Social Values and Norms in Architecture of Turkish House

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Abstract

It is known that the formation of dwellings and architectural forms are affected by a wide spectrum of factors and the characteristics of dwellings are not only determined by physical influences and factors but also shaped by the results of all socio-cultural factors of the society. The design of the house is influenced by both cultural values and choices. Houses reflect rules, norms and social relationships. The same way, houses replete with symbolic meanings.

This research focuses on traditional Turkish houses and examines the links between the social norms of domestic spaces of the traditional house design. With this approach, the relationship between cultural-social values, norms and architecture had been analysed through traditional Turkish house in which different ethnical and cultural groups live. The study based on master student’s research projects. Data of the norms for this paper came from naturalistic fieldwork around the Turkey. The research includes observation and interviews with members of the families as well as architectural analysis and photo documentation. The houses which are analysed, belongs to period before Turkish Republic.

This paper is an examination of linkages between architectural artifacts selected or devised by social norms and social values such as extended family and the status of family within the community, relationships between men and women, neighbor relationships, the daily customs of the family, customs, beliefs and rituals within the life of the community, hospitality, religious beliefs and practices in Turkish Islamic tradition, relate to built form in Turkey. The aim of the paper is to explain architecture of Turkish house is an artifact of culture, which is a synthesis of whole Anatolia.

Keywords: Turkish house; Social values and norms; Cultural codes, Vernacular architecture

1. Introduction

Every society is exposed to some changes which may affect its social structure. Factors like cultural interactions, industrial and technological developments, natural disasters or war are the main reasons which modifies the society and the architecture along with it. Architectural forms and housing characteristics are not just shaped by physical effects, they also shaped by socio-cultural effects. According to Rapoport [10, 11] to understand the constructed surroundings, the benefit of culture and the correct usage of it should be known, resolved and their relations between with each other should be understood by decomposing.

For housing is a cultural fact, it is affected by cultural values of the society to a large extent [11]. According to Mazumdar [7], houses represent the social relationships, norms and rules. In a similar manner, According to Lawrence [6] houses are the places which an individual expresses himself; houses contain a set of socio-cultural values. Housing forms and typologies express the changes and developments which society had in time and they embody the beliefs, social interactions and lives of the society. On this respect Cunningham [5] describes the house as a universe model which composed by sections, form, symbols and regulations that determined by people. From this perspective, very few works have systematically identified and analysed the relationship between cultural values and architectural features of Turkish House. Despite this, Atik and Erdoğan [1]; Erdoğan and Atik [2] have analysed features of the traditional Turkish House in relation to the socio-cultural factors of the country.

In this paper an abstract model of the relationship between cultural and social values and architecture is presented and case studies of the traditional houses from different regions of Turkey is provided to help exemplify and clarify the model. So with this approach, the relation between cultural and social values and architecture has been analysed through the traditional
Turkish houses in which different ethnical and cultural groups.

This relationship between house form and socio-cultural factors has been explained using a four-part model which shows the relationship between architecture and social factors by Mazumdar & Mazumdar [8] (Figure 1). This model can be used as a methodical tool for exploring and understanding the relationship of a particular culture with its architecture and also to learn about the value and meaning of specific architectural artefacts.

Mazumdar & Mazumdar developed a model which can provide an analysis of culture as a concept considering concrete and observable social expressions. In the work, four housing structures from the various regions of Turkey which include the characteristics of “Turkish House” from the beginning of the 21st Century is examined as a part of post graduate research project based on this model and they extracted by results of the data from the field work. Survey method has been used; in addition to architectural analysis, observation and visual documentary, various interviews with family members have been used.

In the working standards of this model; the social norms and the relations of values like; extended family pattern, the status of family in society, male-female relations, neighbourhood relations, the daily habits of the family, traditions, believes and their rituals among the society, their hospitality, the belief and practices in the Islamic tradition have been surveyed. Thus, the explanation of
cultural background of the Turkish house which is a syntheses of Anatolian culture, is aimed.

2. Social values an norms in Turkish house

House is appeared as a result which from one of the basic needs of mankind, the need for shelter while adopting a sedentary life. Throughout the history the houses varied because they have been built with the adaptation of local material, culture and life. In Anatolia, nearly every region which is called Turkish House has different typology because of the structural and cultural differences.

Turkish house can be described as a housing type which shows form and plan resolution that is proper for the traditional Turkish family’s culture and traditions and answers the needs of Turkish people [5]. Traditional Turkish houses from Anatolia to the Balkans, have common characteristics even though they are built with different materials and styles. Traditional Turkish houses subsisted for years within the boundaries of Ottoman Empire. Reorganized its surroundings and life style; became an irreplaceable element of traditional housing configuration which prospers socially, culturally and economically.

Turkish house is changed and developed over the years by feeding off from its surroundings and culture. In the intersection between culture and architecture, the effects of socio-cultural factors to the Turkish houses can be stated with Mazumdar & Mazumdar’s latest model. Model offers a 4 sectioned analysis method to understand culture-architecture relations. These four stages create an awareness in every stage with related questions. The elements which stated in the model provide a systematic research of the social and architectural values and norms. This model can be used as a methodologic tool to resolve the determined culture relations in addition to perceive the meaning as a methodologic tool to resolve the determined architectural values and norms. This model can be used to provide a systematic research of the social and cultural differences.

The privacy in Turkish house is originated from Islamic tradition. The protection of the woman from the strangers is important. Women pay attention to their clothing outside of the house, they prefer to wear headscarfs and there is no discrimination of women in the family. This situation necessitates the creation of privacy for the houses, thus native architecture developed various designs.

2.1. Social values

The social values which are inspected from the four chosen houses are determined as; male-female relations, family pattern, family privacy, neighbourhood relations, hospitality and Islamic traditions.

2.1.1. Male–female relations

Women and men have different responsibilities in the traditional Turkish family structure. Men start the family and they are responsible for providing financial compatibility and protect the family in an authoritative position. Women keep the family together and responsible to take care of children and house. While men make more contact with the external environment during the day, women have a more private position which is to make contact within home or a close environment. Traditions show that men and women should be respected. The value of woman in the family clearly shows the status of the family.

2.1.2. Family structure

In the traditional Turkish family structure, usually the extended family profile is seen. Grandparents, their children and grandchildren prefer to live under the same roof. Generally this situation occurs with the family of the man. Among the main reasons of this situation economical inadequacy can be counted right along with the strong family bonds. Parents are responsible for the children’s education, life and security. Likewise, the children are responsible to take care of their parents when they got old and sick. Social relations within the family is strong. The status of the family in Turkish society varies depending on the socio-economic condition and lineage. Especially in the rural areas, the occupation and financial income of the man shows status.

2.1.3. Privacy of the family

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2.1.4. Neighbourhood relations

The neighbourghood relations are too important in the Turkish traditions. The people who live in the same dwelling unit develop close social bonds and try to support each other in every condition. The neighbourhood relations which is also important for the Islamic traditions can be counted as one of the main characteristics of Turkish family structure.

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2.1.5. Hospitality

Hospitality is also very important for the Turkish society. Turkish people want that every guest who visit them feel like they are home and they threat them as good as possible. That’s why the drawing rooms are made privately and have an important place in the local architecture.

2.1.6. Turkish–Islamic traditions

Islamic traditions have an important place in the social life and human relations because most of the population are Muslims. In the Turkish-Islamic traditions; religious holidays, weddings, giving birth, funerals and many other ceremonies happen in this social conjunction. There some rules which society decides about these special days. Throughout the years this situation survived until today. These special day ceremonies happen inside the house, this causes the house have design values which is adaptive to this situation.

2.2. Social norms

The social values in a society turn into social norms in time. The privacy of woman and family can be shown as the main norm of the traditional Turkish society. While men have a more active role in society, women have to protect themselves outside of the house and they are expected to not make a contact with strange men. Thus, while men are responsible with the social activities and financial gain, women are responsible for the family needs inside the house. Also, treating the guests with respect and sincerity can be counted as one of the social norms of the Turkish society. Amongst the Turkish-Islamic traditions like; religious holidays, weddings, funerals are occur in the same house with men and women without a discrimination.

2.3. Architectural values

While the aforementioned social values and norms necessitate certain behaviours they affect the living environment. This situation directly causes the society to create its own architectural values. For instance; privacy of woman and family causes the specialization of some places in the house. This situation organized the form of house and its relation with external environment differently. The visual relation with the external environment is as short as possible. While there are no areal separation for the male and female members of the family, men guests gather in the common room in the basement and the other parts of the house are more private. So, there is a separation between common and private rooms in the house. This situation defines the visual contact of the guests to the woman and the family according to their closeness to the family.

Man and woman enter to house from the same entrance and they can use the gathering space which is in front of the entrance together. Most of the activities which occur in the house is done in this place. The usage of rooms varies for the needs of the extended family. Rooms have multiple functions. Especially the rooms in the basement are places to do multiple activities such as; eating, drinking, performing prayer, sitting and sleeping.

The close neighbourhood relations and hospitality in the Turkish society’s traditions show their effect on the specialized places in the house and that shows the value of the guests. The garden of the house is used as an active place for hosting the guests and family, especially in Summer. The visual contact of between the garden and the street is important in terms of privacy. Within the context of research the families who live in the examined houses are engaged in agriculture and husbandry. In summer the garden is used actively for spending time, for weddings and festivals by family and neighbours.

2.4. Architectural Artefacts

Aforementioned architectural values are very important factors for the shaping of architectural form (Figures 3–6). There is a single entrance to the house and the common place that is seen after entering the house is called Hayat(Life). While the place which is called Hayat (Aşana, Sofa, Eyvan) is used often by men guests the other private rooms of the house are used by women. Hayat is the gathering place of the house. Most of the activities happen in this place of the house. From this place the other rooms and the core of the house can be reached. The number of the rooms varies the needs of the extended family. Rooms have different functions more than a single function. The guest room is necessarily found in every house and it is decorated more attentive. This situation reflects the value of the neighbours for the Turkish society. The gardens of the houses are used efficiently by the family.

In the inspected houses the extended family structure causes the need for more rooms for the family members (Figures 9 and 10). In the Hayri Azman House we see that rooms are designed like they are apartments for families, the rooms are capable for bathing and cooking (Figures 7 and 8). As a result of the extended family structure and family privacy these needing rooms are specialized for the families and cause them to use the sofa when they get together. While the bathing cubicles in the rooms are used for daily cleaning, bathhouses used for weekly cleaning.

The users who engaged in agriculture and husbandry for their financial income have specialized rooms which are functional for their occupation in the houses. There are barns for the bovine animals in the Yiğitler and Hayri Azman houses. For other houses this place is outside of the house. In addition to this place Hayri Azman House have extra rooms like; woodshed and hayloft.
3. Conclusion

Mazumdar & Mazumdar’s [8] four staged model procured us to explain the culture and architecture relations perceptibly. Architectural factors can’t be analysed or resolved without the culture and environment they are in. This model helped us to understand culture, cultural values, cultural norms and
showed that a combined approach is necessary. Thus, it can be used as a methodological tool for researching and understanding cultural values related to architecture.

In the houses which are inspected as Turkish house examples, the separation of men and women is shaped by Turkish and Islamic traditions. Basement rooms and sofa are generally the common rooms for the guests, the rooms from the upstairs are private and for the close family members. Garden walls regulate the house and street contact and create a visual barrier for to build the privacy of the house.

In the houses there is a single entrance for everyone, women and men users can enter from the same entrance. As a result of the extended family structure, there are many rooms in the houses. These rooms are specialized for families to live sometimes, the rooms are capable for bathing and cooking. These rooms are convenient for flexible use, and can be used for all seasons. As a reflection of Turkish traditions like; close neighbourhood relations and hospitality, there are guest rooms which are decorated privately in the houses.

The houses which are inspected within the research content; Kocaeli/Affan Kalender House, Sakarya / Yiğitler House, Zonguldak / Hayri Azman House, Trabzon / Manzakoğlu House are able to accommodate many cultures and finally appropriate methods for understanding the culture-architecture relationship needs to be taken up. There are many lessons for architects and designers to learn when using modern design criteria related to culture in general design principles.

References


