Reflection

I have begun research process with a strong personal standpoint on importance of the context, but also with a doubt how to define it in an overwhelming city such is Istanbul.

Research was oriented toward investigation of applicability of context and its influence on the design process. Also, it provided a way of *contextualizing* and understanding the city of Istanbul as a possible inspiration, where contextual sensitivity would go beyond notion of similarity. Method of analysis were changing during the course of this semester. Starting from the position that architecture can be based only on *architecture*, I have started with morphological analysis, which enabled conceiving urban form from spatial level, in other words analysis of solid and void spaces of the city. However, I felt the need of introducing notion of time, which enabled completely different view of the subject of urban morphology, shifting my interest from current spatial layer to *typological process.* This approach of finding causes for certain urban phenomena led me to introduce one more critical ingredient into urban development, which is the unique topography of Istanbul. It proved to be a starting point for all the other urban element which were subject of my investigation (residential area, the mosque, organic street network, border of mahalle).

Furthermore, I would argue that a process between research and design should not be linear and objective, but a certain "shift" should occur. Additionally, a critical standpoint of the author should be introduced as yet another influence. In my case, I was able to recognize the importance of the topography as a critical and unique influence of urban development of Istanbul, but simultaneously the recent trend of development where all of the above qualities are lost. This resulted in a conceptual idea where the notion of topography is brought back, but also expanded: in time and space. This conceptual idea backed up my attitude towards context, where topography could be identified with the whole historical peninsula of Istanbul, and local conditions would be used only to adopt the design, rather than completely determine it. This approach led to a more *powerful* design which is based on a critical relation towards bigger part of Istanbul, expanding notion of *context* with time, rather than just space.

Displacing topography in time and space proved to be good strategy, since it allowed bringing back all of urban elements I researched, but it also provided a framework for establishing new relationships between them. Resulting conceptual idea was based on three *topographic* surfaces placed on top of each other, where each one them would be identified with a certain time (past, present, future). This way, I was able to *build upon* the relations I discovered between urban elements during the research phase, but also to introduce new one, reflecting current condition and future predictions.

There was no specific individual building for a case study, instead, I focused on the mosque as a focal building of each mahalle. Once again, my focus was on the development of that specific *type* trough time, trying to identify basic ideas behind the design. Found relations and postulated are not simply repeated, but brought into current context of time, and reproduced accordingly. For example, notion of courtyard and the interior of the mosque as unique relation between private and public is reorganized into vertical stack, where ground level would take the role of the courtyard, and underground would be more protected, *secret* part of the building. Once again, I was trying to combine objective information found during the research with personal *memory* of the place, which in my opinion resulted in a more strong and personal design.

This strategy proved to be very powerful, therefore, I have tried to expand it even more. Many traditional building elements found in Istanbul (colonnade of columns, water ponds, *bostan*) were *brought back* in my design. My focus was not on simply repetition, but rather on finding the purpose of these elements in current time.

This design should be seen as a mixture between personal fascination and objective problems I identified in Istanbul, such as: how to design a big public building in one *mahalle*. I would argue that a specific resulting design should be based on history, but oriented towards future development. With that in mind, I have proposed a new spatial organization, where traditional horizontal development would be expanded in vertical sense. However, this does not suggest that a complete new development is to occur, but rather new manifestation of already established relations. Additionally, a resulting design can be seen as a direct manifestation of my personal attitude towards bigger urban elements in Istanbul, such as notion of *mahalle*. Based on the research, I formed a clear attitude towards importance of the notion of each individual mahalle, as well as the strong justification for specificity of the borders, and each design decision was based on respecting that historical development.

In conclusion, I would state that my research approach resulted in many useful results, which would be used in the actual design, making the project more *contextual.* However, I would also stress the importance of personal attitude and critical relation from the author, since I have found that this can lead to strong conceptual ideas as a starting point of the project.

I would also state the importance of theoretical background I was investigating during the research phase, since it suggested understanding of the city as not just physical manifestation, but also it implied a certain level of *imagination* (Rossi 1976)*.* With this in mind, I have begun to see city more as a metaphor (city as a series of collages), rather than just physical reality. Claiming this, I was able to introduce non-architectural parameters in definition of the city, such as: history, politics, economy, and others, all of them crucial for defining certain phenomena. I would further suggest that this notion of *imagination* could be seen as a certain level freedom, where *typological process* could be seen in more abstract way. Looking back, I would argue that this idea had the biggest impact of forming my conceptual idea of displaced topography.