The Transformation of Turkish Coffeehouses in terms of Public Space and Collective Memory

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ABSTRACT
This study has examined Turkish Coffeehouses (Kahvehaneler) and their representations under the theoretical framework of collective memory from an architectural perspective. In the scope of this study, a comprehensive analysis of the material qualifications of the coffeehouse as a public space is elaborated. This analysis has two aspects: In the first aspect, the change in the political, social and economic contextual evolution of Turkey on a national and global scale is examined, while in the second dimension, the change and transformation experienced in the Coffeehouses from the establishment of the Republic of Turkey to the present. The information gained from this analysis is associated with the third dimension which is focused on place / memory relations. This dimension has been examined by making use of memoirs, bibliography, newspaper articles and photographs of memory spaces in coffee houses as a public space that contributes to the social daily life of the city.
Keywords: Turkish Coffeehouses, Public Space, Collective Memory, Spatial Transformation.

Kamusal Alan Olarak Kollektif Bellekte Kahvehanelerin Değişimi ve Dönüşümü

ÖZ
Bu çalışma, Türk kahvehaneleri ve temsillerinin değişim ve dönüşümünü kollektif hafızanın kuramsal çerçevesinde mimari bir bakış açısıyla incelemektedir. Bu çalışma kapsamında kamusal mekan olarak kahvehanenin niteliklerinin kapsamlı bir analizi yapılmıştır. Bu analiz iki boyutludur. Birinci boyutta, Türkiyenin siyasi, sosyal ve ekonomik bağlamsal evriminin ulusal ve küresel ölçekteki değişimi incelenirken İkinci boyutta incelenen ise, Türkiye Cumhuriyetinin kuruluşundan günümüze kadar Kahvehanelerde yaşanan değişim ve dönüşümdür. Bu analizden elde edilen bilgiler, yer/bellek ilişkilerine odaklanan üçüncü boyutta beraber incelenmektedir. Bu boyutta kentin sosyal gündelik yaşamına katkı sağlayan kamusal mekan olarak kahvehanelerdeki bellek mekanlarını, hatıratlar, bibliyografya, gazete yazıları ve fotoğraflardan yararlanılarak incelenmiştir.
Anahtar Kelimeler: Kahvehaneler, Kamusal Alan, Kollektif Bellek, Mekansal Bellek.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid change in our daily lives due to technological, economical, social and political transformations in the modern era effects our built environment, too. Cultural origins and heritage such as memory, identity and belonging' is also affected by these rapid changes. Spatial transformations makes the public spaces as a life space constructed again. With this change, values that are important for individuals and societies are damaged, destroyed or transformed. Therefore, the releations established with the city and the analysis between the social bonds formed with cities and the life spaces are become important in the context of memory.

Memory as a collective entity, has been a dynamic and evolving phenomenon and associated with social frameworks. The public space, which forms the background of social frameworks, is in continous transformation within political, economic and social actions. In this research, we examine the transformation and representation of Turkish coffeehouses as a public space, according to the socio-politic tendencies in Turkey. With this framework,

the construction and maintenance of collective memory of Turkish coffeehouses as a public space were analyzed related with national identity.

This paper emphasise the importance of Turkish coffeehouses as a public spaces. Some researches in the literature indicate that there was no public sphere popular like Turkish coffeehouses in the Ottoman society until the 19th century (Mardin 1995; Delanty, 1999). As in Ottoman İstanbul also in Anatolia, the coffeehouses were important as the public space of everyday life a way and site of public communication. And Kömeçoğlu (2001), defined them like an arena called Polis (i.e. Romans' civitas) which relates the socio-cultural to the political. Coffeehouses are the places where people with different status and background come together and freely discussed and criticised public issues and affairs (Kömeçoğlu, 2001). In the arise of Ottoman public sphere, this coffeehouse society plays and important role. According to Kömeçoğlu (2001), the coffeehouses were the places of ambivalent interaction of freedom and control (Kömeçoğlu, 2001).

In this study, the reason why coffeehouses were chosen as the research area is that they are the most appropriate and efficient tool for reading the change and transformation of urban and social memory with the history from past to the future. This research, whose theoretical study is examined from an architectural point of view, analyzes Turkish coffeehouses and their representations under the theoretical framework of collective memory. In the scope of this study, the changes and transformations of coffeehouses were analyzed comprehensively by juxtaposing two aspects: in the first aspect we look at the evolution of Turkey in national and global scales in a political, social and economical point of view. In the second aspect we examine the material transformation of Turkish coffeehouses throughout the foundation of the Republic till today. Coffeehouses, as public spaces which makes important contributions to social daily life of the city, were constructed through the examination of places of memories on coffeehouses. These reviews are based on bibliographies, newspaper articles and photographs about coffeehouses. The progress of this study indicates the relationship between the public space, collective memory and the relations of power in a historical context.

1. Coffeehouses as Public Space

Coffee, which was brought to Europe from THE Ottoman lands in the 17 th century, arrived to İstanbul in 1543. The first coffeehouse in İstanbul was established around 1550. Just as in the Arabian Peninsula, the Sufis drank coffee while making their religious services to stay up during long and sleepes nights of worship. Because of its pleasant and stimulating effect like hashish, coffee was considered haram and banned religiously. Although it was banned, it continued to consumed widely. Enis Batur (2001) explains the popularity of coffee in Muslim countires with the following words: ``*unlike the Christians who solved their problem of pleasure by imbibing the blood of Christ in the symbolic form of wine, Muslims were highly motivated to discover an alternative source of such pleasure since wine was proscribed for them''* (Batur, 2001, 6).

Later, coffee moved from the religious to the secular sphere. Coffeehouses transformed and changed the urban daily life and social interaction patterns. A new socialization process began and urban space was reconstructed.

Jurgen Habermas (1991) draws attention to the political importance of public sphere and evaluates in detail how people come together in the public sphere. Habermas' approach to the public sphere offers a universalist perspective: ''*wherein citizens with differing backgrounds and beliefs are able to meet within the public sphere for dialogue and gradually, through a rational encounter amongst informed speakers, come to a place of understanding and shared belief. Without this public sphere encounter, people are confined to their own parochial beliefs and perspectives, and knowledge is limited to what they already 'know' to be true''*. (Wohl, 2017).

According to Schimmel (1976), the main purpose of socialization is to talk. Coffeehouses, as public talking places where this socialization took place. However, coffeehouses were not places where idle talk was discussed, but much more than that where social, political and cultural issues were discussed and intense literary activities were held. For example, neighborhood coffeehouses were similar to small public libraries where mainly religious and popular (folk) epics could be read and listened to (Işın, 2001, 32). In fact, the coffeehouses had a significant role to disseminate the information. Due to this, these public spaces were named as; school of knowledge (Arendonk 1997, 451): or medere't-ül-ulema, mekteb-i irfan and academy of scholars (Dawud, 1992,1).

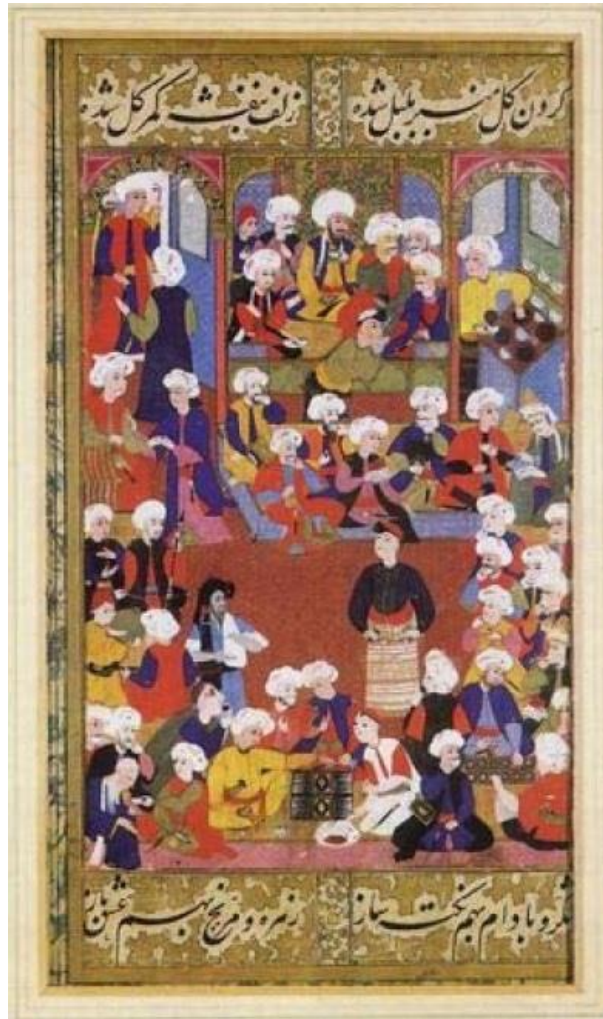## 2. Collective Memory and The Transformation Of Coffeehouses

It is important to create a memory by recording the continuity of the culture by coming together at the point between the experiences approved by the society and the present time. Memory in this sense; it is entirely related to the spread of continuity, the evaluation of uniqueness, and the emergence of a time series. (Nora, 2006:160). As it can be understood from this, memory contruction is a process that is built in stages and realized through experiences. It seems possible with these past experiences that the culture created by modern Turkey is a social meeting point at the point of ensuring continuity and that it guides this most effective cultural period in which culture is lived and approved by sharing. Despite the pressure of liberal consumption practices, which have no connection with the past and popularized by the ideology of constant change, the determination of Coffeehouses (Kahvehaneler) are continue their existence as a places of memory.

Nora (2006) summarizes the necessary conditions of Coffeehouses as memory spaces: ' In memory formation, memory spaces are important meeting places with many dimensions with these meanings. Adaptation of individuality to the community, subconscious, symbolization and transferring to the social realm can be made with memory spaces. Memory is important as it provides a framework rather than content. Old layers of memory integrate history. They are interconnected, fused with each other' (Nora, 2006; 10).

Coffeehouses became an important public space in shaping the everyday experiences and practices of people. Although there were various public space alternatives such as public baths, boza houses, taverns and mosques in the public space of İstanbul, coffeehouses have become more popular as they appeal to a wide range of users including both high and low social statuses.
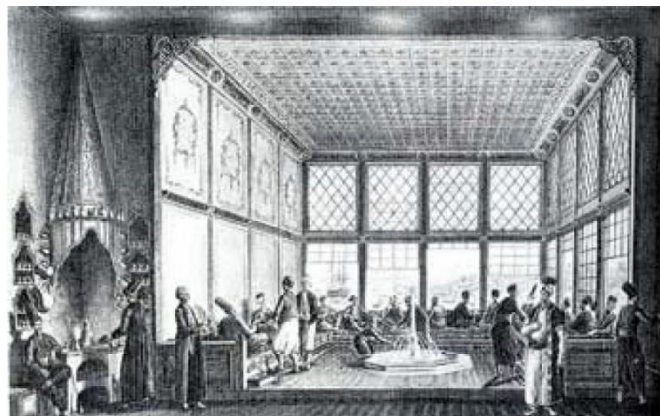
It is claimed that the number of coffeehouses introduced to the public space of İstanbul in the middle of the 16 th century increased rapidly in the following years. Reorganizing the spatial topography and transforming the existing social interaction patterns, coffeehouses have become the central element of İstanbul's urban life. Activities such as story-teller (called Meddah), shadow theatre (Karagöz) and literary actions took place in coffeehouses as leisure places for adult-male individuals only.

Salah Birsel (1975) in his book on coffeehouses, written by Peçevi based on manuscripts, he states that the first coffeehouse was opened in İstanbul in 1555. According to the same source, there were two people named Shams from Damascus and Hakim from Aleppo, opened the first coffeehouse in Tahtakale. Over time, these places started to spread all over the İstanbul. According to Birsel: *'Some of the self-indulgent 'help people' especially the literate article, has a lot of the elegant ones gathered here. Some read books, some play backgammon, some play chess. Those who spent many coins and stamps for bringing their friends together, with these coffeehouses they can be altogether only with one or two cup of coffee'* (Birsel, 1975).

Picture 1. A Miniature showing a Coffeehouse in İstanbul in the 16th century. (quoted from Ralph S. Hattox, Coffee and Coffeehouses)

This minature shows us how the coffeehouses used as a public space and which actions takes place during sixteenth century. In the bottom of the minature,depicts an environment where men playing games such as backgammon and manqala, musicians playing their instruments and singing and some coffeeshop customers talk among themselves. On the bottom left, an old man who has a very obvious illness is drinking his coffee. (The health benefits of coffee are mentioned.) The young man called Köçek (a young man dancing in a women's clothes) depicted in the middle of the minature, is dancing with wooden bells in his hands in front of the four musicians and entertain guests.

Picture 2. Interior view of a Coffeehouse from the Ottoman Period (Hattox, 1998).

The coffeehouse in picture 2 has a view of the Bosphorous and Sarayburnu, which is located on the Tophane hills of the Ottoman period. A total of 22 people are depicted in the picture, 8 of whom are responsible for the coffee service. The others were the frequenters who were sitting on a well-designed divan around the periphery of a large room with a fountain in the middle.

Beside the function of entertainment, coffeehouses has a educational role in the society. In these years (first year of opening) the literacy rate was very low. So it prevents the society from the information. They couldn't read the newspapers. With the circulation of newspapers in coffeehouses, this obstacle can be hung to some extent. Because one of the coffeehop customers in coffeehouses, reading the newspaper aloud for the illiterate and in this way the news is widely was learned by the society. Along with the newspapers, communication is now freed from closeness. Reading newspapers loudly to the illiterate and those whose economic level is not suitable, readers can reach a large number of newspapers, including the coffeehouse in the most remote corners, it has created the opportunity to jointly comment and discuss the news from all over the country. This situation also led to the emergence of a public opinion in coffeehouses. (Faroqhi, 1997).

On the other hand, Coffeehouses has a importance in a Ottoman city for wayfinding. They served as landmarks, as reference points in finding one's way in the city: *It's (İstanbul's) geography is almost past finding out, for no true map of it, so far as I can discover, as yet exists, and no man knows his street or number. What he knoes is the fountain or the coffeehouse near which he lives, and the quarter in which they are situated'* (Birsel, 1975). Through the archives we can undestand the users of the Coffeehouses. In these documents, it is argued that the daily life in the Ottoman Empire was shaped by İslamic discourses and structured within a religious hierarchical whole. According to Hattox, the coffeehouse was identified as a Müslim institution where religious discrimination was dominantly felt in the society and which was a mirror of the society. Contrary to Hattox, contemproray travel accounts and archival documents give different information about the coffeehouse users. According to Thevenot '*all sorts of people come to these places (i.e. the coffeehouse) without distinction of religion or social positions'* (Thevenot, 1687)

With the proclamation of republic Coffeehouses had a different mission. In the Republic Era, especially after the alphabet revolution in 1928, some coffeehouses were used to introduced the New Turkish alphabet to the public beside the National Schools which built by Atatürk. Coffeehouse gained a reputation as the places where the struggle to teach the New Turkish Alphabet to intellectuals and society. Coffeehouses were equipped with chalkboards and coffeetables and converted in to leisure rooms. Lectures were given to coffeehouse users and the public who volunteered for the course. (transfered from Lewis quated from Öztürk, 2006).In this way, coffeehouses allowed the new alphabet to spread among the people and contributed directly to the reading process. Especially in the years of the war of independence, the rapid progress of the 'Education Mobilization' (Eğitim Seferberliği), which was entered in to midst of its troubles, even 'People's Houses' (Halkevleri) and in the information of establishments such as 'Village Institutes' (Köy Enstitüleri), coffeehouses were part of it. It can be said that they had a transitional role in the transformation of these spaces.

By the 1930s, in İstanbul, Beyazıt, 'Küllük Kahvesi' was the most popular space through famous literateurs like Yahya Kemal, Sait Faik, Abdülhak Şinasi, Tarık Buğra, etc...And also it was the meeting center of enthusiasts of 'science and literature'. (Picture 3.)

It can be said that such places are famous coffeehouse of the past which does not exist nowadays has the identity of academia and preffered by the famous litearry writers, poets, novelists and journalists. In this spaces, scientific issues were discussed and even many decisions of releasing journals were taken.

Picture 3. Küllük Kahvesi (https://listelist.com/kulluk-kahvesi-hakkinda/)

Not only Turkish society, but also in Europe as well as transforming coffeehouses to literary forum. Poets and writers present their latest works to a critical audience of users to evaluate their works. Alhough it is not often encountered today, in the past it was especially frequented by literary figures. It has known that in the coffeehouses there were lots of controversy about literature, social and cultural issues. These elites are found in these places as an artist and this mission gives coffeehouses a different quality as a meeting center.

Picture 4. From the Album of Fethi Sabunsoy Photography Archives

Picture 5. From the Album of Fethi Sabunsoy Photography Archives

Today, coffeehouses have lost its cultural missions such as theather and meddah shows. Due to the lack of their qualities, they are exposed to negative evaluations and almost they are perceived as 'time killing centers'. Even Köknel (2004), mentions about their negative affects as young people will acquire negative habits such as alcohol and drug use, mental disorders, diseases, various crimes. While emphasizing that, one of the examples he showed for these negative habits is 'to go to the coffeeshop and arcades to gamble'. In a column titled 'Coffeehouses create spiritual tension' published by Köknel described the coffeehouses as follows: ' Coffeeshops are the worst place to spend time. If it has %10-20 positive side on the other hand it has %80 negative side. Maybe there is a sense of comfort due to the relationship of people with face to face communication. I mean people who have some problems and troubles convey it to those who live in that place without difficulty. It gives a small feeling of comfort. But apart from that, it is generally a place to spend free time. Yet, every leisure time should be spent in a way that relaxes people physically and mentally. In coffeeshops, this environment does not exist. Various games are played here. Therefore, this situation is a person's mental and physical energy flow in vain.' (Köknel, (http:/www.milliyet.com.tr/2000/04/26/yasam/yas01.html).

Picture 6. An Interior View from the Coffeehouse in neighborhood (From the Individual Photography Archive, (Özdemir, 2019)

Picture 7. An exterrior view from the Coffeehouse in neighborhood.(Özdemir, 2019).

Today, the coffeehouse is a part of our society and people who lives in cities and towns. They use these spaces for resting, having fun, meeting, listening to music-radio and watching television. It is a place for reading newspapers and discussing political, religious, economic and current events (Demiray, 1987). Coffeehouses everywhere have become a haunt at all hours of the day. The users of these places are increasing day by day outside the bussiness hours.

Picture 8. Cafe Nero in İstanbul Nişantaşı (https://www.bikahvebikeyif.com/yeni-ve-ilham-verici-bir-kahve-deneyimi-nisantasi-caffe-nero/)

Picture 9. Cafe Nero in İstanbul Nişantaşı (https://www.bikahvebikeyif.com/yeni-ve-ilham-verici-bir-kahve-deneyimi-nisantasi-caffe-nero/)

Coffeehouses still protect its public space identity. Nowadays these spaces are turned to CAFE's which young people use for studying, chatting, etc..

CONCLUSION
Coffeehouses which ensure the integrity of both the social reality of the individual and the culture of urban space are one of the most important public spaces of the society. Coffeehouses are places where spheres of power become visible and secure. At the same time, they are the areas where the memory of the city is constituted, the whole of meanings specific to the city's culture is derived and reflected and also communicational prctices are carried out.

Thus it is seen that, coffeehouses which are defined as social urban spaces, are important public spaces that affect both social class diversityand ideologically everyday practices. However, liberal economic policies implemented after 1980 deeply affected the daily life experiences, created new consumption areas based on new industrial production and coffeehouses were changed and transformed in this context.

Coffeehouses have been unique with their creativity, spirit and environment of creativity since their entry into social life. In the historical process, coffeehouses have brought a new life to society. They have given a fluidity (dynamisim) and a new movement. This new form of movement turned coffeehouses into an information and news distribution environment where people are listened to and talked about. New development in social life undoubtedly bring positive and also carry negative effects. But this is a natural development of social life.

From this standpoint, this research examined the change and transformation of coffeehouses from public, social and political point of view. The coffeehouse, which emerged as a new public space in the urban setting in the middle of the 16th century, rearranged the spatial organization and trasnformed the forms of socialization by making it livable for adult male individuals.

Coffeehouses are still important public spaces in social life of society but it turns into CAFE. Coffeehouses in which they are located, meet the needs of age and the living conditions have changed in their form. Especially with indurtrialization, coffeehouses have turned in to CAFEs, in the means of western lifestyle consumer society, popularization with the effect of phenomena such as globalization. But it loses its identity of which it has at the sixteenth century with the modernisation and consumption. As an architectural designers to protect the important public space of the society, we should get more information about societies use of public spaces to design. These kind of important public spaces should be designed with its identity not being at the bottom of any apartment (Picture 7.)

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