How a Neighborhood Changes From Summer Resort to Conservative Quarter:
The Case of Florya, Istanbul

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Abstract
Florya one of the oldest summer resorts in Istanbul competing with its neighbors in growing since 1950s. With the changes in its dwellers, the neighborhood started to change incrementally in the past years. In 1950's it has been one of the most modern and beautiful summer resort in the city. From 90's to present Florya wriggle itself out of being a summer resort and with the undeniable effect of the new service areas, it has started to house rich people's family mansions and then it has become the focus of the rich conservatives. This article tries to demonstrate the changes in housing typology of Florya from the beginning to the present day in four periods regarding the social change. First period focuses on summer resorts that can mainly discriminated with their open space usage. Second period has started after the airport and fairground came into service. The houses started to domicile for full time family residents so that housing program and spatial organization has changed. Third period has leaped forward with a legal loophole during the local elections in 2004. The buildings of this period are very luxurious and higher than they can be. Last period is for the houses that very luxurious again but not high as previous ones. These houses are very introverted because of their very conservative residents. This research in this manner tries to seek out the changing typology of the local housing in Florya according to change of the owners.

Keywords: social change, housing typology, Florya, conservative housing, summer houses

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Introduction

Istanbul, the capital city of Turkey, has been one of the biggest metropoles with its dynamic social, geographical and geopolitical conditions since the beginning. This results in rapid change of both physical and social environments in the city. The society it houses had undeniable effects on its physical conditions.

Social change occurs in all societies and it can be said that no society remains completely static. According to Mazumdar (1996), social change may be defined as a new fashion or mode, either modifying or replacing the old, in the life of a people, or in the operation of a society. Merrill and Eldredge (1952) define social change as large number of people are engaging in activities that differ from they or their forefathers engaged in before.

Architecture here is one of the most simple and easy way of tracking the social change. Erskine (1982) states that architecture is a vital influence in people's lives and a major expression of their culture. As a result, the architectural typologies and built environments have changing incrementally along with the society in a city. It can be read easily from residential, commercial or/and any other buildings that relates with the society in a direct or indirect way.

Social change rate is very high in Istanbul's almost every part. Architectural typologies' transformation is an easy way to track this change. This study aims to provide a comparative analysis of the social change and the housing typologies in the case of Florya neighborhood in four periods. Observational, archival and visual comparative research methods have been used.

Case Area: Florya

Bakirkoy is one of the 39 districts in the city of Istanbul and it has 7 neighborhoods that are Atakoy, Cevizlik, Florya, Kartaltepe, Yesilkoy, Zeytinlik and Zuhuratbaba. Bakirkoy involves Istanbul Ataturk Airport and CNR Expo Center in Yesilkoy Neighborhood.

Florya is a neighborhood locating in the Bakirkoy district within the suburban part of Istanbul (Figure 1). It is also adjacent to the Istanbul Ataturk Airport from the northeast and Marmara Sea from the Southwest.
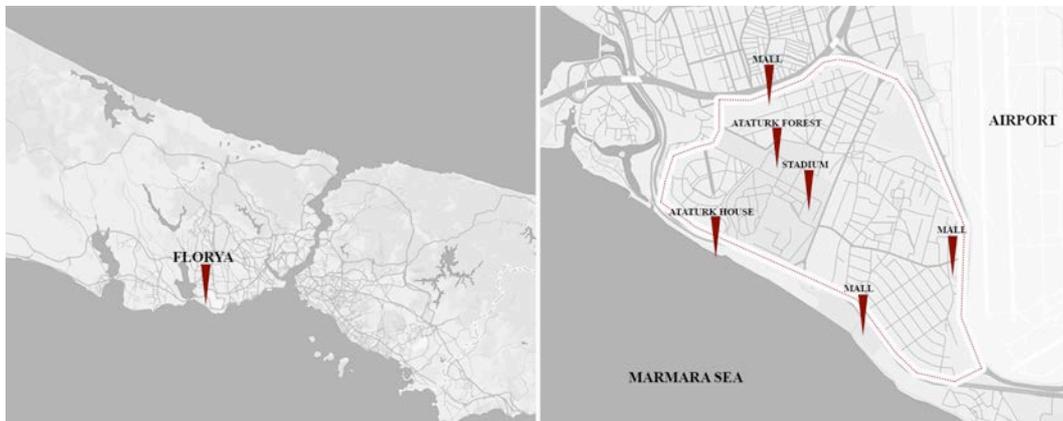

Figure 1: Location and Landmarks of Florya Neighborhood

This district was founded by Konstantin in AD384 as an entertainment area and summer resort. In the 1900s, many ethnic groups were living in the district. There were only 92 people. Ataturk, the founder of Turkish Republic has decided to have a summer residence, public beaches, hotels and related facilities there in his first visit. This construction of the Presidential Marine House marked a turning point in Florya's history as a resort (Akcura, 1999). Neighborhood Florya is well known with its beaches (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Florya Beaches and Ataturk House in 1939 and in 1970

After 1950's, modern summer houses started to take place and the beach called Gunes (Summer) has become one of the most famous beach in the city. In 1980s, the neighborhood started to elude the summer resort identity and gained full time residents. The owners use these summer houses year round. The two main reasons of this change are increasing the capacity of the airport and opening the expo center. The neighborhood dwells mostly nabobs over multiplied its population in years.

Nowadays the population is around 30 thousand. The previous ethnic overlaps cannot be seen and population is mostly consists of Turkish people. The neighborhood now, strings along with metropolis life of Istanbul with high construction rates, malls and decreasing green areas. This paper explores the shifting social and architectural transformation of one of Istanbul's most memorable summer resorts: Florya.

Housing Periods

The neighborhood Florya has mostly residential buildings. The houses here are preferred by the owners who are looking for a calm and green place to live in. In this part, the houses of Florya is divided into four periods according to their owners and collective characteristic features.

Period 1

Florya that started as a summer resort had a peaceful atmosphere for vacationers. As a result of this, the summer houses here generate the first period. Nowadays these houses dwell mostly locals of Florya.

The houses of this period can be recognized by their open spaces. They have wide open spaces such as balconies, terraces and gardens. Outdoor usage is clearly apparent. Owners decorate and utilize these spaces and spend time in. They mostly have beautiful garden gates and roses in their gardens. They have wide range of vegetation and the entrances are mostly well-planted. The balconies are very fancy, and well decorated. These houses also reflect their summer based identity with their mostly white but always bright outdoor paintings Figure 3&4).

Figure 3: Germeyan 3, Mahirler 3

Being very close to the airport and airport traffic area brings regulations in Florya neighborhood. One that affects is the heights limit's being 7,5m. Because of this, the houses in Florya in this period usually have two stories over ground and a rooftop.

Figure 4: Period 1 Housing Examples - Germeyan 13, Mahirler 5

Period 2

Daily life usage has increased with the high economic and constructional developments around the district. Second Period starts after the daily life began in Florya in 1980s. These Second Period houses are not for summer vacationers. The owners work or related in a way around this neighborhood as an airport or expo staff started to stay in these houses all the year round.

Figure 5: Period 2 Housing Examples - Kir Serdar 51, Kir Serdar 21, Eceler 7-9

Open space notion has changed according to the user needs. Balconies got smaller and gardens started to tighten and hidden back to the building. Open space usage remains but decreases do to daily life practices like working or studying. The houses of this period have a very specific and recognizable building mass. The corners of these houses are mostly polygonal, the facade is white, and shutters are uniform (Figure 5).

Period 3

This period starts peremptorily in 2004, before and during the local elections. Through this period, constructors found a legal gap and took the advantage of it.

Height limit of the airport traffic area is not implemented. As a consequence of that, the houses constructed during this period are distinguished by their height. They had up to seven storey. They mostly have two storey below, three storey above ground and two overlapping rooftops that results in almost 20 meters high in total. These buildings exceed the limit more than 12 meters (Figure 6&7).

Figure 6: Period 3 Housing Examples – Ulkem 1, Ciftlik 12

The owners of these houses have close relationships with the government that known as conservative. This worldview reflected to the buildings they live and outdoor spaces waned accordingly. Interior usage became more important and luxurious. These buildings do not have open spaces like the previous ones. Their balconies are very small or closed. They have terraces on the high levels that cannot be seen from the street level and cannot see the street likewise.

The lot coverage rates do not applied and that because the gardens do not exist in this period. The entrances have short bridges and vegetation only appear around the entrance area or in the building as a decoration element.

Figure 7: Period 3 Housing Examples – Harman 32, Harman 14

The luxurious life style appears in many parts of these buildings. They have high-tech infrastructure and security precautions. They all have inside parking area. Besides, the facade is designed with futuristic materials and bright colors that can take attention easily but not allow outsiders to see the interior.

Period 4

Last period is the current situation. As is known, all the human societies and organizations go through certain cycles. The houses of this period contain flashbacks to the first houses of Florya neighborhood. Main reason of this flashback is the constraining the height limits same as before. They started to have two storey above ground and a rooftop. Some have wide gardens but not to luxuriate in (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Period 4 Housing Examples - Germeyan 12, Germeyan 5, Adakale 19

The other open spaces like balconies and terraces cannot be seen from the outside like the previous period houses. As it can be understood from it, the conservative life style is still prevalent in Florya and the indoor living areas are more important than the open spaces. The balconies are mostly closed or as winter gardens with laminated glass.

These introverted houses have very luxurious facilities. They usually have better versions of technological infrastructure in the third period houses. Likely, they are equipped with smart security systems.

These houses do not have vegetation except the entrance. They have futuristic facades and parking area in a similar manner. As a building mass, these houses are very horizontal.

Conclusion

Florya was a very famous summer resort for locals of İstanbul. With the demographic changes houses started to become more introverted in years. The conservative life style they have reflected into their housings. People do not want to be seen so that they do not spend time outside. The materials, the building masses and indoor/outdoor usage has changed accordingly. Therefore, the open spaces are not a part of their daily life anymore but the richness they have is reflected in their houses. On the other hand, some houses of Florya remains still. The owners, if they are local ones, still use the outdoor spaces in their daily life.

Social change in Florya Neighborhood can be read through the housing typologies. Nevertheless, since history repeats itself, societies after passing through all these stages, returns to the original stage, whence the cycle again begins. Social change may be defined as modification in people's ways of doing. To put this statements forward this paper presented the results of social change undertaken in Florya's housing typologies and states the architectural features of these houses.

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