

SMALL DWELLING TRENDS IN ISTANBUL

Hatice Sadıkoğlu¹, Ahsen Özsoy²

¹ *Bahçeşehir University, Turkey*

² *Istanbul Technical University, Turkey*

Keywords: Minimum dwelling, residential trends, gated community residence, small units.

Introduction

Minimum dwelling has become the central problem of modern architecture, and it is also common in today's new housing trend/s. Modernist architects announced the concept of existenzminimum with the aim of solving the dwelling problem emerged after World Wars. The large scale destruction and the housing shortage/crisis that occurred at that time lead to poor living conditions throughout Europe and there was a growing need to find shelter [1]. In order to solve this problem, small dwelling units were designed based on the modernist ideas as an economic and quick solution [2]. Governments started to develop social housing programs especially for lower income groups. The programs provided livable/acceptable dwelling units and quality environments after demolition for lower income groups. The aim was to meet the needs of large numbers of people in terms of providing shelter with the small land use [3].

Modernist architects made an effort to design small and convenient living places for families and they represented the idea of 'modern' life in these small dwelling units. In particular, the famous architect Le Corbusier focused on social housing settlements and emphasized the need for hygienic, comfortable and adequate units [4]. Housing problems occurred in almost all large cities in Europe. Lack of adequate living conditions, activated not only architects, but also associations and societies worked on the minimum dwellings such as the CIAM organization, that worked to develop minimum dwelling designs in urban areas [5].

Although the history of small dwelling units is related to spatial sufficiency, trends in recent years' have shown that it is also a living style preferred in luxury, prestigious housing settlements [6], [7], [8].

Nowadays, small dwelling is a way of living in metropolitan areas. Rising land prices and changing modern lifestyle preferences have contributed to the creation of small residential units. In recent years, along with the neoliberal economy policies, Turkey has met with new housing types and gated community housing settlements have emerged in big cities. After the 1980's with the new socio-economic conditions in the country, lifestyles and housing preferences have also changed. Multi-storey housing developments like skyscrapers were mostly constructed in city centers.

Today these vertical gated community settlements are very popular in big cities of Turkey, especially in Istanbul. Small dwelling units are seen in these very prestigious gated communities. The plan of such unit that includes an open kitchen linked with the living room, a bathroom and a bedroom. These are referred to as, studio apartment (1+1) or one-bedroom units [6], [7], [8].

The one bedroom residential units are largely chosen by young professionals and students. These units are preferred by newly married couples or couples without children.

Especially after 2000's with the rising real estate market and upward land prices, small plan schemes have been preferred by the construction companies. One bedroom (1+1) residential units became widespread in İstanbul and in the other cities. Especially in İstanbul, with the increase of "residence" (*prestigious residential buildings that provide hotel services*) buildings, one bedroom units first appeared at the end of the 90's. These units are generally about 45-75 m² and have been designed in the modern-rationalist architectural style.

Although these small units are built by different construction companies, designed by different architects and located on different parts of the city, most of them have similar plan schemes. Today, there are lots of residential buildings which include one bedroom housing units for all income groups. In general, the plan organizations are all similar. This study is based on one-bedroom residential units in İstanbul, involves functional analyses and a consideration spatial organizations (plan schemes). The research aims to analyze and evaluate / critique one bedroom residential designs in terms of plan schemes, using examples from different locations in İstanbul.

The main aim is to understand user preferences and to develop a critical evaluation for today's small dwelling units comparing them with the examples from early modernist period.

Methodology

The research methodology used in this study is based on examining/analyzing the plan schemes of the gated residential one-bedroom (1+1) units. The 20 units that are chosen for the comparison were designed by different architects and built on different locations in İstanbul. All of them are marketed for the high-income group. In the comparison, space organization and spatial qualities (dimension, form, aesthetic characteristics, etc.) are examined with regard to each of the plans, and the similarities/differences have been focused on. Small/minimum dwelling ideas and examples of today and the modernist period, were compared and searched for similarities with regard to gated residential one bedroom units.

Findings

According to the findings of the research, there are some similarities between the minimum dwelling of the modernist approach and recent housing trends/developments. Both aimed to create livable housing conditions with minimum land use. But today's users of gated residential units are not similar to the users living in the early modernist period. Although user profiles are different, the architectural plan organizations have some similarities with each other. The plans generally include open kitchen or counter with sink, bathroom, and living room with a sleeping area/bedroom. Basic human needs/activities (common facilities) can be realized in these areas. The plan schemes are flexible to use the space for another activity. Living rooms can be converted to bedrooms. Having a flexible space is saving space. Overlapping area of different activities can help to effective use of space. In the plan schemes some areas are overlapped to saving space, there are no long corridors. Service spaces as kitchen and bathrooms are generally located on the blind façade.

Conclusion

Minimum/ small dwelling idea has long history, because people need to shelter. As Maslow pointed out, dwelling/sheltering is a basic human's need [9]. However this emerged as a global problem after the big urban destruction caused by the wars. Governments, institutions and other organizations found various solutions for the problem and developed some designs and methods for creating minimum sufficient living spaces. With the findings of the research, it is seen that today we're using the similar plan organizations for living in both adequate and luxury conditions.

Small dwellings are preferred, not only by low income groups but also by high income groups. The study shows that the user profile of small dwelling units has changed and it can sometimes be called as 'luxury and prestigious'. Interestingly, the small dwelling is available for both low and high income groups, because the basic human needs are same. So it can be said that today luxury and prestigious idea is related with social environment it is not related with only largeness of the spaces (dimensions). The small dwelling idea is important for a sustainable living environment and the research into 'small/minimum dwelling' should be increased for our common future.

References

- [1] Hobsbawn, E. Age of Extremes, the Short Twentieth Century 1914-1991. Abacus Book, London, 1991
- [2] Teige, K. The Minimum Dwelling. MIT Press, Massachusetts, 2002.
- [3] Aureli, P., V. Less is enough: On Architecture and Asceticism, Strelka Press, Russia, 2013.
- [4] Jeanneret, C., E. Towards a new Architecture, Dover Publications, New York, 1985.
- [5] Mac Donald, D. Democratic Architecture: Practical Solutions to Today's Housing Crisis. Whitney Library of Design, New York, 1996.
- [6] Sadıkođlu, H. & Özsoy, A. 'Üst Gelir Grubu Konut Tercihi Olarak Rezidans Kullanımı (Residence' use as a preference of high income user groups). *Ideal Kent Journal of Urban Studies*, Vol.1, No.18, pp.226-245. 2016, (In Turkish).
- [7] Sadıkođlu, H. & Özsoy, A. As a New Tradition: 'Gated Community Settlement' and its Characteristics. Proceedings of the Conference on *ISVS-7 International Seminar on Vernacular Settlements*, pp.391-401, 15-17 October 2014.
- [8] Sadıkođlu, H. Üst Gelir Grubu Konut Tercihleri ve Mekân Kullanımları Üzerine bir Araştırma (A Study on Housing Preferences and Space use of High Income Groups), Unpublished Master Thesis, Istanbul Technical University, Graduate School of Science Engineering and Technology, İstanbul, 2010, (In Turkish).
- [9] Maslow, A. H. A Theory of Human Motivation. *Psychological Review*, Vol. 50, 1943.