

Metamorphism in culture and housing desing: Turkey as an example

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Abstract

Lawrence maintains about all architectural environments and housing that, they are both in a relationship with culture and they are a total configuration of social, demographical, psychological, human behavioral and environmental structure. Moreover, in analyzing this complex structure, he emphasizes to examine it within two perspectives: design-meaning and use. Consequently, the basic components, which affect housing design, are classified in three main topics: cultural, social, and psychological. In the light of Lawrence's ideas, under the topic of the role of culture and tradition in the development of housing, this paper aims to define the basic Turkish traditional housing principles with slogans and important examples. In this content, cultural, social and psychological components in traditional Turkish houses are held under the heading of the development of traditional Turkish house. The organization rules, the effects of the basic psycho-social components...etc., and the presence of these principles are criticized with Turkish housing examples before and after 1980. The chosen period in this study is not coincidental. The aim of choosing the periods before and after 1980 has a special meaning in Turkey's economic, politic and social life. Choosing these two basic periods, will not only point out the changes—like a metamorphism—in cultural life, but in architectural needs in Turkish houses. Therefore, in the aim of analyzing cultural changes and their effects on housing design, the architectural meanings in the elements of Turkish houses are put forward in details, in order to make some estimation for the future of changing Turkish architectural life. © 2006 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

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1. Introduction

The Turkish house, which can be shortly named as “Anatolian”, has undergone many stages of development in the course of five centuries. For this reason, different types were produced in the different regions of Turkey where the Turkish style penetrated and took root. The study on “Metamorphism in Culture and Housing Design: Turkey as an Example” aims to show the similarities and the differences of the housing principles before and after 1980s. Secondly, it aims to put forward the basic principles and their meaningful and formal changes in usage that can be used in the housing designs of the future, with a new language. In this context, the study consists of three main parts. In the first part, under the heading of “The Development of Traditional Turkish House”, an introduction to the origins of the concepts of the Turkish house, the

concepts and the forms of the traditional houses are presented. “The Organization of the Spatial Elements in Traditional Turkish Houses” and “The Basic Psycho-social Components That Affect the Organization of the Traditional Turkish House” are put forward under the second and third subsidiary headings. The traditional and modern examples are given in general to express the ideas. An introduction to the development of the housing problem before and after 1980 is put forward under the last subsidiary heading. The development of the housing problem in Turkey is discussed under six stages, throughout a continual period of 1900–1980. In conclusion, 11 housing types, which are common and accepted around the world, are exemplified with housing designs, made after 1980.

2. The development of traditional Turkish house

The concept and the form of the Turkish traditional house, which can be shortly named as “Anatolian”, firstly, came into being in accordance with a number of factors;

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tradition, economic conditions, regional, physical influences and practical application [1]. The buildings have variations and are described in the following. And also it is observed that social structures in Anatolia have had their effects on the formation of the houses. According to Kucukerman, the variations of traditional housing buildings in Anatolia are: Nomadic tents and houses, village houses, urban houses, other types of Anatolian houses [2].

The other types of Anatolian houses are different from the commonest types of all. These are usually carefully constructed on an imposing scale and display extremes both in their environmental elements and their interior arrangements. They may be listed as follows: Large multi-purpose imposing mansions, summer residence villas set in open country, gardens and with picturesque views, waterfront houses; “yali”, well-protected large mansions; “kasir”, palaces; “saray”, serving as residences for senior officials built on a larger scale and with great elaboration [2].

There are many variations among these buildings but they have one common characteristic in that they are all large, imposing and carefully built, and differ from region to region. Among them the most characteristically Turkish are to be found in the towns and cities, and, the official residences, being large and ornate, hold a very special position in the community [1]. According to Eldem, these variations are grouped into seven main regions in Turkey, and consist of the main details and specifications [3], (Table 1).

3. The organization of the spatial elements in traditional Turkish house

The traditional Turkish house has three spatial fundamental elements which form the structure. These important elements are the “oda” (room), the “sofa” (space between

rooms) and the “eyvan” (space between the groups of rooms). The “room” is accepted as the main element, which does not show any difference in usage. It is a space with many functions having inside for many purposes [4]. The “sofa” is the space, between the “rooms”, to provide the inner communication. The “sofa”, shortly means the common area between the rooms, provides access between open and closed areas. The sofa has a various technical terminology in Turkish, as; “sergah, sergi, sayvan, cardak, divanhane, hayat,”...etc. The “eyvan”, is the passageway in front of the “rooms”, which permits a common life inside. Its relation with the external open areas is very important, (Table 2).

As well as providing a passageway inside the house, “sofa” also serves as a meeting ground and the space around the circulation area was adapted for seating. In time, sofa became the most important element of the whole form of the Turkish house and influenced its whole shape.

The traditional Turkish house is classified according to the position of the sofa in the plan organization. This classification gives four types of houses: “Without a Sofa”, “With an Outer Sofa”, “With an Inner Sofa”, “With a Central Sofa” [3].

The first one is the primitive state of a house plan and consists of merely one or more rooms placed in a row. The second one is the first step in the development of the plan. This form of plan was used in the Hellenic houses in Anatolia before the arrival of the Turks. The type of plan “with an inner sofa” is the one, which is most common in Anatolia. This plan was developed by the addition of another row of rooms onto the outer side of the “sofa”. The last type presents a “central sofa” surrounded by the rooms on four sides. The origin of this type is Byzantine’s house with a central atrium.

Table 1
Traditional Turkish houses due to the seven regions in Turkey

The Blacksea shore and Hinterland	The Istanbul and Marmara region	The Aegean Hinterland region	The Mediterranean region	The Central Anatolia region	The Eastern Anatolia region	The South-East Anatolia region
						
Trabzon	Istanbul	Izmir	Antalya	Nevsehir	Malatya	Urfa
						
Safranbolu	Bursa	Aydin	Mugla	Sivas	Erzurum	Maras

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