TASARIM İLE SOSYAL DEĞİŞİMİN İMKANLARI ÜZERİNE: MİMARLIK EĞİTİMİNDE DENEYSEL BİR ÇALIŞMA¹

ABOUT THE POSSIBILITIES ARISING FROM DESIGN AND SOCIAL CHANGE: AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY IN ARCHITECTURE EDUCATION

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Öz: Makale, mimarlık öğrencilerinin mimarlık ve toplum ilişkisi üzerine düşünceleri ve içinde bulundukları topluluk veya diğer organizasyonların problemlerine ilgili olmalarını sağlamak üzere geliştirilen Toplumsal Fayda Odaklı Mimarlık isimli seçmeli ders kapsamında yapılan çalışmaları içermektedir. Ders kapsamında; öğrencilerden gruplar oluşturularak, Bursa ili merkezinde, alt ve orta gelir gruplarının yaşadığı mahallelerinin fiziksel ve sosyal yapısını incelemeleri istenmiştir. Öğrencilerden, alan araştırması yaptıkları mahallede, yerel halkın ihtiyacı olan bir fonksiyon için mekan önerisi sunmaları istenmiştir. Üretilen tüm projeler, üniversite kampusunda her gün çok sayıda kişinin kullandığı bir alan olan öğrenci merkezinde sergilenmiştir. Programın sonunda öğrencilerden derisi değerlendirmeleri istenmiştir. Öğrencilerin tamamının gerçek bir probleme yönelik tasarım üretmekten memnun oldukları ve mimarının toplumsal yönüne ağırlık verilen projelerin uygulanması yönündeki çalışmaların içinde yer almaya istekli oldukları görülmüştür. Sonuç olarak, öğrencilerin mimarlık eğitimi içinde teorik bilgilerden yanında, bizzat deneyerek, yaparak ve işin içinde olarak mimari tasarım alanındaki bilgi ve becerilerini geliştirebilecekleri bir eğitim ortamını talep ettikleri görülmüştür.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Mimarlık Eğitimi, Mimari Tasarım, Sosyal Değişim

Abstract: This paper investigates the activities in the scope of the elective course entitled “Architecture Focused on Social Benefits”, which has been developed to direct architecture students to think about the relationship between architecture and the society and the problems in their society or the problems of other organizations. Within the course; the groups were established with students and every group was asked to examine the physical and social structure of Yıldırım district of Bursa/Turkey, where middle and lower income groups are concentrated in the center of Bursa province. Students were asked to suggest a function related to the needs of the local people in one of the quarters where students have carried out their field research. At the end of the program, students were asked to evaluate the lesson. It was seen that all of the students were pleased to develop designs for a real problem and that they are willing to take part in architecture activities focusing on the society. As a result, it was understood that in addition to the theoretical information that students receive in the scope of the architecture education, to develop their knowledge and skills students request a training environment in which they can try and implement projects and become a part of the architectural design process.

Key Words: Architecture Education, Architectural Design, Social Change

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1. INTRODUCTION

Today global economic crises, climate change, rapid consumption of global resources, natural disasters, rapid population increase, fast migration to cities, insufficient infrastructure and services in cities due to unplanned urban development, unemployment, and increasing poverty are among the most important global problems. Due to these issues there are people in rural and urban settings that cannot adequately use services such as housing, education, health, culture, and recreation. In the face of the increasing environmental and social problems, architecture as a profession has a large potential in creating an important impact based on its approach towards social problems. In this regard, architects can play an important social role by focusing architecture activities on meeting the needs of the society. Small scale and relatively independent initiatives of architects can meet the needs of the people in their own society of the needs of people in different locations (Dogru, 2009). The impact of such independent architecture initiatives on the physical and social settings and their results and indirect impact on the social life vary.

Architecture activities that focus on the social benefit can employ various implementation processes. This paper associates the subject with the architecture education and therefore focusses on the architecture activities inside or connected to the university setting. Architecture activities inside or connected to the university setting are those

which emerge as lessons or internships within the architecture curriculum or in workshops or by activists or by volunteering architects outside the architecture curriculum. For example, Rural Studio, which is formed in relation to university education is a design and construction studio programme established in 1993 and carries out activities depending on the Auburn University in the state of Alabama in the USA. The purpose of the programme is to bring forward the social responsibility of the architecture profession and create necessary conditions to create new, secure and healthy buildings for people in need. Throughout this programme for second and fifth year students, participants leave the university campus and spend all their time in rural settings with the local people. During the programme students get to know the local people and their characteristics, define their needs and design projects accordingly (Gündoğdu, 2011; Dean, 2002). Smoke House (1994), Bryant Haybale House (1995), Butterfly House (1996), HERO Playground (1997) Akron pavilion (1997), HERO Children's Center (1998), Thomaston Farmers Market (2000), Akron boys and girls club 1 (2001), HERO Knowledge Cafe (2002), Organic Vegetable Stand (2003), Newbern Fire Station (2004), Lions Park Baseball Fields (2006), Akron Boys & Girls Club 2 (2007), Lions Park Skate park (2009), Thinnings Bridge (2010), Greensboro Boys and Girls Club (2012), Rural Studio Farm Storehouse (2015), Rural Studio Farm (2016) are a few of the many projects that emerged in the scope of the Rural Studio.

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In Turkey the obligatory summer internship programme of the Architecture Department of METU/Turkey is an example to social architecture activities that are connected to university education. In the scope of this internship programme, students produce a small scale building in a rural areas from scratch (Zelef et.al, 2001; Gür & Yüncü, 2004; Önür et al. 2006; Erbil, 2008). In these summer internship programs, a public building is designed and constructed to meet a social need in rural areas, architecture students at one hand are given the opportunity to touch and feel materials, implement and see the construction processes to gain the ability of “constructing a building” and at the other hand create a physical and social connection with a rural setting. Among the projects carried out in various locations of Anatolia are; Coffehouse, Ağla/Muğla (1958), Boathouse, Eymir/Ankara (1961-62), Library, Yassihöyük/Ankara (1963), Museum, Ildırı/İzmir (1964), Refreshment-bar, Gölevi/Ordu (1965), Multifunctional Building, Kutludüğün/Ankara (1966), Refreshment-bar, Güneyköy/Elazığ (1966), High School, Eminlik/Niğde (1967), High School, Gilindire/İçel (1968), Government Office, Pınarbaşı/Kastamonu (1968), A Building to Bottle Spring Water, Ilıca/Siva (1970), Motel, Ocaklar/Balıkesir (1970), Guard Booth, Eymir/Ankara (1973), Storehouse Office, METU/Ankara (1974), Multifunctional Building, Eminlik/Niğde (1999), House (Provided to teachers of primary school), Eminlik/Niğde (2000), Additional Building to Ordos Mountain House,

Demirkazık/Niğde (2002), Computer Workshop, Fındıklı/Rize (2003), Library Modification, Yassihöyük/Ankara (2004), Village Clinic, Yahşıhan/Kırıkkale (2005) (Turgay, 2005). Architecture students through this summer internship understand that a large portion of the Turkish population still lives in rural areas. A social interaction is created between students and people living in rural areas. Architecture students play a direct role in creating a building that is valuable for the public in the rural areas.

Activities carried out in Yestermorrow Design-Build School (1980) shine out as good examples to social architecture activities, which are carried out outside the scope of the architecture training curriculum, and in the scope of workshops or volunteered activities of students or student activists. The school is a non-profit organization where design and construction is carried out together. Applied workshops are organized in the Yestermorrow Design-Build School and participants are able to apply what they have learned under the supervision of the supervisors and thus increase their occupational experiences (Sahin, 2013). They offer time and skill in building a variety of projects in collaboration with local non-profits, schools, and other organizations that contribute to the well-being of our community. Some of Yestermorrow projects are cabinetry, concrete countertops, timber frames, yurts, renovations, tiny houses, garden sheds, earthen ovens, tree-houses and other building projects. Architecture

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for Everyone (Herkes için Mimarlık) can be given as an example for the social architecture activities, which are carried out outside the scope of the architecture training curriculum, and in the scope of workshops or volunteered activities of students or student activists in Turkey. Architecture for Everyone is an entity that is both an association and also an independent student organization. The goals of Architecture for Everyone are to produce architectural solutions to the social problems in the country and to expand the scope of the architecture education. Another goal of the association is to push architects to take more initiatives on social problems during their education. It also aims to provide students with the opportunity to apply the theoretical education they receive in the school during their initiatives to provide solutions to social problems (Duman, 2013). Some of the outstanding projects are Mentally Challenged Occupational School Project/Ovakent (2014), Women and Children Spaces Project/Keşlik Village (2014), Inactive Village Schools Project/Kargı (2012), Children's Reading Hall/Çorum (2014), Curious Cat Primary School Landscape/Ankara (2015).

Throughout the architecture education, design proposals are usually developed based on fictional settings independent from limitations such as user groups and budget. Students usually use 1:50, 1:100, 1:200, 1:500 scales and very seldom work on 1:1 scale projects. Therefore, the design process does not include materials and details

sufficiently. Creation of settings that provide implementation of theoretical information and employ experimental activities to create connections with real events and people would be beneficial for the professional development of students (Turgay, 2005). Integrating social architecture activities with architecture education processes will provide students opportunities for their social development and also for their professional skills development, which in turn can make it possible to create projects that can be implemented in real life.

2. METHODS

A selective course was designed to emphasize the importance and to question the possibilities of social change by design. In the scope of the selective course entitled “*Architecture Focused on Social Benefit*” it was aimed to direct students to think about the relationship between architecture and society, and to focus their attention on problems of other organizations. In this regard students were encouraged to work on a real architecture product that aims to serve a real social need. The architecture project's orientation towards a real problem and its focus on the social aspect were emphasized in addition to its historical, theoretical and practical aspects. At the end of the fourteen-week period during the education year an exhibition was organized for all the projects. A process with 4 phases was applied in the scope of the lesson.

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The first phase the architecture activities focused on social benefits, which are carried in the scope of the curriculum of architecture education in the world and/or in the scope of lessons, internships, workshops, volunteer activities of students and activists, and architecture activities focused on social benefits, which are carried out by independent actors in urban and rural settings, were examined and discussed.

In the second phase groups were established with students and every group was asked to examine the physical and social structure of Gökdere, Davutdede, Duaçınarı, Arabayatağı, and Mimar Sinan quarters of Yıldırım district at center of Bursa province in Turkey, where middle and lower income groups are concentrated. In this regard photographs, publications, video records, interviews, surveys, etc. were used by students and the information collected was systematically turned into research reports. Environmental Data (location, climatic characteristics, topographic structure, tree species, etc.), Social Structure (establishment of the neighborhood, socioeconomic structure, general features of structures, spatial features (plan diagram), Architectonic Features (walls, tiling, roofs, stairs, doors, windows) of neighborhoods were subjects of the examination. Every neighborhood researched was examined with the participation of all students and was opened for discussions.

In the third phase students were asked to suggest a function related to the needs of the local people

in one of the quarters in the scope of the field research. The ideas suggested for the location of the building, how and by who it will be used were turned in to concept projects and developed further by members of the jury and students.

In the fourth phase the projects developed were exhibited in the student center in the university campus, which is used by a large number of people every day. It was decided that a participatory approach should be used at the end of the exhibition for the implementation of the project. People who visited the exhibition were asked to vote for their favorite project that they desire to see implemented.

3. FINDINGS

Sample 1 (Stage): It has been understood that narcotic crimes were widespread at Gökdere/ Selimzade Quarter. Therefore, locals consider security as the most important problem. There is a need for a playground and a meeting point for the local people. A new complex that would meet the needs of the inhabitants of the neighborhood at a park, and also increase the daily usage of this park, which is deserted and is considered insecure, in order to make it more secure was proposed. This new location is arranged so that children can use it as a playground, and films can be shown and trainings can be given to the people of the quarter. This wooden structure will have a roof, open sides and the seats made from stairs. The plain wall where the toilets are lo-

cated will be used for posters and announcements.
(Figure 1)

Figure 1. Stage / Aylin Pelin

Sample 2 (Vitamin Bar): The high number of schools and the density of students at the Mimar Sinan Quarter are remarkable. However, the quarter lacks of catering areas for students because the ones that are being used are not suitable. A vitamin bar was proposed to increase the vitamin intake of students, taking into consideration the low economic status of families in the quarter. A fruit collector will be established under the coordination of the schools in the region. The vitamin bar is proposed to be located on the route that is used by children to reach the schools, near a bus stop that can easily be seen. (Figure 2)

Figure 2. Vitamin Bar / Ayşe Sena Çıldır

Sample 3 (Screen): A project was suggested in the Davutdede Quarter that could add color, dynamism, liveliness, and raise the spirit and participation in the slow and monotone lives of children and grownups. The idea is to introduce various cities in the world via screens in the 7-meter tunnel that cuts a park of Yıldırım Municipality. The project will also increase the usage of the park. It is believed that this location, which will provide a new experience related with different locations, will also increase the liveliness of the park. (Figure 3)

Figure 3. Screen / Ayşenur Dönmez

Sample 4 (Pavilion): It has been seen that there is a need for a gathering place for the public with seating units in the Arabayatağı Quarter. A pavilion is suggested on the pedestrian route. This structure will provide an open and semi open resting area for the local people. Also the scarcity of green areas in the region was seen and the concept of vertical gardens will be introduced to the public with implementations on the suggested building. (Figure 4)

Figure 4. Pavilion / Berfin Güngör

Sample 5 (Stand): It has been seen that there are many salesmen that sell commodities at the back of their cars and trucks in the streets of Arabayatağı Quarter and that this activity disturbs the traffic flow. A fixed stand to support local producers was suggested. The design will also make it possible to use the area as a resting place and a meeting place. (Figure 5)

Figure 5. Stand / Ceyda Çağlayan

Sample 6 (Seating Units): It has been seen that there is a strong separation in the Arabayatağı Quarter based on ethnical identities. It is believed that there is a need for social spaces in order to reduce the separation between these groups. Therefore, a social space was established to bring together people with different ethnical backgrounds. The suggested social space is located in the intersection of main roads to increase the chance of people getting together. Also seating units were installed and the pedestrian route was defined

with eaves that produce their own energy using solar power. (Figure 6)

Figure 6. Seating Units / Ecem Taner

Sample 7 (Laundry Room): The Şevket Yılmaz Hospital in the Mimar Sinan Quarter is heavily used. There is a hotel near the hospital that is used by friends and relatives of the patients. There is a need for spaces that can meet the needs of the accompanying people. One of these needs is related to hygiene and therefore a unit that has a laundry room, toilet, bathroom, ironing room and changing room is suggested. Taking into consideration that the accompanying people cannot leave their patients alone for long periods the laundry room is located at a convenient location that is close to the hospital. (Figure 7)

Figure 7. Laundry Room / Fatma Nur Özüpak

Sample 8 (Public Kitchen): Duaçınarı Quarter looks like an industrial zone with many workshops

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and manufacturing shops. There are no suitable locations that the workers in the region can use for eating. A public kitchen is suggested; where workers can eat lunch and where new jobs can be created for unemployed women. This kitchen will also become a social space for women. Refugees usually rent houses in this quarter because of the low rental fees and the kitchen can also support refugees. (Figure 8)

Figure 8. Public Kitchen / İrem Selin Altun

Sample 9 (Playground): It was seen that a playground in the Gökdere Quarter is not used because of neglect and security issues. The aim is to re-design the area to provide children a secure space where they can play and workshops can be organized. Recyclable and low cost materials are selected for the design of the area. (Figure 9)

Figure 9. Playground /H. Kübra Şimşek

Sample 10 (Container): There are many small scale workshops at Duaçınarı Quarter. There are no spaces that provide the workers in Duaçınarı to pass time without paying. It is suggested to provide defined spaces for these workers made of containers. This space will include toilets, resting areas, areas where workers can eat the meals that they bring from their houses, kitchen counters, and seating groups. (Figure 10)

Figure 10. Container / Semin Mutman

Sample 11 (Cube Storages): It has been seen that the people of Davutdede Quarter pass time in front of or around of the Yıldırım Municipality building. It has been seen that the street furniture used in this area was not sufficient. Therefore, seating units that are composed of mobile cubes on rails are designed. Each one of these cubes have a second function, which is a storage area for books, toys, clothing, etc. shared by the people of the area with people in need of such articles.

Figure 11. Cube Storages / Zeynep Altın

4. DISCUSSIONS

In the scope of the “Architecture Focusing on Social Benefit” selective lesson; at the end of the 14-week program, students were asked to evaluate the lesson. Five questions were directed to the students.

- All students have answered “Yes” to the first question which was “Do you think that the lesson entitled “Architecture focusing on social benefit” should be included to the architecture education?”
- All students have answered “Yes” to the second question which was “Would you recommend the lesson entitled “Architecture focusing on social benefit” to other students?”
- All students have answered “Yes” to the first part of the third question which was “Do you think that the lesson entitled “Architecture focusing on social benefit” is assisting your

development?” and have made the following comments to the second part of the question, which was “In which area did the lesson assisted your development?”

“We have discovered problems in our environment and produced solutions to them; I have a larger perspective now and I am more practical.”

“I have understood my responsibilities in the region I live.”

“I looked at urban problems from a different point of view.”

“My awareness on the environment increased.”

“I learned to evaluate that area that I am re-searching and to correctly determine problems.”

“I have understood the importance of people during the project design process.”

“I understood that the society is forgotten during project design and implementation and that they need to be taken into consideration more.”

“I am more sensitive towards the environment and I realize the needs of the people better.”

“It made me more sensitive.”

“My sensitivity towards the public increased.”

- The answers of students to the question “Which changes to the “Architecture focusing on social benefit” lesson’s programme and imple-

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mentation can attract students more?” is given below.

“Lesson time can be increased.”

“Various workshops and field trips can be organized to make it a more active lesson.”

“It was very good as is. We first made the research and then presented designs and suggestions according to the problems.”

“It was very good and fun.”

“This semester’s programme was very good. It was simple and easy to understand.”

“This programme was very good. It should continue as is.”

“It can be improved if projects are implemented and some lessons are carried out at project sites.”

“Implementing projects can draw the interest of students.”

“Implementing projects of students and working on the project at the project site will be more beneficial.”

- All students have answered “Yes” to the fifth question which was “Would you volunteer to work on the project you have designed in the lesson entitled “Architecture focusing on social benefit” if that project would be implemented?”

It was seen that all of the students were pleased to develop designs for a real problem and that they are willing to take part in architecture activities focusing on the society.

As a result, it was understood that in addition to the theoretical information that students receive in the scope of the architecture education, to develop their knowledge and skills students request a training environment in which they can try and implement projects and become a part of the architectural design process.

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