

U.S. Involvement in the Development of Design in the Periphery: The Case History of Industrial Design Education in Turkey, 1950s–1970s¹

H. Alpay Er, Fatma Korkut and Özlem Er

Introduction

Industrial design as a profession and discipline spread to “peripheral” countries after World War II. In many countries of the periphery, the introduction of industrial design into local industrial, cultural and political contexts took place during the 1950s and ‘60s, and was intrinsically associated with the concepts of “industrialization” and “modernization.” Like the “industrialization” concept itself, all technological and organizational methods with their ramifications in daily life were imported from the center. They were idealized symbols of modernization as a social project. In this context, industrial design was regarded as a strong, visual symbol of modernity. As Bonsiepe points out, industrial design has been “one way for countries on the periphery to come to terms with modernity, with the modern project, and not only and predominantly in the realm of industry, but also in that of social organization.”² The history of industrialization in the periphery, which is closely related to the economic and social modernization in those countries, has been observed as a process of learning imported technologies.³

Industrial design was “imported” through a variety of transfer mechanisms. One of the more prominent ones was the teaching of industrial design. The two oldest design schools in the periphery, the National Institute of Design (NID) in India and the Escola Superior de Desenho Industrial (ESDI) in Brazil, established in the early-1960s, are typical examples. The design community in central countries played a major role in this process as evidenced by the initiative of Charles and Ray Eames in the establishment of NID, and the involvement of Ulm alumni in both NID and ESDI are among the well known cases of the history of industrial design education in the periphery.⁴

However, little is known about the origins and development of industrial design in the periphery. The distinct nature of its introduction into the peripheral context is one of the fault lines that differentiates the history of design in the periphery from the history of design in the center. The exploration of relatively unknown

- 1 An earlier version of this article was presented at the Mind the Map: 3rd International Conference on Design History and Design Studies “Design History Beyond Borders” (Istanbul, 9–12 July 2002) Istanbul Technical University - Kent Institute of Art and Design.
- 2 Gui Bonsiepe, “Developing Countries: Awareness of Design and the Peripheral Condition” in *History of Industrial Design: 1919–1990 The Dominion of Design*, C. Pirovano, ed. (Milan: Electa, 1991), 252.
- 3 Alice H. Amsden, *Asia’s Next Giant: South Korea and Late Industrialization* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).
- 4 See Gui Bonsiepe, “Developing Countries: Awareness of Design and the Peripheral Condition.” See also NID, *Eames Report* (Ahmedabad: National Institute of Design, 1997).

design territory in the periphery is crucial if a world history of design is ever to be written. As Margolin⁵ points out, a significant part of the world history of design will be explaining interactions between countries, and the development of design in various countries in different social, economic, and political environments.

This article is an attempt to explore the role of external dynamics in the initiation of industrial design education in certain peripheral countries, particularly from the mid-1950s to the early-'70s, which witnessed one of the most interesting and relatively overlooked design promotion programs funded and directed by the U.S. Government and employed a number of American design firms and schools. Apart from discussing the political motivation behind the U.S. initiative, this paper also aims to elaborate the extent and the nature of the U.S. involvement in spreading industrial design education in the periphery in the specific case of Turkey and the Industrial Design Department of the Middle East Technical University (METU).

The study primarily is based on an extensive review of the unpublished reports and documents prepared at METU in the early-'70s, as well as articles and news that appeared in Industrial Design magazine in the late-'50s, and on recent correspondence with David K. Munro, an American design consultant actively involved in AID (Agency for International Development, formerly ICA) programs in many countries including Turkey during this period.

- 5 Victor Margolin, "A World History of Design and the History of the World" (talk given at the Mind the Map: 3rd International Conference on Design History and Design Studies).



Figure 1
The victory of the allies at the end of World War II as described by the famous Turkish cartoon master of the period, Ramiz Gökçe. The cover of *The Cartoon Album of This War 1*, Istanbul, 1944. Courtesy of Yapi Kredi Yayinlari.

Political Background Preceding the U.S. Involvement in the Development of Industrial Design in the Periphery
Before discussing the details of U.S. programs in the 1950s and '60s, it is imperative to look into the underlying economic and political dynamics of that period in order to fully understand the motivation of the U.S. Government in promoting design in the periphery.

While World War II was ending, the economic principles of the post-war new world order were agreed upon at an international meeting, United Nations Monetary and Financial Conference in Bretton Woods in July 1944. The conference established the forms of cooperation for international trade and the regulation of financial initiatives. The Bretton Woods agreements were exceptional in the history of international economic relations in terms of their scope and impact. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank were established at this conference to promote and regulate the development of an international economy. While this conference may be accepted as the formal beginning of a global economy as we know it today, it certainly laid the foundations for the post-war capitalist world economy. The economic integration and development of the world was considered to be the only safe path to political stability across the globe.

However, the Cold War, which developed out of political differences about the shape of the post-war world, created suspicion

countries. Four months later, in April 1949, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was founded. When the Marshall Plan ended on June 30, 1951, the U.S. Congress was in the process of preparing a new foreign aid proposal designed to unite military and economic programs with technical assistance. In October 1951, this plan became a reality when Congress passed the first Mutual Security Act, and created the Mutual Security Agency.

Point Four emerged as a significant aid program that the U.S. Government used to win support from the uncommitted, developing nations. It included not only direct financial assistance, but also the transfer of some technical knowledge and skills to these countries through educational programs and consultancy work. Between 1950 and 1953, the Point Four Program was administered by the Technical Cooperation Administration, a separate unit within the State Department. During the administration of President Eisenhower it was integrated into the overall foreign aid program.⁹ It was reorganized under the name of International Cooperation Administration (ICA) in 1955.

The main pillar of U.S. foreign policy in the 1950s was to prevent Soviet power from expanding into non-communist nations by any means. In addition to the direct use of political or military power, the U.S. Government also used foreign aid programs of a financial and technical nature. The foreign aid programs directed towards pro-Western or neutral developing countries under the administration of the ICA (later renamed AID) appear to have included a variety of nonfinancial aid mechanisms including design support.

From the viewpoint of design history, the use of U.S. industrial design expertise in foreign aid programs by the ICA in the second half of the 1950s and 1960s makes this relatively overlooked chapter of the American design history¹⁰ an important part of the development of industrial design in the periphery. The following section details the role of industrial design profession in the U.S. foreign policy in the concurrent cases of international trade fairs and the ICA program for developing countries.

The Role of Industrial Design in U.S. Foreign Policy in the Late-1950s

By the 1950s, industrial designers in the U. S. already had made significant progress towards the public and legal recognition of the profession. The profession was represented by two organizations, the American Designers' Institute (ADI), officially established in 1940, and the Society of Industrial Designers (SID), founded in 1944.¹¹ In 1951, the ADI changed its name to IDI (Industrial Designers Institute) to identify its members with the emerging profession of industrial design; and in 1955, SID changed its name to ASID (American Society of Industrial Designers) to indicate the national affiliation of its members, particularly of those working for

9 Ibid.

10 *The American Design Adventure* by Arthur J. Pulos perhaps is the only source book that covers a concise review of the American design organizations involved in the ICA program for developing countries. See Arthur J. Pulos, *The American Design Adventure: 1940-1975* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1988), 236–241.

11 Pulos, *The American Design Adventure*, 196–199. Among the founding members of the SID were the most widely known figures of the American industrial design: Walter Dorwin Teague, Henry Dreyfuss, Raymond Loewy, Norman Bel Geddes and Russel Wright. George Nelson and Charles Eames were the members of the ADI.

foreign clients.¹² American designers had established professional ties with Europe and Japan, and had been involved in exhibitions both of foreign products at home and of American products abroad.

Two developments in U.S. foreign policy in the second half of the 1950s opened up new territories and brought new challenges to American designers. Firstly, the U.S. Government developed and implemented a brand new policy concerning the overseas international trade fairs, and secondly, established the International Cooperation Administration, and launched a rather ambitious technical assistance program for the “craft economies” of the periphery.

“Battleground of Ideologies:” The International Trade Fairs

In the early-1950s the Soviet Union had participated in more than 130 international trade fairs while the United States stayed home.¹³ As it became evident in the exhibits of the Soviet Union and other communist countries, international trade fairs not only offered opportunities for trade but also provided direct access to the public for promoting ideologies, particularly in those so called “uncommitted” countries. Thus the U.S. Government decided to take action and started a program for official participation in trade fairs mainly for political reasons:

Other exhibiting nations do need, and expect, to sell merchandise; the U.S.A. wants and needs to establish its influence in politically uneasy countries, to promote capitalism as a system superior to communism. The first goal, then, is eminently political despite its commercial garb.¹⁴

The trade fair program started with the American exhibit in Bangkok in December 1954. An Office of International Trade Fairs (OITF) was established in January 1955 with funding from the President Eisenhower’s discretionary budget. In the first year of the program, more than 12 million people in 15 countries visited the U.S. exhibits. The OITF was given a permanent status by the Congress in 1956.¹⁵

The early American exhibits, in 1954 and 1955, were designed by the Office of Design and Production in Paris under the direction of OITF. However the exhibits were felt to be rather uniform and not fine tuned to the sentiments of the audiences in economically, culturally and politically diverse countries. As the world leader and the richest nation, Mitarachi observed, the U.S. was “all the more an object of resistance and resentment.”¹⁶

In 1956 the OITF decided to invite bids for the design of exhibits and contacted various professional groups including the Advertising Council and the ASID to reach the designers fit for the task.¹⁷ The bids were awarded on the basis of “quality plus price” and in the fall of 1956 eight exhibits—each based on a different theme—were set up in Salonika, Bari, Izmir, Damascus, Kabul, Stockholm, Vienna, and Zagreb. Following the exhibits, a critical

12 Pulos, *The American Design Adventure*, 202–203. ASID, IDI, and the Industrial Design Education Association (est. 1957) merged in 1965, and became the Industrial Designers Society of America (IDSA).

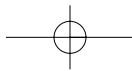
13 Jane Fiske Mitarachi, “Design as a Political Force,” *Industrial Design* 4 (February 1957): 38; and Pulos, *The American Design Adventure*, 242.

14 Mitarachi, “Design as a Political Force,” 39.

15 Pulos, *The American Design Adventure*, 242–243.

16 Mitarachi, “Design as a Political Force,” 39.

17 Ibid.



evaluation of the OITF as a client suggested several areas to be reconsidered or improved: guidance and information on audience, control over the material to be presented, time pressure, the bid system, and the selection criteria.¹⁸ Toward the end of the trade fair program, private manufacturers were given access to the official exhibitions as to free funds to visit more countries.¹⁹

Mitarachi reported in 1957 that the trade fair program was “undoubtedly one of the most serious responsibilities that the design profession has ever assumed.”²⁰ Industrial designers, Pulos commented in retrospect, were well suited to their task and undertook their work “in the spirit of service to their country rather than in the hope of financial return.”²¹ The trade fair program, from another perspective, also provided the American designers with a unique opportunity to prompt the aspirations and standards for products in other countries.

“Economic Aid through Design:”

The U.S. Design Assistance Programs in the Periphery

Under the Eisenhower administration a new State Department agency, the International Cooperation Administration (ICA) was established in 1955. The ICA was responsible for all U.S. foreign assistance programs “except for military assistance, programs involving refugees, and contributions to international organizations.”²² In the same year, the Hoover Commission proposed to allocate 1/10 (almost \$400,000,000) of the U.S. Mutual Security Program budget to an economic aid program for the developing countries around the world.²³ The program, administered by the ICA, was expected to follow, if not to echo, the success of the Marshall Plan, and to keep unstable countries of the periphery on the U.S. side of the “political fence” by stimulating their economies.²⁴

However, unlike Europe, the quality of human resources in developing countries was not promising a quick recovery. As put by Fleishman openly, the key word was development, and the developing countries lacked the knowledge and experience to sustain “vast construction projects like dams and factories.”²⁵ Political circumstances in those countries did not seem to allow a gradual buildup of necessary resources of various nature, either.²⁶ Thus, the new program for developing countries focused on the development of local handicrafts and small industries, and explored various means to increase the commercial potential of those products in internal and external markets—the U.S. market particularly.

Peter Müller-Munk, the head of ASID’s Foreign Affairs Committee and a founding member and the first president of ICSID, served as an advisor to the government on ICA program.²⁷ The five design organizations selected by the ICA and the countries assigned to them were Russel Wright Associates (Hong Kong, Formosa/Taiwan, Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam); Walter Dorwin Teague Associates (Greece, Jordan, and Lebanon); Dave

18 Ibid., 55.

19 Pulos, *The American Design Adventure*, 243.

20 Mitarachi, “Design as a Political Force,” 55.

21 Pulos, *The American Design Adventure*, 243.

22 U.S. Department of State, “Director of the International Cooperation Administration,” www.state.gov/www/about_state/history/officers/dica.html (29 September 2001).

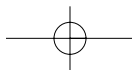
23 Pulos, *The American Design Adventure*, 236.

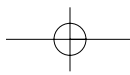
24 Avrom Fleishman, “Design as a Political Force Part 2,” *Industrial Design* 4 (April 1957): 45.

25 Ibid.

26 Pulos, *The American Design Adventure*, 236. “Political circumstances” in developing countries in the 1950s and ‘60s indicated civil wars, regional tensions, decolonisation problems, political upheavals, and independence movements.

27 Pulos, *The American Design Adventure*, 236, 242.





*Chapman's Design Research Incorporated (Pakistan, Afghanistan, Mexico, Surinam, El Salvador, Jamaica, and Costa Rica); Smith, Scherr and McDermott (South Korea); and Peter Müller-Munk Associates (Israel, Turkey, and India).*²⁸ As a separate project under the "Point Four" Program, the ICA also negotiated a three-year contract between the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston and Technion Institute of Technology in Haifa to provide special design assistance to Israel.²⁹

The ICA program mainly involved surveying the assigned country and recommending action to improve the competitiveness of local products. The assignment also included opening markets for those products, and advising local producers on marketing issues.³⁰ The country surveys conducted by the selected design organizations suggested different approaches and courses of action for the program. Their recommendations, together with examples of related work they undertook or participated in, can be summarized under three main headings:

- Promoting and marketing selected and/or improved local handicrafts in the U.S. through exhibitions, trade fairs, or trade centers (e.g., Wright's "Southeast Asia Rehabilitation and Trade Development Exhibit" in New York in 1956;³¹ Smith, Sherr and McDermott's Korean Exhibit at the New York Gift Show in 1958;³² and the Korean Trade Center set up in New York).
- Training local instructors or craftsmen through training centers, demonstration and promotion centers, or professional design offices set up in the assigned countries (e.g., the Handicraft Promotion Center set up in Taiwan on Wright's recommendation; the Demonstration Center in Seoul established by Smith, Sherr and McDermott;³³ and the Müller-Munk's Haifa design office in Israel).
- Teaching design and related courses in local universities³⁴ (e.g., Smith, Sherr and McDermott's design courses at local universities in South Korea³⁵).

According to Pulos, the majority of the ICA projects fell short of the broad political objectives of the program; some countries, however, including Taiwan, South Korea, and Israel did grow close to the U.S. in political and economic ideology, as well as in technology.³⁶

Munro, who was the project director in the Smith, Scherr and McDermott's four-year mission in South Korea, commends the approach developed by Wright in Taiwan, but generally holds a similar view of the ICA projects in the late-'50s:

Russ had a pretty good model going in Taipei, I visited once. It was prior to our big push in Korea. I am not sure if he had a counterpart activity in the US however, but he certainly had the right idea. ... In 1957 many famed design-

28 Pulos, *The American Design Adventure*, 236–237. Fleishman, "Design as a Political Force Part 2," 46. The leading figures in those selected design organizations were the members of ASID.

29 Industrial Design, "U.S. Gives Design Aid to Israel," *Industrial Design* 3 (February 1956): 22.

30 Pulos, *The American Design Adventure*, 236.

31 For a detailed review of the exhibit and Wright's approach to his assignment, see "The Designer as Economic Diplomat," *Industrial Design* 4 (August 1956): 68–73.

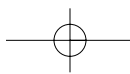
32 "Korean Crafts Marketed Here," *Industrial Design* 5 (September 1958): 18.

33 "Design Team in Korea," *Industrial Design* 5 (March 1958): 20.

34 The ICA program was trade oriented and did not particularly support industrial design education programs. As will be discussed later in the Turkish case, in the 1960s, educational programs were supported by various governmental and nongovernmental institutions including the successor to the ICA, USAID. Concerning educational projects in the late-'50s, Pulos mentions that the U.S. Information Service contracted IIT Institute of Design for the organization of an exhibition to share American philosophy and methodology in industrial design education with students and teachers in other countries (Pulos, *The American Design Adventure*, 245–246).

35 *Industrial Design*, "Design Team in Korea," 20.

36 Pulos, *The American Design Adventure*, 241.



ers toured the world on State Department grants with the predecessor of AID called ICA (International Cooperative Association [sic]). There was a race on to garnish lucrative development contracts and the prestige that went along with them. I was in the thick of things in '57 but my impression of the Müller-Munk is that, for many reasons, it never materialized beyond the survey phase. Many went that way, I remember clearly Iran dried up very fast and I cannot remember the design team at this moment.³⁷

At the professional level, on the other hand, the international trade fair program and the ICA development projects made an impact on the ideological identity of the American industrial designer, which was reflected in the discourse of the professional publication of the period, *Industrial Design* magazine.³⁸ The trade fair program not only made the U.S. Government an important client of the design profession; it also charged the designer to be a communicator or "propagandist" of the American way.³⁹ 40 The ICA program reinforced the role of design as a "political force;" it also strengthened the view of designer as "a generalist rather than a specialist,"⁴¹ and cast the American designer in the role of an "economic diplomat," a national planner for the economies of entire countries.⁴²

The Turkish Case: The U.S. Involvement in the Development of Industrial Design in Turkey

This section traces U.S. involvement in the development of design in Turkey by presenting a case history of the attempts to start industrial design education at the Middle East Technical University (METU) in Turkey since 1957. A short review of the position of Turkey vis-à-vis the international politics of the Cold War, is imperative to contextualize the activities of the U.S. governmental and nongovernmental institutions in Turkey.

Political and Economic Background in Turkey in the 1950s and '60s

Just after World War II, Turkey was threatened by the Soviet Union which demanded a cession of several Turkish districts on the Soviet-Turkish frontier, a revision of the 1936 Montreux Convention regarding the Turkish straits. In response, the U.S. warned the Soviet Union that it would protect Turkey. The expansion of American security concerns after the war, and the implementation of containment as the focus of the foreign policy and as a deterrence against Soviet expansionism in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East, made Turkey a cornerstone of the U.S. Cold War strategy. This was implemented through a series of policies: First, through the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan; and secondly,

37 David K. Munro, e-mail to Fatma Korkut, 21 December 2001. It was Dave Chapman's Design Research Inc. that contracted with the ICA for the Iran project; see "Economic Aid Through design," *Design*, no. 107 (November 1957): 71.

38 *Industrial Design* magazine was launched in 1955 by Whitney Publications; see Pulos, *The American Design Adventure*, 201.

39 Mitarachi, "Design as a Political Force," 39.

40 A similar point was raised by Doordan about the role of the U.S.-supported design strategies in postwar Italy. See Dennis P. Doordan, "National Agendas for Italian Design After 1945," *Design, Industry and Government Initiatives: Past, Present and Future*, (11 November 1995) Design History Research Center, University of Brighton, U.K.

41 Industrial Design, "The Designer as Economic Diplomat," 69; Mitarachi, "Design as a Political Force," 39, 54–55; Fleishman, "Design as a Political Force, Part 2," 46.

42 Fleishman, "Design as a Political Force, Part 2," 60.

through the presence of the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean; and finally through Turkey's admission to NATO. In this context, the U.S. was granted the use of military bases in Turkey and, in exchange it extended military and economic assistance to Turkey.

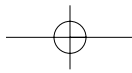
On the domestic front, after World War II, Turkey had to give up its independent, and sometimes isolationist, foreign policy in the face of the Soviet threat, and openly sided with Western Europe and the U.S. This change in foreign policy also coincided with a radical change in the domestic political structure when the first multi-party election was held in 1946. In the 1950 elections, a new party won a majority of the votes and the overwhelming majority of the seats in the Parliament. The new ruling party was politically liberal and populist, and it was supported mainly by rural sections of the society. In the early-1950s, a relatively liberal, trade-driven growth policy was pursued. The Turkish economy predominantly was based on agriculture. The industry was limited to the state-owned enterprises set up in the planned industrialization of 1930s.⁴³ During the 1950s, the encouragement of private entrepreneurship and the promotion of agriculture for export were recommended and supported by the U.S., which also was actively involved in the Turkish economy through its foreign aid programs.⁴⁴ The demand for Turkish agricultural export products such as food and cash crops grew considerably with the start of efforts to rebuild Europe. During the first years of the new economic policy, favorable external and internal conditions enabled Turkey to grow at impressive rates. However, in 1954, when the economic conditions deteriorated, it was deemed necessary to introduce more protectionist trade policies. In the 1950s, the basic infrastructure of the country had been formed, and a national domestic market emerged for industrial goods. The number of private industrial enterprises increased, and they started assembling consumer durable goods under license, which they previously imported. By the late-1950s, the initial stage of modern industrialization already was completed under the protectionist policies pursued since the 1930s.

Following the military coup of May 1960, the industrialization of the country through a planned economy became the primary national objective in Turkey. In the early-1960s, Turkish policy makers' main concern was to establish a wide industrial base behind protective barriers aimed at import substitution. At that time, Turkey was ready for a full scale Import Substituted Industrialization (ISI) policy,⁴⁵ having a potentially large domestic market and some experience in manufacturing. Moreover, private capital was eager and strong enough to take part in an ISI policy, even in relatively more capital-intensive industries. The ISI policy continued until the beginning of the 1980s.

- 43 H. Alpay Er, "The Emergence and Development Patterns of Industrial Design in Newly Industrialised Countries with Particular Reference to Turkey" (Ph.D. dissertation, Institute of Advanced Studies, Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, 1994).
- 44 Kepenek and Yentürk, *Turkish Economy* [in Turkish], (Remzi Kitabevi, 2000).
- 45 Er, "The Emergence and Development Patterns of Industrial Design in Newly Industrialised Countries with Particular Reference to Turkey."



Figure 3
The production of Anadol by Otosan in 1966 marked a new stage in Import Substituted Industrialization policy in Turkey.
Courtesy of Yapi Kredi Yayinlari.



The Early U.S. Initiatives in Industrial Design in Turkey

As mentioned earlier, Turkey was among the countries targeted by the ICA to provide assistance in improving its craft products and increasing their market potential in the advanced markets. Since industrial design was one of the means chosen to fulfill this mission, ICA sought the expertise of established design consultancy firms. In 1955, Peter Müller-Munk Associates was assigned by ICA to help Turkey, along with India and Israel, to raise the quality of their craft products.⁴⁶ Peter Müller-Munk and designers from his firm visited Turkey several times in 1956 and 1957.⁴⁷ In the April 1957 issue of *Industrial Design*, Fleishman reported that:

Turkey will soon be the scene of a Müller-Munk design office aiming to adapt local handicrafts like ceramics, lace, meerscham and copperware for the world market. Craft skills are at a high level in specialized shops, but most crafts are practiced in cottage industries by entire farm families. Designers Paul Karlen and Robert J. Renaud will tackle major Turkish problems: coordination of scattered production centers, quality control and pricing (to combat poor trade reputation of Turkish goods), and better understanding of Western markets.⁴⁸

The activities of Müller-Munk Associates in Turkey also were reported in one of the METU reports in the 1970s:

Between 1955 and 1957 a team of American industrial designers and marketing experts associated with a major industrial design consulting firm in Chicago came to work in Turkey under the auspices of the ICA (International Cooperation Administration, the forerunner of AID).⁴⁹

However, this ICA assignment in Turkey—as in the majority of ICA assignments in other developing countries—was not successful.⁵⁰ It was, on the other hand, the first known initiative to create an awareness of industrial design in the Turkish context.⁵¹

The Origins of Industrial Design Education at METU

During this same period, an international project originated and backed by a UN initiative, was underway to establish a new technical university in Ankara. In 1955, through the sponsorship of UNTAA (United Nations Technical Assistance Administration), an advisory committee visited Turkey in connection with the establishment of the Middle East Technical University (METU): Prof. G. Holmes Perkins, Prof. Wilhelm von Moltke, and, Assoc. Prof. Leon Loschetter (all from the University of Pennsylvania's School of Fine Arts). METU was established in Ankara in 1956 with active international support, including that of the U.S. The U.S. aid through ICA

46 Fleishman, "Design as a Political Force Part 2," 48–52; and Pulos, *The American Design Adventure*, 236–237.

47 "Peter Müller-Munk Associates announce that ...," *Industrial Design* 3 (June 1956): 26; Fleishman, "Design as a Political Force, Part 2," 52; and "Peter Muller-Munk Returned to Pittsburgh....," *Industrial Design* 4 (December 1957): 22.

48 Fleishman, "Design as a Political Force Part 2," 50.

49 David K. Munro, "A Rationale and an Outline for the Establishment of a Department of Industrial Design at the Middle East Technical University, Ankara" (unpublished report, 23 pages, Ankara: METU, October 1971), 4.

50 *Ibid.*, 4–5.

51 Meanwhile, in Istanbul, the School of Applied Fine Arts (TGSYO) was founded in 1957 as an independent initiative from the ICA program. The school comprised decorative painting, graphic arts, textile arts, ceramics, and furniture-interior design departments. It was financed and administered by the Ministry of Education, and was supported by a group of German tutors. However, the industrial design program in this institution was officially started in the early-1980s. See H. Alpay Er and Fatma Korkut, "Industrial Design Education and Institutionalization in Turkey: Chronological Comments" [in Turkish] in *Nesnel I: Türkiye'de Tasarım Eğitimi*, H. A. Er et al., eds. (Istanbul: Endüstriyel Tasarımcılar Meslek Kuruluşu and Boyut Yayıncılık, 1998), 6–9.

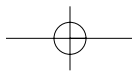




Figure 4

From left to right: Thomas B. A. Godfrey, Acting Dean of the METU Faculty of Architecture (1956–59); Professor G. Holmes Perkins, Dean of the Graduate School of Fine Arts, University of Pennsylvania (1951–71), and the chief advisor to the Turkish government in the establishment of METU; Tefvik Ileri, Minister of Education; Necmi Tanyolaç, Secretary General of METU (circa 1957). Courtesy of METU.

(later AID) and some nongovernmental organizations such as the Ford Foundation to the METU project increased significantly from the late-1950s, and continued until the early-1970s.

Professor G. Holmes Perkins, Dean of the Graduate School of Fine Arts, University of Pennsylvania (1951–1971) was assigned by UNTAA to act as the chief advisor to the Turkish Government in the establishment of METU. When Prof. Perkins visited METU for the second time in June–July 1957, he proposed a development plan for the period of 1956–1960 which included a department of industrial design in the Faculty of Architecture.⁵² The plan did not specify a time frame, and it appears that he did not propose to launch it in the short run. This was the first official mention of an industrial design program at a university in Turkey.

The proposal for including industrial design within METU programs—which appears to be independent of the first ICA design mission by Peter Müller-Munk—was followed by a second ICA-backed design initiative in Turkey. According to Munro, between 1958 and 1961 another major campaign was launched to build a design center in the METU Faculty of Architecture.⁵³ The proposal was to set up a design center in cooperation with the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston, Massachusetts. This proposal was put forward and supported by the Institute of Contemporary Art, William E. Cox (Acting Dean of the METU Faculty of Architecture), Dr. Aksal of the Turkish Ministry of Industry, and Dr. Aptullah Kuran of the METU Faculty of Architecture.

The Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston appears to have been the key proponent of this initiative. The director of the Institute, James S. Plaut, had been a design advisor to the Israeli Government since 1951, and he also signed an agreement with ICA in 1956 for a full-scale design education and assistance program to improve Israel's consumer goods under the "Point Four" Technical Assistance Program.⁵⁴ The three-year contract between the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston and the Technion, Israel's Institute of Technology was in accordance with the U.S. policy of establishing working relationships between schools that would endure beyond the termination of government support.⁵⁵ The Institute of Contemporary Art's program for Israel had three major phases: The Institute would formulate an industrial design curriculum at Technion; create a Design Center; and initiate a consumer research program in the U.S. to give direction to the design of Israeli exports.⁵⁶

It appears that the Institute of Contemporary Art tried to set up a design center at METU as part of a program similar to that which they proposed for Israel. The internal communication at METU⁵⁷ also indicates that the establishment of an industrial design program was on the agenda of the university's administration in

52 Arif T. Payaslioglu, *The History of an Innovation in the Turkish Higher Education: From Barrack to Campus 1954–1964* [in Turkish] (Ankara: METU, 1996), 59. According to the plan, the Faculty of Architecture comprised the departments of architecture, city planning, building construction, industrial design, and commercial art.

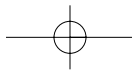
53 Munro, "A Rationale and an Outline," 5.

54 *Industrial Design*, "U.S. Gives Design Aid to Israel," 22.

55 *Ibid.*

56 *Ibid.*; Fleishman, "Design as a Political Force, Part 2," 50; Pulos, *The American Design Adventure*, 241.

57 For example, Robert L. Matters, METU internal communication to Dean William E. Cox (ref: Proposed formation of a department of product design), METU, Ankara, 30 September 1959; and Willis R. Woolrich (President), METU internal communication to Dean William E. Cox (ref: Ford Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation), METU, Ankara, 30 December 1959.



1959. Apart from ICA, the Ford Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation also were among the U.S. institutions that were approached for financing the program. Nevertheless, the proposal failed to materialize:

The plan, unfortunately, was too unwieldy and demanded too much of too many people and agencies (i.e. Ford foundation, AID) and was so besieged by financial limitations that the project finally foundered.⁵⁸

Indeed, the proposal involved too many partners: METU, the Turkish Ministry of Industry, ICA, Boston Institute of Contemporary Arts, Ford Foundation, etc. However, the main blow to the plan must have come in the beginning of the 1960s, when two independent developments appear to have paralyzed the partners of the project. First, on 27 May 1960, the Turkish Military took over the administration of the country. They arrested most ministers, and forced many high-ranking bureaucrats to resign, accusing the former government of misconduct and corruption. It was a major disruption for many projects in Turkey. Meanwhile, in the U.S., the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 abolished the ICA and transferred its functions to the Agency for International Development (AID).⁵⁹ Subsequently, no concrete results were achieved in the second U.S.-backed design initiative in Turkey.

However, the efforts to establish a Department of Industrial Design at METU continued during the early-1960s. In particular, Aptullah Kuran, who later became the Dean of the Faculty of Architecture at METU, was instrumental in keeping the project alive.⁶⁰ In autumn of 1964, Raymond Loewy, the famous American industrial designer, visited the Faculty of Architecture at METU. The Dean, Aptullah Kuran introduced him to the students, and he presented and talked about his designs.⁶¹ This is a surprising event, since none of the Turkish or American sources mentions that Raymond Loewy played any role at all in ICA-or AID-funded design assistance programs either in Turkey or in any other developing country. Following his visit to METU, Loewy sent an issue of *Industrial Design* (March 1963, no. 3) which included an article by Jay Doblin on graduate study at IIT to Kemal Kurdas, President of METU, and Dean Kuran. On the margin of the article, Loewy wrote the following note:

*President Kurdas, Dean Kuran.
Dear Jay Doblin of the Illinois
Institute of Technology's Institute of
Design was a member of my staff
for 12 years.
[Signature]
Dec. 64*

58 Munro, "A Rationale and an Outline," 5.

59 U.S. Department of State, "Director of the International Cooperation Administration."

60 Munro, "A Rationale and an Outline," 5. According to Munro, in 1965, Kuran published a report on the proposed department of industrial design.

61 The visit of Raymond Loewy was mentioned by Serim Denel in a meeting organized at METU, "Establishment Years of the Department of Industrial Design," 19 April 2001, METU, Ankara.

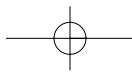




Figure 5
Kemal Kurdas, President of METU (1961-69),
METU Faculty of Architecture, circa 1963.
Courtesy of METU Press.



Figure 6
David K. Munro, Ankara, 1972.
Courtesy of David K. Munro.

This note looks like a recommendation “letter” for Jay Doblin. However, it is well known that Doblin did not play any role in industrial design education in Turkey. Thus, the nature of that brief involvement of Loewy in the establishment of the industrial design department at METU still awaits an explanation. However, what is known, is that during the second half of the 1960s, the establishment of an industrial design department at METU with continued support of AID was still on the agenda of the university’s administration. In his memoirs, Kemal Kurdas, the President of METU in the 1960s, recalls the case of the industrial design department as follows:

In fact, we wanted to establish industrial design as a department. We received foreign aid for this aim, significant foreign aid. We invited a professor who was renowned for being the founder of this field in the world, and used his expertise as a consultant. However, industrial design was kept as an option in our academic program because the circumstances were not ready yet.⁶²

David K. Munro at METU in the Late-1960s

Practically and officially, the beginning of industrial design teaching at METU was marked by the appointment of American industrial designer David K. Munro (IDSA of New York) by AID to implement the establishment of industrial design department in 1969.

David K. Munro was born in Paris, and grew up in France and England. Between 1945 and 1949, he served in the U.S. Navy’s 7th Fleet operating in China, Japan, and Southeast Asia. During his military service, he also attended the U.S. Navy Supply School in Illinois. Following his discharge in 1949, he was accepted by the Philadelphia Museum School of Art, and graduated with a BFA in industrial design. He also attended the New School for Social Research in New York, and Temple University in Philadelphia. After his graduation, he worked for Henry Dreyfuss Associates. Later, he moved to Detroit to accept a position with Harley Earl’s personal industrial design practice.⁶³ He then moved to Akron, Ohio to work with Smith, Sherr and McDermott, and became the Director of Foreign Operations there. He primarily was responsible for contract negotiations with the State Department in Washington, and was in charge of pursuing potential international small-scale industry projects.⁶⁴

In 1957, after Smith, Sherr and McDermott was awarded a contract by the ICA for a program in Korea to stimulate the development of native handicrafts and small-scale industries, group of designers including Munro was sent to Korea to set up a demonstration center in Seoul and to teach design and related courses at three local universities.⁶⁵ He was the U.S. based director of this project which also initiated the development of industrial design in Korea.⁶⁶ While working on the Korean project between 1957 and

62 Kemal Kurdas, *My METU Years: The Story of a Service* [in Turkish] (Ankara: METU Press, 1998), 155.

63 David K. Munro, letter to Fatma Korkut, 14 August 2001.

64 Munro, letter, 14 August 2001. Munro, e-mail, 21 December 2001.

65 *Industrial Design*, “Design Team in Korea,” 20; Kyung Won Chung, “Strategies for Promoting Korean Design Excellence,” *Design Issues* 14:2 (1998): 6-7; and Munro, letter, 14 August 2001.

66 See Chung, “Strategies for Promoting Korean Design Excellence,” 6-7.

1961, he also was assigned to design the U.S. pavilion for an international fair in Kabul, Afghanistan in 1960. He recalls the Afghan mission as follows:

This was a nine months effort under incredibly difficult logistical obstacles but the fair was a great success and helped keep the Russians at bay in the economic war of the region.⁶⁷

During the same period, he also visited Sri Lanka (Ceylon) on a U.S. State Department grant for a brief period to assess the industrial potential of the country.⁶⁸ Between 1962 and 1964, Munro was awarded a Fulbright Foundation visiting lectureship in Thailand to help establish a department of industrial design at the Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok. Between 1964 and 1967, he was involved in the project known as "Products of the Alianza," to help selected South American countries "help themselves." These countries were Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia.⁶⁹ He took part in the successful establishment of five craft centers in these countries, and their exportation of crafts products. In 1966, he was awarded a survey-grant by the U.S. State Department to analyze the export potentials of products from French-speaking Africa (Senegal, Niger, Ivory Coast, Gabon, and Dahomey). This was the last mission that he undertook for Smith, Sherr and McDermott. During 1967 and 68, Munro had been part of an independent project of Litton Industries on Crete. Before being assigned by AID to the Turkish mission in 1969, he was briefly in Algeria for a project of General Electric.⁷⁰

"It was a fiercely contested opportunity with many international designers and educators striving for the prize."⁷¹ This is how Munro described the AID contract in Turkey. It appears that there had been an intense competition among several designers and educators. Arthur J. Pulos (Syracuse University) and Victor Papanek were among the leading contenders for the contract.⁷² The contractual organization for AID was the Institute for International Education (IIE) in New York. A consultant from IIE, "a Mr. Bush-Brown," interviewed Munro at JFK Airport, before his departure to Ankara, in connection with making the final selection.⁷³ After a rigorous screening procedure, Munro was awarded the AID contract, and appointed to implement the establishment of an industrial design department in the METU Faculty of Architecture under the joint auspices of AID and METU.⁷⁴

Munro went to Ankara, and started working at METU in the autumn of 1969. His job title was visiting lecturer in industrial design. Munro summarizes his duties as follows:

Studied economy, displaceable imports, current training/educational resources. Wrote 5 year curriculum. Taught same. Assisted U.S. & Turkish agencies and producers in design, training, marketing and export.⁷⁵

67 Munro, letter, 14 August 2001.

68 Ibid.

69 Ibid.

70 Ibid.

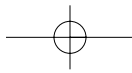
71 Ibid.

72 Munro, e-mail, 21 December 2001; and David K. Munro, e-mail to Fatma Korkut, 22 December 2001.

73 Munro, e-mail, 21 December 2001.

74 In fact, Munro's involvement in Turkey goes back further than 1969. He visited Turkey in 1957 when he was an agent on behalf of Equipment International of Akron, OH. In 1960, he worked with Director Grant of AID, a marketing firm in Istanbul (PEVA), and the Ministry of Industry in Ankara in an effort to foster industrial design in Turkey (Munro, "A Rationale and an Outline," 5).

75 Munro, letter, 14 August 2001.



In October 1970, Munro started two elective courses under the architecture program for third- and fourth-year students, Arch. 361 and Arch. 461 Industrial Design. Another elective course, Arch. 601 Industrial Design, also was started under the existing M.Arch program in the same year.⁷⁶ However, Munro's real mission was to establish a graduate industrial design program at METU.⁷⁷

During his stay, Munro wrote several reports for the formation of an industrial design department at METU. His reports provide the reasoning behind and a description of the proposed department. He explained his approach to industrial design and industrial design education in the periphery as follows:

We can say that Industrial Design, at its best, is an important social factor. It is moreover, a critical capitalistic tool. It does not really exist for aesthetic and altruistic reasons per se. When lagging industries approached Raymond Loewy, Norman Bel Geddes, and Henry Dreyfuss in the U.S.A. in the late 20s it was because these industries felt that they needed some sort of a competitive edge at the market place—the point of sale.

Industrial design, as an economic and social force, must fit and be geared to the economy in which it performs. The mere transposition of Industrial Design disciplines and attitudes from more advanced economies and technocracies, to Turkey for instance, would be invalid.

The latter is particularly true in the educational sector where essentially there are no checks and balances. It will be imperative for METU, in its proposed Industrial Design curriculum, to constantly consider the specific needs of Turkey's expanding industry as well as her consumer requirements.⁷⁸

In Munro's opinion, there was no question that Turkey must have trained home-educated industrial designers to perform the vital functions in industry:

[T]here is no substitute in any expanding economy for the properly trained industrial designer. In terms of Turkey's future, especially as the world shrinks, an awareness of this is essential...and speedy action upon the implementation of a viable Department of Industrial Design at the Faculty of Architecture, Middle East Technical University, is categorically essential.⁷⁹

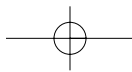
To fulfill its premise to benefit Turkish industry, the proposed department was foreseen to have close relations with industry. Industry support was sought to provide specific projects and financial assistance to the department. For example, Munro wrote a report in the form of an interoffice memorandum in November 1971, explaining his field trip to the Arçelik production plant in

76 According to Munro, these elective courses were open to students in the Faculty of Architecture and the Department of Mechanical Engineering (David K. Munro, METU internal communication to "Those Interested in Industrial Design," METU, Ankara, 26 June 1971).

77 Munro, "A Rationale and an Outline," 9–15.

78 David K. Munro, "An Outline for the Formation of a Department of Industrial Design" (unpublished report, 11 pages, Ankara: METU, June 1971), 11.

79 Ibid.



Çayirova, Istanbul (Field trip report to Istanbul, 25 November, 1971) with the aim of seeking industry sponsorship on behalf of the proposed industrial design department.

On the basis of these series of reports, a final report under the title of "A Rationale and an Outline for the Establishment of a Department of Industrial Design at the Middle East Technical University, Ankara" was prepared in October 1971. This report summarized the activities undertaken by Munro and other industrial design-related initiatives by the U.S. Government in Turkey, and provided the proposed program of industrial design education at METU. The "masters in industrial design" program was going to have four semesters, and be open to graduates of various disciplines, as well as to those of the architecture and mechanical engineering departments.⁸⁰

In addition to the support for an industrial design department at METU by institutions including the Ford Foundation and the Fulbright Commission, AID and its office in Ankara was instrumental in the realization of the project, and was widely acknowledged in the reports. Dr. Kenneth M. Kauffman (Deputy Director, AID/Ankara); George D. Thomas (AID); Robert E. Doran, Leonard Pompa, and Kenneth Howe (Educational Division, AID/Ankara) played significant roles during Munro's stay at METU.⁸¹

The mission led by Munro was described as "an attempt to infuse industrial design as a discipline within Turkey's economy and its academic community." It cost \$250,000, including contributions of books and equipment to METU, since the late-1950s.⁸² In terms of the additional funding requirements of the proposed department, Munro applied to a number of Turkish, American, and international institutions: the Ford Foundation, the Fulbright Commission, the State Planning Organization of Turkey (DPT), the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the International Council of Societies of Industrial Design (ICSID), Industrial Designers Society of America (IDSA), leading Turkish manufacturing companies such as Arçelik and Eczacıbaşı; and United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). In particular, the expectation from AID was to provide funding for fellowships for industrial design students to obtain advanced training in the U.S. during the 1971-1972 academic year. Munro also contacted 25 industrial design schools in the U.S. for student fellowships, travel grants, and other expressions of interest in the new department.⁸³

In 1972, the American News Center in Ankara and METU organized an industrial design exhibition, which included student projects of the elective industrial design courses by Munro in the METU Department of Architecture.

At the end of his contract, David K. Munro left Turkey in 1972, and AID withdrew its operations from Turkey the same year. However, when Munro left, his original mission was not accom-

80 Munro, "A Rationale and an Outline," 8, 10.

81 *Ibid.*, 6.

82 *Ibid.*, 6.

83 *Ibid.*, 6-8.

plished due to the political unrest of the early-1970s at METU, where the car of the U.S. ambassador to Turkey was burned by protesting students. The Senate of the university postponed many initiatives in this political climate, including the establishment of the Department of Industrial Design.

Industrial design was offered as an elective course in the architecture program during the 1970s. The Department of Industrial Design at METU was established with a BID program in May 1979, two decades after the Perkins' development plan. The academic staff who were actively involved in the industrial design courses initiated by Munro in the early-1970s, most notably Serim Denel, Mehmet Asatekin, and Güner Mutağ, played critical roles in the development of the program and the establishment of the department.

Conclusions

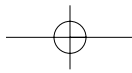
Three main conclusions can be drawn from the study which reflect three viewpoints. First of all, from the viewpoint of the periphery, the attempts at initiating industrial design education in some peripheral countries such as Turkey and Korea in the late-'50s and '60s appear to be a result of aid programs which were instrumental in U.S. foreign policy, which aimed at containing the Soviet threat during the Cold War. The use of industrial design in the service of the U.S. national interests led to the early emergence of industrial design education in some peripheral countries with significant implications for the development pattern of industrial design in the periphery.

Secondly, from the viewpoint of the center, it is evident that, during the Cold War, especially in the second half of the 1950s, the U.S. Government became a major client of American designers and design companies through trade fair and ICA contracts. The American industrial design profession, while serving the political and economic interests of the U.S. within the context of international politics at that time, assumed a new ideological identity and role.

And finally, from a global perspective, the history of industrial design education in Turkey reveals that an analysis of the interactions between the center and the periphery is crucial for a comprehensive understanding of global design history. The role of the American industrial design profession in the U.S. foreign aid programs is a relatively overlooked chapter of the design history in the center. Nevertheless, it had a significant impact on the development of industrial design in the periphery.

The case presented in this paper reveals a good example of the political dimension of the world design history as part of general world history.⁸⁴ It also confirms the interconnectedness of the national design histories of central and peripheral countries.

84 As Margolin states, a world history of design is inherently political because it brings into relation nations that have existed in a political sphere (Margolin, "A World History of Design and the History of the World").



Acknowledgements

We would like to express our gratitude to David K. Munro for the invaluable account of his professional career, and for the tremendous stimulation he continues to provide. We also would like to extend special thanks to Güner Mutaf of the Middle East Technical University, who generously lent his personal files and all of the unpublished reports and documents prepared at METU in the early-1970s; and to Serim Denel of the California Polytechnic State University, whose recollections of METU in the late-'60s and early-'70s contributed to some of the most exciting details of this paper.

