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How Do Social Values and Norms Affect Architecture of the Turkish House?

Nevnihal Erdoğan

Additional information is available at the end of the chapter

Abstract

This chapter investigates the relationship between social, cultural and religious traditions and the architecture of vernacular housing. It also represents a search for answers as to how the Turkish cultural traditions of the traditional Turkish family, beliefs, values and rituals influence housing architecture. The relationship between the house form and sociocultural factors can be explained through a model. Therefore, in this chapter, a model that consists of four parts and is flexible is used. It shows the linkages between architectural artifacts selected or devised by a culture, architectural values, social norms and social values. We illustrate the model through a study of the traditional Turkish house, focusing on how social values such as religious beliefs or the relationship between the male and the female figure, family structure, statue of the family in the society, privacy of the family, neighborhood, hospitality and social values in Turkish-Islamic tradition relate, in order to build form in Anatolia.

Keywords: traditional Turkish house, social values, social norms, architectural values, architectural artifacts

1. Introduction

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

This chapter investigates the relationship between social, cultural and religious traditions and the architecture of vernacular housing. It also represents a search for answers as to how the Turkish cultural traditions of traditional Turkish family, beliefs, values and rituals influence housing architecture.

For housing is a cultural fact, it is affected by cultural values of the society to a large extent. Rapoport [1, 2] was instrumental in describing the cultural variability in the ways people designed and constructed their houses. According to Mazumdar, they are made up of rules, norms and social relationships [3], which according to Lawrence and Low they are replete with symbolic meanings [4, 5].

Some scholars tended to focus on the symbolic meanings and purpose of the house [1, 6–8]. Several studies have demonstrated that religious beliefs influence the layout of micro-spaces, including those of the house [9–16]. Rapoport agrees with this opinion when he adds that religion is a factor that affects both the environment and individuals within that very environment [1]. The hierarchical space designed and the sacred spaces in Hindu households were examined by Mazumdar and Mazumdar [3, 17]. On the other hand, while there have been many studies that focus on religious symbolism, meaning and ritual, there are only a handful of researchers who have been studying the gender-based separation and its relation to space [18–21].

Regarding the issue at hand, there have been a number of comparative cultural studies [1–22]. In their investigations about the domestic architecture of Iran, scholars such as Mazumdar and Mazumdar [23, 24] have focused on the interrelationships between religious traditions and domestic vernacular architecture and the relationship between religion, majority-minority intergroup relations and vernacular domestic architecture.

Many scholars have taken an interest in the study of the spatial surrounding of domestic life by focusing on the ways to achieve a better understanding of the use and meaning of the home environment. In Pierre Bourdieu's famous study of the Berber house, he underlines the symbolic significance of domestic spatial patterns [25]. Other scholars have conducted extensive research into M'zabite (Berber) houses in Algeria. According to Bellal [26], *"the Berber house is not only defined as formal or informal, it is defined foremost as male/female, Muhram/non-Muhram and as then as formal/non formal."* Kazimee and Mcquillan [27] stated that a pattern of 'diurnal rotation' is key to the layout of domestic courtyards in Afghanistan, and that this pattern is embodied in more monumental Afghan structures as well.

In traditional cultures such as those found in Islamic countries, values are largely shaped by religious ideology. Some studies about domestic architecture in Iran have been carried out. Memarian and Brown [28] explained the impact of climate and of religious ideology (Shi'a Islam) on the spatial and formal organization of the traditional courtyard house in Iran.

From this perspective, very few works have systematically identified and analyzed the relationship between cultural values in Turkey and architectural features of the Turkish House. Despite this, Atik and Erdoğan [29], Erdoğan and Atik [30] have analyzed features of the traditional Turkish House in relation to the sociocultural factors of the country.

In this chapter, an abstract model of the relationship between cultural and social values and architecture is represented, and case studies of traditional Turkish Houses in Turkey are provided to help exemplify this very approach to the relationship between cultural and social values. Architecture has been analyzed through the traditional Turkish House in which cultural groups live.

2. Model of the relationship between social values and architecture

The relationship between the house form and sociocultural factors can be explained through a model. Therefore, in this chapter, a model that consists of four parts and is flexible is used. It shows the linkages between architectural artifacts selected or devised by a culture, architectural values, social norms and social values. The elements depicted in the model can be analyzed through a systematic exploration of certain questions presented in a tangible-intangible direction, such as "What architectural artifacts are in use?" "What architectural values effected the circumscription of choice of artifacts?" "What social and behavioral norms, prescriptions and proscriptions affected these architectural values?" "What social values affected and gave rise to the social norms, regarding activities, certain behavior and choices?"

We illustrate the model through a study of the traditional Turkish House, focusing on how social values such as religious beliefs and the relationship between the male and female figure, family structure, status of the family in the society, privacy of the family, neighborhood, hospitality and social values in Turkish-Islamic tradition interact and coexist to build form in Anatolia. Thus, traditional Turkish House explains an artifact of culture, which is a synthesis of subcultures of Thrace and Anatolia. This relationship between the house form and sociocultural factors has been explained using a four-part model, which shows the relationship between architecture and social factors by Mazumdar and Mazumdar [3] (**Figure 1**). This model can be used as a methodological tool for exploring and understanding the relationship between a particular culture and its architecture and also to learn about the value and meaning of specific architectural artifacts.

In the working standards of this model, the social norms and the relations of values such as extended family pattern, the status of family in society, relationships between men and women, neighborhood relations, the daily habits of the family, traditions, beliefs and their rituals
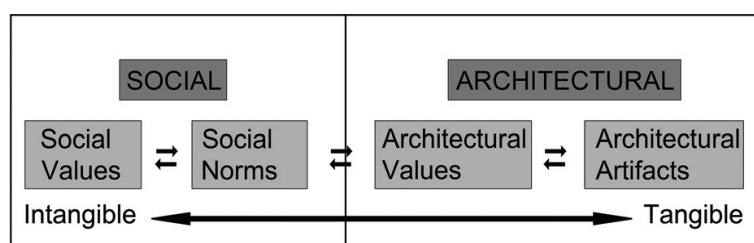

Figure 1. Model of the relationship between social values and architecture [18].

among the society, their hospitality, the beliefs and practices of the Islamic tradition have been surveyed. The aim is to explain the cultural background of the Turkish House which is a synthesis of Turkish and Anatolian culture. Six different housing structures from various regions of Turkey, which include the characteristics of 'Turkish House' from the beginning of the twenty-first century, is examined as part of a postgraduate research project based on this model, and results have been obtained through the data collected from naturalistic fieldwork around Turkey. Survey method has been used in addition to architectural analysis, observation and visual documentary, together with several interviews with family members.

The houses inspected within the research content are Kocaeli/Suzan Şimşek House, Kırklareli/Fatma İner, Sakarya/Kozan Family, İzmit/The house on Kapanca Street, İzmit/Sırrı Paşa Kioks, Kocaeli/Tavşancıl village-Hatice Tuzcu House. They are able to accommodate many cultures. Finally, necessary methods for understanding the relationship between culture and architecture need to be used. There are many lessons for architects and designers to learn when using modern design criteria relating to culture in general design principles.

2.1. An example: traditional Turkish house in Anatolia and Thrace

This chapter deals with the examination of the relationship between cultural traditions and domestic space of the traditional Turkish Homes, along with specific factors. These factors will be explained through an analysis of the religious "Suni" sect Islamic beliefs in Turkey, followed by a description of the sociocultural traditions of the Turkish House. Six housing structures from various regions of Turkey, which embody the characteristics of the "Turkish House" from the beginning of the twenty-first century, are studied. I examine in the following sections each of the four parts, namely the social values, social norms, architectural values and architectural artifacts for this period (**Figure 2**).

2.1.1. Social values

The features of social values I focus on are family structure and the status of family within the community, relationships between men and women, hospitality and neighbor relations, the daily customs of the family, and the customs, beliefs and rituals within the life of the community.

2.1.1.1. Family structure and the status of family within the community

The extended family represents the foundation of traditional Turkish society [31]. The traditional Turkish family consists of the mother, the father, children and grandparents if they are still alive. The mother is the second head of the household after the father. In rural areas, any male child who has completed his military service and is married also gains the right to be called the head of the household. If there is more than one male child in the house, then the eldest one has the right to the title after his father. Whether or not a married son should leave his father's home is based on a few conditions. These conditions usually are as follows: (1) when the family owns a vast amount of land and (2) when the brides who have become a part of the family are incompatible. Even though it is rare, sometimes a daughter can bring a husband into the family home. This is called an "iç güveyi." The family dynasty is kept on with the sons.

The status of the family was related to the economic and social position of the family. It was important for the family to be an extended one and have a long past and bygone. The career
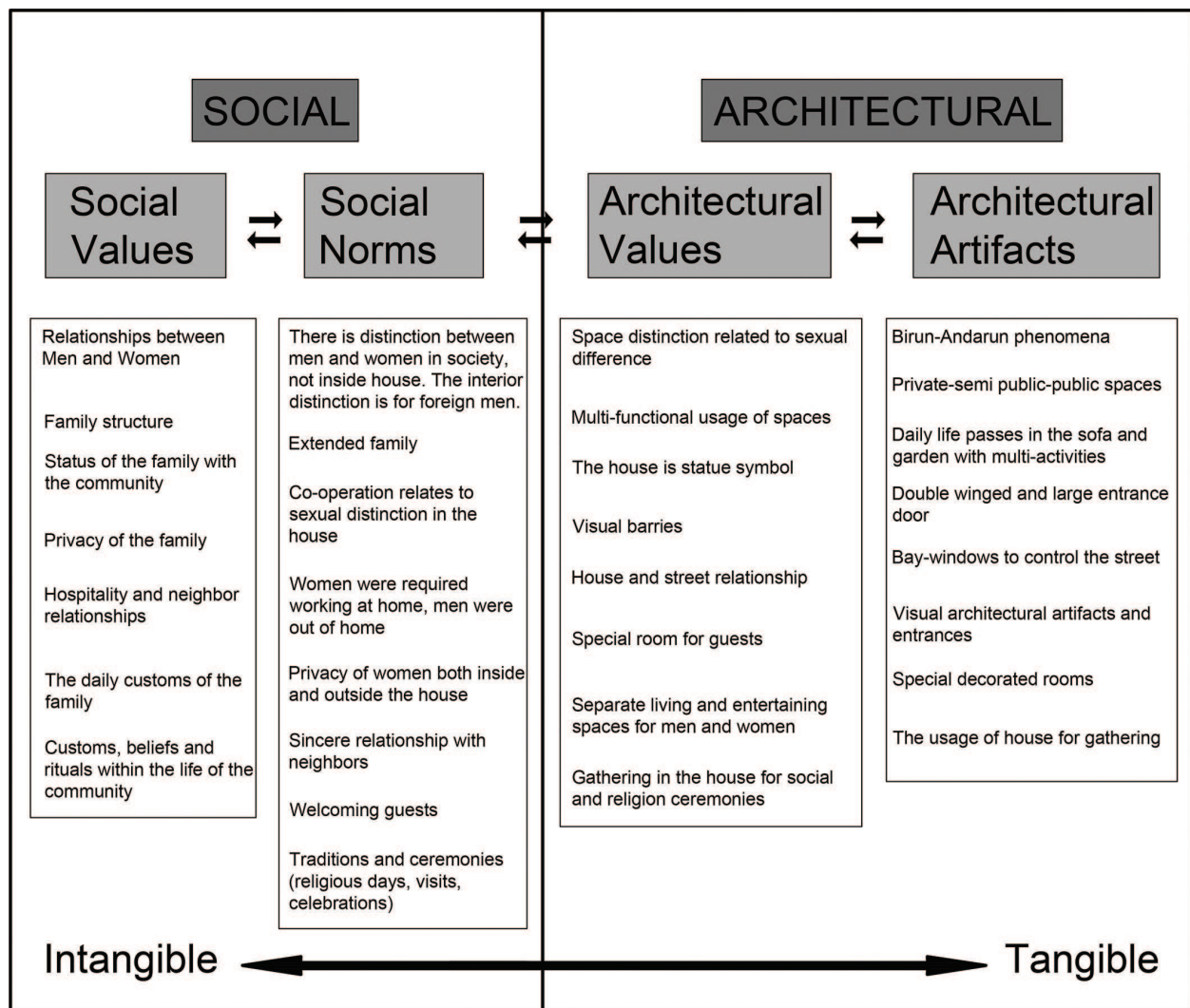
SOCIAL		ARCHITECTURAL	
Social Values ⇄	Social Norms	Architectural Values ⇄	Architectural Artifacts
Relationships between Men and Women	There is distinction between men and women in society, not inside house. The interior distinction is for foreign men.	Space distinction related to sexual difference	Birun-Andarun phenomena
Family structure	Extended family	Multi-functional usage of spaces	Private-semi public-public spaces
Status of the family with the community	Co-operation relates to sexual distinction in the house	The house is statue symbol	Daily life passes in the sofa and garden with multi-activities
Privacy of the family	Women were required working at home, men were out of home	Visual barries	Double winged and large entrance door
Hospitality and neighbor relationships	Privacy of women both inside and outside the house	House and street relationship	Bay-windows to control the street
The daily customs of the family	Sincere relationship with neighbors	Special room for guests	Visual architectural artifacts and entrances
Customs, beliefs and rituals within the life of the community	Welcoming guests	Separate living and entertaining spaces for men and women	Special decorated rooms
	Traditions and ceremonies (religious days, visits, celebrations)	Gathering in the house for social and religion ceremonies	The usage of house for gathering

Intangible ⟷ Tangible

Figure 2. Model showing the socio-physical aspects of the Turkish house.

of the head of family, whether he is a soldier, a clerk or a merchant reflects and affects the social status of the family.

In Turkish-Islamic tradition, women had a significant place in the family. She had a role in educating children and making decisions regarding the family as a unity. The other important traditional behaviors were to respect women, the faithfulness of men and women and their interdependence [30].

2.1.1.2. Relationships between men and women

Islam is not only a religion but also a lifestyle, which organizes religious activities and daily behaviors. Under Islamic Law, men are required to pray in mosques all together, especially on Friday prayers. According to Turkish-Islamic traditions, men have the responsible position as a head of the family. Women are required to do the house work, bring up the children and lead the social interactions while men are required to work outside of the house, earn money and protect his family. Men usually live in a world without women outside because of the distinction between public and private. This resulted in separate gatherings for ceremonies like weddings and house entertainments.

Islamic principles required that women should be accessible or visible to only certain categories of men [32]. There existed no strict restriction regarding men and women of two or three generations living in the same house in the traditional extended family. According to Islam as practiced in Turkey, there are no restrictions regarding the members of two or three families residing in the same house either. It was, however, very important to preserve the privacy of the family against people outside of the house. There was a certain distinction between men and women in the society, and women covered themselves for privacy and protection.

2.1.1.3. Hospitality and neighbor relationships

The family's relationships with their neighbors were as strong as the ones they had with their kin and close relatives. It was so strong that when it came to a social support system and solidarity, after the family it was the neighbors who were the closest. In the Turkish and Islamic traditions, relationships with neighbors are very important and the rights of neighbors are protected.

Hospitality means welcoming guests, treating them well, making them comfortable as if they are in their own homes, during valuable social functions such as weddings, funerals or circumcision feasts. Hospitality was evident in the way that the guests were received, the way they were served and were seen off.

2.1.1.4. The daily customs of the family

The daily customs of the Turkish family differed with the seasonal climate, number of people and meaning, and they would live either outside or inside or both. The most fundamental customs were attached to daily life, how they spent their free time, getting together for meals and how they greeted guests.

2.1.1.5. Customs, beliefs and rituals within the life of the community

Social values are deep-seated convictions, shared beliefs and ideas held by the culture and include general ideas within a society, regarding the society itself and people's role in it, about people's relations with the environment, with the cosmos (cosmic view), with the world (world view) and religion. Through mutual interactions and negotiations among its members, societies develop a way of socialization among its members. Traditions take form in time and are necessary for the survival of society.

The social values in Turkish-Islamic tradition are like religious days, weddings, funerals, births and circumcision feasts. The society has some traditions and rules about these values, especially for wedding ceremonies. This became a tradition in years generation by generation. Funerals are religion-related ceremonies. Another tradition is to give birth in the house.

Orientation is particularly important to Muslims. Since prayers must be performed while facing in the direction of the *kibla*, mosques must be oriented in the direction of Mecca. In home construction, one pays attention not to build the courtyard toilet so that it should not be in the direction of Mecca.

2.1.2. Social norms

Primary social norms and prescriptions that developed out of social values were the require-ments for privacy. The privacy of women 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 pro-tect themselves outside of the house and they are expected to not make a contact with strange men. But they were allowed to meet their male relatives and neighbors in the house without covering. As a result of extended family, there was cooperation in the house. According to this, men were responsible for the relations outside of the house, while women were responsible for the relations inside of the house. Neighborhood relations were so strong that helping each other was important. Also, treating the guest with respect and sincerity can be counted as one of the social norms of the Turkish society. Offering help to each other among neighbors was important, and women usually did the housework with their women neighbors. Hospitality was another value, which required treating people with respect and honor. Ceremonies like religious holidays, weddings and funerals were held in the house, in separate or the same spaces for men and women.

2.1.3. Architectural values

These social norms required definite sorts of behavior, which in turn led to certain architec-tural values. Since there is a distinction between men and women in society, visual barriers were used for privacy of women and family. It also developed the house form, which empha-sized the lack of visibility of the inside of the house in order to protect privacy. The distinction between the public and the private supported the development of a guest room, which was used to welcome male guests. Other parts were used by women in daily life.

Therefore, there were no direct entrances into the house. One entrance was from the street for males directly into the guestroom. The other entrance was used by women and family mem-bers and was from another street, opening to the garden. Furthermore, the door of the main entrance was a status symbol.

The house represents the status of the family in social life, and the house is multifunctional and designed flexibly according to the extended family. The usage of rooms varies regard-ing the needs of the extended family. Rooms have multiple functions. Multifunctional rooms were used in daily life, which also opened to the courtyard and the garden. The house-street relation was designed as public, semi-public and private spaces in hierarchy.

The close neighborhood 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 guest. As a result of hospitality, a special place was prepared for guests. Guestrooms were better deco-rated than the other rooms in the house.

Social and religious ceremonies were held in the house. In these ceremonies, close relatives and male or female neighbors could be in the same place, but they gathered separately in dif-ferent places in the presence of foreign men. The hall (sofa/Hayat) was both a transition area and a gathering place.

2.1.4. Architectural artifacts

The small house did not provide separate areas for different genders. The space could be used both by men and women separately at different times during the same celebration or could be used by men and women at the same time (**Figure 3**). But big houses had two separate quarters. The *haremlik* (andaroun) consisted of those areas reserved solely for the use of family members and offered privacy (the concept of "mahremiyet") to its users. The *selamlık* (Birun), on the other hand, included those areas used to host male guests and the stable for mounts of the house. In this sense, these latter areas are considered semi-public.
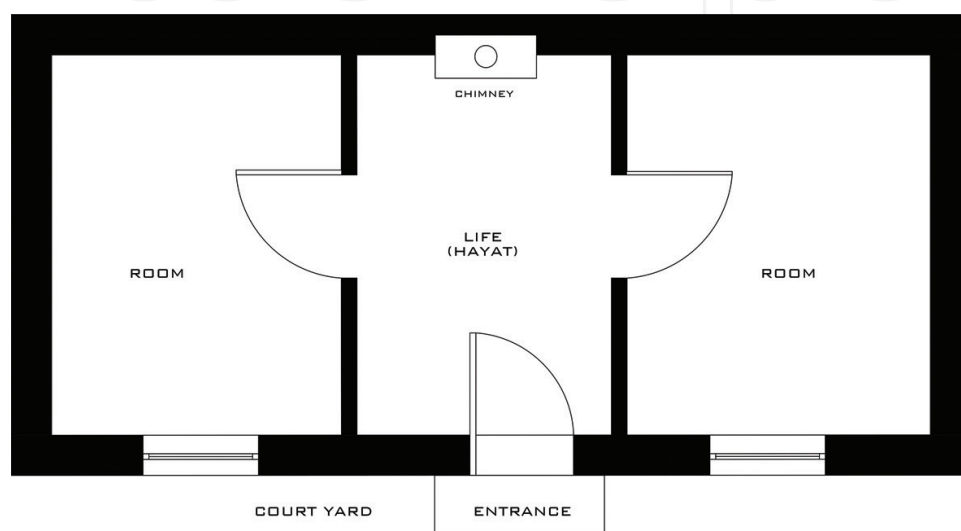
Figure 3. Ground floor plan of Fatma Iner house.
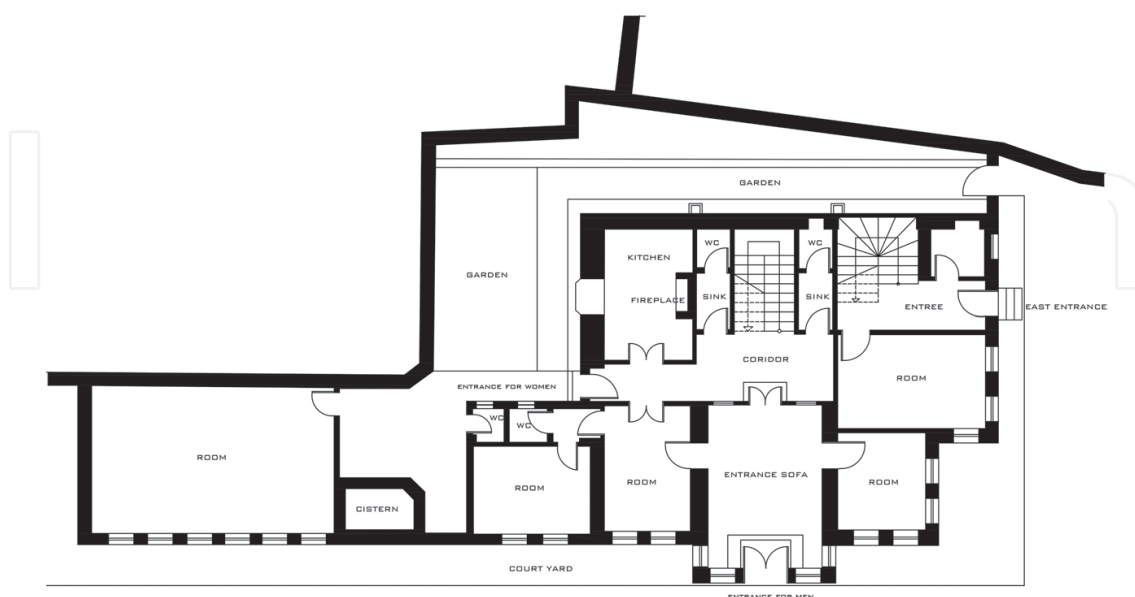
Figure 4. Ground floor plan of Sırrı pasha mansion.
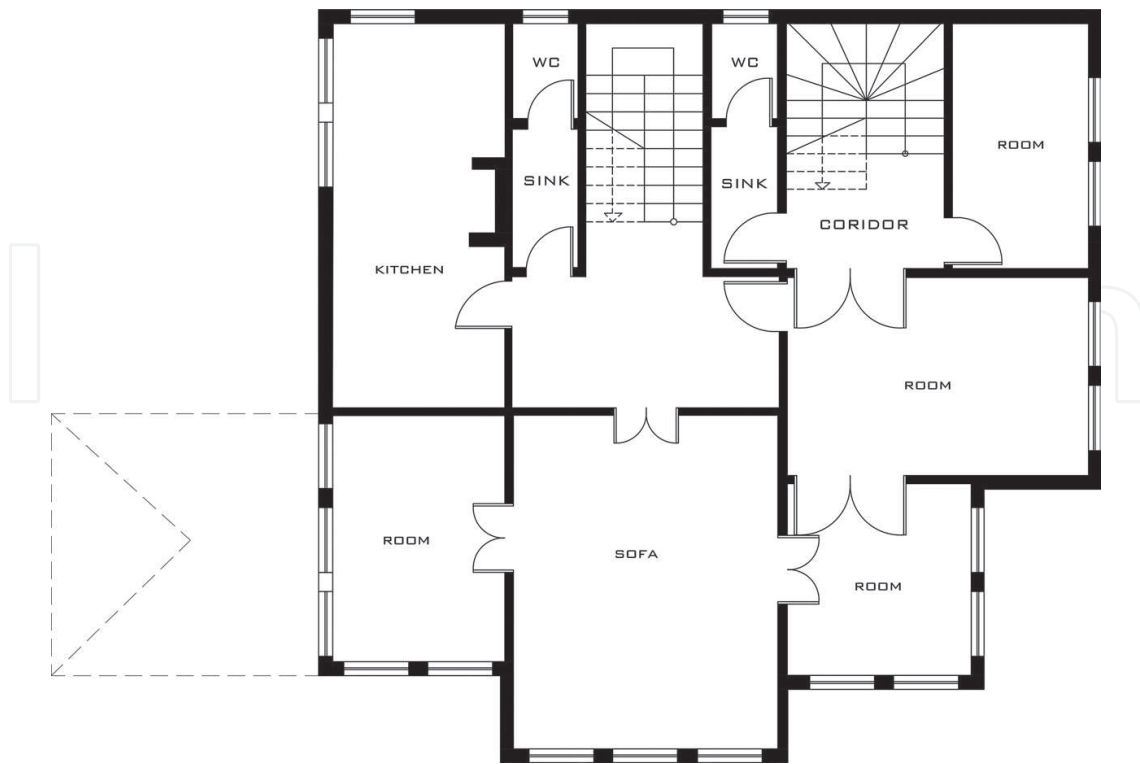
Figure 5. First floor plan of Sırrı pasha mansion.
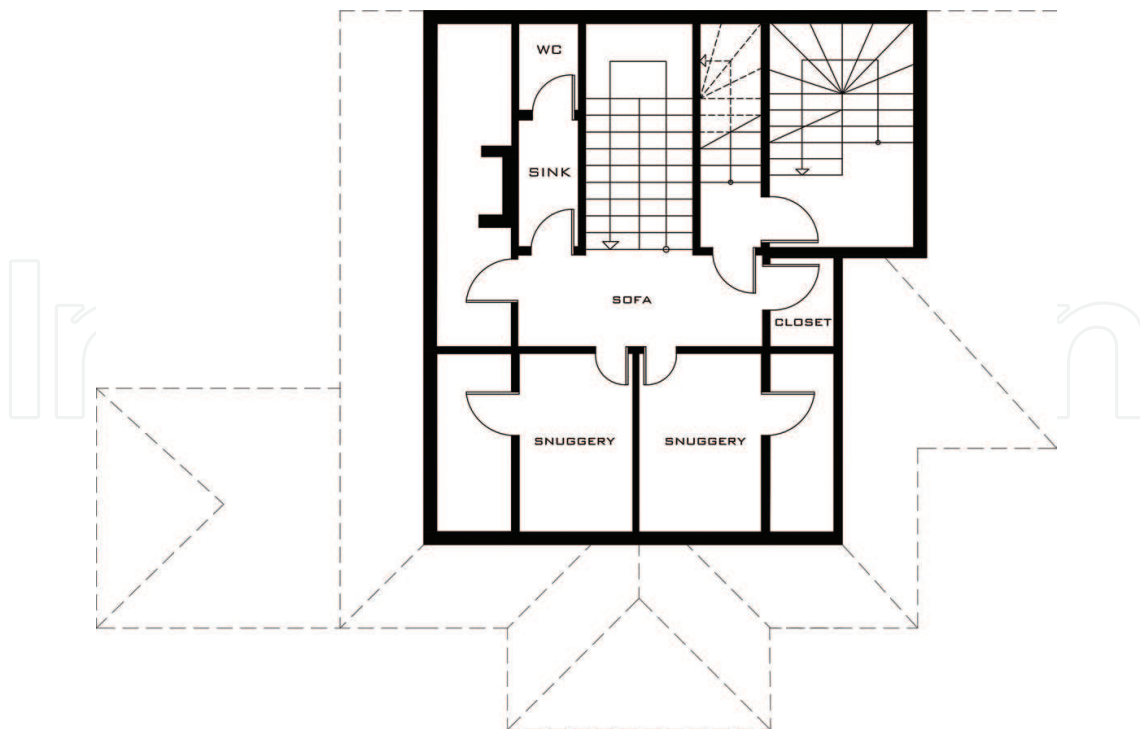
Figure 6. Second floor plan of Sırrı pasha mansion.
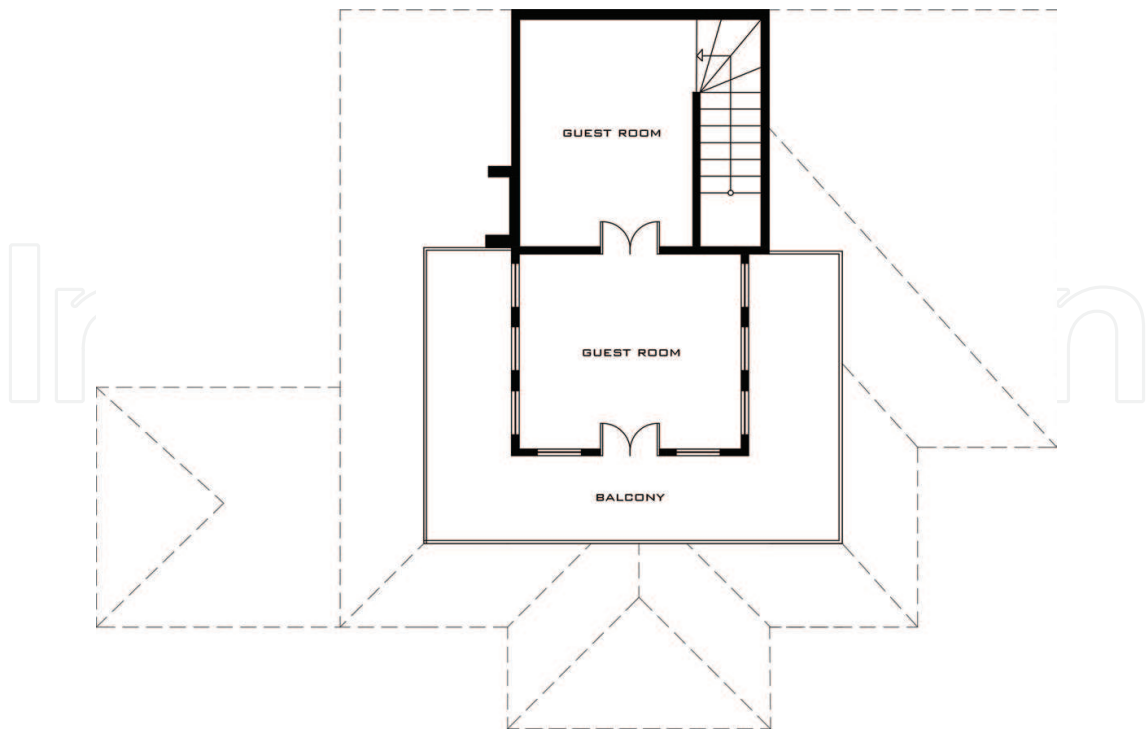
Figure 7. Attic floor (cihannüma) plan of Sırrı pasha mansion.

Figure 8. Bay windows of Sırrı pasha mansion and the windows overlooking the street/garden/courtyard.

Figure 9. Guest room of Sırrı pasha mansion.
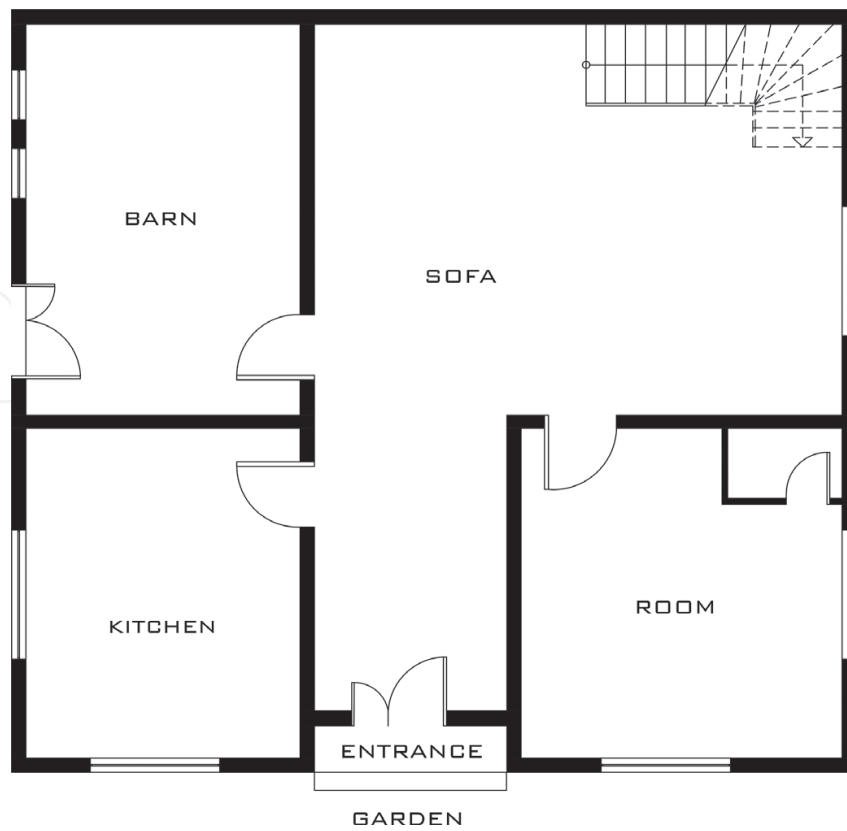
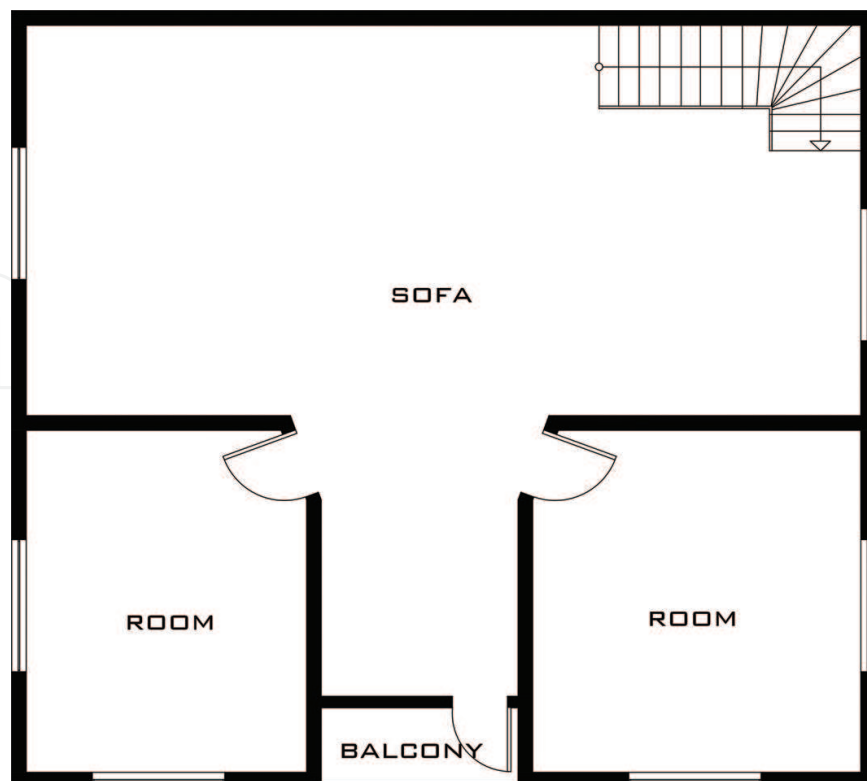**Figure 10.** Ground floor plan of Kozan family.
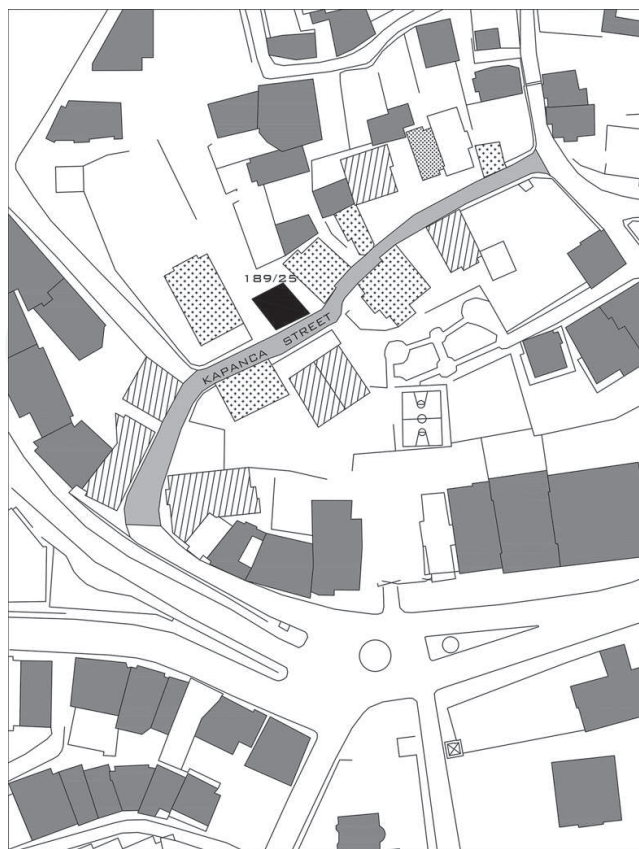
Figure 11. Upper floor plan of Kozan family.

Figure 12. Site plan of house on Kapanca street.
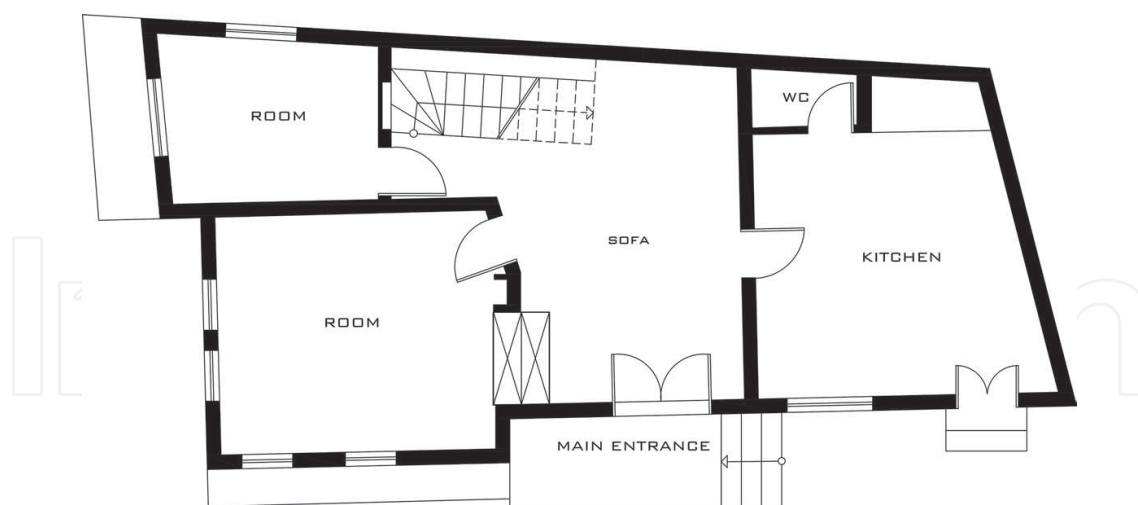
Figure 13. Ground floor plan of the house on Kapanca street.

The house had two entrances (**Figure 4**). One of them was the entrance, which was used by male guests in order to protect the privacy of women and family. From the courtyard it led directly into the house. At the same time, it was the main entrance with a large, wooden, double-winged entrance door.
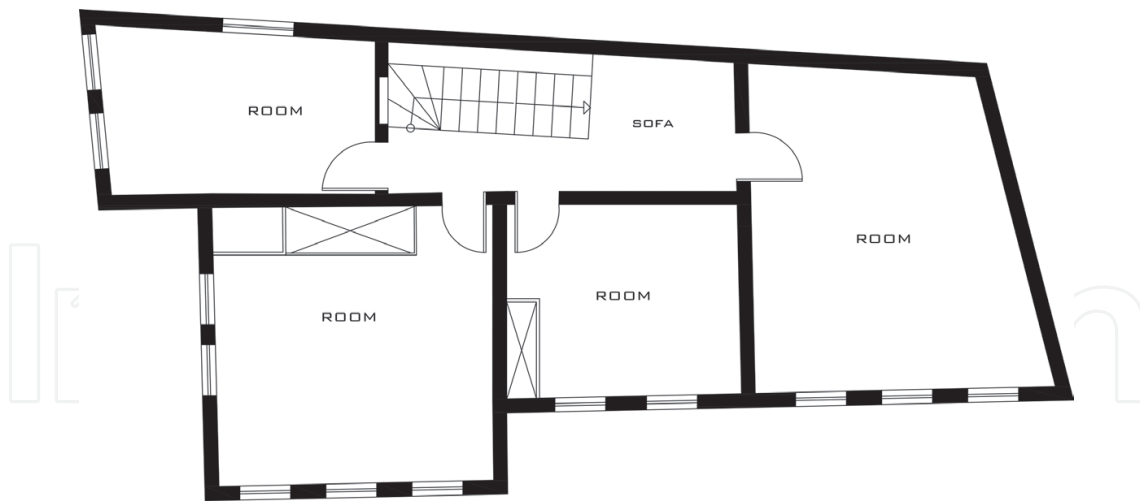
Figure 14. Upper floor plan of the house on Kapanca street.

The houses within the case study reflect how the extended family structure reveals the need for more rooms for the family members. They were used according to the family's lifestyle. Daily life had been lived in a multifunctional room where the family gathered, spent time, ate and slept (**Figures 3**, **5**, **7**, **11**, **14**). While the bathing closet in the rooms was used for daily cleaning, the Turkish bath (hamam) was used for weekly cleaning (**Figures 6**, **10**, **15**, **16**, **18–20**).

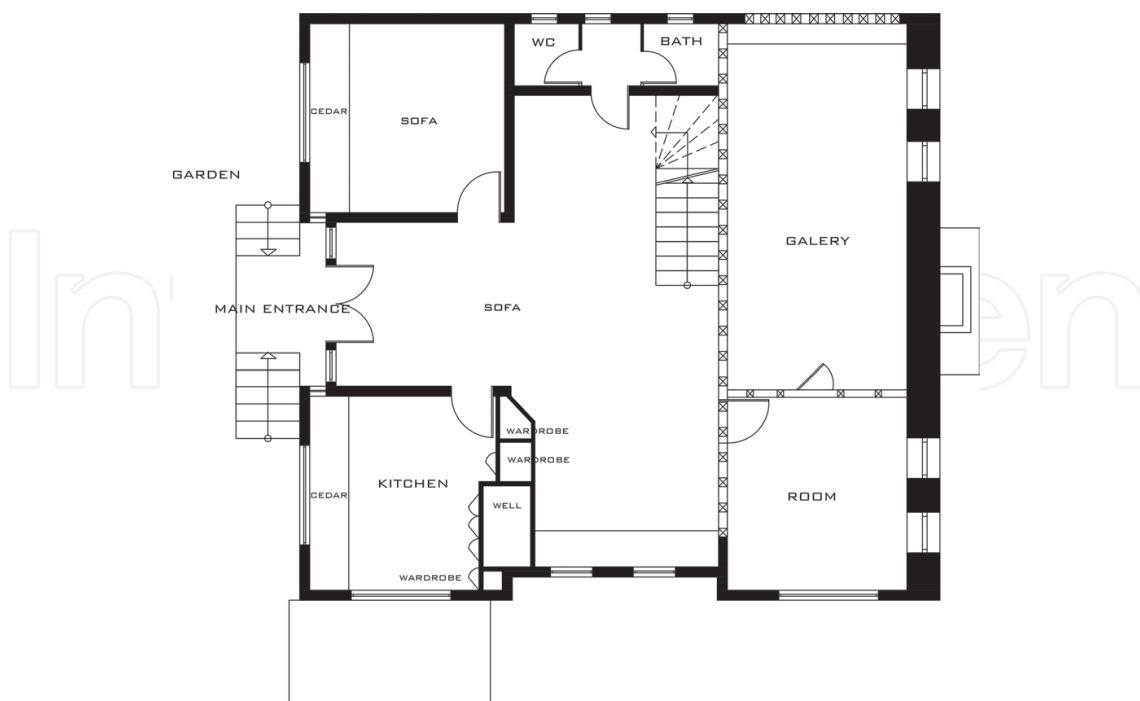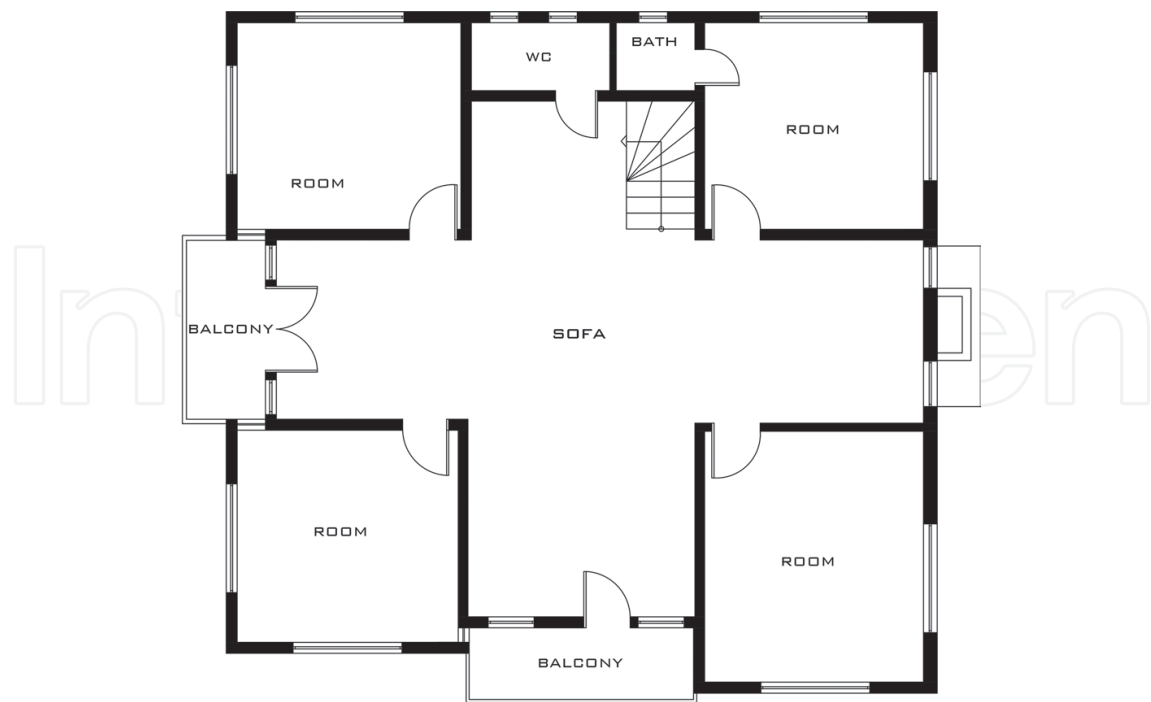**Figure 15.** Ground floor plan of Hatice Tuzcu house.

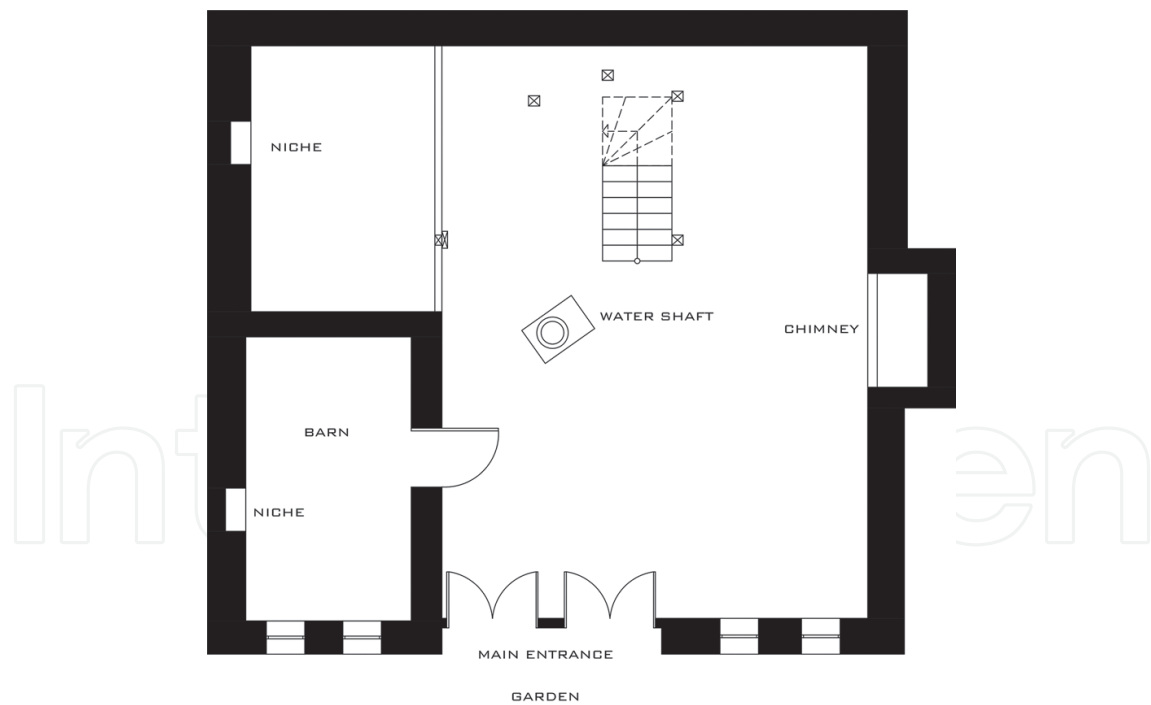**Figure 16.** Upper floor plan of Hatice Tuzcu house.

Figure 17. Basement floor of Hatice Tuzcu house.

The courtyard functioned as the most active space in the house and was the center of the family's activities. This space, according to season and climate (sun, wind and shade), was used all day long for various activities. This rather introverted lifestyle made the garden a very important space and brought nature in the house (**Figures 3**, **10**, **12**, **17**).
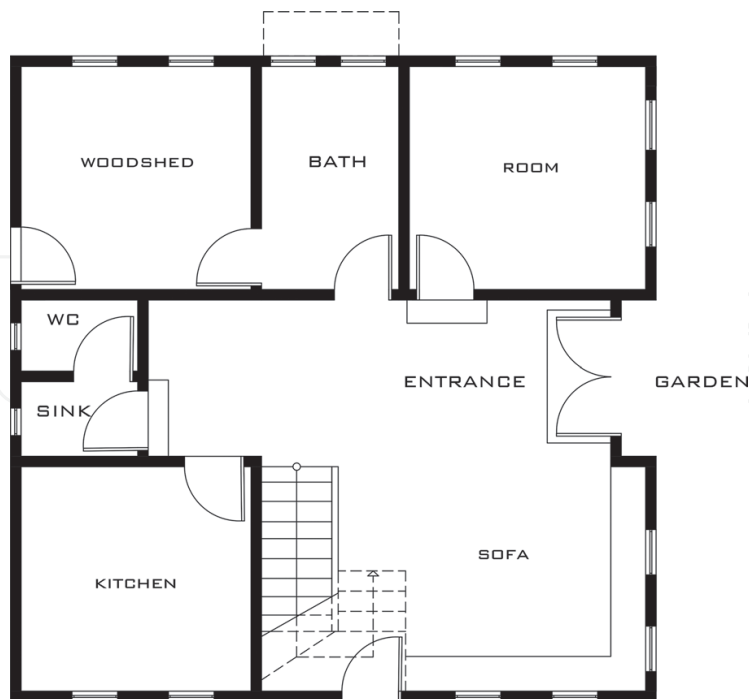
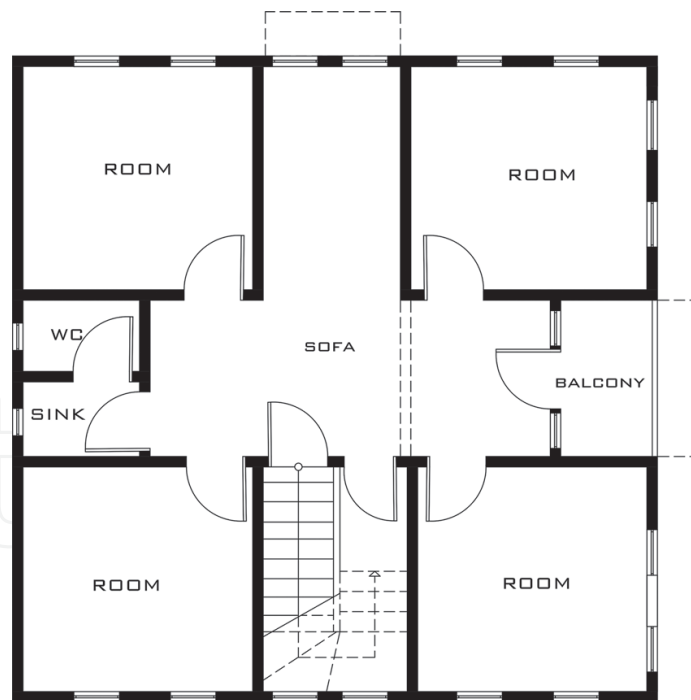**Figure 18.** Ground floor plan of Suzan Şimşek house.

Figure 19. First floor plan of Suzan Şimşek house.

There is a single entrance to the house, and the common place that people see upon entering the house is called the Sofa (hall), while the place which is called Hayat (Aşana, Sofa, Eyvan) [33] is often used by male guests. Other private rooms of the house were used by women. Ceremonies and entertainment were held in the sofa. These places were gathering spaces for
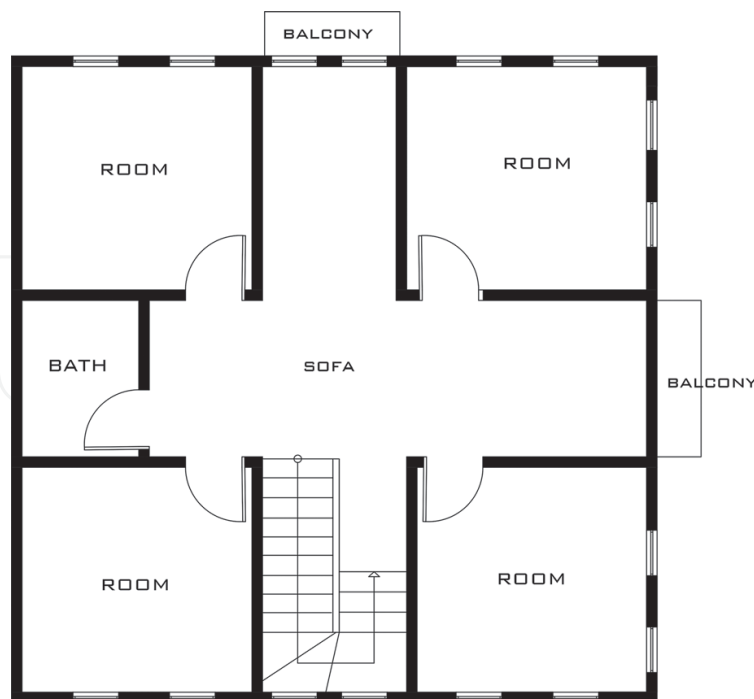
Figure 20. Second floor plan of Suzan Şimşek house.

relatives and neighbors in religious days and visits, for example, when people visited the baby and the mother after a birth or a circumcision. A special preparation was carried out for these situations. Wedding ceremonies and entertainment were held separately for men and women, sometimes held together for a specific gender group in the same space inside the house (**Figures 3–5**, **7**, **10**, **13**).

The guestroom phenomenon existed for foreign men. The guestroom in the ground floor or the upper floor was used as a room to welcome male guests (**Figures 7**, **9**, **13**). A special room was designed for guests with special decoration and furniture because guests were important. The guest room parlor was obviously different and better decorated than other rooms of the house (**Figure 17**).

Windows, doors and wells were planned strategically so that the inside could not be seen from outside. Bay windows were used to control the street/garden/courtyard and visitors (**Figures 7**, **8**, **14**).

3. The role of traditional house in Turkey for contemporary housing design

During the modernization process of development countries, modern housing forms have become the focus of scholars and researchers in the search to achieve a balance between modernization and traditional values and to retain or blend some traditional elements in newly built modern houses. It has been observed that the rapid transition from traditional houses to the multistory apartment buildings is very common within urban areas of modernizing third world countries.

Contemporary architecture (modern architecture) in Turkey has been examined in generating a modern idiom from traditional architectural, this is *"is not repeating what was valid and built for the past but is a continuous search for abstract intrinsic values to guide new solutions"* [34].

Sedat Eldem, Hassan Fathy and Rifat Chairji had contributed to regionalism within modernism, which shares a similar fate in the Islamic countries. Sedad Eldem is also a devoted regionalist in search of an architecture that is primarily Turkish. Eldem has coupled a continuous search into the source of traditional architecture with a modern practice that drives from, and reinterprets, the finding of these sources. Turgut Cansever and Behruz Çinici are also students of Eldem and kept using his architectural ideas, and Doruk Pamir has also elevated the quality of the contemporary architectural environment by employing the regional idiom, regional input and environmental determinants. During the tourism boom in Turkey in the 1980s, new vernacularism dominated the design of tourism-functional accommodation. This approach utilized Mediterranean rather than Anatolian architecture in the holiday village of group EPA in Bodrum and Datça.

During modernization, developing countries supported using traditional elements in modern houses in today's architectural practice rather than traditional house form, material, construction form and appearance.

Eldem always based his traditional architecture references on abstractness and interpretation. *Even though* "his research in the form of collective typologies as the Turkish house and Turkish garden. Also, In drawing only abstract references from what belongs to the past he use proportions and structural systems, reinforced by the selection of materials, blended wish very limited use of ornamental geometric patterns exclusively in the form of surface treatment and tiling. Behruz Çinici's reflection of Eldem's idiom occurred in the Middle East Technical University Staff Housing, where he not only utilized traditional load-bearing brick construction but also referred to the central Anatolian courtyard-type house plan with many details from Turkish house types" [35]. The widest area of the application of neo-vernacularism approach is obviously architecture intended for tourism and cultural uses. Local forms and settlement patterns have been revived in conventional technology and precast accessories in order to imitate the prevent vernacular on Holiday Village in Bodrum and Datça [36].

4. Conclusion

We find out some results using the four-step physical model of Mazundar and Mazumdar [3], which shows the relationships between culture and architecture. Restricting the study to tangible architectural artifacts alone seems problematic, as certain aspects of the relationship are left unexplored, leaving us with an incomplete understanding. The model allows us to catalog and analyze the design, forms, spaces, structures, materials and effects of geography, topography, climate and general environmental conditions. The relationship between architectural artifacts, behavioral norms and social values can be explored systematically through the use of this very model, and the questions are outlined. This model helped us understand culture, cultural values and cultural norms and has shown that combined approach is necessary. Thus, it can be used as a pedagogical tool for researching and understanding cultural values that relate to architecture.

Turkish houses clearly exhibit sociocultural factors, which affected their formation in general. Courtyards, sofas, rooms, hayat and service areas are placed in an order from open to closed in a hierarchical way. The houses provide flexible usage for men and women without distinction in the family. The distinction between men and women under Islamic Law had let to the concept of a 'guest room', different entrances and bay windows to the street. The separate entrances for women and men required a hierarchy like private, semi-public and public order. The status of the family affected the size of the house, the number of floors and the shape of entrance doors. Moreover, extended family structure created multifunctional rooms that provide flexible usage for day and night, and summer and winter. The importance of sincerity among neighbors shows itself with shared garden walls and common doors. Men and women gather separately in sofas, rooms and courtyards of the house in all social ceremonies. Especially, courtyards and gardens play an important role in social gatherings with relatives and neighbors. As a result of hospitality, guest rooms emerged as a special space for male guests. In many of these studies, both gender and space relations have been studied through physical occupation and a representation of a range of complex meanings, emotions, experiences and relationships, but spatiality remains implicit. Space and gender relations in Islamic societies have also been the subject of study in the context of public and private realms [37]. Orhun studied proceeding from the premise that space constitutes gender relations in its structure and functioning and asks how gender relations are systematically expressed in various spatial-functional types of houses. It argues that each type developed locally into a complex spatial culture [38].

I can conclude my argumentation regarding the traditional Turkish House after finding out the sociocultural factors that affect the formation of those very factors in general. Courtyards, sofas, rooms and service places are in order from open to close in a hierarchical way. The case houses provide flexible usage for men and women without distinction in the family.

This chapter aims to analyze the influence of specific sociocultural values regarding the design and meaning of domestic architecture. It is obvious that there are lessons for architects and designers to create modern design criteria related to culture by using a general design principle. Also there could be a need to research how are cultural values in architectural education. Educators need to confront several fundamental and troubling questions. The existence of multiple cultures and philosophies prompts questions about pedagogical and curricular organization in architectural education. In future study, I discuss how educators will impart the teaching of values and norms in teaching and learning processes.

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