speed train, and further, new station complex has started to be built in another area of the city. The outcome of this situation is that the current train station is going to continue with the less frequent trains and the result is still unknown.

IV. EVALUATION AND CONCLUSIONS

As compared to other cities of Turkey, Konya is undergoing a huge urban transformation nowadays. However, these transformation practices take place in the form of building new constructions without regard to the identity of the city and also protectionism.

When making a brief evaluation on the transformation process, we can say that the historical necessity was of the city was failed to notice for a long time. Especially the historical city center and its surroundings were come up against a huge destruction.

Although the city center "Alaaddin" and its surroundings were founded the years before the Ottoman era, there is no sign of the Roman-Byzantine period. On the other hand, Konya was a very necessary Anatolian Turkish city (as a capital of Seljuks) until it loses its importance in the Ottoman era. But the city's location is highly strategic ever. So the railway was built at the city in Ottoman era, as the city was considered to be a major point the connectivity of transportation. The first planning activities started in this period, but it remained to be typical Anatolian city.

The main land use plans of the city were prepared in Republican period but these plans were extremely far from the concept of protectionism. Also this kind of planning, causing the destruction of the structures and the texture of the city which constitute the identity of Konya city.

On the other hand, during the Republican era, a new architectural trend has been developed. The identity of the city has led to the development of a positive identity of these structures. Today, it is observed that these urban transformation activities are aimed to preserve only the historical centre, but the other urban regions are constructed without identifying its identity and quite far from Konya city's original identity.

The relative awareness on the nature of the city, traditionalism, protectionism and identity in the renewal and urban transformation applications has begun lately. But it can be mentioned that this awareness is related to economic motivation mostly. For example, the restoration and the revitalization of the historical city center is aimed to increase the customer of the bedesten and somewhat only a part of it was made into realization.

On the other hand, urban safety is another motivation for urban transformation at the city center. In other words, the transformation works that are currently being implemented around the historical center are also aimed to keep away the criminal and marjinal people away from the historical center, so that the security problem should be solved with the reconstruction of the buildings to be renewed at the city center.

Whatever motivation it is, there is an obligation for urban transformation in Konya. But first of all, this transformation must depend on the city identity. However, this study shows that urban transformation applications are conducted mostly without taking into consideration of the city identity. Nevertheless, we believe the study will contribute to the limited literature on this subject and be a remarkable reference for both the policy makers and practitioners. Also this study can be evaluated as an entrance for the further studies and detailed surveys can be carried out.

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