

Tolerance and coercion: The political scenes of European modern design movement

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Abstract: The social origins of European modern design was not only associated with technological change but also had a strong relationship with other factors such as social system. With the assistance of the method characterised as historical sociology, this article makes a comparative analysis on the rise of European modern design. It tries to clarify how European political systems were diversely modernised and how they had the distinctive effects on the modern movements of different European countries. Particularly, the constitutional system and liberalism of Western Europe did not develop recognised pattern of modern design but contributed to the democratic idea of modernism through benign inactivity. The centralised bureaucratic system and nationalism of Central and Eastern Europe did directly stimulate the birth of modern design but then repressed its later development. In addition, this study illustrates why Germany became conspicuous in the diverse political situations during that period.

Keywords: European modern design, social origins, politics, tolerance, coercion

Introduction

For social change, although the transformation of technology and the social system are both the strong factors, the discovered effect of a social system is more ambiguous than that of technology. It has also been admitted that the causal link between the social system and the origins of European modern design cannot be interpreted as clearly as the one between technology and its origins. The difficulties mainly stem from two aspects. First, the intrinsic logical relationships between the social system and design activities are not always convincing. The explicit and direct force of the social system on the military or economic affairs such as the First Sino-Japanese War of 1894 or the

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wartime communist policy of Russia can easily be demonstrated. Yet, observers cannot expect similar connections will be readily found in the field of modern design. Technologies or aesthetics have obviously affected the appearance of modern design, whereas the same force of the social system on the design activities cannot directly be detected because a specific pattern of design, which has been under the impact of technological change or aesthetic trends, can probably appear in any kind of social system. Moreover, the toughness still comes from another fact. That is, the investigation of this kind of link has hardly become the central theme of modern design history and the main concerns in this field are related to the issue of aesthetics since the origins of modern design has a close relationship with modern art, on which technological change directly produced an effect, for instance, machine aesthetics and abstract art. Despite the obstacles caused by the difficulties aforesaid, the social system indicates a potential but forceful action on the birth of European modern design and a historical analysis of it will display its historical significance. As for the social system, beyond the briefly chronicled political or economic backgrounds, more attention should be paid to the connection between design activities and political conditions, and intensive analysis at the macro level should be conducted to strengthen the understanding of this connection¹. This is exactly as Douglass Cecil North states in *Structure and Change in Economic History* in which the investigation into the industrial revolution was not only a review on the elapsed

¹ I can hardly deny the efforts which have been made to inspect the relationship between politics and modern design activities within the narrowed confines, for instance, based on several studies of German modern design, John Heskett 'has shattered the myth of a symbiotic relationship between good design and democratic social formations' and 'implies the need for a fundamental re-assessment of the relationship of societies to types of design practice', see Dilnot, 'The state of design history, part I: mapping the field'. Other studies also made an attempt to investigate this kind of link, see, for instance, Lane, *National Romanticism and Modern Architecture in Germany and the Scandinavian Countries*; Betts, *The Authority of Everyday Objects: A Cultural History of West German Industrial Design*; Maciuika, *Before the Bauhaus: Architecture, Politics and the German State, 1890-1920*; Jaskot and Rosenfeld, *Beyond Berlin: Twelve German Cities Confront the Nazi Past*. However, I do argue that the investigation of this kind of link from a macroscopic view, by which attempts such as comparative study can be made to investigate the causal link on a larger scale, for instance, Europe instead of Germany, and in the long term, for instance, more than a century instead of around ten or twenty years, has hitherto hardly become the central theme of modern design history.

brilliance in England, but also a serious examination on the ‘property rights system’ and ‘private rates of return’ (North 1981). With the assistance of historical sociology as a research method and through a comparative analysis of England, Germany, and Russia, this article takes measures to achieve the following aims: (1) It clarifies the diverse effects of political conditions on the historical process of the European modern design movement at the macro level. (2) It confirms the causal link between the social system (an influential social factor) and the emergence of European modern design (a modern cultural phenomenon). In addition, (3) as an introspection, it makes an attempt to encourage readers to reflect on the situations of contemporary cultural activities, art and design for instance, against the background of varied state politics.

Background

Although many art history researchers had already given continuous attention to modern design before this time, the 1930s can be considered as the starting point of academic research on modern design history. Nikolaus Pevsner, as a British historian, wrote the earliest work on modern design history in 1936. His book, *Pioneers of Modern Design: from William Morris to Walter Gropius*, declared the real beginning of modern design history study.

Since the 1940s, based on Pevsner’s classical study as a narrative chronicle, some researchers have provided new studies on this issue. The remarkable works include *Mechanization Takes Command: A Contribution to Anonymous History* by Siegfried Gideon and *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age* by Reyner Banham. Against Pevsner’s ‘heroic approach’, Gideon presented ‘anonymous history’ the focus of which moved from the historic force of heroes to a much broader view of the impact of impersonal industrial technology. Banham directed his academic insight towards those design activities that had not classically been included into modernism’s main trends such as Italian Futurism in the 1910s.

From the 1970s up to the 1990s, Penny Sparke, Adrian Forty, and Jonathan Woodham, as the later researchers, stepped into the same field. Their wide-ranging works included *A Century of Design: Design Pioneers of the 20th Century*, by Sparke; *Objects of Desire: Design and Society since 1750* by Forty, and *Twentieth-Century Design* by Woodham. Along with other up-and-coming researchers, they adopted

a more comprehensive theoretical view in order to examine modern design history and discussed it using diversified methods. This change strengthened the trend which indicated a significant shifting from narration of modern design under chronicle to analysis and interpretation on modern design from the sociological and cultural views (Banham 1960, Sparke 1986, Woodham 1997, Forty 1992). This new trend thus had an impact that continued into the twenty-first century.

This study, as an intensified exploration into European modern design history from a political perspective, follows this main trend as well. Although political history has traditionally been isolated from social or cultural history, it will inspect the potential action of political and economic policies on the social origins of European modern design. The expected result will improve the understanding of the relationship between politics and modern design activities.

Methodology

Historical sociology

Historical sociology had been accepted as a sub-field of sociology since its rise in the 1960s. Researchers who have made general contributions into historical sociology, however, regard it as a specific sociological method, which is characterised by historical and diachronic standpoint (Skocpol 1984). In brief, as a research method, historical sociology places a heavy emphasis on the unique and diverse historical evidence from a macroscopic view. It possesses the advantage of comparatively clarifying the reasons and results of social change in the long term, during which the evidence can hardly be obtained by the controlled experiments, interviews, or questionnaires. Several classical sociologists and historians have laid the groundwork for historical sociology. The masterpieces from Alexis de Tocqueville, Max Weber, and Marc Bloch take on the main characteristics of historical sociology (Tocqueville 1955; Bloch 1953; Weber 1930, 1978; Elias 2000). A few researchers, including Perry Anderson, Barrington Moore, and Theda Skocpol, subsequently made further achievements, and their works have reflected the glory of historical sociology in tracing the diversified historical evidence and providing comparative interpretations of social change, particularly in the studies of political system and economic policies (Anderson 1974a, 1974b; Moore 1966; Skocpol 1979). For modern design history, some

historical sociologists have also presented their own understandings, which are infrequently found in the studies of modern architecture and urban planning (Delanty and Isin 2003).

The sociological exploration into modern design history has been greatly enlightened by the above-mentioned works. The successful comparative studies on social change in terms of political and economic issues will encourage the same effort towards modern design (as a manifestation of social change too) and will correspondingly display the dynamic interaction between social system and modern design activities. The empirical studies of modern design history make contributions to the historical narratives, yet the studies of historical sociology target the achievement of reflection on the sociologically valued questions within modern design history.

Evidence and understanding

On account of the invalidity of scientific experiments, interviews, or questionnaires for data collection, this study, like many other studies of historical sociology, will depend on the historical evidence, the meanings of which should be evaluated in terms of subjective understanding instead of objective statistics illustration (Weber 1949, 1978; Tullock 1965). This kind of evidence belongs to the past but maintains strong relevance for sociological evaluation. Hence, all kinds of original documents, records, and other items laid out in narratives will provide significant clues for the study. In this article, particularly, the evidence have left two ways through which the author can access.

First, this study takes historical narratives into account. This is not a way that has never been greeted with serious critics. Under the contemptuous title 'second-hand', it often draws devaluations of importance. As the applications of first-hand evidence do have to reach the fact by evading prejudice and misunderstanding, the second-hand proof can achieve the same. The second-hand evidence may help the historical sociology researchers conduct a better study, provided they perform an adequate literature review and took the full significance of the evidence into consideration from a comparative and analytic perspective (Skocpol 1979). Second, as a specific field of research, the study of historical sociology on modern design does possess another type of evidence. Researchers can take advantage of the works of modern design, for instance, industrial products or architecture. They

have been viewed as ‘solidified history’ and have articulated the momentous historical significance both in appearance and sociological indication. Hence, as for the term ‘modern design’ employed in this article, it refers to the areas mainly connected to the activities or the works of architecture, product design, and graphic design in modern times, namely, from the age of the industrial revolution to the second half of the twentieth century.

As illustrated, this study looks upon understanding as a preferential approach for investigation. It supposes that the significance of social action can only be accessed through the ‘inside’ comprehension, rather than through the ‘outside’ statistical figures (Weber 1949, 1978; Tullock 1965). Otherwise, the sociologically valued hints would be missing. In general, under an efficient and macroscopic literature review with an interdisciplinary principle, this study endeavours to take a diachronic view that serves the comparative analysis of long-term social change by the subjective understanding, in order to obtain the historical evidence-based conclusions. It also indicates that this study will be part of theoretical work based on historical sociology interpretation instead of a historical narrative of empirical study. Specifically, the procedure of research is as follows: a spectrum of political systems in European modernisation will be formed in the first place, by which a few cases will be illustrated from an ideal type perspective. Then, based on these illustrated cases, an inspection will be carried out in order to demonstrate how the distinctive political processes of West Europe, as well as Central and East Europe, took effect on modern design activities at the time. It will highlight the intricate connection between the diverse political systems and the rise of European modern design at the macro level.

Typology spectrum of political systems in Europe’s modernisation

Prior to any analysis of the interactive relationship between social system factors and the modern movement in Europe, it is necessary to make sense of the political spectrum in those countries involved in the social origins of European modern design. A coordinate is constructed to take a better look at the diverse European political situations. Although there has been no authoritative classification of political patterns during Europe’s modernisation, Barrington Moore’s opinion has provided a reference for the investigation. His theory has then been applied, as a suggestive guide rather than a rigorous criterion, to

identify the classification of the social system in this article. In *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, Moore argued three major types of political turning towards modernisation, which has regarded 'capitalistic democracy' as the first type, 'militarism' the second type, and 'communism' the third type, with each of these prototypes found in modern European history. According to this established coordinate, typology differentiation has been produced in terms of social system. It has been revealed that England, France, and the Netherlands took the way of 'constitutional democracy' as their political modernisation method (Moore 1966). Although considering the diversity presented in time line, evolutionary path, and administration pattern, they all took a similar form that in retrospect turned into a mainstream political trend in which social contract and liberalism were the dominant ideologies. This political form then became the advanced one in modern times. Italy and Germany, however, with their successive experiences of constitutional monarchy and parliamentary republic, later went down the road of the militarism. This became a dramatic form of social domination. Although conservative political powers were represented, particularly in Germany, this did reflect an effort towards constitutionalism and parliamentary politics (Anderson 1974a; Skocpol 1979; Moore 1966). It was still an ambition of those countries with the extreme limitations, running after the advanced countries in the modern political progress. Russia, after failed to establish a constitutional government, finally developed an astonishing but suitable system that featured one-party bureaucratic domination, which was far from constitutionalism or parliamentary democracy. The detailed elaboration on the Russian political road is beyond the scope of this study, although it can indicate at least a severe political situation that led to this political way at the time (Skocpol 1979; Moore 1966). As for ideology, Germany and Russia were both dyed with the colour of nationalism that confronted liberalism prevailing in Western European countries, for instance, England and France. A further inspection will be made on the diverse ways of European politics. In terms of industrialisation, those European countries aforesaid had received a ticket to enter through the same gate disregarding the time sequence and degree. Once political process had been reviewed, it showed the variety instead. Regarding the established constitutional governments and parliamentary democracies of England, France, and the Netherlands, their political systems revealed modernity that is

different from what is found in the aged agrarian societies, although they implied a degree of relations, for instance, the constitutional monarchy of England. Germany, however, had to set its primary target to keep up with the advanced countries by the political reform or revolution but failed to reach it for the hindrance of strong conservative political power (Skocpol 1979; Moore 1966). Fortunately, in fact, the countries lagging behind, like Germany, did achieve political modernisation partly. Germany shared an affinity with Western Europe and afterward the modern movement was going to be a beneficiary of this political resonance between Germany and the West. Again, Russian political modernisation performed an amazing task. Russia radically started a social revolution and abolished its traditional social hierarchy but maintained a similar element of the old monarchy, which is known as absolutism. The Russian emperor was replaced by a political party, which was then followed by a large-scale bureaucratic group. Consequently, its dramatic influence was displayed during the historical process of modern design in Russia.

West Europe: Tolerance and indifference

With a brief review of political modernisation of Europe, the intricate connections between the diverse political forces and European modern design movement are going to be examined. Compared with the action of technological change on modern design, a new mechanism is then introduced. As for technological change or industrialisation, an inquiry into whether it directly improved the rise of modern design should be made first. Regarding political force, however, the inquiry is reversed to whether it impeded the emergence of modern design, for the lack of technological support always suggests a delayed social progress, whereas the absence of political force probably leads to a beneficial effect and a radical policy even causes the irrevocable social harm.

The constitutional system of Western Europe has been chosen as the starting point for analysis. With this setting, it is found that the absence of political control has presented benign inactivity in this region, for the system had seldom laid any organised social impediment on the road on which the design activities were undertaken. The following illustration is made to interpret how it brought this benign inactivity into effect.

In terms of Art Nouveau in France and De Stijl in the Netherlands, little effect of benign inactivity has been discovered for their aesthetic

reformation essence. Influenced by the Aesthetic Movement and the idea of 'art for art's sake', Art Nouveau preferred the issue of decoration and was deficient in social responsibility (Pevsner 1960; 1968). The attitude of the De Stijl movement towards industrialisation or machine aesthetics was opposite to that of Art Nouveau, yet it kept the same quality of visual reform. J.J.P. Oud considered De Stijl as a movement regardless of social problems and Piet Mondrian's opinions merely reflected an artistic trend (Raizman 2010).

The evidence is obscure in France and the Netherlands, whereas England provides some vital clues. The Arts and Crafts movement was not only a trend that embodied the visual reformation, but also one with a strong awareness of social responsibility, which was dyed with the rich colour of political ideology. It is repeatedly remarked in modern design history that John Ruskin and William Morris insisted on naturalism aesthetics, acclaimed the spirit of the Middle Ages, radically objected to the industrial manufacturing process and division of labour, and strongly expressed their dissatisfaction with capitalism. A distinctive contrast between Ruskin's family background and his social awareness strengthened moral values of his political opinion (Raizman 2010). The similar discontentment disturbed Morris as well, for he contended that capitalism had enslaved people and bluntly criticised the British government's foreign policies (Kruft 1985; Raizman 2010). Consequently, Morris wrote *News from Nowhere*. and Ruskin conceived a communist society in his head.

Based on the clarified facts, the historical action of benign inactivity is emerging. Provided a given society with the severe restrictions on social critics, what kind of end would a political dissident like Ruskin or Morris face? Nevertheless, England did not belong to this fabricated society during that time². On the contrary, it was the earliest established constitutional government (in terms of common law) in Europe, where the individual rights that were written into law were deeply embedded in the brains of its people. This system provided an

² In terms of tolerance and coercion, I do neither suggest that the British government never played the coercive role internally and externally nor indicate that England was a liberal paradise. Rather, in so far as I illustrated on typology, the social system of England was significantly different from that of other countries in comparison, for instance, Germany or Russia, and this system, as an ideal type, did exert a force on the rise of European modern design in a way that was not in line with that of Germany or Russia.

atmosphere where people could express their own thoughts and tolerance became a core social value. In this circumstance, the dissident found an opportunity to make their voice heard and then for it to take effect. England, therefore, became the origins of modern design for the democratic ideal that targeted at serving all the people in a modern civil society, instead of the vested interests in a hierarchical society. Ruskin and Morris, each playing the role of the dissident, presented 'design for the public' for the first time in history.

For the sake of comparison, the history of Bauhaus is presented as another case to testify to the effect of benign inactivity. Having briefly reviewed the early stages of Bauhaus, social tolerance will touch the readers again. Bauhaus was founded during the Weimar Republic and its life kept in step with that of the Weimar Republic (Fiedler and Feierabend 2000). In terms of politics, the Weimar Republic closely resembled Western Europe before the Second World War. In fact, due to the founder's ambition, Bauhaus had a strong tendency of utopia-like religious mysticism in the beginning, which subsequently raised serious doubts and drawn reproaches from the public. However, the local government had a very tolerant attitude towards this school (Ibidem). As for the historical process of Bauhaus, political tolerance did provide a buffer for its reform towards rationalism in the middle period. It cannot be imagined that a system with tough control would allow any social organisation to have an ideological deviation. This did not befall the early Weimar Bauhaus, for social tolerance kept it from happening. Comparatively speaking, the political environment became strange in the late period of Bauhaus.

This leads to a confusing question: why did the political advantage characterised by benign inactivity did not make England the birthplace of modernism? Instead, it finally arose in those countries with a different social system and ideology, for instance, Germany and Russia. Specifically, why did the modern movement of the early twentieth century did not take place in England in the late nineteenth century? As for this question, besides the historical effect of the industrial revolution, political action also played a part. The performance of the social system was indeed double-edged. Even though benign inactivity did confirm free expression in England, the tradition of liberalism had individuals, rather than the government, play a key role in the movement. The British government did endeavour to encourage the industrialisation of design (Sparke 1986;

Forty 1992), but their actions were not strong enough to have a conclusive influence over the period of the Arts and Crafts movement. While the critical persons uncompromisingly refused the potential functions of industrial technology, the government exerted little corrective effect on this trend and was not ready to play an active role at key moments (tolerance indicates indifference), although there were a few designers who had already made a prophetic judgement on the significance of industrialisation.

Central and East Europe: Encouragement and coercion

This investigation then led to those European countries whose social systems were different from that of England in order to see what kind of effect they had on the rise of modern design.

In Italy, although the futurists almost acted out their roles individually and the unexpected end of Futurism was caused by the international war rather than the internal political turbulence, this movement did deliver a vague awareness of nationalism in pursuing the advanced countries. Germany and Russia, however, have left the deepest political mark on the birth of European modern design. Germany had experienced constitutional monarchy during Prussia and then the Weimar Republic after the First World War until turning into Nazi in the 1930s. Russia experienced the fall of Tsarist Empire (traditional absolute monarchy) and the rise of the communist regime (modern centralised bureaucratic domination). Despite the different types of social system, Germany and Russia have shared the same ideology, namely nationalism. Although the Weimar Republic tended to be a liberal country, Germany, as the country lagging behind, consistently depended on national power since the first unification. The powerful form of German governmental bureaucracy was far from the British vision. It created a deep-seated ground for a nationalised political force with Nazi Germany as the pinnacle. Russia was suffering from an even crueller political situation. It had lagged more behind, and there was much unrest in the political power transition. If the Russian communists had failed to take nationwide control, they would have missed the fundamental requirements for survival. This situation also constructed a framework upon which the formidable national power arose.

If constitutionalism and liberalism in the West double-edged, what kind of effects would totalitarianism and nationalism in the Central and

East Europe have? Opposite of tolerance and indifference, they are to be extremely active. On the historical process of European modern design, the active political action led to two contrasting outcomes, between which the change was alarming. In those countries with a bureaucratic totalitarian and nationalist background, once the national policies were activated to support modern design, political force would play a positive role. This action can hardly be found in England or the Netherlands, where constitutionalism and liberalism have firmly taken root. Thanks to support at the government level, a strong bureaucratic system was competent enough to mobilise the social resources, particularly in the short term, which cannot be easily achieved by any kind of society with tolerance and indifference (namely, the small government). Nevertheless, political power could play a negative role as well, from which modern design had suffered. In this situation, modern design would experience the merciless constriction, under which not only design activities but also thinking must be suppressed. All these factors are dependent on national politics or the motivations of policymakers.

This mechanism will be disclosed whenever German or Russian modern design history is taken into consideration. As a result of social modernisation, modern design was once regarded as an effective approach to obtaining an industrial advantage and the German government offered full support for the modern design movement in conjunction with official guidance for the industrial and economic activities (Riseboro 1982). The Deutscher Werkbund was founded on industrial economy and backed by the industrial world, with the summarised target of an advantageous combination of national economy and applied art (Kruft 1985). Even Hermann Muthesius was a governmental officer, whose social role suggests a distinct comparison with that of Ruskin or Morris in England. The concern of Muthesius and other politicians, such as Friedrich Naumann, for the design activities revealed the economic and cultural interest of the German government (Frampton 2020). It indicated the strong ambition of Germany, which was trying hard to integrate economy, industry, and design into the national expectation. Namely, entrepreneurs and designers should be encouraged to keep nationalism in mind, which can improve the link of management, design, manufacture, and market (Riseboro1982). For this historic mission, Muthesius had confidence and every detail in his speech had revealed nationalism (Banham1960).

It was an encouraging force exerted by a government under the influence of nationalism. In the second Deutsches Reich, the German national policies and ideology realised the success of the Deutscher Werkbund and then had standardised modern design arise in Germany. Since European modern design history had witnessed the inseparable connection between the two forces, the negative role of German political action, however, should also be taken into consideration. The German modern movement in fact came to an end and the demise did occur. When the modernists voiced extreme thoughts during the later stages and the Nazi power ended the Weimar Republic at the same time, Bauhaus was then seen as a political threat and the modern movement was suddenly terminated by the new government. Although the obscure connection between the Nazi government and Bauhaus has been revealed during the Third Reich, numerous facts have illustrated the unfortunate end (Cruickshank 1996; Fiedler and Feierabend 2000; Frampton 2020; Raizman 2010).

As for the influence of national policies and political ideology on the European modern design movement, a more dramatic U-turn occurred in Russia. Russian Constructivism was closely stuck to the political system by which this movement was once surrounded. Accordingly, the delivery of Constructivism was warmly assisted by the organised national power and the end was caused by the national policy as well. After the October Revolution, Russian communist power did stimulate the cultural activities and social liberation inspired the enthusiasm of Russian designers (Riseboro1982). There was once an ensured interaction between the communist regime and Russian designers or artists. The Soviet government supported modern design activities and numbers of institutes, whose target was to encourage the combination of applied art and manufacturing, had been founded under the governmental direction (Raizman 2010). Correspondingly, Russian designers began to act. El Lissitzky, as a constructivist enjoyed a great reputation, created his abstract graphics for political propaganda and Vladimir Tatlin pursued the visual association between art and socialism (Frampton 2020; Raizman 2010). These activities were regarded as a romantic return to the new society. In this way, it was understood that modernism inspired an uplifting expectation in Russia, as had been happening in Germany. Nationalism again claimed its ideological encouragement and the historical facts continuously testified to this situation. The exploration of modern design in Russia

was beginning to overtake the West, whereas Russian politics did not allow it to go any further. The Russian modern movement arose during the reign of Vladimir Lenin, when the design activities received the political support and political tolerance - an analogue of German modernism in the Weimar Republic (Riseboro 1982). This infrequent background provided a space for Russian modern design and then left a remarkable heritage for Western European modern movement. Meanwhile, it was destined that the contributions of Russia would not be as significant as Germany's. The later stages of Constructivism testified that Russian modern design was absolutely dominated by the Communist regime instead of the constructivists. With Joseph Stalin, the successor to Lenin, the Russian government made different requests to Russian designers and artists. These new claims permitted no free experiments but the pragmatic activities, for instance, the residential housing programmes, or the realistic art which was restrained by a subtly changed ideology. The dissidents chose to either go away or keep silent, otherwise a severe punishment would fall upon them. The Russian turning became more inconceivable than that of Germany. The demise of Bauhaus was caused by the change of political system, whereas Russian modern design ended with the alternation of political leaders. It thus revealed another action of the social system, which was significantly different from the one of England, on the historical process of modern design in Europe.

In terms of the discussion on the relationship between political force and European modern design, another intricate question will be revealed as well: what kind of trace would the division of European social systems leave on modern design in the long term? European society has been reconstructed, and militarism was eliminated after the Second World War, yet the Continent is divided into two parts. Since the end of the war, Western European countries, whose ideologists and designers had refused the industrialisation of design in the early days, gradually accepted modernism developed by Germany, Russia, and the Netherlands, and then made significant progress in their modern design activities. This trend was marked in architectural design with the title 'international style', which prevailed from the 1950s to the 1960s (Cruickshank 1996). Belgium, France, and England, for instance, broadly imported the industrialised design process and methods in architecture despite varied cultural attitudes towards modernism (Ibidem). However, what had happened in the East? After the war, the

low quality of Eastern European industrial design was a fact beyond all doubt and it was not exclusively ascribed to the underdeveloped technological system. The Soviet Union also constrained the significant progress of architectural design. In Sir Banister Fletcher's *A History of Architecture*, a note on this issue is as follows: the inferior and anaemic architecture indicated the lack of freedom and the financial and technological support in the Soviet Union (Ibidem). Eastern European countries always contained ideological determinism, which was once exhibited through the paradoxical attitudes of East Germany and the Soviet Union alliance towards Bauhaus. At first, they looked upon Bauhaus as a great symbol of socialism, then criticised it as an icon of decayed capitalism and anti-socialism (Fiedler and Feierabend 2000). Nevertheless, it indicates a different reflection: is this comparative analysis an all-purpose model, and can the readers assert that different social systems did have the predictable consequence of modern design? In a diachronic sense, it is more cautious to differentiate sociological studies from chemical experiments. Modern design is referred to as an activity with diverse creativity and innovations, whose progress needs freedom and tolerance. A certain social system can most likely encourage it, while another one cannot. As for Russia, the course of social modernisation should be taken into consideration. This extreme situation led to a distinctive social system, which brought surprise and disappointment into Russian modern design. If an idealised Russia had not been conceived in history, a better picture of Russian modern design cannot be woven into history either.

Influence of economic policy

According to the different political actions on the rise of European modern design, a homologous but more indirect force has been discovered in terms of economic policy. Europe's modernisation displayed not only the diversity in politics but also in economy with which the political force was strongly connected.

As industrialisation has been a prerequisite for the birth of modern design in Europe and history has illustrated the industrial revolution in the manufacturing system was conditioned by a free market economy, a boost from the market economy for modern design is confirmed. Like political tolerance, the market economy ensured the freedom and equal rights of individuals. Western European designers usually

communicated and realised their values in the free market. Morris in England and Siegfried Bing in France, for instance, were actively involved in the design business and many other works of West European designers were commercialised. In comparison, Russian modernists had little to do with commercial work.

Nevertheless, the free market did not become an overall economic arena for European modern design. The power of monopoly and planning was also kept in focus. Combined with political force, it influenced the progress of modern design in Europe. Encouragement from the monopoly towards German modern design has been discovered and even the planned economy manipulated by the Soviet government had stimulated a rapid development of design activities in urban planning and construction in the short term (Riseboro1982, Frampton 2020). Economic factors, hence, have made an impact on European modern design, although a more indirect and diverse effect is characterised when compared with political force.

Conclusion

As interpreted in this investigation, there is little doubt that the political factor had played an important part in the historical process of European modern design at the macro level. Western Europe did not develop a recognised pattern of modern design, but the constitutional system along with liberalism raised tolerance, which ensured an intellectual contribution to European modern design. This trend was prominent in England, for the Arts and Crafts movement laid a strong ideological basis for the democratic awareness of modern design. Totalitarian systems and nationalism were the key performance indicators for the rise of European modern design as well. Their actions have been unfolded in a dual nature. Under the domination of national policy, those countries under the influence of nationalism either energetically supported or constrained the modern movement on the Continent. Standardised modern design was largely developed in Germany and Russia, and subsequently the decline of the European modern design movement was attributed to these two countries as well. It is never forgotten that both Russia, ruled by Stalin, and Nazi Germany, led by Adolf Hitler, unhesitatingly strangled the Constructivism movement and Bauhaus for the changed ideology and national policy. Nevertheless, it also confirms the encouragement nationalism had on the successful combination of industrialisation and

design activities. German and Russian modern designers were strongly stimulated by nationalism during the second Deutsches Reich or by the political support of the communist regime with the ambition to construct a powerful industrialised nation in Russia. Such ideological support hardly appeared in countries with laissez-faire system such as the Netherlands. Therefore, the historical picture of the modern movement in the Netherlands was far removed from those in Germany and Russia. The former a kind of free and easy artistic type and the latter a type dominated by the powerful bureaucratic system and ideology.

Incidentally, a comparative view has been obtained regarding the reason why Germany appeared to be conspicuous in the European modern design movement. All the positive factors were gathered in this nation. In terms of politics, German modern design received the approval of nationalism (the Deutscher Werkbund in the second Deutsches Reich), and then it experienced a tolerant and liberal atmosphere (Bauhaus during the Weimar Republic). Therefore, although the Nazi government shook the modern movement, the historical heritage would not be substantially weakened by such a political catastrophe because of its full development. Russian designers were making their own way towards modernism and had experienced a warm beginning, but they were marked with a strange epilogue. The Russian modern movement could have played a more important part in European modern design history if political tolerance had not ended with Stalin's national policy. Unfortunately, once coercion was encountered, all these imaginations faded away.

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