



CONCRETE AS A MEASURE OF DESIRE

Paperwork⁷

CURATORIAL TEAM

Architecture¹² as² Measure⁷
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Map of the cement industry in Turkey, 8 January 1958. Illustration: Engin Balas. Samet Mor Archive.

Concretion: The state of being concreted.¹

This map, which depicts the geographical distribution of Turkey's cement industry in 1958, was a source of pride in its time. The contemporized geographic representation wished to declare it had put modernization into practice with the latest resources of the era. The cement factories were scattered all around Anatolia^{•1} and their relationship with infrastructural investments—fossil fuel plants^{•2}, hydroelectric power plants^{•3}, and power transmission lines^{•4}—reveal how the young Turkish Republic had capitalized on all the geographical potentials and resources in its pursuit of development. Concrete, which has now become almost an element of crime with cities being referred to as “concreted,” had in fact stepped into our lives as the leading actor of a revolution in the first years of the Republic.² Then again, concretion, which indicates a physical change, is not the only result of this process. The turning point in the 1950s—in other words, the rising desire for construction—brought with it an unexpected and much less discussed conflict.³

1 Merriam-Webster Dictionary.

2 İhsan Bilgin, “Türkiye’de Popüler Kültürün Harcı Olarak Beton” [Concrete as the grout of popular culture in Turkey], *Betonart*, issue 2, p. 55.

3 Cement is the second most consumed material in the world after water. See Yeliz Yirmibeş’s interview with Yavuz

The process of making clinker, the main component of cement, is responsible for 8 percent of annual carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions. These emissions—paradoxically—cause the carbonation of concrete⁴ and consequently, the erosion of the steel fitting that makes up the reinforced element of the reinforced concrete. So, every concrete that is produced, through shortening the life of its predecessors, constantly induces more production.

This cycle, which gradually increases carbon emissions, shortens not only its own life, but by playing a part in climate change, the life of Earth's as well. So, it is no longer a matter of temporizing, but of losing life itself. In short, the desire for concrete construction, much like any desire abounded in populist rhetoric, steadily pushes its creator towards a fall of their own making.

Işık (President of Turkish Ready Mixed Concrete Association). "Beton, Sudan Sonra En Fazla Tüketilen Malzeme" [Concrete is the second most consumed material after water], ST Ağır Sanayi Çözümleri Dergisi. January 2016. p. 52-57.

4 The phenomenon that sees calcium hydroxide in cement merge with carbon dioxide and turn into calcium carbonate, which is a salt.