The Transformation of House Types in Istanbul in Relation to the Socio-cultural Changes

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Key Words: house type, social structure, diachronic examination, spatial quality, contemporary city

Absract

The **house type**s differentiate at successive social periods. This is the evidence of the transformation in **social structure**s, economic status and the political approaches. In this sense, the **diachronic examination**s can reveal the interrelation between changing housing types and social formations. The housing reserve and the house ownership relations in Istanbul changed considerably within a century. The population of the city increased. There are a large number of people who need to have houses in proper environmental conditions. For the sake of finding solutions the authorities modify the regulations and try to appropriate the rights into the contemporary conditions. However the contractors' eagerness to earn more results in use of the utmost space. In this way the citizens get the opportunity of owning a house but the **spatial quality** both in and outside of the houses diminishes. In this paper the diachronic relations between residential buildings and social structures will be evaluated. The housing types built in Kadikoy, one of the districts of the city that holds a significant number of housing settlements will be scrutinized. The purpose of this paper is to argue on differentiating housing types in relation to socio-cultural changes and to scrutinize the coexisting housing types and the resulting plurality pertaining to form in the **contemporary city**.

1 Introduction

The house types differentiate due to the changing socio-cultural structures at certain time intervals. Obviously the different political approaches are associated with this formation. The tendencies of the period affect the whole housing process noticeably. Not only the houses but also the city gains a new appearance. At first hand, the demands of the dwellers change parallel to the situation that they live in. They alter their preferences about the quality of house that they want to own as well as the location choices. On the other hand, the contractors change their business both in scale and quality according to country's conditions. In this sense, not only dimensions, construction systems and materials of the houses but also spatial organizations in the residential buildings verify the social transformation in a society.

It is known that any form created represents the ideologies of its time. It is produced regarding to reachable knowledge- the environmental conditions, the available material sources, the construction methods and the techniques- besides the current socio-cultural values. It is also valid for the house form. People purchase a house as an object that cover the physical and psychological needs and function as a social agent at the same time. They pay an important amount for the image considering the social comfort that houses provide. For this reason, the external look of houses should be in harmony with the trends and carry the related signs.

Thus house is accepted as an artifact that materializes ideological stand points, social and cultural preferences and economic power. Dwelling in a definite house is the revelation of being accepting as a member of a social group while refusing the other probabilities. It is the definition of the social and psychological borders through the emphasized spatial choices. In this regard, one examining houses only externally may find answers to the questions such as WHO is living in, WITH WHOM s/he is in relation, HOW does s/he behave socially, WHICH economic social cultural and ideological groups does s/he belong to, IN WHAT WAY her/his spatial behavior can be evaluated.

The diachronic examinations of housing systems are useful to asses the correlations between residential buildings and changing social structures in successive periods. It is possible to detect the transforming spatial values and the related signs exhibited openly by the buildings. In this sense, the purpose of this paper is to argue on the interaction between different housing types and socio-cultural changes and to scrutinize the coexisting house types and the resulting plurality pertaining to form in the contemporary city. The evaluation of the past and the present situations will lead to a future prospect of housing areas in relation to transformations in the city.

2 The Method

In the beginning of the new millennium, Istanbul turned to be a huge metropolitan with indefinable borders. Its population exceeds 10 million. Nevertheless the housing stock and land owning conditions in Istanbul changed immensely within a century. Now the built environment is dense. The houses seem to be enough quantitatively for the citizens living in Istanbul but a significant amount of people need to be accommodated in houses and environments that have higher standards. [10]The contractors try to use every possibility to build new housing blocks in the city and to get the maximum profit. They sometimes demolish the older apartment blocks and build higher ones and sometimes greedily utilize the few vacant lands left without caring much to the vanishing green. In the last years, the houses at outskirts of the city attract a great ratio of the population promising an escape from the chaotic inner city conditions. The air pollution, traffic jam, noise, and the fear of earthquake push the people to the North of the metropolitan. The spaciousness and additional socio-cultural and sportive facilities of the new housing settlements on the fringes also appeal a number of citizens who do not have financial problems and are looking for alternative housing systems. [8]

Considering the contemporary situation firstly the social value of house will be discussed in this paper. According to Roderick Lawrence only a few housing studies deal with changes in design and the use of dwelling units over time and relate these changes to broad societal dimensions. [11] Thus it is important to scrutinize the house types built at socially significant periods in Istanbul for comprehending the correlation between the morphological dimensions and the social dynamics.

With the purpose of sampling the above mentioned housing types it has been decided to focus on Kadikoy which is a district of Istanbul at Anatolian part. Kadikoy has been accepted as the "dormitory" of the whole city for it consists of increasing number of houses. In order to see different kinds of residential units built in succeeding periods one at a time it will be appropriate to get a vertical section perpendicular to the sea shore bisecting the "layers" of settlements built parallel to each other. The satellite view of the area besides the photographs showing the houses of the drawn section will help to document the houses of different time intervals visually.

3 The Meaning of House in Social Platform

Obviously house has psychological and physiological values for an individual and for a family. Anyhow it is a socially multifunctional object at the same time. House prepares human resources for society who will participate in social reproduction. It guaranties the social unity. In other words the continuity of cultural values, history, traditions and morals are taught in it. The adjustment of social problems in houses is quite important. In any case, house is the foundation stone of the society. Its

economic change value forms a base for social order. It is an instrument of self expression or defining the place of an individual that belong to a social group. It is also an important agent in which the future of the society is assured with the basic education and health care services. However, house gets shape according to the mentioned social relations. The house form, its decoration and the neighboring environment as well consolidate the social mechanisms. J. Jin states that the home environment and its content have been described as objects that symbolically express the social class, personality traits and aesthetic preferences of their occupants [9]It has been understood that the dwelling is one of the principal symbols of social status. [6] It symbolizes the self and represents the social background of its resident. [3, 4] In brief, the house expresses the personal and socio-cultural identity. [9]In regard to the interaction between house and social mechanism U. Tanyeli argues that a trial of reading over house architecture offers people the chance of recovering the field that they are already active. House not only defines the active people as it expresses varying habitation patterns and cultural expectations but also describes a meeting place. In that place, there is public authority, restrictions and social group values and individual preferences. [13]

3.1 House is a commodity

It is something that can be purchased and sold. There is an effective interaction between housing sector and national economies. According to C. Alexander [1], the distribution of money in society, the flow of money for housing in the economy, the manufacture of building materials and the political structure of local regions, all have massive effects on the production of housing. However on the opposite side, housing construction systems change the flow of money, the distribution of political power, and the nature of manufacturing. I. Tekeli [14]shares the same opinion and adds that housing can be the instrument of creating new employment fields. The dwellers can either use it to make profit or to attain social security. Thus it should attract the potential client groups. The supply should match with all kinds of demands of people, at least in a certain period. Necessarily the consumers have to be able to afford the product financially. When their income level gets better they prefer to own more luxurious houses or more than one house. This inclination influences the housing systems[15]Anyway housing systems whatever their capacities are define the way of city development. [15]On the other hand, the economic level, the accumulated capital in country has a direct relation with the created housing systems. The interwoven relations of economy and housing systems give way to certain forms. The scale and the quality of houses as well as the contextual character relatively change.

3. 2 House is an instrument of expression

House is an agent that plays an important role in articulation of social and cultural identity. It helps people to emphasize their status in the society. C. Mougenot [12] states that houses show dwellers' position in the social universe and give information about their adhesion to the common order. She also indicates that house is a criterion for social identification and belongings. It becomes a social status symbol by which people measure their position in the social structure. The dwellers can be identified with a social level that they can be either equal or superior to others. Thus belonging to a social group means to have differences or putting a distance between group members and outsiders. At this point, housing production can be inadequate in supporting identities. Alexander asserts that housing production lacks two necessities. Firstly, every family and every person is unique and must be able to express this uniqueness in order to express and retain human dignity. Secondly every family and every person is a part of society, requires bonds of association with other people and inquires a place in society, in which there are relationships with other. [1] On the one hand the dwellers need to give the impression that they are individually having certain places in the society and on the other hand they are the members of a social group through spatial structures. Houses give the necessary social and psychological support to them.

3.3 House is the first chain of education

It is the first place that the family members are trained and the social relations are experienced in a controlled environment. People learn how to behave socially in a house and become ready to be in

contact with others. On the other side of the coin, this role of house can be manipulated by the dominants in the society. Mougenot states that housing policies are used to for installing morals into working classes. Housing brings morals as well as social peace to the whole society but in particular to lower classes. The governors use housing policy for managing ideas by changing the dwellers' conceptions of themselves. [12]either totally conceived or spontaneously formed housing formations in the city context build orders which impose people a way life and teach how to be in harmony with it at every category.

3.4 House is a rehabilitation unit

It is the place where the inhabitants are cured physically and psychologically. It ameliorates the people who have become socially ill. Looking from the opposite side again house is one of the institutions that society use to build an authority over people. According to Michelle Foucault society arms itself to punish and cure social ills that prison, school and psychiatric hospital serve in this way. [7]

4 Kadikoy

4.1 Before 1923 (The establishment of the Republic)

In Ottoman Period Kadikoy was a non- Muslim settlement composed of Armenian, Greek and the other Western people. Some of the inhabitants were involved in commerce while the others were working at the embassies. Their houses carried the cultural signs of these minorities. On the other hand, Ottoman elites and the generals (pashas) had owned some big wooden houses (kiosks) in vast green lands which were used in the summers more often. The transportation was done by boats and carts. In 1873 the railway was opened to the service. After the railway some settlements developed around the stations.

4.2 1923-50

During the first years of the Republican Period the new elites preferred to build the cubic houses which reflect the modernist tastes. They only used them as their second houses, in summer months because the transportation to the business center at European side was almost impossible. The people were having very good time at the beaches along the Marmara Sea. The tranquilized life continued in the gardens of adorable houses that were full of trees and flowers.

4.3 1950-70

In 1965, "Apartment Owning Law" formed the new ownership relations. Before, because of traditional land owning system the lands had been divided into very small parts. From that time on, the properties were divided also at vertical direction piece by piece. [16] Many poor people were in need of houses. With the invented "Built and Sell" system the contractors gathered the capital from different dwellers who can not have separate houses before building the houses [5]This system provided houses for many low income people but the quality of both houses and the environment decreased a great amount.

4.4. 1970-90

The population of the city increased a lot by the migrations. With the new bridge over Bosphorus connecting the European and Asian sides and the new founded automobiles sector, the transportation became easier. This enlarged the district in a considerable way at both directions. In 1972, the municipality prepared the regional master plan regarding to the current tendencies. According to the plan, the height control for the apartment blocks was discarded. These conditions encouraged the construction sector and the apartment blocks covered the whole area. The construction quality ameliorated due to changing demands. The apartment blocks of 90s were marketed with new mottos that they had double elevators, pools on the terrace, high quality finishing materials and modern

kitchen and bath designs. However the big construction companies have begun to build satellite cities at open lands behind the high way near the squatter settlements.

Housing Types along the Defined Axis

Regarding to the years that the houses were built, the housing groups along the defined research axis can be examined in different parts. The first part (P I) is the area between the sea coast and the first axis, Baghdad Avenue. Successively the other parts can be described as; (P II) Baghdad Avenue and the Railway, (P III) the Railway and Fahrettin Gunaltay Avenue, (P IV) Fahrettin Gunaltay Avenue and E 5 (the highway), (P V) Yeni Sahra, the squatter settlement behind the highway, (PVI) Atasehir-the satellite settlement behind the highway and adjacent to the squatter settlement. [2]
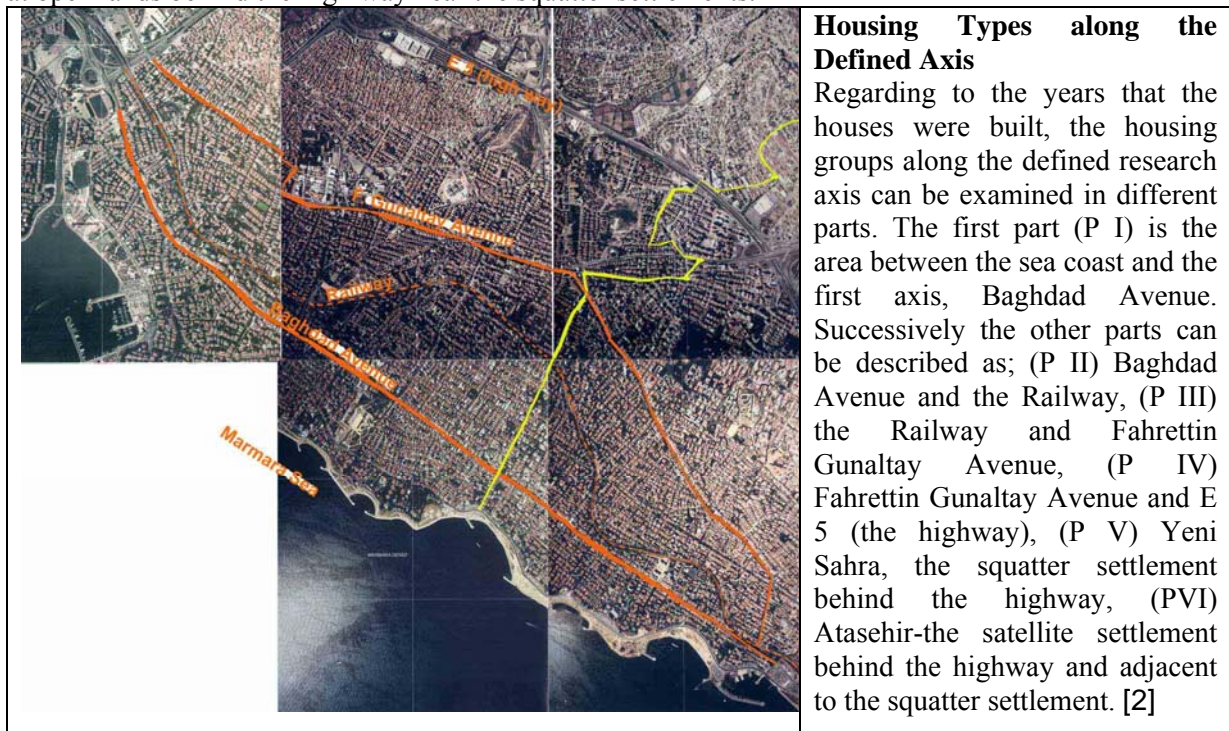
Figure 1: The Satellite view of the district. The main transportation axes and the research axis drawn perpendicular to the line of the sea shore

Table 1: The Relation Between Social Status and Environmental Conditions in Different Parts [2]

Parts	Average Age		Education %		Why household prefer to live in	What household (in the environment)	
						like	dislike
P I	F	62.6	Univ.	20	Born & raised there Father's house Have friends Like the env.	Green, trees, flowers, birds Shopping, sport facilities	Noise, heavy traffic in the Avenue at the sea coast, crowd, unorganized built env, People coming from squatter settlement
	M	71.5	High Sch.	60			
			Primary sch.	20			
P II	F	51.5	Univ.	22.2	Can go to walking, shopping, Grand father's place, Like the env, Close to parents, Have friends	Like the house, designed her/himself, Close to parents	Adorable houses with gardens were demolished, green area diminished, climate changed, noise, new comers
	M	60.4	High Sch.	50			
			Prmry	27.8			
P III	F	48.5	Univ.	50	Like the env.	Functional design, garden	Neighbors, apartment blocks,
	M	50.5	High Sch.	--			
			Prmry	50			
P IV	F	46.13	Univ.	50	Raised there, Close to parents, Like the env. Have friends Location of house & its spaciousness, secure environment otopark, hot water	Play area for children, Shopping facilities, vividness, Like the house	Noise, heavy traffic, unorganized built env, People coming from squatter settlement
	M	51.8	High Sch.	12.5			
			Prmry	25			
			none	12.5			
P V	F	22	Univ.	--	Financial necessities, Live with the family of husband, Father's house	Neighbors, Familiar with everyone in the quarter	No park for children, No big market, No medical help, dirty env, humidity, insects & bad smell, unorganized built env.
	M	27	High Sch.	50			
			Prmry	50			
P VI	F	47.6	Univ.	60	Env. arrangements, green, playing area for children, secure env. peaceful, modern, own house, close to my relatives.		Transportation difficulties, no neighbors, bad relations, House could be bigger, no sound insulation, no balcony, it should be more secure

PI: The first region covers the area between the recently built Avenue by the seaside and the Baghdad Avenue. The summer houses were once located in the place. Now, the environment is crowded with mostly 4-5 storied apartment blocks. The land values are very high. The roads in grid order are clean and tidy. The area is quite green and there are a few old trees that have been planted in the gardens of wooden houses in the past. The inhabitants living in the area are aged people and all are retired. They have been either moved to the site many years ago or were born there. They are economically powerful. In general, they have relations with foreign countries and their children have been educated abroad. They like the environment though they miss the old days, quite streets, low buildings with gardens. [2]

P II: The area between Baghdad Avenue and the Railway constitutes the second part. Physical properties of the houses are similar to the ones at PI. It is a great chance that two big wooden Ottoman houses and their gardens have been protected. However one is used as a restaurant and the other is kept as a guest house. The families living in area have good economic conditions. They are pleased to live in the site and like its vivid and green environment. Especially the younger people like to go shopping. A number of luxurious stores, trendy cafes on Baghdad Avenue attract them. The only thing that bothers the inhabitants is the increasing security problems. [2]

P III: The third region starts from the Railway and ends up at Fahrettin Gunaltay Avenue. Some areas around the train station are developed spontaneously. The houses are dense and comparatively old. There are few wooden houses. The region has a cosmopolite population. There are many people who have recently come from other cities as well as the railroad workers and their relatives. Some of the families belong to the middle class. They settled the area in the past while some are in very well conditions economically. [2]

P IV: The fourth region is between Fahrettin Gunaltay Avenue and the E5 (Highway). The area is rather newly established. There were plantations and few single houses before. Today, there are many high apartment blocks, which are built by cooperatives or big construction companies. The houses are mostly in moderate quality. They lack some facilities such as playing areas and sport fields for children. The houses belong to either

middle class or upper middle class families. The population is younger. According to them the squatter settlement beyond the Highway creates security and noise problems. They desire higher environmental standards and want to live together with upper social groups. However they are pleased to live in the area because of clean air, green areas and the new malls. [2]

P V: The squatter settlement beyond the high way was accepted as the fifth region. The neighborhood has been constituted illegally and thus it has no defined plan. The inhabitants have migrated mostly from Black Sea Region. They are quite young and live together or close to their relatives in the area. The families are poor and work in temporary jobs like taxi driving, food marketing. The people are not very well educated. The women are mostly graduated from primary school only. The children have no place to play and they wander around in litters. There is no park, the humidity is high and the streets are dirty. The infrastructure was built recently. People use the
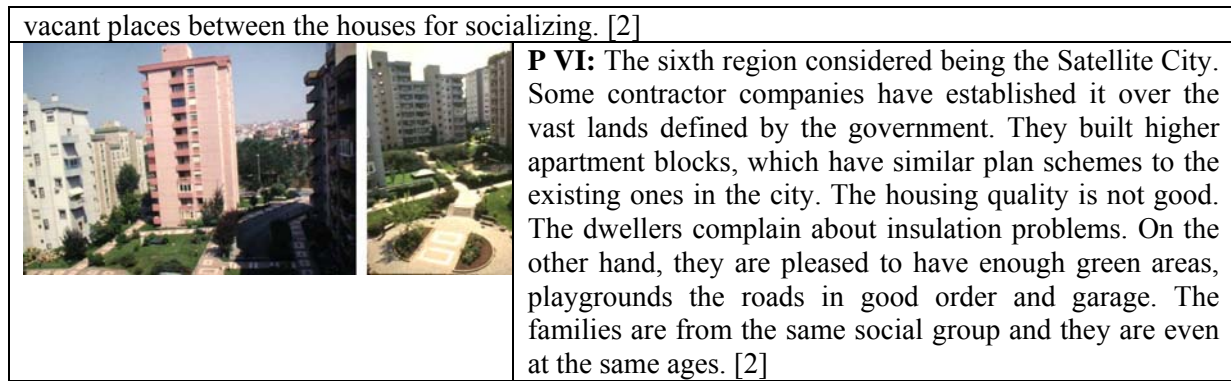
vacant places between the houses for socializing. [2]	
	P VI: The sixth region considered being the Satellite City. Some contractor companies have established it over the vast lands defined by the government. They built higher apartment blocks, which have similar plan schemes to the existing ones in the city. The housing quality is not good. The dwellers complain about insulation problems. On the other hand, they are pleased to have enough green areas, playgrounds the roads in good order and garage. The families are from the same social group and they are even at the same ages. [2]

Figure 2: The Housing Types in the Defined Parts

5   Discussion and Conclusion

The quality of housing groups examined in six parts in Kadikoy verifies the interaction between house types and socio-cultural changes. Within a century the former modest and calm lives, romantic sensitivities in meticulously built summer houses along the seashore were replaced with the dynamic life tempo of the cosmopolitan groups dwelling in dense and ostentatious apartment blocks. Due to some social formations the different social groups that present cultural and economic variations began to live in the district. At some occasions authorities tried to modify the regulations and to reorganize the housing environments in order to solve the residential problems. However they could not prevent the abnormal growth at many places. Sometimes people resisted the inadequate and/or inappropriate precautions and found their own solutions. They acquainted the site with Built and Sell system and squatter settlements.

In any case, the traces of the mentioned social movements can be traced along the drawn axis. In part I there exists a single house in a vast garden used by the family of a biscuit factory owner. It reminds one of the summer houses of the first Republican Period (1923-50). The other buildings are not very high and they are the first apartment blocks built in the gardens of the wooden kiosks. The environment is clean and well ordered. The inhabitants are powerful economically and these aged people are well educated. They like to live in the site because they feel comfortable in this social area. They go walking together with their friends along the seashore, do shopping at chic stores on Baghdad Avenue and have fun in the clubs, restaurants and cafes. The people living in part II almost belong to the same social group. In this area there are two wooden kiosks which are no longer used as residential units. In accordance with the recent ideologies they gained new functions. Some of the first apartment blocks have been demolished and replaced with higher and luxurious buildings because of the increasing land value and changing demands of the people in parallel with alternating socio-cultural values. These houses are not only residential units but also status symbols for their owners. In part III and part IV there are several housing blocks built in groups by either the cooperatives or the contractor companies on the lands which were plantation areas once. The building quality is not good as the former parts. The families mostly belong to middle class and upper middle class. People are younger and have moved in the site not very long ago. Some live in the area because the house is close to their relatives. They are in need of social solidarity-child care, illness and solitude. This situation indicates the lacking social organizations and reminds the role of house as an education and rehabilitation unit. Part V encompasses a squatter settlement and exhibits the unsolved social problems in front of the eyes. One can follow the underdeveloped and unbalanced economy, the weakness of the authority, the different socio-cultural values and group relations of the new comers as well as their creativity in finding a way of standing in front of the difficult conditions of metropolitan. In Part VI there are the high blocks of the new satellite settlement. The families preferring to live in this isolated quarter because they want to raise their children in an unpolluted and secure environment together with others who belong to similar social groups besides taking the advantage of nearby shopping, entertaining and exercising facilities.

All these groups try to impose their own values and find a way of reaching to a satisfaction in the houses and their environments. Sometimes they turn the authority lack to an advantage from their own points of views. Every new housing type added to city is the sign of a dynamic society and the changing social order as well as emphasizing the important value of house at social platform. The plurality, fragmentations and condensations give an idea about the future structure of the metropolitan which is on the way of being a global city. It is the place of reconciliation.

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