

## UNDERSTANDING FURNITURE ARRANGEMENTS THROUGH PRACTICES IN KONYA HOMES

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**Abstract-** People aim to construct their environment within object-practice, practice-space and space-object relations. Everyday life experiences are the main element to organize the spaces. A space is meaningful with the activities in it. Moreover, the activities are associated with the objects. Thus, the furniture together with the other home decoration elements is arranged to each other. The research aims to understand the furniture arrangements with focusing functional issues.

The research questions the impacts of daily life practices through object selection and arrangement in daily life. The study conducted with ethnographic research to enhance cultural information of space and objects in daily life. The case is selected as Konya that has different cultural interactions towards history. Eight Konya homes are investigated with the settings, furniture usage and impacts of cultures to the furniture selections.

**Key Words-** Object Selection, Everyday Life Practices, Furniture Arrangements

## KONYA EVLERİNDE, EYLEMLER ÜZERİNDEN MOBİLYA DÜZENLEMELERİNİ ANLAMAK

**Özet-** Bireyler maddi çevrelerini günlük aktivite-nesne, nesne-mekan ilişkileriyle inşa ederler. Gündelik yaşam deneyimleri, mekan organizasyonları için en önemli bileşenlerden biridir. Mekan içerisinde yapılan eylemlerle anlam kazanır. Ayrıca bu eylemler nesnelere doğrudan etkileşim içerisindedir. Nesne seçimleri, yaşam tarzlarıyla ilişkili olarak yapılan aktiviteler doğrultusunda mekanda yer bulur. Bunun yanı sıra mobilyalar birbiriyle ve diğer dekorasyon elemanlarıyla birlikte düzenlenmektedir. Araştırma mobilya düzenlemelerini işlevsellik konularıyla beraber anlamaya çalışmaktadır.

Araştırma günlük yaşam eylemlerinin nesnelere seçimi ve kullanımındaki etkisini sorgulamaktadır. Çalışma, mekan ve nesnelere kültürel bilgileri arttırmak için etnografik araştırma ile yürütülmüştür. Tarihle farklı kültürel etkileşimlere sahip olan Konya çalışma alanı olarak seçildi. Sekiz Konya evleri, mobilya seçimlerine yönelik ayarların, mobilya kullanımının ve kültürlerin etkileri ile araştırılmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler-** Nesne seçimleri, Gündelik Yaşam Eylemleri, Mobilya Düzenlemeleri.

*Bu makale, 4. Uluslararası Mobilya ve Dekorasyon Kongresi'nde sunulmuş ve İleri Teknoloji Bilimleri Dergisi'nde yayınlanmak üzere seçilmiştir.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION (GİRİŞ)

Historically, Anatolia was the center of many ancient civilizations, combination of different cultures. Today some of the material and immaterial traditions that cause rich cultural synthesis of civilizations, extend back a long time [1]. Konya where is located in the Central Anatolian Region of Turkey has similar cultural roots as other Anatolian cities have. Besides, the religiosity, spirituality and traditions of many civilizations from Hittites to Ottoman Empire, are involved into modernized and globalized daily life and socio-cultural life of Konya [2-5]. The cultural background affects the everyday life practices not only material but also immaterial aspects. The specialization of everyday life activities is home [6]. Moreover, the homes as domestic spaces have importance to bring cultural codes into daily life. The domestic spaces express the daily life activities of the users. The modernity, domesticity, and space subjects have been discussed in many scientific areas. Understanding domesticity is major issue in this research. According to Le Corbusier modernity is rejection of domesticity [7]. He claims that “the name of the steamship, of the airplane, and of the motor-car, the right to health, logic, daring, harmony, perfection” [7]. Reed asserts that “made the conditions of domesticity, and its standard for modernity, projecting the values of home life outward onto the public realm in both its aesthetic and socio-political initiatives” [8]. Understanding the cultural pattern in modern homes related with the activities in it.

Home is a private living space that is the backstage of culture through the object selections and interactions [9]. The research focuses on the living room as a domestic area and object interactions. The size of home and number of rooms are variable. The objects are not only related with the lifestyle but also the number of home. For instance, the rooms that lost its function as dining, sleeping could be used as storage if the number of room is more than the functions. To interpret spatial organization patterns and the variable activities, which are related with human occupation strategies, in it are important to identify spatial units for all era. Therefore understanding spatial behavior is key to understand the capabilities of society [10].

The home is separated through the activities as sleeping, cooking, living and dining spaces. The differentiations related with the activities and social expectations through cultures. The distinction of the ‘living room’ from the other rooms is “feature of contemporary domestic arrangements” [11]. Das and colleagues observe that the domestic in anthropological records can refer to at least three meanings: first, the family and residential arrangements; second, the politico-jural domain; and third, the objects, feelings, and persons that are tamed there [6]. The living room mainly used for communications, sharing leisurely activities, gathering, hosting the guests. From this aspect the living room takes the place in domestic space as ‘public space’ because of the hidden life issue [11].

Goffman divides spaces into two main groups according to social interactions in terms of the “performances” people give. These are “front regions” and “back regions”. Front regions are where performance takes place, for example; living room and dining room. The other one is "back regions" or “hidden spaces” for example bedroom and bathroom where preparations for such performances are made [12, 13]. However, in this study the living room has been examined as a domestic space to understand the furniture arrangements through practices. Usually, the living room is the first space when the entering the house. In that sense, it can be seen as the general meeting space of the house. Homeowners entertain a guest and arrange the furniture according to the size and capacity of the living room. In addition to this, they also provide interaction and communication when arrange the furniture. On the other hand, living room can be organized and arranged for different occasions. Besides, there are different studies about psychological effects on person through the furniture arrangement. Certain furniture arrangement leads to certain behavior of the user. Homeowners are the primary people who can

influence these behaviors with furniture arrangements [14, 15]. Likewise, activities in the living room such as entertaining a guest, watching TV, relaxing, eating, individual or family activities affect the way of furniture arrangements [13, 14, 16]. If it is desired to create an intimacy between people, the furniture can be arranged closer. Also, separate clusters can be created by forming separate sections while arranging the furniture, so that different groups can spend time at the same time [14]. If there is not an extra room for individual activities such as to read, to study, to meditate or even officeworks, living room can be used. Thus, living room gains a function as a space of “solitude” to users [13, 14].

People tend to create impressions on their lifestyle, culture etc. The social characteristics are the key to understand style of living room, which is indeed the domestic spaces [13, 17]. In addition the social identity and style interrelation appears in this room [13]. Especially the objects in the living room mediate the social affiliation. Therefore, social inconsistency and social mobility are related with the value of objects, their arrangement and their use [13, 18]. As a domestic space refers the identity of the households to guests [13].

The living room is referred by different names according to the function of the room in different periods of history. Historians of housing are accepted that the existence of domestic spaces for the purpose of entertaining a guest between 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries [13, 19, 20]. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century the rooms that are used for entertaining a guest called as “parlor” [13, 21]. However, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century the distinction between public and private got blurred and the term “living room” was emerged according to multifunction usage of the room. In the beginning, the differences between living room and parlor was as follows; the term Parlor is used for defining the rooms that are more formal entertaining, while the term living room used for defining the rooms that a place where to work and leisure [13, 21]. Now the term living room is using for the describe as a place where both formal entertaining and as a place where the householders spend their daily lives [13, 20].

Many studies assert that home has personal meaning. However, few studies describe the private and personal functions of the living room. Researchers tend to describe a home as a whole, rather than to defining one by one the other parts of house [13].

Wood and Back (1994) made detailed work related to the living rooms. Various uses of the living room, objects and the meaning of the living room are mentioned in their study [13, 22]. In addition to that, one other study mentioned that householders are most felt themselves at home in their living room, as well as, they stored important and special objects in their living room [13, 23]. Moreover, householders exhibit some photographs in their living room such as their friends, relatives, and the elderly people of that house [13, 24]. These studies shows that the private and the personal meaning of the living room and the objects. However, they do not provide a systematic explanations of the functions of the living room and the objects [13].

Talya B. Rechavi investigates the activities and objects householders’ living room. As well as, this study presents the different possible functions and meanings of living rooms and living room object. At the same time, this research examine that the possible connections between different functions, and possible contributions of objects to living room uses [13].

Pierre Bourdieu claims that “objects occupy a similar position to space, time, and bodies: they are foundational media through which social life is experienced.” [25]. The furniture gives information about the main practices. For instance, the main activity of a setting of coffee table, bergere and magazine rack is reading.

Space-culture relation bases on organization and arrangement of the spaces to feel safer and comfortable. Kaynaş claims that "It is the expression of the gap, the distance and the

relationship of a person with an object and an object of an object, in short terms, it is the three dimensional expression of the vacancies that surrounds us" [2]. Furniture connect people to space in terms of usability and comfort. The use of furniture causes indirect effects in society. For instance, furniture arrangement involves socialization indirectly depending on culture. Besides, "cultural environment, sociocultural background, time periods, behavior and activities have significant influence on furniture arrangements." [14]. Home as a reflection of private life is important to understand the human in many perspectives. The furniture that is significant unit for homes, and the arrangement depends on the people's need in terms of function, aesthetic, use or symbolic values. To demonstrate, the coffee table is arranged next to the seat for being at hand. For this reason, the rooms supply confidence, safety, and relaxation. Especially, in Turkish homes the hygiene issue has big importance as well as easy movement. For instance, covering the seats with renewable textile is to be clean [9]. On the other hand, for the aesthetic or symbolic value of the objects makes them a part of the furniture organization.

The research aims to understand the practices through domestic spaces and human relations. The research questions the impacts of practices on furniture arrangement in living room.

## 2. METHOD (YÖNTEM)

Hammersley and Atkinson define the ethnography as: "Ethnography is a particular method or set of methods which in its most characteristic form it involves the ethnographer participating overtly or covertly in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions – in fact, collecting whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the focus of research" [26].

The study was conducted with eight houses that is chosen with snowball sampling. Each home is consisting married couples, living in a city center of Konya. The participants' age range was 29 to 60 years old. Data were collected by taken photographs of participants' living room with their permission and obtained from the face-to-face interviews conducted with them. Photos were taken without any intervention of respondents on furniture arrangements. Thereby, it provides valuable data for respondents' daily life practices such as how they use the furniture, how they arrange the furniture. Also it provides to understand the interactions and relationships between each furniture. In addition, interview questions are mainly about the participants' daily lives, practices, such as; how they interact with the furniture in the living room and getting information about the furniture that they use.

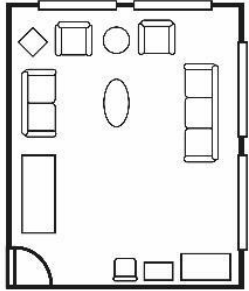
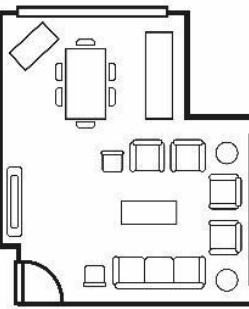
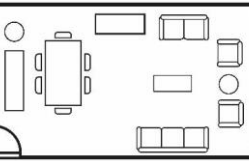
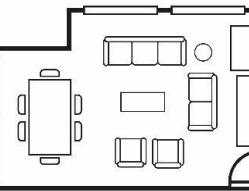
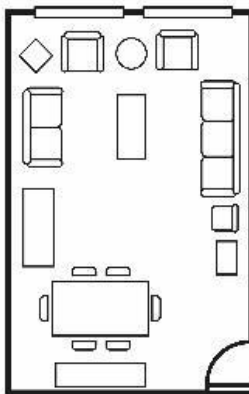
The study inquiries the spatial organizations of the living room in Konya. The homes are selected with snowball sampling and participant observation is applied for the ethnographic study. The participants are young couples with middle income level.

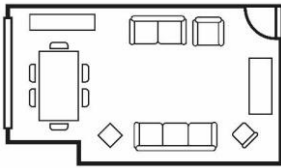
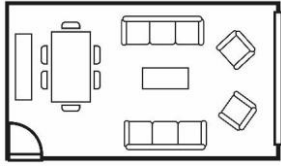
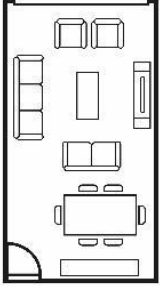
## 3. FINDINGS (BULGULAR)

According to the interviews the participants in Konya spend their time in living room for celebration of special days and hosting their guests. The homes in Konya have 5 rooms. Each room differentiated with the activities in it. The respondents in Konya do not have daily life activities in living room except hosting the guests. The participants, the organization of living room, main activities and related objects, the results are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** The Homes

Participant	Organization of Living Room	Results

P1		<p>The main activities are hosting guests, The objects: sofa set, bergeres, three coffee tables, showcase, carpet, worktable, curtain</p> <p>They called this room as “living room” and they use this room only for their guests. They have extra room for their daily life. They do not prefer to have TV and dinner table in living room, the focal point of the sofa set is coffee table. While hosting the guests the participants serve snacks and tea or coffee. The showcase brings the serving sets and decorative products with aesthetic and symbolic reasons for guests.</p>
P2		<p>The objects: sofa set, bergeres, sideboard, showcase, dinner table, three coffee tables, carpet, curtain, TV</p> <p>They called this room as “living room” and they use this room for their guests and their daily life. They prefer to have TV in living room, the focal point of the sofa set is TV and coffee table. They use sofa for sitting, napping and relaxing. While hosting the guests the participants serve snacks and tea or coffee. The sideboard brings the serving sets. They display decorative products in the showcase with aesthetic and symbolic reasons for guests.</p>
P3		<p>The objects: sofa set, bergeres, sideboard, showcase, dinner table, three coffee tables, carpet, curtain</p> <p>They called this room as “living room” and they use this room only for their guests. They have extra room for their daily life. They do not prefer to have TV in living room, the focal point of the sofa set is coffee table. While hosting the guests the participants serve snacks and tea or coffee. The showcase brings the serving sets and decorative products with aesthetic and symbolic reasons for guests. Also the sideboard brings the serving sets.</p>
P4		<p>The objects: sofa set, bergeres, sideboard, showcase, dinner table, two coffee tables, carpet, curtain</p> <p>They called this room as “living room” and they use this room only for their guests. They have extra room for their daily life. They do not prefer to have TV in living room, the focal point of the sofa set is coffee table. While hosting the guests the participants serve snacks and tea or coffee. Sometimes they change the position of the dinner table for guests. The showcase brings the serving sets and decorative products with aesthetic and symbolic reasons for guests. Also the sideboard brings the serving sets.</p>
P5		<p>The objects: sofa set, bergeres, sideboard, showcase, dinner table, three coffee tables, carpet, curtain</p> <p>They called this room as “living room” and they use this room only for their guests. They have extra room for their daily life. They do not prefer to have TV in living room, the focal point of the sofa set is coffee table. While hosting the guests the participants serve snacks and tea or coffee. The showcase brings the serving sets and decorative products with aesthetic and symbolic reasons for guests. Also the sideboard brings the serving sets.</p>

P6		<p>The objects: sofa set, bergeres, sideboard, showcase, dinner table, a coffee table, carpet, curtain</p> <p>They called this room as “living room” and they use this room only for their guests. They have extra room for their daily life. They do not prefer to have TV and coffee table in living room. They do not use the advantage of the focal point of seats to place a coffee table. Instead of that they serve their food and drink to the guests with portable nesting table. While hosting the guests the participants serve snacks and tea or coffee. The showcase brings the serving sets and decorative products with aesthetic and symbolic reasons for guests. Also the sideboard brings the serving sets.</p>
P7		<p>The objects: sofa set, bergeres, sideboard, dinner table, a coffee table, wall mirror, carpet, curtain</p> <p>They called this room as “living room” and they use this room only for their guests. They have extra room for their daily life. They do not prefer to have TV in living room, the focal point of the sofa set is coffee table. While hosting the guests the participants serve snacks and tea or coffee. The sideboard brings the serving sets.</p>
P8		<p>The objects: sofa set, bergeres, sideboard, dinner table, a coffee table, TV and TV console, carpet, curtain</p> <p>They called this room as “living room” and they use this room for their guests and their daily life. They prefer to have TV in living room, the focal point of the sofa set is TV and coffee table. While hosting the guests the participants serve snacks and tea or coffee. The TV console brings the serving sets and decorative products with aesthetic and symbolic reasons for guests. Also the sideboard brings the serving sets. They arranged the position of the dinner table towards the living room door to be close to the kitchen.</p>

They mostly have daily activities in their secondary living room while some homes in Turkey have their all activities in their living room. Even though they have similar objects in these spaces they have different evaluations on living spaces.

#### 4. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION (SONUÇ VE TARTIŞMA)

The homes are the private spaces to express people’s personal information in terms of lifestyle, culture, and daily lives. The modern furniture do not gives information about the cultural codes itself without the arrangements or the other items such as lacework, decorative objects etc.

The practices are the main reason to organize the living rooms. The Konya homes commonly have the living room for hosting guests, celebration of special days; not for daily activities. However, this situation also depends on the size of the house, the number of the rooms in the house and the number of people living in the house. For example, even though P8 has a house consisting four normal size room and one large room. Nevertheless, there is no extra room for spend their daily activities due to the number of households living in the house. They use one room for entertaining guests and daily life activities and they called it "living room". However, the common results show that the living room is to host the guests. The main objects are seat, coffee table, dining table, seat set, carpet, curtain, sideboard and showcase. The furniture are selected for long term usage with specific location. In other words, the furniture fits a specific position through the architectural plan. The coffee table is the focal point of seats and the dining

tables are separated from these group. The sideboard and showcases are located in waste spaces to conceive the circulation and easy movement. Not having TV in living room shows the importance of hosting the guests.

The living rooms in Konya are important private spaces for hosting the guests to show them their grace. The organization of space related with that purpose. For entreating food and drink to the guests is common in Turkish homes. In that sense reaching to the coffee table and the relation between seat and coffee table is common for each home. The living room and the furniture relevant with hygiene, aesthetic, cultural behaviours and easy movement issues.

The study is not reflection of general Konya homes. It is limited with the selected homes as a preliminary study. To enhance the study the psychological, economical, socio cultural, and spatial perspectives with more number of sampling.

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