

THE PHENOMENON OF PLACE IN MASTER'S AND DOCTORAL STUDIES IN TURKEY

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ABSTRACT:

Research in higher education in Turkey has especially gained a fast pace during recent years resulting in the accumulation of a body of research that is beginning to define lines of certain traditions. However possibly because of its short history there are very few attempts toward examining this body. The present paper is a report coming out of an ongoing university funded research project based on this problem situation that is focusing on the original doctoral research in architectural design in Turkey completed in last two decades. Established upon this larger research framework, this paper on the other hand extends the scope to include master's studies but filters them by focusing on the phenomenon of "place". It examines and questions the roles of hermeneutical and phenomenological approaches (within which the notion "spirit of place" has emerged) in higher education in architecture in Turkey by conducting a qualitative "content analysis" method.

Keywords: Phenomenon of Place, Research in Higher Education, Architecture

1. INTRODUCTION

In higher education, researches are in nature placed within certain traditions, to target certain problem areas and themes. They are passively controlled by such traditions, as well as the conditions, needs and problem situations of the day. Master's and doctoral studies can give us in depth objective information about traditions within which these researches were embedded.

The paper gives the panorama of the phenomenology within the studies in higher education in Architecture in Turkey. It provides a representative view of master's and doctoral studies and reviews the state of phenomenological approaches in Architecture in Turkey, by using content analysis method - via NVivo software. Content analysis targets the analysis of the written material – in this case master's and doctoral theses - in Architecture in Turkey. Since the doctoral studies represent the body of original research in the field, and the problems due to the limited access to the digital theses archive of YOK, in the present study doctoral studies are given priority over master's. While in both degrees parallel series of searches

was performed, unlike the doctoral studies whose data was exported from their full contents, data of master's studies were exported mainly from their abstracts.

Results are discussed according to the identified research questions such as: is there a significant amount of academicians who studied the phenomenon of place in Turkey? If so, how does it affect their studies– mainly at the levels of theory, model, problem formulation, topic, method, background literature and cases? Do these studies represent a significant line of study, or school, which have influenced the architectural research atmosphere in Turkey? Do they affect curriculum development (certain courses, particular pedagogies framing the notion of “spirit of place” etc)? and if so how. How has the distribution of the phenomenology studies changed over the last two decades in Architecture in higher education – by years and by schools? Building upon such a foundation it also traces that is there any research that has studied the “spirit of place” especially within the framework of education.

1. 1. METHODOLOGY AND THE RESEARCH POPULATION

For reaching out theses and dissertations done in Architecture in Turkey, this study uses YOK (Counsel of Higher Education-CoHE) theses center digital archive. YOK theses center archive is the only source to access the full contents of the theses and dissertations. It provides a reasonable ground for researching out data on higher education in Architecture and other disciplines in Turkey.

The raw data used in this study includes all the indexed theses in the field of architecture that were open to access and defended in last 20 years - which means the contents of the 1081 architectural master's and PhD studies dated from 1995 to 2014. The search was categorized in two different fields as master's and doctorates. Since the doctoral studies represent current body of original research in Architecture in Turkey, the paper was mainly constructed on doctorate theses. Master's studies were searched in parallel to them to see if there are some main correlations between them.

General doctoral studies list between the years 1995-2014 was produced from 12 separate searches. As expected, before the list was solidified, some work was needed to clean the raw data. For example, some theses appeared in the indexes of the YOK database more than one times. They needed to be detected and modified to form a coherent final list.

As a result, doctoral studies were searched according to the indexes shown at the following table (Table1). It should be noted that the English translations in the table are rather approximate translations since there are no exact English versions of some of the words/concepts:

	Keywords	Index Area	Number of findings	Studies included in the research population	Studies with restricted access
1.	<i>Bina Bilgisi</i> / Building Science	division	22	15	
2.	<i>Bina Bilgisi Mimari Tasarım</i> / Building Science Architectural Design	division	1	1	
3.	<i>Mimarlık Anabilim Dalı</i> / Architecture Studies	division	607	160+8	8
4.	<i>Mimarlık Tarihi Anabilim Dalı</i> / History of Architecture Studies	division	21	2	
5.	<i>Bina Araştırma ve Planlama</i> / Building Research and Planning	program	6	2	
6.	<i>Bilgisayar Ortamında Mimarlık Bilim Dalı</i> / Digital Design Studies	program	14	9	
7.	<i>Bina Bilgisi Bilim Dalı</i> /Building Science Studies	program	43	21	
8.	<i>Mimari Tasarım Sorunları</i> / Issues in Architectural Design	program	2	2	2
9.	<i>Mimari Tasarımda Bilişim</i> /Informatics in Architecture	program	3	3	
10.	<i>Mimari Tasarım Bilim Dalı</i> / Architectural Design Studies	program	69	25+6	6
11.	<i>Mimarlık Bölümü</i> / Department of Architecture	department	96	23	
12.	<i>Mimarlık / Mimari Tasarım</i> / Architecture / Architectural Design	subject	1081	178+10	10

Table 1: Search Queries.

At this point, it is important to note that, after the search and the listing period, since they have no publishing permission form, 102 theses have to be requested from YOK - from the university library via using TUBESS procedure. Since YOK do not allow access to a large number of theses at one time, they have to be requested as small groups – not to exceed four theses at one time. As a result, it took five months to get all the theses. At the end of the period, “sharing restricted” 10 theses still could not be reached. Again, as required from the YOK policies, theses demanded from TUBESS could only be obtained by photocopying. Since theses could not be obtained digitally, every photocopied material had to be transformed to digital formats such as “pdf” and “word” before the analysis stage. At the end of these procedures, we had 261 searchable digital formatted doctoral theses in the field of Architecture.

According to the diagrams related to the research population of the study (Figure 1), a large proportion of doctoral studies come from Istanbul. Second largest group of study come from Ankara and then Izmir. It is not surprising that they have the largest theses population since these three cities lay the foundations of the country's university tradition. They produced around eighty-five percentage of the whole dissertations in the broader field of architectural design and theory in Turkey. The distribution of the affiliated institutions of the authors can be found in Figure 1.

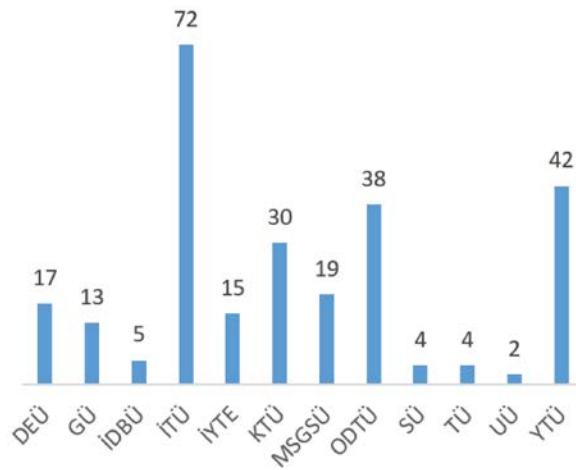


Figure 1: Distribution of Architectural Doctorates by Institutions.

(Figure 2) shows distribution of the doctoral studies by year. From the table, it is observed that after the beginning of the 2000's there is a meaningful increase in the theses population.

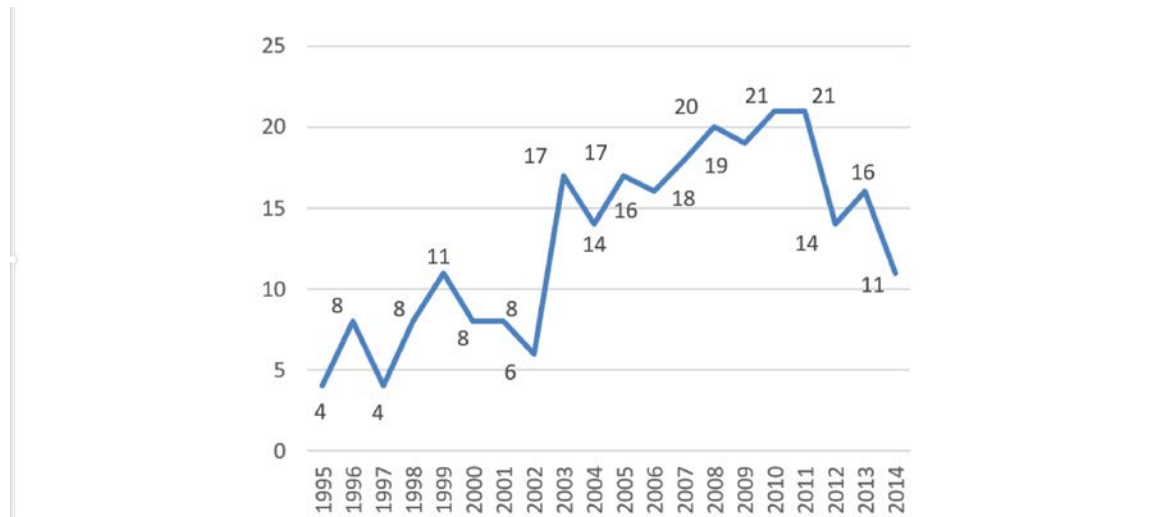


Figure 2: Distribution of Architectural Doctorates by Years.

And finally, (Figure 3) shows the distribution of doctorates by language. In Turkey, the main language of higher education is Turkish. On the other hand, in some universities or some departments and /or programs education is performed in English, German or French.

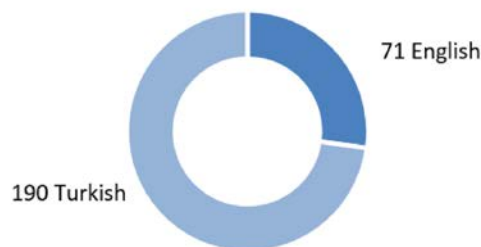


Figure 3: Distribution of Architectural Doctorates by Languages.

2. CONSTRUCTING A FRAMEWORK FOR THE ANALYSIS OF PHENOMENOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS IN DOCTORAL STUDIES IN ARCHITECTURE

After determining the theses population in the field of Architecture, the present study focused on determining the theses of those who construct their arguments on the phenomenological approach in general, and on the notion of "spirit of place"/ "genius loci" in particular. For this, a further filtering series of search was performed.

First, theses in the general list were searched according to the keywords: "spirit of place", "genius loci", and their Turkish counterparts "*yerin ruhu*", "*mekanın ruhu*", and "*yerin tini*". Studies that refer to the keywords in their abstracts, titles, keywords, references, and main texts were selected as the research population of this paper. Second, theses in the general list were searched according to the main references of phenomenology and architecture such as Martin Heidegger, Christian Norberg-Schulz, Kenneth Frampton, Juhani Pallasmaa, Edmund Husserl, Gaston Bachelard, Alberto Perez-Gomez and Hans Georg Gadamer. The main phenomenological reference list was carefully selected through an analysis of foundational architectural reference books including the notion of "spirit of place" i.e. Kate Nesbit's *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture*. Of course, it is always possible to extend the reference list but since they constitute a meaningful set of filter for detecting the foundational arguments within the fields of phenomenology and architecture, at this stage of the study the reference filter set is considered as successful.

As a result of the search process, 25 doctoral studies were identified as the research population of this paper. At this point, it is important to note that this study eliminated the theses based on the concept of "place" if they did not contain the main references of the phenomenology. Therefore, theses based on the themes such as production of "space/place", "non-place", "void", "in-between" and "leftover space", were eliminated unless they referred to the related main references. In addition to these, "sharing restricted" four theses could not be reached.

Based on the finalized list, distribution of main references in doctoral studies in Architecture in Turkey is shown in the following table (Figure 4)

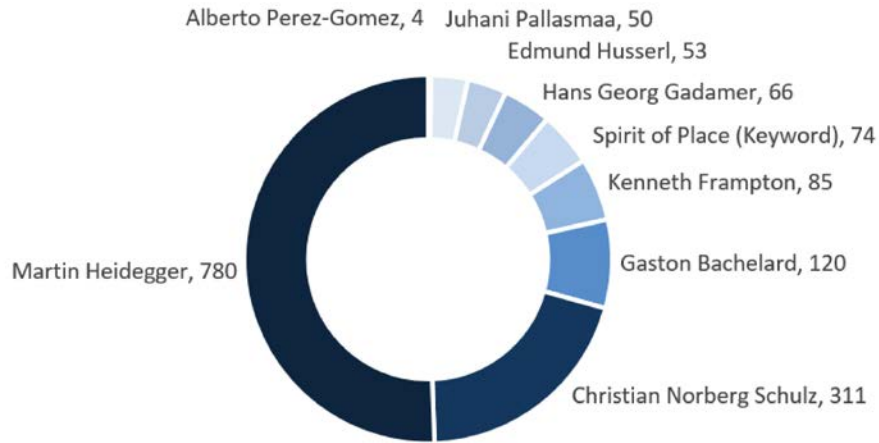


Figure 4: Distribution of The Main References in Architectural Doctorates on Phenomenology.

It is observed that in architecture on consideration of phenomenology Heidegger, Norberg-Schulz and Bachelard are heavily cited. In addition to that, there are some multiple-citations (the frequency that multiple citations appear together in the same paper) observed in different studies. After a close reading, it is seen that these studies are belong to similar schools, half of their examining committee were the same, and they were completed within a year.

In (Figure 5) it is seen that, similar to the general population of doctoral theses, a large proportion of doctoral studies come from Istanbul. Second largest group of study come from Ankara and then Izmir. They produced around ninety-five percentage of the specific population of dissertations with a focus on the notion of “spirit of place” and its associated concepts. To examine which schools the dissertations belong, we grouped the schools of the authors 12 groups and displayed the results in a pie chart.

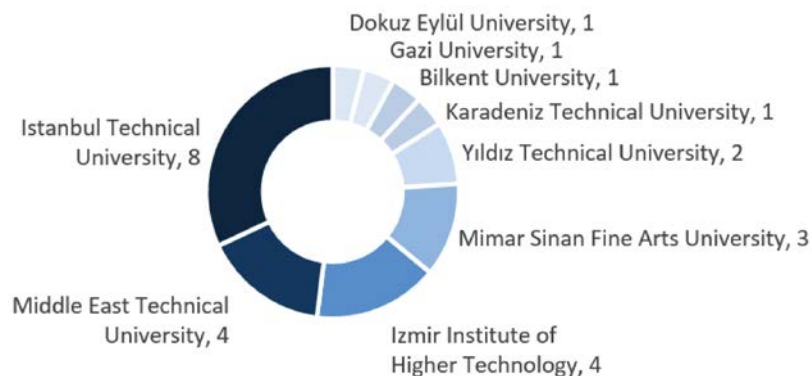


Figure 5: Distribution of Architectural Doctorates on Phenomenology by Institutions.

(Figure 6) shows distribution of the doctoral studies on phenomenology by year. From the table, it is observed that in 1996 and in 1997 and then between the years 2002 and 2010, studies contain more references on phenomenology. However there is not a visible trend of decline or incline in the numbers of studies, the number of studies per year changes between 0 to 3 studies per year for the last 20 years.

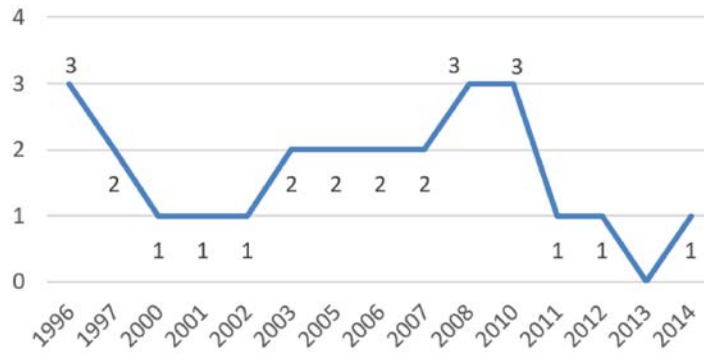


Figure 6: Distribution of Architectural Doctorates on Phenomenology by Years.

And finally, (Figure 7) shows the distribution of doctoral studies by language. Compared to the general theses population, according to the table, we can say that from the framework of phenomenology, percentage of studies by language do not show a significant change.



Figure 7: Distribution of Architectural Doctorates on Phenomenology by Languages.

2. 1. MAIN FOCUS AREAS

With some understanding of doctoral theses in architecture on phenomenology in Turkey, we then analyzed and categorized various specialties by close readings via content analysis. Main Focus Area table (Table 2) helps to reveal the main issues studied under phenomenological frameworks.

Main Focus Area	T 1	T 2	T 3	T 4	T 5	T 6	T 7	T 8	T 9	T 10	T 11	T 12	T 13	T 14	T 15	T 16	T 17	T 18	T 19	T 20	T 21	T 22	T 23	T 24	T 25	
	Education			X																		X				
Urban				X	X	X						X	X	X	X					X		X	X	X		
Theory	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Design		X	X	X										X												

Table 2: Distribution of Architectural Doctorates on Phenomenology by Focus Areas.

Content analysis provides some insights into the field of architecture. (Table 2) shows that all the thesis within our research population can be classified as theory. Based on that, it can be said that focus area of 11 of them is urban-theory, and the two of which have the special emphasis upon design. Focus area of 4 studies is design-theory and unfortunately education as the main focus is represented in only 2 studies. After a close reading, it is seen that education-focused studies are belong to similar schools, and they were conducted under the same supervisor.

From the table, it is also observed that, while they are theory theses, about half of them (12) are constructed as case-based studies. As seen from the studies, mainly the urban-focused theses exemplify themselves via cases. Another interesting observation is that although their supervisors were different, especially in the period of first ten years, theses were guided by some shared examining committee members.

2. 2. METHODS

Methods	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	
qualitative	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
quantitative																										
Logical argumentation	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		x		X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Simulation research													X							X						
Interpretive historical						X					X	X	X				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Correlational research								X							X									X		
Case-study research	X			X		X						X	X		x			X	X			X	X	X	X	X

Table 3: Distribution of Architectural Doctorates on Phenomenology by Research Methods.

Since they are all studies in the field of theory all of the studies in examined within the scope of this paper present discussions on concepts. On the other hand, as seen from the (Table 3) they differ in terms of their approach on researching. Since their focus is on qualitative phenomenological understanding of the world, they mainly concentrate on introducing, describing, reinterpreting and reconstructing the related concepts and contexts. Therefore they mainly use logical argumentation method which is essentially “attempts to situate a well-defined thing or issue in a systemic framework that can have explanatory or utilitarian power over all instances of that thing or issue” (Groat & Wang, 2002, p:93). Since they “make use of empirical evidence from the past” (Groat & Wang, 2002, p:88) and try to generate an evolutionary perspective they also use interpretive historical approach. And after constructing a conceptual framework, they often analyze some local cases and/or generate simulations and models to understand, interpret and reinterpret the outer world.

Although fewer in number, sometimes theses makes correlations "to identify venues in which a research focus can be framed" (Groat & Wang, 2002, p:90).

2. 3. CONCEPT LIBRARY

Through a series of close readings of the textual material, some repeating concepts are observed. Those are: "spirit of place," "genius loci," "place," "place-making," "placelessness," "homelessness," "space," "time," "space-time," "site", "path," "domain," "edge," "boundary," "void," "environment," "landscape," "making" (in considering tectonics), "dwelling," "home", "house," "building," "body," "poetic," "being," "becoming," and "existence."

Above concepts are seen to shape the discourses of phenomenology emerged in architectural studies in Turkey within the last twenty years. In total, they indicate that phenomenological understanding of architecture is a dynamic structure that advances in relation to the "things" it studies. On the other hand, it also constructs an ontological, contextual, ethical, spatial, natural, historical and tectonic awareness at the level of architectural knowledge.

3. THE PHENOMENON OF PLACE IN MASTER'S STUDIES

With reference to the large number of studies in master's level and the limited contribution master's degree studies do to the field; these studies are not examined in detail in terms of their content within the limits of this paper. However in parallel to the doctorates, a similar keyword search has been made within the database of YOK using the seminal references in the first section of the study.

Studies which refer to the following names in their abstracts, titles, or keywords are included in the study space of this paper; Martin Heidegger, Christian Norberg Schulz, Kenneth Frampton, Juhani Pallasmaa, Edmund Husserl, Gaston Bachelard, Alberto Perez-Gomez and Hans Georg Gadamer.

Also a second set of search was made to check for any other study which refers to the "spirit of place" "genius loci" discussions. "space-place" and "spirit of place" were ran as additional keyword searches to find any other study which doesn't refer the specific authors but develops a similar discourse in the same field. The second level of search also revealed a number of studies, which can be categorized under the neo-marxist studies on space which refer to authors such as Henri LeFebvre or Marc Auge and so on. These studies were not included in the final list even though the discussions include similar discursive positions the limits of this study has been set by the "spirit of place" discussions. As a result, 47 master's degree studies were included in the list.

The quantitative-descriptive data on the sum of the studies are as follows; 14 studies are in English while 33 are in Turkish (Figure 8).



Figure 8: Distribution of Architectural Masters on Phenomenology by Languages.

ITU and METU are the leading universities in terms of numbers of studies produced. (Figure 9)

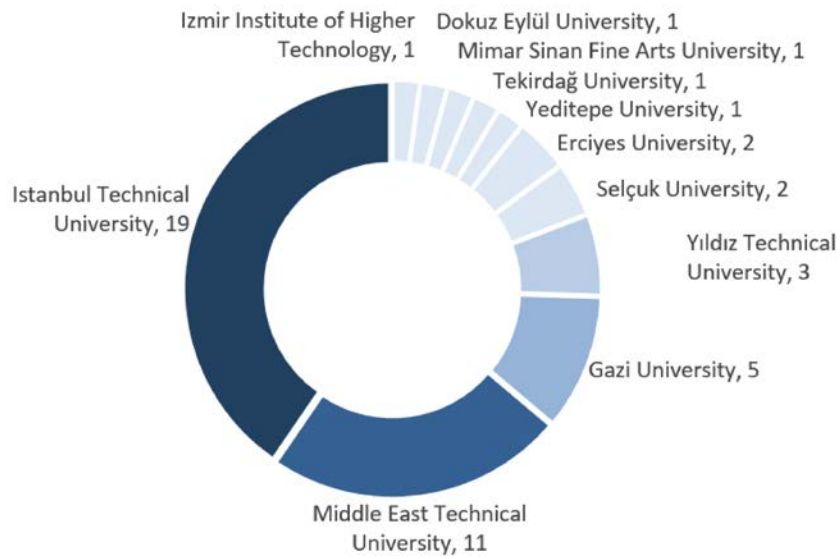


Figure 9: Distribution of Architectural Masters on Phenomenology by Institutions.

There is not a trend of decline or increase in terms of numbers of studies produced yearly, yet we can observe a fluctuation between 5 and 1 studies a year. (Figure 10)

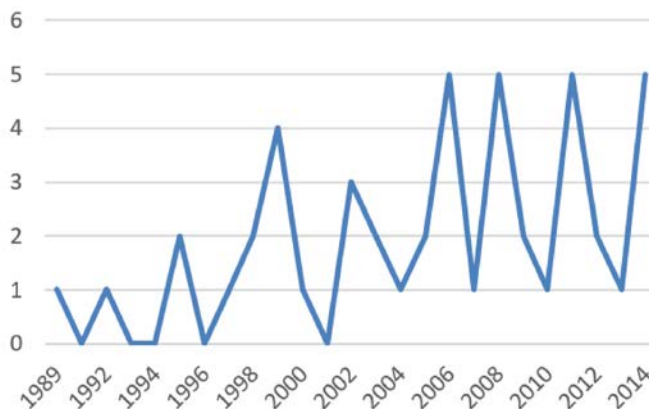


Figure 10: Distribution of Architectural Masters on Phenomenology by Years.

The Advisors of the studies also doesn't produce a statistically significant trend as the number of studies conducted by each advisor changes between 3 and 1 in a distributed manner.

When we make an overall examination of the studies through their abstracts, we can observe that the duality of space-place or the same duality in the case of dwelling epitomized by home-house duality is a recurring theme in the studies with an emphasis on the values generated through the becoming of a place. One other recurring type of typical study in this respect is studies that develop a critical perspective in late capitalist cities with reference to the very same duality of space and place. These two types of studies together make up the majority of studies in discussion.

One other type of study in this respect is studies that are based on certain localities. Eight studies were identified with this quality. Cases of rural or urban settlements/buildings are examined in this type of studies. The cases include: Kesmez Village, Derevenk, Gesi and Ađırnas valleys as rural settlement cases, Cer-Modern, Mezith Bey Bath, City Walls of Istanbul, Eskişehir Odunpazarı Neighborhood and Galata as historical urban cases, Cem Houses as an architectural type embedded in cultural practices. Three studies focus on individual architects whose practices are considered as examples of critical regionalism in Turkey. The studies in this group examine works of; Han Tümertekin, Turgut Cansever and Cengiz Bektaş.

However, despite the variety in study types, none of the types presents a predominant amount over other types. The numbers of different types of studies also show a balanced distribution.

4. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

In total, this paper presented general features of doctoral studies in Architecture in Turkey and made visible results of content analyses performed through a carefully selected research population. It then focused on generating, analyzing, representing, and interpreting a sub-population based on hermeneutical and phenomenological approaches (within which the notion "spirit of place" has emerged) in higher education in the field. In addition to these, the study concentrated on developing a brief parallel understanding of master's studies in the area.

With reference to the presented numbers of studies we can assert that in Turkey there is a substantial amount of post graduate studies in the field of Architectural Theory and especially since the beginning of the 2000's, the population of studies in the field is predominantly increasing.

Within this increasing population of studies, nearly ten percent of the studies includes phenomenological issues and (citation numbers of the foundational references are considered), half of them are based heavily on phenomenology.

Within the population of studies in phenomenology nearly half of them refer to the concept "spirit of place"/"genius loci." They explain the concept as an ethical and architectural

position, which demands a special form of phenomenological spatial understanding through the critical reinterpretation of architectural knowledge, the various conceptual approaches can be listed as follows:

- as the conceptual basis of Heideggerian existential understanding of the world,
- as an ethical function a distinctive value that should be included by all the good architecture,
- as the keystone of the contextual understanding,
- as a device for existential, experiential understanding of the world,
- as the spirit which gives identity, and character of a place
- as an act of architecture that transform space to place,
- as the main ontological content of architecture that defines architects as meaning maker
- as a lost spatial value,
- as structure of feeling through which people communicate their environment
- as a degree of consciousness to call forth land and history,
- as an expression of the feeling of place,
- as a reaction against globalism of the International style,
- as a critical reinterpretation of place leads to insights that it is a social product.

Even at this level of introductory search, we can easily say that in Turkey all the theses, which are intended to address phenomenology, are qualitative in nature. Nearly all of them use logical argumentation. Their arguments generally constructed onto interpretive historical structures. Mainly they develop and test their arguments in reference to cases. Some of them prefer to generate models to represent a phenomenological worldview and finally, a small number of theses approach to phenomenological issues by making correlations. It is noticeable that very few phenomenology-based theses concentrate on design and education. Majority of the theses can be identified as conceptual (pure theory).

To see whether there might be any connection between the authors and the architectural education, another type of classification was made according to the author's / researcher's professions. The results are as follows: All the authors have a career in teaching Architecture. Nearly all authors are conducting various levels of "Design Studio" in their institutions. Some of them are giving basic introductory courses such as "Basic Design" and "Introduction to Architecture". On the other hand, despite the large number of theory studies in the research population, very few of them are giving specialized courses based on the phenomenological issues. This allows us to assume that in Turkey, issues of phenomenology enter into the curricula mostly through the design courses.

Although there is no reliable way to see (at least today) active instructors of the graduate courses from the websites of the schools, it is still possible to see whether there might be any graduate level specialized phenomenology course (except from the all included theory courses) in architectural schools. Based on the information, which was collected from the schools' websites, we obtain a very few number of specialized courses on this category.

As a result, it can be inferred from the above data that although there have been noticeable amount of research conducted on phenomenology (in both master's and doctoral levels), in Turkey, the topic has not yet the power of effecting undergraduate and graduate architectural curricula. In addition to that, although there have been discrete examining committee meetings throughout the twenty years, the study does not indicate the occurrence of a social network constructed and evolved in line of a phenomenological architectural tradition in Turkey.

As stated at the beginning, since there have been some difficulties in obtaining satisfactory information from the YOK archive, future improvements are recommended to address deepening of the master's theses section in relation to the doctoral studies.

As part of the main research project, in the future phenomenological studies on architecture will be extended further particularly with respect to government funded research studies.

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