



Urban Planning as Part of a Turkish Westernization Project in Late Ottoman and Early Republican Eras: Bursa as a Case Study

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The idea of Westernization for the social, economic and urban development of Turkey, which is situated between Europe and Asia, the two continents that represent the West and the East in universal literature, has always been emphasized in various periods in history. The Westernization attempts that began in the recession and decline process of the Ottoman Empire have continued in the establishment period of the Turkish Republic and thereafter. Westernization attempts, which started during the decline period of the Ottoman Empire mostly as a result of external pressures, were in the form of a general reorganization. The Westernization concept in the Republican period, on the other hand, was based on the idea of restructuring rather than reorganization. Westernization attempts in these two periods, that have had a wide influence in different fields, from economy to politics, from urban design to local government organization, differ from each other in terms of conceptual infrastructure and application areas. In both of these two periods, responsibility was usually given to foreign experts due to the lack of local professionals in many fields.

Urban planning played one of the most important roles in the realization of Westernization in both of these two periods. In the context of this paper, the influence of Westernization on urban planning in the period from late Ottoman era to the 1960s in the Republican period will be analyzed. In the light of this analysis, the urban development of Bursa in the period of concern will be discussed. Bursa is a unique example in terms of Westernization attempts and the activities of foreign planners. The endeavor for the Westernization of the physical structure of the city, which was initiated by local governors who were entrusted with various duties in the West during the Ottoman period, continued in accordance with the proposals of foreign architects and planners in the early years of the Republic. Although the decisions of these planners have not transformed the total physical structure of the city, each planner has left various traces in the development of the city. Evaluated in this context, the physical structure of Bursa, which reflects traces of the planning trends in various periods rather than a single planning concept, comprises important potentialities for reinterpretation by researchers. The aim of this paper is to reinterpret traces of the planning decisions in the development of the physical structure of the city and the various changes that have developed spontaneously.

KEY WORDS: Urban planning, westernization, foreign planners, Bursa, Turkey.