



Original Contribution

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC ROLE OF WAQF SYSTEM IN THE MUSLIM-OTTOMAN CITIES' FORMATION AND EVOLUTION

Sazak Saduman¹. and Eyuboglu Ersen Aysun²

^{1*} Trakya University, Faculty of Eng. & Architecture, Edirne /Turkey

² Trakya University, Faculty of Eng. & Architecture, Edirne /Turkey

ABSTRACT

Waqf is a religious endowment, a property giving revenues, as regulated by [Islamic](#) law. It was vital to the religious parts of the society before the establishment of modern states in the Muslim world. In Ottoman Empire, the waqf system together with the imaret and another religious institutions have important role in social and economical development of the Muslim Ottoman Cities. In this paper not only the religious and official face of waqf system but also the face of administration of local government of the settlements policies and their reflections on the cities in Turkey will be investigated.

Key Words: *Waqf, System, Ottoman, Empire, Islam, Istanbul, Imaret.*

INTRODUCTION

The role of waqfs in the services of housing and urbanization which are regarded as the indicator of the civilization level of a society, especially in Ottoman administrative organizations have been very important so far in history. Typically, in Ottoman Empire, "kulliyes" comprised of a combination of various facilities and called as "imaret system" and also established and managed via waqfs have played considerable role in the establishment and development of Turkish and Muslim cities, generally in the social and economic life of the country (Barkan, 1974) ¹.

Roadhouses and arcades, bakeries, grinders, workshops of candle and lead, *bozahouses*, abattoirs, etc., fair and market places, which were built in order to provide religious, cultural and social institutions, generally located around a mosque, such as madrasah, library, foodhouse (*imaret*), guesthouse (*tabhane*), hospital (*darussifa*), bath (*hamam*), caravansary and residences of the officers and employee of these institutions as well as infrastructure facilities such as

water channel and sewerage system with regular income (each one is to be allocated to a group of art or trade competent), comprised the skeleton of the new city or district to be built or an old city (Barkan ve Ayverdi, 1970).

Such big waqf facilities and imaret sites were established together with various buildings dependent to them and crowded retainer staff and their families, and had a small urban landscape. Due to encouraging convenience and relief these facilities provided such as immunity from taxes and providing the new comers and settlers with land and house, waqf facilities comprises the skeleton of a new district in cities, as mentioned above.

While establishing waqf facilities, every detail was taken into consideration. For example, in caravansary service not only a building was made, but also the most suitable places were considered to build them, and they were built in accordance with specific distances and conditions in order to make them more useful. The features of the roads that the caravans were going to follow were not ignored, summer and winter months were taken into consideration, and security cautions were not neglected (Tuncay, 1984).

The facilities related to the imaret system were established by charitable people,

*Correspondence to: Saduman Sazak, Trakya University, Faculty of Eng. & Architecture, Edirne /Turkey; e-mail: sadumans@yahoo.com

they formed their management, and in order to enable their administration they built several other revenue-generating facilities near by and to other places. And, this way, they provided income for imaret, and they served for the development of the towns and cities.

Their management type was called “Vakif (Waqf)”, and their management regulations called “Vakfiye”. And the managers were called “Mutevelli”. Mutevelli was required to be heir of the charitable person who made the imaret. For building the imaret, for managing it, for repairing, for retainer expenses, government did not pay any money. And every kind of services and aids provided by all facilities of the imaret were free for public.

Is imaret system a system that is unique to Turks? This cannot be adduced. This system is a developed form of Greek’s “Cite”. Cite is defined as a town or city which has rampart around, with a castle on its highest hill, and a temple in its middle, and around the temple it has a market, bazaar, and square. There is no difference between the significance the Arabian and the Hesperian give to “Cite” and “Medine”. The imaret system that Turks introduced in city planning and in the development and construction of the public facilities may be accepted as Greeks’ “Cite” and Arabians’ “Medine” (Ergin 1939).

Turks developed imaret system as they did in Anatolia and Rumelia by increasing the number of aid, health, science and cleanup facilities.

This system, which is called “Cite” by the Greek, “Medine” or “City” by the Arabian, and “Imaret” by the Turk, is called “City crown” by the German (Ergin, 1939). This system means to make a district civilized, to make the district a town or a city by enriching it with several different civilized, constitutional, religious, and scientific buildings.

With this establishment, present cities such as Istanbul, Bursa, Edirne, Amasya, and Manisa were built and the development and enlargement of the cities were enabled via the kulliyes which were built to apart hill.

Research done shows that district names in most of the Anatolian and Rumelian cities were named after a religious structure which played an important role in the establishment of that district till the end of the 18th century. And the examination of the maps of these cities supports the idea that these cities were established according to imaret system (Barkan, 1963).

For example, when the backgrounds of the districts of Edirne examined, it is seen that each district is established around a kulliyeh which consists of facilities built before such as a mosque, a mescit, guesthouse, bath, tekke, bakery, food house. In order of establishment these imarets may be listed as: Yildirim Beyazid’s Imaret (Old Imaret), Gazi Mihal’s Imaret (Middle Imaret), Muradiye (Murat II) Imaret, Mezit Bey’s Imaret, Balaban Paşa’s Imaret, Ibrahim Paşa’s Imaret, Evliya Kasım Paşa’s Imaret, Fazullah Paşa’s (Seyitler) Imaret, Sultan Beyazid II’s Imaret (New Imaret) (Kazancıgil, 1999).

All these facilities which were built in the establishment phase of the districts of Edirne were made as Waqfs. This, in turn, shows that waqfs are the driving force behind the development of the cities.

THE ROLE OF WAQF FACILITIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND CONSTRUCTION OF PUBLIC FACILITIES AND IN HOUSING OF(IN) ISTANBUL

Waqf facilities played an important role in the development and construction of public facilities and in housing in Istanbul after the conquest. In the development and construction of public facilities in Istanbul, imaret system which was managed by waqfs was applied as it was in Bursa and Edirne before (Barkan and Ayverdi, 1970). Mentioned facilities and districts formed the basis for the development and construction of new public facilities and for new housing opportunities in new desired districts in Istanbul.

Statesmen and rich people supported the development and construction of public facilities in Istanbul by establishing waqfs. The plans for reestablishing Istanbul and for its economic growth may resemble today’s state investments together with private enterprise. By this way, the development and construction of public facilities in Istanbul were succeeded in a short time.

According to Ekrem Hakki Ayverdi’s research, only in Fatih’s era, 207 mosques - 112 are present and 92 are still being used-, 24 schools or madrasahs, 32 hamams, and 12 roadhouses and bedestens (covered bazaars) were built in Istanbul. In order to enable these facilities to continue their activities, several people were forced to migrate to Istanbul and they are housed in houses which were built by waqfs. On the other hand, the cores of the 183 of 280 districts present in the ramparts in Istanbul in 1922 were established in Fatih’s

era (Barkan and Ayverdi, 1970). The most beautiful samples of the activities for the development and construction of public facilities in Istanbul are the waqfs of Fatih Mosque (Figure1) and Ayasofya Mosques.

These activities in Istanbul in Fatih's era were followed and developed in Beyazit II's and especially in Kanuni Sultan Suleyman's eras. Kanuni Sultan Suleyman made several mosques and imarets build for himself, for his son and his daughter, and for his wife, and water channels (Kirkçeşme) were built in his era (Figure 2).



Figure 1. Fatih Kulliyesi/Istanbul

The majority of the source of income that was required for these formations to carry on its work, was obtained from nations' land taxes with the permission of chief of state, sultan. Thus, generally, the original and working capitals of the formations, which would be included to the imaret complex and city nucleus, in new cities or new districts of old cities, were paid by empire's large and wealthy sources.

Administrative and financial independent enterprise, land waqf formation for conquered countries' development and housing, is a formation that has been applied and developed all along. This formation was applied along time and has been the occasion of the revitalization of the social and economical life. Marshes and wastes had been housed and developed by waqfs and became healthy and useful lands. Community that has been brought to settle was dispensed from some taxes. This community's occupation group has been considered to be workers, dealers, craftsmen. In many large lands, watering facilities and agricultural reforms had been made by waqf system (Orhonlu, 1963).

CONCLUSION AND EVALUATION

Waqfs have been very important for a long

THE DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF PRIVATE WAQFS AND WAQFS BELONG TO IMARET SYSTEM

Such formations generally incorporated by sultans and statesmen which represent the government and have the government's power and authority and especially by their peculiar donations and allowance (Barkan, 1974). Being provided for waqfs' building expences by sultans' peculiar treasure whose name was given to this waqf, doesn't embarrass its public character.

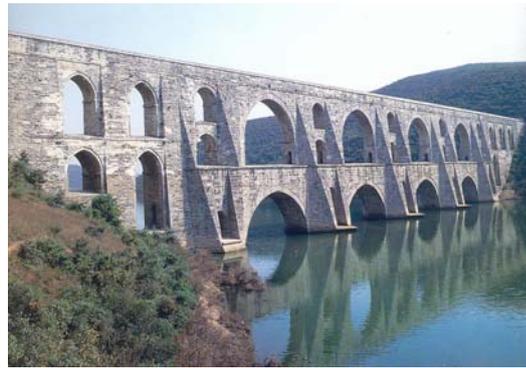


Figure 2. Water channels (Kirkçeşme/Instanbul)

time in Islamic cities, and have deeply affected social and economic life. Besides being religious and legal establishments, they had a very important role in the development and construction of the public facilities in the Ottoman management system.

Waqfs have been institutions which executed most of the services which are executed or cannot be executed by social state today; and they created economic opportunities on their own. Waqfs, which play an important role in our society and management system, operated for centuries according to the legal norms determined by Islam law, local management procedures, and free economy principles. All state services, social, scientific, religious, and modern life requirements were managed by waqf facilities (Barkan, 1963).

In the establishment and development of Turk and Muslim cities, waqf facilities and imaret sites played an important role. Waqf facilities mostly formed the basis for the development and construction of new cities or of new districts of old cities. We can present Istanbul, Bursa, Edirne, Amasya, and Manisa as examples. Therefore, waqfs have been the most important driving force in the development of the cities.

From another point of view, although waqfs may not be considered as a concrete example of “Local Management Union” which is today seen as a tool for meeting the local needs sufficiently and on time, for contributing actively to national development, for improving public habits to participate in democratic management, and for solving problems faced with in rapid urbanization (but which has never been able to be applied properly), they may be considered as the nucleus of local managements within historical development in Seljuk Empire and, especially, in Ottoman Empire even though they differ in quality and quantity (Gonul, 1977).

On the other hand, within the general urbanization history, the factors that were seen in Islam urbanization grew within the imaret system. For example, hans which were built in order to be dedicated to for a class, art, and trade expert (Can 1995).

Also, most of our architectural masterpieces such as Suleymaniye and Selimiye were created with the help of waqfs (Figure 3-4).

Today waqf masterpieces which we came across almost in all parts of Turkey are proofs of how important role waqf facilities played in the development and construction of public facilities and in housing in Islam world.



Figure 3: Suleymaniye Kulliyesi /Istanbul



Figure 4: Selimiye Mosque /Edirne

REFERENCES

1. Barkan Omer Lutfi, “Osmanli Imparatorlugu’nda Bir Iskan ve Kolonizasyon Metodu Olarak Vakiflar ve Temlikler”, *Vakiflar Dergisi*, 2, Istanbul, (1974), sf. 279- 387.
2. Barkan Omer Lutfi., *Sehirlerin Tesekkul ve Inkisafı Tarihi Bakimindan Osmanli Imparatorlugu’nda Imaret Sitelerinin Kurulusu ve Isleyis Tarzina Ait Arastirmalar*, İstanbul, (1963).
3. Barkan Omer Lutfi & Ayverdi, Ekrem Hakki, (1970),” Istanbul Vakiflari Tahrir Defteri 953 (1546) Tarihli”, Istanbul Fetih Cemiyeti Yayini, *Istanbul Enstitusu Dergisi*, (1970), sf. 61.
4. Can, Yilmaz, *Islam Sehirlerinin Fiziki Yapısı*, Ankara, (1995), sf.158.
5. Ergin, Osman, *Türk Sehirlerinde Imaret Sistemi*, (1939).
6. Gonul, Mustafa., *Yerel Yonetim Birlikleri*, Türkiye ve Orta Dogu Amme Idaresi Enstitusu Yayinlari, Ankara, 159, (1977), sf.34.
7. Kazancıgil, Ratip., *Edirne Imaretleri*, Edirne Valiligi Yayinlari, 10, (1999), sf. 11 – 17.
8. Orhonlu,Cengiz.,*Osmanli Imparatorlugunda Asiretlerin Iskan Tesebbusu (1661- 1696)*, Istanbul Universitesi Egitim Fakultesi Yayini, No:996, (1963) Istanbul, sf. 8.
9. Tuncay, Aydin, *Eski Vakif Hukumlerimiz ve Vakiflarla Ilgili Bazi Inceleme ve Sorunlar*, Yildiz Sarayi Vakfi Yayini, Istanbul,(1984), sf. 41.