

Family structure and spatial configuration in Turkish house form in Anatolia from late nineteenth century to late twentieth century

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Abstract

With a background that embraces various cultures and civilizations, the evolution of house form in Anatolia is a particularly interesting case. Previous research has examined configurational properties of Turkish houses during the Ottoman Empire period, with interpretations about relationships to social structure. Building on this research, this study examines the transformation of Turkish house and apartment plans from the late nineteenth century, early twentieth century and late twentieth century through analysis of spatial configurations. Observed transformations in spatial configuration in these three periods are interpreted through their relationships to shifts in family structure represented by household compositions and women's status. House plans in these three periods were analyzed utilizing space syntax methods. Since the "sofa" (hall), as a central living space, has always been an integral part of Turkish family structure, and since the kitchen has been a woman's space, their transformations were emphasized. Family structures were examined through the changes in women's employment status and education level, in addition to household types and size in all periods. When house plans from these periods were compared, findings revealed that the transformations in spatial configuration were parallel to shifts in family structures. Results of the study about spatial configuration – family structure relationships were stimulating for further research into accommodating contemporary household needs in current housing practices.

Keywords

s p a t i a l
configuration, family
structure, women's
status, Anatolia

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1. Introduction

Although various house forms in Anatolia have originated from different civilizations, by the end of the nineteenth century a common morphology was formed, reflecting the initial juxtaposition and following integration of different cultural backgrounds, such as living patterns and family structures. It has been widely argued that house form is influenced by the gender roles embedded in family structures (Saegert&Winkel, 1980, Rock et al, 1980, Ahrentzen, 1989, Spain, 1995, Domosh & Seager 2001, Booth, 1999, Bowlby et al, 1997, Franck, 1985, Munro & Madigan, 1999, Peatross & Hasell, 1992, Weisman, 1992, among others). Although reference has not been made to family structures explicitly, previous space syntax research has examined configurational properties of Turkish houses during the Ottoman

Empire period, with interpretations about relationships to social structure (Orhun, 1999, Orhun et al, 1995). It is also argued that Turkish house form and allocation of functions are symbolic representations of social norms and specifically of family structures (Asatekin, 1994). Building on this research, this study examines the transformation of Turkish house and apartment plans through the late nineteenth, early twentieth and late twentieth centuries in relation to family structures.

1.1 Case selection

House and apartment plans from these periods were initially analyzed utilizing space syntax methods. It was observed that a common house morphology was formed among Turkish house and apartment plans, within each of the three periods. Ankara, a central Anatolian city, was chosen for this study.

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Ankara is a special case due to the fact that it had rural characteristics in the late nineteenth century during the Ottoman Empire, whereas by the late twentieth century Ankara had transformed into the second largest city in Turkey with a completely urban character. Its transformation from rural to urban character began in the early twentieth century when it became the capital city of the new Turkish Republic. In the late nineteenth century, parallel to the rural characteristics of central Anatolia, the dominant dwelling type in Ankara was the single-family house. However, in the early and late twentieth century, parallel to the urbanization process, the majority of dwellings were converted to apartment buildings. Simultaneously, family structures were transformed through these three periods.

1.2 Methodology

House and apartment plans were analyzed through utilizing space syntax methods, while family structures were analyzed through findings of previous research and census data. In order to explain how spaces are gendered in the house, one of the approaches is to examine the configurational properties of spaces accommodating functions related to housework (as it is suggested by Bowlby et al, 1997, Peatross and Hasell, 1992, Hanson, 1998, and Roberts, 1990). Parallel to this approach, configurational properties of housework space (the kitchen), spaces for family life (the sofa, main room and living room) and entire systems were analyzed and compared across typical houses and apartments from the three time periods in this study.

It has been argued that since the early twentieth, the household composition, women's access to education, their property and legal rights, and participation in the paid labor force have changed, resulting in more equal gender roles in Turkish society (Kagitcibasi, 1986). Therefore, in this study, family structures were examined through

the changes in household composition and women's status. Observed transformations in spatial configuration in these three periods were then interpreted through their relationships to shifts in family structure.

2. Late nineteenth century Ottoman Empire

In the late nineteenth century Ottoman Empire, a major distinction identified the characteristics of settlements: Istanbul, which was the capital city of the Ottoman Empire, versus the rest of Anatolia (Tanyeli, 1999, Duben, 1990a, 1990b). Life styles and consequently housing standards in Istanbul were very different from the rest of Anatolia. Therefore, Istanbul defined the urban characteristics in this period, whereas the rest of Anatolia had rural characteristics (Duben, 1990a, 1990b). Anatolian settlements including Ankara retained rural characteristics in social and spatial organization in this period. In terms of house form, the typical two-story Turkish house of the late nineteenth century dominated the Ankara landscape (Tanyeli, 1999, Celebioglu-Abali, 1989).

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2.1 Family structure in the late nineteenth century

Family structures were shaped within strict patriarchy in late nineteenth century Anatolia. Marriage rules were arranged in such a way that a newly married couple was expected to live with the husband's family. Since marriage meant the wife's entrance into her husband's household, it neither changed the residence of the husband, nor did it have any significance in terms of the transfer of property rights. They could set up an independent household after the husband's father died. In this patrilocal system of residence it was the patriarch's responsibility to provide a dwelling for the new couple, either under the same roof or in close proximity (Duben, 1990a).

The rural Turkish household formation system in the late nineteenth century can be called a joint household system considering that the social rules call for the joint residence of senior and junior generations at the marriage of the latter, and that authority always rested with the senior generation. Nevertheless, the actual lives of families did not always fit into this set of rules due to social, economic or demographic barriers. Different types of household compositions were experienced at different stages of life. Therefore, for the rural population of Anatolia in the late nineteenth century, the percentages of the household types can be given in intervals. For example, 17-34 percent of all households were composed of two or more couples, and 4-25 percent were composed of a couple and various other non-conjugal relatives. About 55-60 percent were simple (nuclear) in structure, which ranged in size between 5.3-6.5 (Duben, 1990a). Consequently, it is not possible to argue that the majority of the population in rural Anatolia in the late nineteenth century was living in complex

family structures (non-nuclear family structures). However, it is possible to argue that at some point in life for variable time periods, the majority of the population lived in complex family structures. This patrilocal system of living within complex family structures supported unequal gender roles in families (Erman, 1998).

In addition to the patrilocal system of living and comparatively larger size of even the nuclear family in this period, the restrictions applied on women's participation in the paid labor force was another measure of women's status (Kagitcibasi, 1986, Ilcan, 1994, Duben, 1990a).

This overall family structure was closely associated with the typical two-story Turkish house, in which a room was allocated for each of the couples living under the same roof (Eldem, 1968, Eldem, 1984, Sozen, 2001). Therefore, the spatial logic of the Turkish house was strongly dependent on this patrilocal and patriarchal system of living.

2.2 House form in the late nineteenth century

A typical Turkish house at the end of nineteenth century was composed of two main stories: on entrance level and the first story.

The main story of the Turkish house was the first story. This was mainly due to the search for fresh air, and a better vista (Eldem, 1968, Eldem, 1984, Sozen, 2001). The main story accommodated two major elements: the "sofa" (hall) and the "room" (Figure 1). The "sofa" provided space for circulation, yet its main use was for daily activities and some cultural rituals and special events (Eldem, 1984, Sozen, 2001, Asatekin, 1994). The "sofa" has also been referred to as a neutral space, in which all members of the family were involved in some kind of activity during the day (Asatekin, 1994). All spaces on the main story were directly connected to the "sofa". Therefore, the "sofa" constituted the core of the typical Turkish house, along with its connotations with the center of family life. Each "room", on the other hand, was allocated for one couple living in the house. Therefore, each "room" functioned as a "house" to one couple: there was no connection between the rooms. The only access from the rooms through a single door was to the "sofa", the core of the house and the family (Eldem, 1968, Eldem, 1984).

One of the rooms, which was named the "main room", was designated for the senior couple in the patrilocal system. This room was where the head of household spent time when he would be home. Therefore, the main room was symbolically important for family structure, although its spatial interrelationships were no different than other rooms.

The entrance level was designated for ancillary services, such as storage and laundry. Although in the early examples of the Turkish house, in addition to laundry and storage, bathrooms were located on the entrance level, in the late nineteenth century examples, bathrooms were located in the first story along with increased technical possibilities (Asatekin, 1994). The kitchen, in which women were expected to cook, was mostly located on a mezzanine level in between the main story and the entrance level.

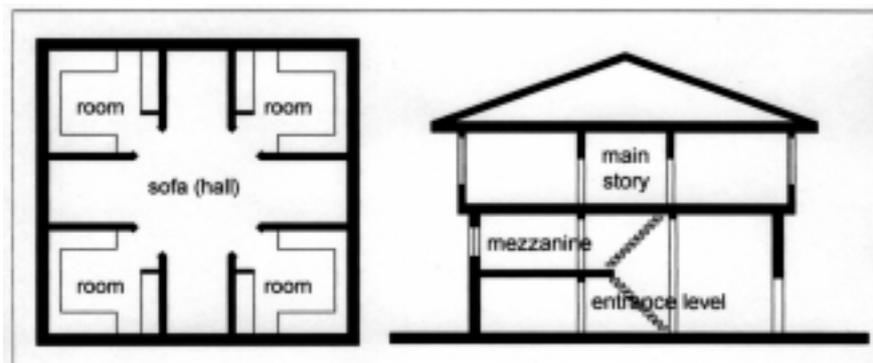


Figure 1: Plan and cross-section of a typical two-story Turkish house (based on Eldem, 1984)

The two-story Turkish house is representative of the majority, which was not influenced by extreme social conditions, and which accommodated the middle class (Asatekin, 1994).

2.3 Three cases of the late nineteenth century Ankara houses

Three houses from this period were analysed utilising Space Syntax methods. All three houses were built in central Ankara in the late nineteenth century. The selected houses form accurate examples of typical two-story Turkish houses (Figure 2). In all three houses, the main story is the first story, in which a “sofa”, a “main room”, one or two other rooms, and a bathroom are located. The entrance level is allocated for storage and other ancillary facilities. One kitchen is located on a mezzanine floor in between the entrance level and the first story. A stairway connects the entrance level and the mezzanine floor to the sofa.

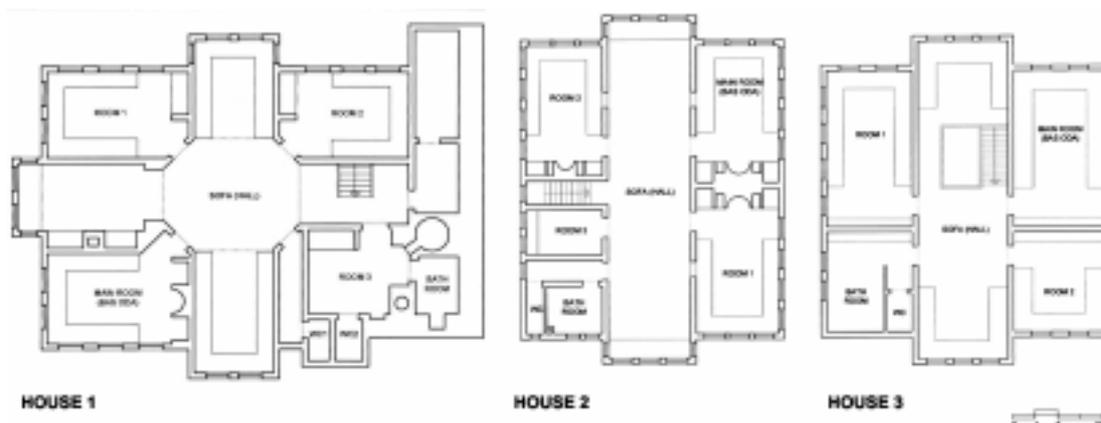


Figure 2: Floor plans of the selected late nineteenth century Ankara houses (Source: Eldem, 1984)

In terms of configurational relationships, the houses reflected repeating patterns. In all houses, the “sofa” was the most integrated space, followed by the rooms, the stairway, the kitchen and the entrance level (Table 1).

House	Integration Rad = n
1	sofa > room 1 = main room = room 2 = room 3 > mezzanine = bathroom = kitchen = entrance level
2	sofa > room 1 = main room = room 2 = room 3 > mezzanine > bathroom > kitchen = entrance level
3	sofa > room 1 = room 2 = main room > mezzanine > bathroom > kitchen = entrance level

Table 1. Global integration of spaces in each of the three houses in relation to each other.

The justified permeability graphs of these three houses reflected this pattern clearly (Figure 3).

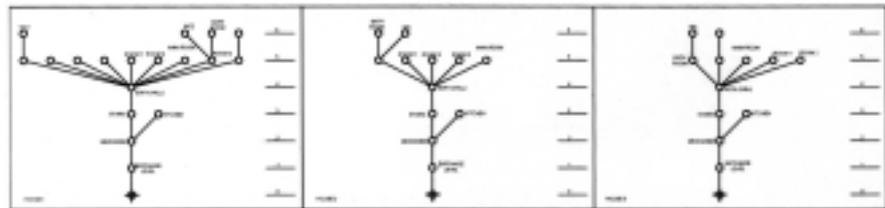


Figure 3: Justified permeability graphs of selected late nineteenth century Ankara houses

All rooms were directly connected to the sofa, which is connected to the mezzanine level through a flight of stairs. The kitchens, located on the mezzanine level, were relatively segregated from the main floor spaces with at least three steps from the sofa. Supporting the earlier discussion, the main rooms in all houses were configurationally no different from the rest of the rooms on the first story. Overall, the main living spaces on the first story were at least three steps deep from the entrance, due to the level difference.

3. Early twentieth century

Just after the establishment of the Turkish Republic, Ankara became the capital city in 1925. This was a big attempt towards modernization and the new capital city was representative of this modernization process with its re-construction. In search of a more contemporary look, a “New City” (“Yenisehir”), was built as a new district in Ankara (Goksu, 1994, Aslanoglu, 2001).

In the first half of the twentieth century the rural population decreased as the working class and middle class emerged. Government officials constituted the majority of the middle class, which mostly resided in Ankara. This resulted in a housing shortage in the city. Although apartment buildings in the “New City” were only a partial solution to this problem (Aslanoglu, 2001), they still identified the character of development in Ankara in this period.

This period marked a transformation for Ankara from a rural to an urban character with increasing numbers of apartment buildings and decreasing numbers of houses, with an increasing amount of traffic and consequently automobile oriented development, and with increasing domination by the government (Aslanoglu, 2001, Bilgin, 1999, Gunay&Selman, 1994).

3.1 Family structure in the early twentieth century

There is widespread agreement in the literature that Turkish women have had a unique historical experience due to the total modification of the legal system under the reforms introduced in the early years of the Republic. In about a decade, the laws affecting women's status were changed drastically: from religious rules to a secular civil code, from unequal rights regarding divorce and ownership of property to equal legal treatment, from none to full political representation and participation rights (Aslanoglu, 2001, Kagitcibasi, 1986). All these reforms provided the legal and institutional structures for an equal treatment of women under the law. However, these structural changes were not reflected immediately in the everyday lives of women (Kagitcibasi, 1986). Therefore, the early years of the Republic are transitional years for women's status in everyday life. The structural changes in this period initiated equal status for women. Yet, being a transitional period, the early twentieth century was also the time where some of the social rules of the previous century were still partly observable.

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3.2 House form in the early twentieth century

In Ankara, following the increasing population due to its being the capital city, accommodating government officials and receiving the highest percentage of migration at the time, the "New City" was built apart from the traditional city centre and close to a suburban character. In this period the typical dwelling was the apartment building. Since the residents were mostly the government officials, the apartment buildings in Ankara were modest. They were mostly three story apartment buildings with two apartments on each floor. The typical apartment plan was composed of two or three mid-sized rooms, and a living room (Aslanoglu, 2001).

In the early apartment plans, it was observed that the "sofa" was starting to transform into a corridor (usually named "hall"), which separated the rooms facing the street from the service quarters that faced the back (Bilgin, 1999). The rooms of these apartments were no longer designated for couples, due to the fact that the majority of the population shifted to nuclear families. Therefore, apartment rooms were much smaller than those of nineteenth century houses. Another observation in this period was the formation of a "living room", which integrated the daily life of the former "main room" and "sofa" of the nineteenth century houses. The "sofa",

while conserving its spatial interrelationships, lost the function of accommodating daily life to the “living room” (Aslanoglu, 2001). However, in some apartment plans of this period, remnants of the “sofa” can still be observed in the form of wide corridors, or windowless small rooms located in the centre of the apartment. Similarly, due to the disappearance of the patrilocal system in urbanizing Ankara, the “main room” disappeared, losing its symbolic importance to the living room. The disappearance of the level difference between the kitchen and the rest of the living spaces naturally provided easier access. However, it can still be observed that kitchens were “left aside” at the back of the apartments compared to other spaces.

3.3 Three cases of early twentieth century Ankara apartments

From this period, three Ankara apartments reflecting these characteristics, and located in the “New City” of the time were analysed in this study (Figure 4). All the selected apartment buildings from this period were built in the 1930s.

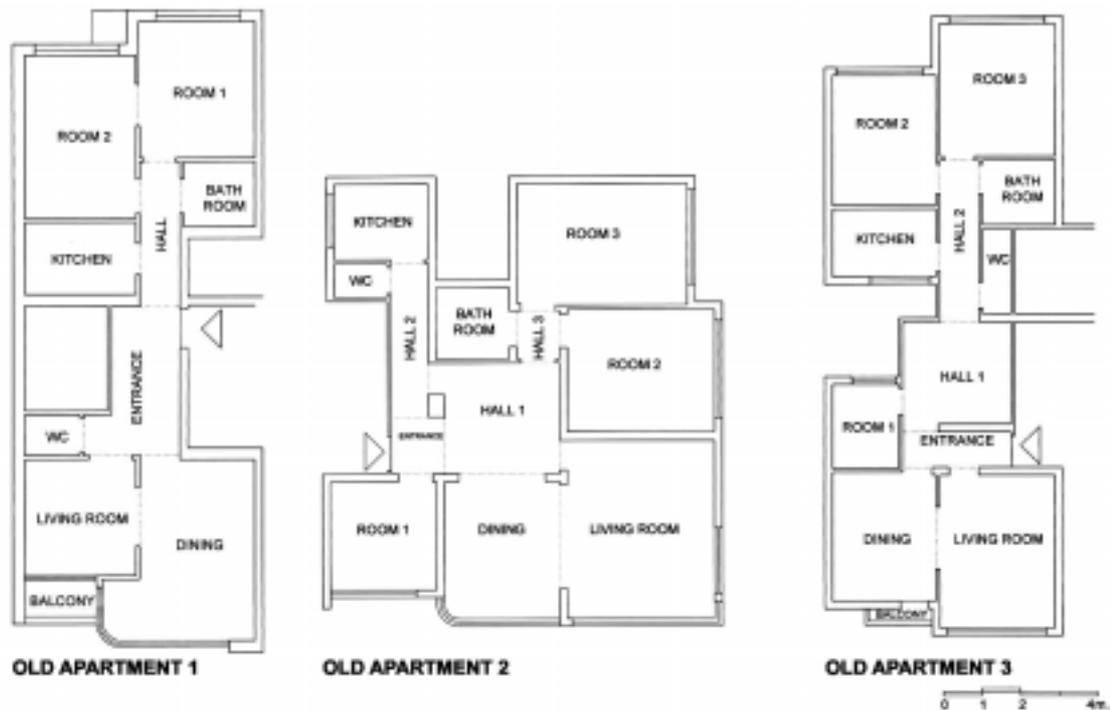


Figure 4: Floor plans of the selected early twentieth century Ankara apartments (Source: Aslanoglu, 2001)

In all three apartments an entrance space provided access to the rest of the system. The hall, which has replaced the “sofa,” was directly connected to the entrance space, closer to the back of the apartment. All rooms were directly connected to the hall, which in one case was in the form of a corridor and in two cases in the form of a windowless central room. While replacing the “sofa”, the hall was much smaller. In two of the cases, extensions of the hall were observable in a corridor form, which exemplified the transformation of the “sofa” to the hall and corridor. One living room, which was the largest room, was directly connected to either the hall, or in

one case to the entrance space. A specifically designated dining area was observable in the living rooms of these apartments, while not being separated by a door. The living rooms of all apartments faced the street side.

The configurational properties of these spaces reflected those observations available in the literature. The hall conserved its role as the most integrated space, although its function as the main living space was changed. The entrance space followed the hall with its high level of integration. The rooms and the living room had lower integration values. The kitchen, although much more integrated to the system compared to late nineteenth century houses, was still relatively segregated compared to the other spaces in the system (Table 2). However, this shift in the configurational properties of the kitchen can be interpreted as an initial reflection of the changes in women's status.

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OLD

APARTMENTS	Integration Rad = n
1	hall > room 1 > room 2 = living room = dining > entrance > kitchen > bathroom
2	hall 1 > living room = entrance = dining > hall 3 > room 1 = hall 2 > room 2 = bathroom = room 3 > kitchen
3	hall 1 = hall 2 > bathroom = entrance = dining = living room > room 1 = kitchen > room 2 = room 3

Table 2. Global integration of spaces in each of the three old apartments in relation to each other.

These configurational properties were also observable in the justified permeability graphs of these apartments (Figure 5).

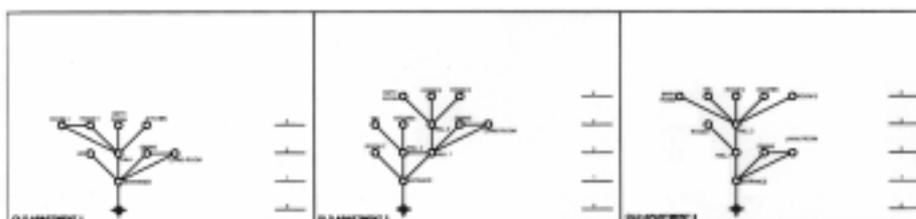


Figure 5: Justified permeability graphs of the selected early twentieth century Ankara apartments

In all apartments, the halls were directly connected to entrance spaces. The living room, directly connected to either the hall, or the entrance space, was at most two spaces deep from the entrance space. The kitchen, although without a level difference, was still among the most segregated spaces along with rooms. In all three apartments it was at least two spaces deep from the entrance space. Overall, all three systems were more integrated compared to the nineteenth century houses.

4. Late twentieth century

By the late twentieth century, the transformation of Ankara from a rural to an urban character was complete. The main type of dwelling was the apartment building, both in the city centre and on the suburbs. The transportation networks were the major determinants of development (Gunay & Selman, 1994, Bilgin, 1999).

4.1 Family structure in the late twentieth century

Compared to the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, the rules regulating social life are less rigid in urban areas in contemporary Turkish society. They are defined and redefined in response to changing conditions (Erman, 1998, Bolak, 1997). Therefore, the city is the place to develop and affirm new identities and ways of living that are impossible within the conservative, socially homogeneous confines of rural areas (Erman, 1998).

The greatest gains in women's intra-family status are achieved through development, which provides higher status for women. Development may be explained through the processes of modernisation and urbanisation, in addition to women's higher levels of education, economic independence and professionalization (Kagitcibasi, 1986, Erman, 1998, Bolak, 1997). With the influential dimensions of development in cities, the internalized patriarchy is being questioned and challenged (Erman, 1998).

The best indicator of increased women's intra-family status is a combination of education and participation in an organised urban labor force (Kagitcibasi, 1986, Vergin, 1985, Erman, 1998, Bolak, 1997). Working away from home relates positively to women's status in the contemporary urban context (Kagitcibasi, 1986, Ilcan, 1994). Turkish women's participation in scientific-technical "male" professions is exceptionally high in urban areas compared to other countries (Kagitcibasi, 1986).

Moreover, in urban areas, where the extended family disappeared from the middle and upper classes, the nuclear family is the dominant family structure (Vergin, 1985, Erman, 1998). According to the 1990 census, the average household size including all types of households is 4.8. The dominant household type is the simple household (or nuclear family) with 72.2 percent (DIEweb). In nuclear families, the inter-spousal relationships shape the responsibility patterns, whereas in extended families (complex family structures), other cultural factors of hierarchy play important roles instead of inter-spousal relationships (Erman, 1998).

The formation of family structures in urban Anatolia is based on improved status of women. Access to education, participation in the labor force, and economic independence, in addition to the dominance of the nuclear family type provide drastically better status for women in urban Anatolia in the late twentieth century compared to late nineteenth century and early twentieth century.

4.2 House form in the late twentieth century

High-rise apartment buildings in suburbs are the new dwelling form of this period (Bilgin, 1999). Due to the increased density in the city centre, a general tendency to build apartment buildings within the 15-20km vicinity of the city is observable in contemporary Ankara. Most of these apartment buildings are built targeting middle-income nuclear families, since middle-income families of about four people dominate the overall demographics of the city.

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4.3 Three cases of late twentieth century Ankara apartments

Therefore, three apartment examples from suburban neighbourhoods of Ankara, built in 1990s, were chosen for analysing in this study (Figure 6).



Figure 6: Floor plans of the selected late twentieth century Ankara apartments

In these three apartments it was clearly observable that the transformation of the “sofa” from a central living space to one or more corridors (named halls) functioning as main circulation carriers was complete. In all three examples, the central hall of early twentieth century apartments was replaced by entrance spaces. While the living room, the kitchen, and in one example a room were directly connected to the entrance space, the remaining rooms, including ancillary spaces were directly connected to halls in the form of corridors.

This series of relationships was supported by configurational analysis. The hall still maintained its place as the most integrated space; however, its function as the main living space was completely replaced by circulation. The living room and the kitchen were much more integrated to the system compared to the early twentieth century apartments (Table 3).

NEW APARTMENTS		Integration Rad = n
1	hall > entrance > kitchen = room 1 = living room > main bedroom > room 3 > room 2 > bathroom 1 > mb bathroom	
2	hall > entrance = kitchen = living room = room 3 > bathroom 1 = room 1 > mb bathroom = main bathroom > bathroom 2	
3	hall > kitchen = living room = entrance = main bedroom > bathroom 1 = room 2 > room 3 > mb bathroom	

Table 2. Global integration of spaces in each of the three new apartments in relation to each other.

These interrelationships were also observable in the justified permeability graphs of these three systems (Figure 7).

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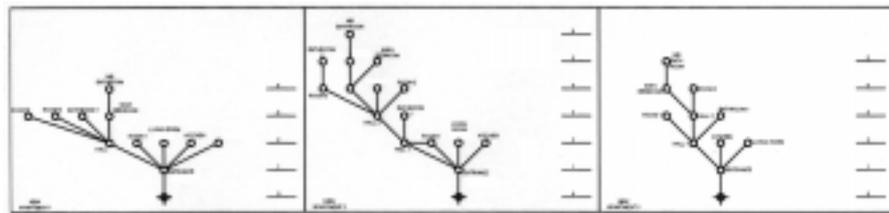


Figure 7: Justified permeability graphs of the selected late twentieth century Ankara apartments.

The living room and the kitchen were one space deep from the entrance space in all three examples. The hall was the space to which the most number of spaces was directly connected. The change in the configurational properties of the kitchen was the most significant, since it was directly connected to the entrance space, which was the second most integrated space. Similarly, its close location to the living room was significantly different from early twentieth century apartments. All these transformations suggested a close relationship to the improved status of women in contemporary Turkish family structure.

5. Comparison of cases

Comparing the three periods, it is possible to argue that the women's status in family structures has improved from the late nineteenth century to the early and late twentieth century. The nuclear family structure became dominant, as the complex family structures and partilocal system have faded. The household size has decreased, suggesting a higher number of independent household formation upon marriage, which supports more equal gender roles. Moreover, women's education level and proportion of the paid labor force has increased following the institutional improvements. These transformations can be related to variations in the spatial configuration of cases as follows.

Through the three periods it is clearly observable that the hall maintained its most integrated space status. In the early nineteenth century, the “sofa,” while accommodating daily life, also undertook the role of main circulation on the main story of the houses. However, in the early and late twentieth century examples, the “sofa” gradually lost its accommodation of daily life, while its main circulation function became dominant. Consequently, as more and more spaces were directly connected to the hall, its global integration has increased. The accommodation of all functions at the same level in twentieth century examples certainly provides an explanation for this phenomenon. However, the drastic increase in the global integration of the hall from early to late twentieth century clearly exemplifies its increasing importance as a main circulation carrier (Figure 8).

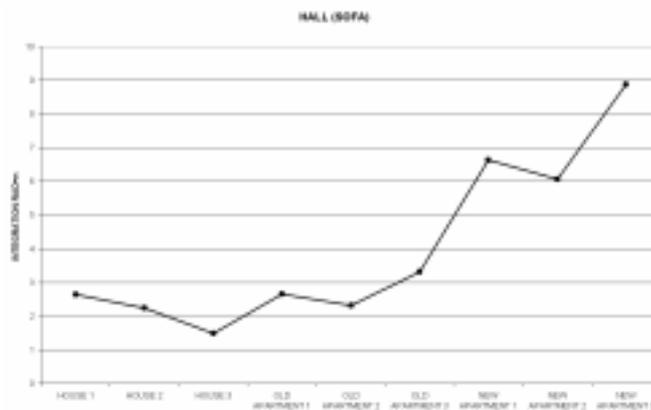


Figure 8: Variance of global integration values for “sofa’s” and halls across cases.

The patrilocal system and complex family structures in Ankara supported the function of the “sofa” as a central space in the late nineteenth century. The gradual disappearance of this complex family structure and the increasing domination of a nuclear family structure is parallel to the loss of daily life function in the “sofa”, and is clearly observable in the change of configurational properties from “sofa” to “hall”.

Such changes in the family structure were also observable in the shift from the “main room” to the “living room”. Evidently, the need for a “main room” was no longer sustained upon the disappearance of the patriarch from the family structure. However, its symbolic role as an important space and a space for receiving guests remained with its transformation into the “living room”. As the main living quarters shifted from deeper to shallower spaces close to the end of twentieth century, the living room, with its relatively higher levels of integration compared to other rooms retained its character as a symbolically important space, which can be observed in Figure 9.

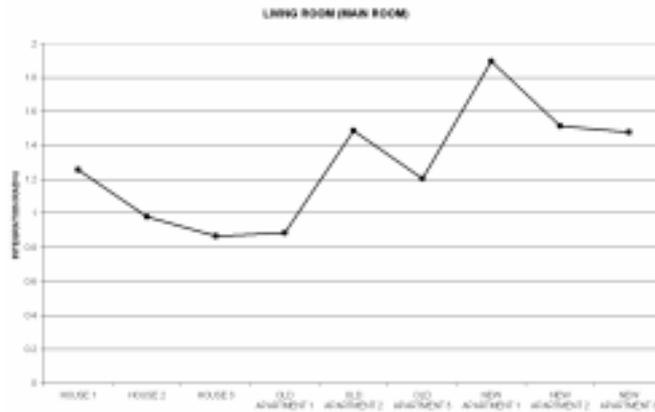


Figure 9: Variance of global integration values for "main rooms" and living rooms across cases

Following the improved status of women and decreasing household size, the kitchen, being one of the housework spaces, has been drastically transformed as it became shallower from the entrance and globally more integrated within the entire system (Figure 10).

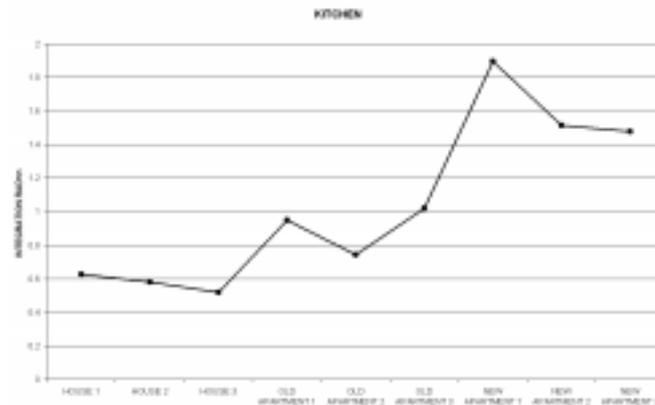


Figure 10: Variance of global integration values for kitchens across cases.

This transformation can be interpreted by two approaches. First, based on the conventional assumption that the kitchen is a "women's space", as the women's status in nuclear family structures has improved, their relative location in the house has also "improved". The second explanation is based on the contemporary assumption that housework is shared between women and men in couples due to equalised time availability and relative resources between them with women's increasing participation in paid labor force. Accordingly the kitchen has become a shared space between women and men. Therefore, higher global integration and lower depth from both the integration core and the entrance space is a reflection of its transformation into a shared space.

6. Concluding remarks

Overall, it was possible to relate transformations in spatial configuration to changing Turkish family structure, in which the household size has decreased considerably as a result of the transformation from complex family types to nuclear family types. When house and apartment plans from these periods were compared, findings revealed that the transformations in spatial configuration were parallel to shifts in family structure. Result Although various house forms in Anatolia have originated from different civilizations, by the end of the nineteenth century a common morphology was formed, reflecting the initial juxtaposition

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