Araştırma Makalesi

Cultural-Geographic Factors in Branded Housing Interiors: Istanbul and Ulaanbaatar Study**

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Abstract

In recent years, branded housing projects have proliferated in urbanized cities globally, with sample apartments designed to reflect an "ideal life" based on brand identity. While these interiors often present consistent contemporary living notions, they also exhibit variations shaped by the cultural and geographical contexts of the respective country, city, or neighborhood.

This study aims to investigate the design differences arising from these factors by analyzing two model apartments designed by Gonye Design—one located in Istanbul, the other in Ulaanbaatar—selected for their comparable size, designer, design concept, year, and target user profile. Supported by Gonye Design, an accredited design center by the Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Industry and Technology specializing in branded residential interiors, the research utilizes a literature review of interior architecture, as well as interviews with the co-founder of Gonye Design, whose insights inform the analysis. The case studies are examined through technical drawings, 3D visuals, mood boards, and interviews with the design team. The findings are presented in a table.

The case studies, which represent the unique value of the research, were designed by Gonye Design in 2022 and form the scope of the sample. To optimize the similarity of the projects in terms of the specified criteria, the sample was limited to two branded residential projects—one national and one international—carried out by Gonye Design. As a result of the study, not only similarities between the designs are observed, but also specific differences based on cultural and geographical factors are identified. It is anticipated that examining and evaluating the interior design differences resulting from cultural and geographical factors will play an effective role in defining methods and criteria that can be followed to create unique values in future interior design projects.

Keywords: Branded Housing Project, Interior Architecture, Design, Culture and Geography, Istanbul and Ulaanbaatar

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Markalı Konut İç Mekânlarında Kültürel ve Coğrafi Faktörler: İstanbul ve Ulanbatur İncelemesi

Öz

Son yıllarda markalı konut projeleri, küresel ölçekte kentleşmiş şehirlerde hızla artmıştır ve örnek daireler, marka kimliğine dayalı olarak "ideal bir yaşamı" yansıtacak şekilde tasarlanmaktadır. Bu iç mekanlar, genellikle çağdaş yaşam anlayışlarını yansıtmakla birlikte, bulundukları ülke, şehir veya mahallenin kültürel ve coğrafi bağlamından kaynaklanan farklılıklar da sergilemektedir.

Bu çalışma, bu faktörlerden kaynaklanan tasarım farklılıklarını incelemeyi amaçlamakta ve Gönye Tasarım tarafından tasarlanan, İstanbul ve Ulanbatur'da bulunan iki örnek daireyi karşılaştırmaktadır. Bu projeler, boyut, tasarımcı, tasarım konsepti, yılı ve kullanıcı profili açısından benzer oldukları için seçilmiştir. T.C. Sanayi ve Teknoloji Bakanlığı tarafından akredite edilmiş bir tasarım merkezi olan Gönye Tasarım'ın desteğiyle yürütülen araştırma, iç mimarlık literatürünün incelenmesi ve Gönye Tasarım'ın kurucu ortağı ile yapılan görüşmelerle zenginleşmiştir. Çalışmada, tasarım ekibiyle yapılan görüşmeler, firmadan teğmin edilen teknik çizimler, üç boyutlu görseller ve ilham panoları kullanılarak seçili iki proje analiz edilmiş ve bulgular tablo halinde sunulmuştur.

Araştırmanın özgün değerini temsil eden vaka çalışmaları, 2022 yılında Gönye Tasarım tarafından tasarlanmış olup örneklemin kapsamını oluşturmaktadır. Projelerin belirlenen kriterler açısından benzerliğini optimize etmek için örneklem, Gönye Tasarım tarafından gerçekleştirilen biri ulusal diğeri uluslararası olmak üzere iki markalı konut projesi ile sınırlandırılmıştır. Çalışmanın sonucunda, tasarımlar arasındaki benzerliklerin yanı sıra kültürel ve coğrafi faktörlere dayalı belirgin farklılıklar da gözlemlenmiştir. Bu iç mekan tasarım farklılıklarının incelenmesi ve değerlendirilmesinin, gelecekteki projelerde özgün değerler yaratma yöntemlerini ve kriterlerini belirlemede etkili bir rol oynayacağı öngörülmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Markalı Konut Projesi, İç Mimarlık, Tasarım, Kültür ve Coğrafya, İstanbul ve Ulan Batur

1. Introduction

Interior design, especially in recent years, has been influenced by global prevailing directions in interior design, resulting in similarities among designs. Despite the simultaneous impact of worldwide design tendencies, the factors that differentiate designs and add unique value to them are primarily influenced by the culture and geography in which the projects take place. The space, which is shaped by cultural influences, creating an architectural product in the broadest sense, is an environment where individuals can perform one or more actions, and individuals reflect their cultural accumulations in the space while performing these actions (Eyüce, 1995, as cited in Aras, 2015, p. 3). Today, in many major cities, large construction companies are presenting model apartment projects to support and increase housing sales in the face of competition. To appeal to various social groups within society, these model apartment designs tend to reflect global prevailing directions in interior design. As a result of this shift toward a shared global design language, it is observed that the details that distinguish living spaces from one another are shaped by cultural and geographical contexts.

This study develops the subject by focusing on the interior design projects of Gonye Design. The aim of this study is to investigate the cultural and geographical influences that reveal the unique value of two of Gonye Design's national and international sample apartment projects. It aims to explore how branded residential projects, which are particularly prevalent and share similar fundamental features on a global scale, are shaped according to the cultural and geographical values of the surrounding area and society. In this context, a literature review on branded housing projects, as well as on geographical and cultural factors affecting interior design, and contemporary perceptions of interior design was conducted to establish the academic foundation of the research. A comparative case study is conducted through the examination of two different branded residential interior design projects located in Istanbul and Ulaanbaatar. Both projects were designed by the same interior architectural team. The research questions guiding this study are as follows:
1. What are the impacts of cultural and geographical factors on interior design?
2. What is a branded housing project?
3. How do cultural and geographical factors manifest in the designs of branded residential projects?

The study involves a literature review on cultural factors, geographical factors, and branded residential projects based on international sources. This study was conducted within the framework of Gonye Design's portfolio, selecting one national and one international project that aligned most closely with the research criteria. The case study was restricted to these two projects to facilitate an in-depth comparative analysis. To ensure consistency, key factors—such as size, designer, design concept, design year, and target user profile—were carefully considered. Based on these parameters, the Mona94 project in Istanbul was chosen as a suitable counterpart to the Encanto project in Ulaanbaatar, providing a pertinent foundation for investigating the impact of cultural and geographical factors on design.

The research methodology is a comparative case analysis grounded in qualitative data collection methods, supported by a literature review encompassing theoretical studies within the fields of architecture and interior design. In addition to the literature-based source review, an interview was conducted with Architect Yelin Türer Evcen, co-founder of Gonye Design, regarding branded residential projects, and her insights were included in the literature review. The literature review is illustrated through two branded residential projects by Gonye Design, located in Istanbul and Ulaanbaatar, designed in the same years for similar client profiles. Data collection involved face-to-face interviews with the Gonye Design team, gathering insights from conceptual development to the implementation stages, and using architectural and interior design documents, including technical drawings, 3D renderings, and conceptual mood boards. The impact of cultural and geographical factors on design was examined through these case studies, supported by demographic data, client surveys, and additional findings derived from the literature review, organized in tabular form, where examples were compared according to spatial features and their cultural and geographical attributes.

This study provides an original contribution by examining the influence of cultural and geographical factors on interior design through the comparison of similar branded residential projects across different countries. Additionally, it bridges the knowledge gap in the literature on branded residential projects by offering a detailed analysis from an interior architectural design perspective. By academically examining practical insights and experiences gained from such projects, this study offers a unique contribution toward closing the informational divide between academic theory and real-world practice in interior design.

2. Theoretical Framework of the Study
2.1. Branded Housing Projects

The notion of housing is defined as a settlement and living space that forms the basis for people to meet their basic needs such as shelter, nutrition, security and belonging (Sezgin, 2017, p. 35).

Branded housing projects are institutionalized collective living spaces, usually built to a high quality by large construction companies, consisting of one or more blocks, separated from the surrounding built environment by walls, with communal areas and a continuous private security system. Since the early 2000s, Turkey's real estate sector has experienced significant growth, with branded housing projects playing a pivotal role in this expansion (Örnek, 2016, p. 46). These buildings usually have qualities that distinguish them from other standard housing, such as green areas, swimming pools, spas, fitness centers, social facilities such as cafes and cinemas, parking and residence services (Özarslan, 2018, p. 55). Many branded housing projects have facilities such as schools, shopping malls, hotels and hospitals in close proximity.

Neighborhoods in Istanbul, once primarily known as "industrial zones," are rapidly transforming into vibrant urban hubs through branded residential developments. These projects not only offer investors profitable and secure living spaces but also drive social change, elevating these areas to some of the city's most desirable locations (Örnek, 2016, p. 47). Apartments within branded housing projects vary in shape and size. In addition to standard apartment types such as 1+1, 2+1, 3+1, 4+1, they appeal to different lifestyles and add diversity to projects as housing types such as garden duplexes, roof duplexes with terraces, loft apartments, row houses or villas. The interiors of the apartments in branded projects are delivered fully finished with floor coverings, suspended ceilings, doors, kitchen furniture and bathroom furniture. Branded housing projects offer residents not only a home but also a lifestyle.

The number of branded housing projects in Istanbul exceeds that of any other city in Turkey. The increasing preference for branded housing since the early 2000s can be analyzed through the slogans used in advertisements aimed at boosting their sales. According to Yasemin Vergili (2023), the features highlighted in branded housing advertisements over the last 15 years are categorized under four main themes: the spatial characteristics of the housing (architectural design, security, location), its social effects (social activities, social status), its cultural aspects (notions of neighborhood and family), and its economic significance (investment value) (p. 29). In addition to these themes, according to the interview conducted with Architect Yelin Türer Evcen, co-founder of Gonye Design, the reasons for the demand for this type of housing can be listed as follows:

- Lack of space for new construction in the city center.
- There is an earthquake risk in the apartment blocks in the center.
- Parking problems due to the fact that the areas crowded with an increasing population are old settlement areas without urban regional planning.
- Suburbs are considered reasonable as new living places with the metro planning for public transportation in Istanbul.
- Public housing projects offer social facilities that make life easier for the user.
- The formation of new city centers in the suburbs with the construction of shopping malls, schools, hospitals and hotels near large projects with a large number of housing units.

- Branded housing projects offer convenient purchasing options before construction and providing long-term loans with favorable interest rates for ease of purchase.
- Providing a safe living space with controlled entry compared to city centers where people are concerned about security with the crowded population (Türer Evcen, personal communication, November 21, 2023)

It can be inferred that the growing preference for branded housing is closely related to the wide range of amenities these projects offer. This trend has significantly contributed to increased competition and rising sales prices in the housing market. As alternative approaches to contemporary housing production and marketing models continue to emerge, the amenities provided by residential properties have diversified.

Moreover, with the increasing influence of the private sector and the development of Real Estate Investment Trust (Gayrimenkul Yatırım Ortaklığı) structures over the past two decades, the concept of "living space" has become a prevalent slogan in housing typologies targeting upper- and middle-income groups (Temizci, 2017, p. 19). In the early 2000s, branded housing projects were primarily limited in their offerings, focusing on meeting basic needs, with their main advantages being affordable purchasing conditions and enhanced security. However, in recent years, these projects have evolved into premium living spaces, offering luxury facilities beyond basic needs and commanding higher prices than properties in city centers. Consequently, branded housing has become increasingly desirable among buyers seeking both status and comfort.

In branded housing projects, sample apartments play a crucial role in attracting and engaging potential buyers. It showcases the project's quality and unique features creating a tangible and immersive experience that reinforces the brand's identity and credibility (Temizci, 2017, p. 71). Especially during the construction phase of the buildings, sample apartment designs are essential to provide potential customers with a sense of the lifestyle these projects promise. The purpose of these designs is to allow customers to visualize and experience what their future homes might feel like before construction is completed.

Branded housing advertisements often emphasize that purchasing a home is not just about acquiring a physical space but also about embracing a new lifestyle, a fresh way of living, and even a redefined urban identity (Kılıç & Ayataç, 2019, p. 110). Therefore, when potential buyers view the interiors of these model apartments, furnished and decorated as if a family already lives there—with belongings such as clothes and personal accessories—it significantly influences their purchasing decisions. A successful sample apartment avoids resembling a showroom; instead, it creates a sense of familiarity and livability.

Thus, in branded projects, fixed furniture in all residences is typically designed in a consistent style and color palette to align with the project's overall aesthetic (Türer Evcen, personal communication, November 21, 2023). This approach ensures that when new homeowners move in and add their personal belongings, the interiors remain harmonious, creating an adaptable yet cohesive living environment.

2.2. Cultural and Geographical Factors Affecting Interior Design

Architecture and design, throughout the history of humanity, have been a persistent element that, while taking shape, has simultaneously shaped not only the development of fundamental human needs such as the acts of shelter and protection but also the

cognitive systems of humanity. The foundation of human communities in different geographical locations realizing architectural designs with similar purposes but harboring distinct characteristics and physical features lies in culture. Numerous researchers have provided varying definitions of culture throughout history. Culture is the product of human relations with human beings, things, and nature. The creator or builder of culture is human beings. It is human beings who not only create culture but also keep it alive and pass it on to new generations (Arslan, 2006, p. 7). As Amos Rapoport (2016), culture is not a tangible entity but rather an idea, notion, construct, and label encompassing various aspects of what people think, believe, and do. It serves as a definitional notion, encapsulating numerous human actions (p. 6).

Culture, when considered as a whole or system, is not purely a material phenomenon, and its definition is highly variable (Turgay, 2009, p. 76). It is the standard behavior unconsciously operated by a particular group of people or society. It consists of human behavior and the abstract values, beliefs and perceptions behind that behavior (Aras, 2015, p. 3). This research focuses on culture in terms of norms or social norms, which is considered as a subheading of culture. A norm can be defined as a socially shared guideline that shapes and regulates behavior and thought by reflecting common practices and perceptions within a group, thereby influencing and being influenced by cultural practices (Frese, 1015, p. 1328). The cultures created by particular communities interact with each other, influencing one another's traditions and norms, resulting in a dynamic, layered cultural structure that embodies shared and evolving characteristics. Cultures are diverse and interconnected systems that influence one another and shape societal lifestyles (Sezen, 2023, p. 15).

The distinct characteristics of living spaces are directly influenced by cultural and lifestyle factors, which are shaped by the unique geographical and climatic conditions of each region, impacting everything from construction materials and building methods to clothing and daily living practices (Rızaoğlu, 2012, p. 15). Culture and geography, which have an impact on architectural and interior design, directly or indirectly affect and direct each other. According to Dilara Tüfekçioğlu (2019), culture is a multifaceted phenomenon and has created different effects in different societies with many elements such as geographical and climatic conditions, religious beliefs, world views, economic and social structures (p. 66). The lifestyle and the manner of using and obtaining essential materials among human communities with different geographical conditions, irrespective of whether they share the same or different cultures, vary. This condition indicates the multifaceted nature of culture, its formation within the context of the environment-space relationship, and its regional specificity. According to Üftade Muşkara (2017), the most important elements that determine the authenticity of traditional architecture are the original building material and construction technique used depending on the geography (p. 437). Since ancient times, the geographical factors forming the foundation of regional architecture are listed as follows: the utilization of local materials, topography, climate, hydrography, vegetation cover, soil, human-economic activities, agriculture-livestock, tourism, and time (Kaplan & Uzun, 2022, p. 52). As a result of developing technology and architectural construction techniques, it is noticed that the effect of geography on architecture is not prioritized today compared to the past. Yet, an examination of the design details reveals that specific interior architectural decisions are still made in harmony with geography.

The intersection of culture and interior architecture demonstrates how interior design transcends functional requirements to embody societal values and traditions. Spaces are fundamental reflections of cultures, aiming not only to address functionality with appropriate dimensions and relationships but also to gain identity through the meanings

they convey (Apaydın Başa, 2012, p. 3). Interior spaces serve not only as physical enclosures but also as instruments reflecting and influencing cultural identity. For instance, the use of materials, color schemes, and spatial arrangements often draws inspiration from cultural norms and practices, shaping how individuals interact with their surroundings (Küçük & Erten Bilgiç, 2022, p. 320). Architectural spaces and the cultures they engage with are indicative of their respective time periods (Can, 1998, p. 6). As societies evolve, the interpretation of cultural elements within interior spaces also develops, facilitating a dynamic dialogue between heritage and contemporary design. This interaction underscores the role of interior architecture in preserving cultural narratives while adapting to the needs of the modern era.

When branded housing projects are analyzed from a cultural perspective, it can often be observed in Turkey that rather than directly reflecting the existing culture, they tend to offer a new lifestyle to society. This lifestyle appears to be introduced gradually, blending familiar practices with new suggestions. According to Türer Evcen's sectoral experiences, although there seems to be a growing acceptance of open kitchens in Turkey, the preference for closed kitchens still persists. Similarly, while living rooms were commonly designed with doors in the early 2000s, this feature appears to have become less essential over time, with open-plan living areas gaining acceptance (Türer Evcen, personal communication, November 21, 2023). This shift suggests that while cultural norms play a significant role in shaping branded housing projects, the willingness of residents to adapt or change some of their longstanding habits is also an important sociological consideration.

2.3. Contemporary Interior Design Perceptions

Interior architecture is a dynamic field shaped by the evolution of culture and the effects of globalization. As culture evolves over time and global interactions increase, the perception of contemporaneity in interior design is constantly changing. This evolution, on a journey from the Industrial Revolution to the present day, combined with technological developments and globalization, affects the understanding of contemporary design. Henry Lefebvre (1998) noted that culture evolves over time, a shift highlighted by mid-20th-century industrialization and mass production (pp. 209-220). With the effect of technological advances and globalization, new designs have become accessible to large masses by spreading all over the world through the press, broadcasting and the internet (Gür, 2000, as cited in Aras, 2015, p. 2).

The impact of globalization on interior design can be evaluated from a perspective in which the notions of culture and globalization are interconnected. Globalization facilitates access to images and goods around the world, causing world powers and events to affect local lives more and more (Albrow, 2007, p. 24). The elimination of the notions of time and space by information technologies has accelerated globalization and thus the interaction of cultures around the world (Özkul, 2008, p. 25).

The evolution of culture and the belief in the cultural integration of the world are reshaping the perception of modernity alongside globalization. This process not only aims to eliminate differences but also seeks to present cultural products derived from various local cultures to the service of the cosmopolitan market (Morley & Robins, 1997, p. 155). This brings about an approach that pushes the boundaries of the perception of contemporaneity in interior design and offers an innovative and open perspective to diversity.

The development of housing and its design has mirrored the historical advancement of contemporary societies, reflecting the broader scope of architectural practices through to the present day (Sezen, 2023, p. 19). The perception of contemporaneity in interior design is constantly redefined and shaped by the interactions of cultural changes and globalization. This evolution encourages the incorporation of elements from different cultures in the design field and increases the potential to create a unique, contemporary aesthetic in interiors. In this context, interior designers must have a constantly evolving perspective to understand the perception of culture and contemporaneity and integrate these dynamics into their designs.

3. The Examination of Two Interior Projects Located in Istanbul and Ulaanbaatar

Cultures, as a result of their interactions with their environments, can develop quite similar characteristics, yet they can also acquire vastly different aspects from one another. This situation emphasizes the richness, diversity, and uniqueness among cultures, owing to the contribution of the complexity of interactions to the diversification of cultural features. This duality of cultural similarities and differences becomes particularly evident in the design of living spaces, where cultural values intersect with environmental conditions to shape interior environments. Examination of specific projects allows us to delve deeper into how these dynamics manifest in practice, offering valuable insights into the interplay between culture, geography and interior design.

To explore how the influences of culture and geography manifest in the interior spaces of contemporary branded housing projects, this study examines two case studies: the sample apartment projects of "Mona94" in Istanbul and "Encanto" in Ulaanbaatar, both designed by Gonye Design in 2022. The selection of these projects was based on the similarity of factors such as the designer, design approach, design year, and the target user profile, aside from the cultural and climatic characteristics of their respective locations (Table 1). To define the user profile, this study utilizes the classification outlined in Suher's 2005 article, "Socio-Economic Status Scales Frequently Used in Marketing, Advertising, and Media in Turkey" (Table 2). Prior to the analysis of the case studies, it is essential to contextualize the cultural and geographical characteristics of Istanbul and Ulaanbaatar.

Table 1. General Descriptive Attributes of the Projects

	Mona94	Encanto
Location	Istanbul	Ulaanbaatar
Climate	Transitional climate between the Black Sea climate and the Mediterranean climate	Cold semi-arid climate under monsoon influence
Project size	208, 56 sqm (3+1)	181,4 sqm (4+1)
Designer	Gonye Design concept team	Gonye Design concept team
Design Concept Keywords	Inspired by the color white, a spacious space with modern and simple lines.	Natural-toned colors, contrasting textures, and dark borders create a frame. The design draws inspiration from the movement of sand.
Year of Design	2022	2022
Aimed User socio-economic status	A, B (Table 2)	A, B (Table 2)

Table 2. Socioeconomic Status Measurement (Suher, 2005, pp. 89-100)

A	Uppermost	Social elite, noble families, those whose wealth comes from at least 2-3 generations, big industrialists, top managers and famous freelancers (doctors, lawyers)
B	Just Below Upper	This newly rich group consists of private sector executives, journalists, writers, senior public sector executives and medium-large artisans.
C1	Upper-Middle	Together with C2, this group of professionals and managers makes up a large part of the country as a whole.
C2	Lower-Middle	White-collar workers (civil servants and laborers) and small business owners (artisans).
D	Just Above Lower	Blue-collar workers are skilled and semi-skilled workers.
E	Lowermost	Unskilled workers consist of manual laborers (agricultural workers, porters, etc.), small shopkeepers and the unemployed. It is the group with the lowest income and education level.

The Turks and Mongols, through their shared habitation of the same geography for many years, established similar organizational structures and social lifestyles, which led to the development of a common culture (Uyar, 2020, p. 13). Both cultures, originating from Central Asia, exhibit similarities in traditional nomadic lifestyles, shared linguistic roots, warfare traditions, and religious beliefs. Additionally, common elements can be identified in cultural expressions such as music, folklore, literature, and traditional crafts (Yılmaz, 2022, pp. 1412-1421). Nevertheless, significant differences exist between Turkish and Mongolian cultures. Disparities can be observed in cultural elements such as language, customs and traditions, culinary practices, and traditional attire. Historical processes, geographical factors, and interactions have led to unique characteristics that distinguish both cultures. For example, Turkish culture has been shaped primarily by the migration of Turks from Central Asia to the west starting in the 10th century, followed by the influences of the Seljuk and Ottoman Empires. In contrast, Mongolian culture developed historically under the influence of the Mongol Empire (Uyar, 2020, pp. 13-32), followed

by the Yuan Dynasty and the Qing Dynasty, China's last imperial dynasty (Reardon-Anderson, 2000, p. 503).

Geographically, Istanbul can be characterized as a coastal city influenced by a temperate and humid climate, with the impact of waterways. On the other hand, Ulaanbaatar is the capital situated in the inner regions under the influence of a continental climate, characterized by harsh winters. These geographical differences exert a significant influence on the culture, economy, and lifestyles of both cities.

Culture and geography are in a constant state of continuous change, albeit at different rates. Therefore, determining a time frame is crucial for an examination based on these two factors. The cities and interior designs discussed in the case study have been evaluated within the context of contemporary conditions.

3.1. Evaluation of Branded Housing Projects in Istanbul; The Mona 94 Case

Istanbul is officially listed as the most populous city in Europe of the present day, with an approximate population of 16 million, shaping tangible and intangible bridges between the West and the East. It is known as the capital of empires which refers to the 1600 years from the 4th century AD to the first quarter of the 20th century (Coskun, 2013, p. 107). From the establishment of the Republic of Turkey to the present day, Istanbul has undergone numerous changes in terms of cultural, sociological, economic, and urban planning aspects during its century-long journey. This section discusses the impact of Istanbul's geographical features on residential buildings and the cultural changes in residential interiors during the 20th century. It then examines the branded residential project Mona94 located in Istanbul.

Istanbul spans across two continents, separated by the Bosphorus and the Golden Horn. Due to natural constraints such as forests and water basins in the northern part, a significant portion of the population resides within a narrow linear area, approximately 100 km in length and 20 km in width (Yücesoy & Özüduru, 2018, p. 149). According to Doğan Kuban (1970), Istanbul's strategic location along a key trade waterway between the Steppe and the Mediterranean, its sheltered harbor, the Golden Horn, and its role as a bridge between the Balkans and Anatolia have shaped its significance. Additionally, its topography provided both maritime access and natural defense, making it an ideal site for settlement and trade (p. 26). It possesses a strategic geographical structure that has shaped the spatial organization of various civilizations throughout history. Due to the distinct administrative structure of the Ottoman Empire, influenced by Islamic culture and various sociological factors, Istanbul's urban development and the scale of its built environment evolved differently compared to other major cities of its time (Karakuyu, 2010, p. 37). Cities structural topography today change in response to contemporary demands as well as its historical characteristics. Skyscrapers, propelled by technical developments, urban land commodification, changing social dynamics, speculative considerations, neoliberal restructuring, and globalization, have drastically changed Istanbul's skyline since 1980 (Çobanlı & Ceylan, 2023, p. 26). The reflections of this change have also spread to residential interiors.

With the increasing population density, the city has transformed into a megacity, where steps taken for the preservation of cultural heritage at the urban scale play a crucial role in determining the city's brand value and aiming to protect its historical legacy. However, from a sociocultural perspective, it is observed that cultural practices have gradually given way to more global and present elements in daily life and household usage. To

examine the cultural influences in residential spaces, it is crucial to analyze the social life and policies of the late Ottoman period, the Republican era, the 1950s, and up to the present day. Social transformations occurring during these periods have significantly impacted on the living environments of individuals, reshaping both their daily routines and culturally ingrained habits.

The evolution of Istanbul's residential interiors reflects a dynamic interplay between historical transformations and cultural practices. During the Ottoman period, structures appear to have been built using stone or some form of timber-framing system, typically consisting of one or, at most, two stories. Wealthier individuals, however, owned mansions with stone or stone-based lower floors and wooden upper floors (Kuban, 1970, p. 35). The interior spaces of dwellings, influenced by ancient nomadic culture, have been shaped by portable and flexible arrangements, with rooms organized on the ground floor. Functional living spaces were created using movable elements such as carpets, rugs, and couches; these arrangements were designed to allow the space to be used for various activities throughout the day (Göğebakan, 2015, p. 46). Cultural influences shaping the daily life of the people of Istanbul had developed under Ottoman rule for centuries, began to Westernize in the mid-19th century. Spatial organization and furniture preferences changed significantly under the influence of Westernization, integrating elements such as separate dining rooms and European-style furniture into daily life (URL-1).

The mansions and palaces that shaped the residential topography of Istanbul during the Ottoman period were no longer sought after by the modernizing population in the Republican era (Sezginalp, 2017, p. 89). Following the proclamation of the Republic, traditional housing and its spatial organization lost significance, giving way to a rise in the number of apartments driven by industrialization and migration. Having apartments, multi-story modern homes with elevators, radiators to heat the interior, and constant hot water became common after this period (Sezginalp, 2017, p. 36). According to Selin Mutdoğan (2014), the separation of workplaces from homes led to the decline of the *selamlık*, while the increasing role of women in social life contributed to the disappearance of the *harem*. These social transformations brought about fundamental changes in the usage and design of interior spaces within residential buildings (p. 4).

Until the 1950s, architecture in Turkey was shaped by state policies and dominant ideologies, but in the following decade, the focus shifted towards establishing a universal architectural identity (Öztürk & Şenyurt, 2024, p. 2). The housing market transformation in the 1960s led to a shift from detached houses to standardized apartment buildings, prioritizing maximum unit density on a single plot. This resulted in uniform architectural features, including street-facing living rooms, rear-positioned bedrooms, and repetitive window arrangements on façades (Sezginalp, 2017, p. 112). After 1980, the increasing demand for housing led the government to continue supporting mass housing production, as in previous periods. Through state incentives and partnerships, efforts were made to encourage private sector investment in this area, positioning housing as a lucrative investment opportunity (Çinçin, 2023, p. 288). The cultural character of social housing becomes complex, as it must accommodate diverse practices while preserving daily routines of the citizens. Social housing should provide an environment that supports maintaining everyday habits, fosters social interaction, and aligns with the cultural dynamics of its residents (Sezen, 2023, p. 45).

One of the reasons for the expansion of social housing to different parts of the city in Istanbul can be attributed to transportation infrastructure projects. The opening of the Bosphorus Bridge in 1973 and the Second Bridge in 1985, along with its connecting

roads, played a role in the growth of the city, which had previously been growing in a monocentric way, towards the Anatolian side and its outer periphery (Yücesoy & Özüduru, 2018, pp. 149-150).

A branded housing project can be defined as a residential development that possesses conceptual features tailored to its specific location, includes amenities that allow it to be categorized within a particular project class, and has the potential to influence unit price ranges and property values in its surrounding area (Sezgin, 2017, pp. 35-36). The interior designs of sample apartments in branded housing projects in Istanbul are developed within the framework of the expectations and shared tastes of potential buyers with a global consumption mindset. Within this global perception, interior spaces embody contemporary design lines, spacious environments, and visually satisfying images. In this section of the article, through the example selected from Istanbul, it is examined which design details are formed under the influence of culture and geographical conditions in the interiors that are expected to appeal to the user's wishes and tastes at the maximum level and achieve the standard in the global context.

The Mona94 project located in Istanbul is an exemplary 3+1 apartment (208,56 sqm) prepared for four-story residences designed in a wooded area (Figure 1). According to the design team, the design, grounded in the principle of balance, emphasizes simplicity with light tones, minimalist lines, and a sense of spaciousness (Figure 2). Given its theoretical similarity to the project in Ulaanbaatar, it has been deemed suitable for examination.
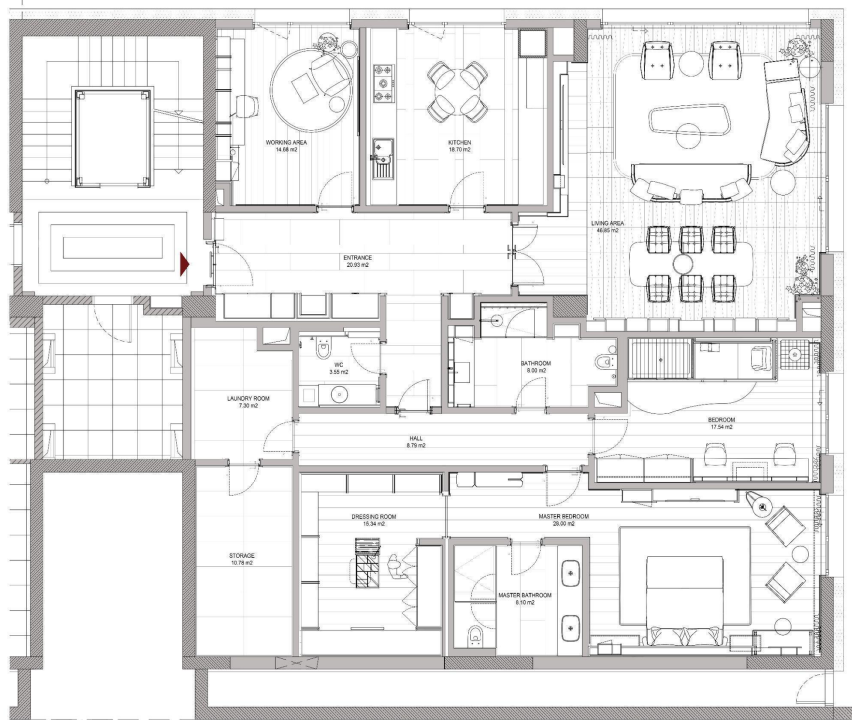
Figure 1. Mona94 Istanbul Project Plan (Gonye Design Archive)

Figure 2. Mona94 Project Moodboard (Gonye Design Archive)

The dwelling plan typologically reveals an entrance door, kitchen, living room, and a guest toilet, opening to an anteroom leading to the corridor of divided bedrooms (Figure 3). The separation of bedrooms by doors and the opening of the entrance foyer area to other parts of the house is a common apartment layout seen in Gonye Design's branded housing projects Istanbul. Here, the significance lies in segregating private spaces from shared spaces.

Figure 3. Mona94 Project Entrance & Hall (Gonye Design Archive)

In the living room, the display cabinet behind the dining table, while having an up to date appearance, does not serve the traditional function of showcasing porcelain and glass dinner sets (Figure 4). Nevertheless, it remains a requested and enduring element in most projects. Despite the decrease in social activities such as gathering for meals, hosting guests, and gathering around the dining table, particularly after the Covid-19 pandemic, the use of large dining tables is still preferred. Incorporating wide windows to bring in the view and natural light is a prominent criterion in design, given Istanbul's mild climate and experiencing all four seasons.

Figure 4. Mona94 Project Living Room (Gonye Design Archive)

The use of natural stone in the TV unit panel, a material widely appreciated in recent luxury interior designs, is associated with the favorable climatic conditions for the comfortable use of this natural and cool material in interiors.

The close juxtaposition of the kitchen, often desired to be close to the dining table in the living room, holds significant importance (Figure 5). The preference for closed kitchen types is common to prevent the spread of odors to other spaces and to interrupt communication between the person cooking and those in the living room. Larger kitchens, including a dining table, are desired, allowing for a table within the kitchen that can be used for extended periods without utilizing the dining table in the living room. The aim of sample apartment designs is not only to showcase a functional and livable home to potential buyers but also to demonstrate the possibility of owning a stylish and high-quality home, considering the brands and materials used. Therefore, the use of wallpaper in the kitchen is not avoided, and a hood that can emphasize the dining area more is preferred.

Figure 5. Mona94 Project Kitchen (Gonye Design Archive)

According to the design team, in previously completed branded housing projects in Istanbul, key criteria included expansive window openings that maximize views and at least one balcony. This preference can be attributed to the increasing use of large windows in Turkish housing to enhance natural light, improve airflow, and create brighter, more comfortable living spaces (Öden, 2023, pp. 39–40). In spatial organization, users are directed towards the view through the placement and position of furniture (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Mona94 Project Living Room Windows (Gonye Design Archive)

The Covid-19 pandemic, which played a significant role in altering daily life habits, has also influenced the design of branded housing projects. During the pandemic, many companies prioritized employee health by enabling remote work, integrating professional activities into the home environment (Turna, 2022, p. 35). The rapid increase in the rate of working from home after the Covid-19 pandemic has made the study room design more common in sample apartment designs to reflect the home's potential for home-office use to buyers (Figure 7). The notion of "home-office," once familiar but less widespread, became a necessity for many. Consequently, homes evolved from spaces serving basic needs into multifunctional environments accommodating workspaces and meeting rooms after the Covid-19 (Güney Yüksel, 2022, p. 91).

Figure 7. Mona94 Project Living Room Windows (Gonye Design Archive)

In the Mona 94 project, the master bedroom exhibits a cohesive design language aligned with the overall apartment rather than focusing on details shaped by cultural influences (Figure 8). According to interviews conducted with the project design team, the room was designed to meet general user needs and maximize its potential appeal to prospective buyers. This was achieved by including a bed with bedside tables, a dressing table with a mirror, a TV unit, an armchair seating group, and a walk-in closet.

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Figure 8. Mona94 Project Children's Room (Gonye Design Archive)

Children's rooms play a pivotal role in the sales strategies of branded housing projects, often portrayed in advertisements as safe and child-focused environments, reinforced by visuals and slogans articulated by children (Vergili, 2023, p. 49). In the analyzed project, the design of the children's room prioritizes elements that support physical development and imagination, rather than reflecting cultural influences (Figure 9). As children require environments that foster connections with both their social and physical surroundings while addressing their biological, social, and cultural needs, creating functional, creativity-enhancing spaces scaled to their dimensions and instilling a sense of ownership is increasingly significant (Doğan & Baksi, 2019, p. 95).

Figure 9. Mona94 Project Children's Room (Gonye Design Archive)

User demands for bathing spaces are shaped by their location within the building, interior layout, activities performed, included fixtures, and users' cultural, sociological, economic, physiological, and psychological conditions (Oruç, 2009, p. 205). 21st century bathroom trends in Turkey have emphasized reflecting users' lifestyles, elevating concepts of health, tranquility, comfort, and enjoyment, while reimagining bathrooms as spaces for leisure and relaxation (Aytac & Ogut, 2015, p. 6459). A bathroom design that integrates these concepts in residential spaces in Istanbul effectively appeals to the target demographic of potential homebuyers. It is observed that there is a preference for large bathroom areas in the analyzed branded housing project (Figure 10). According to the design team, the creation of the perception of spaciousness stands out in bathroom designs. For example, the use of built-in cisterns is seen as an option that makes the space perceived more spacious and supports the image of quality and is used in the office's branded housing projects in Istanbul.

Figure 10. Mona94 Project General Bathroom (left) and Master Bathroom (right)(Gonye Design Archive)

As residential spaces become increasingly compact worldwide and the emphasis on storage areas in housing design diminishes, the need for storage continues to rise, with similar shifts in Turkey, where changes in lifestyles, needs, expectations, and habits are reshaping spatial and facility usage in homes (Açıkel & Kaynakçı Elinç, 2022, p. 297). According to the design team, storage spaces play a significant role in the decision to purchase homes in branded housing projects. Due to high demand, pantry rooms, coat closets, and cabinets are frequently incorporated into the designs of projects in Istanbul. Design decisions in the analyzed project are shaped not only by the habits of Turkish daily life and the suitability of the climate, but also by a focus on establishing a standard that emphasizes quality with a sales-oriented approach.

3.2. Evaluation of branded housing projects in Ulaanbaatar; The Encanto Case

Mongolia, a landlocked country in Northeast Asia, is situated between Russia and China. Covering 1,564,100 square kilometers, it features diverse landscapes, including mountains and forests in the north and west, grassland steppes in the east, and the Gobi Desert in the south (Shugatai et al., 2021, p. 48). The country's current population is approximately 3.5 million (URL-2). With an approximate population density of around 1.72 individuals per square kilometer, Mongolia has one of the lowest population densities globally. The capital city of the country is Ulaanbaatar (Shugatai et al., 2021, p. 48). The population of Ulaanbaatar is approximately 1.7 million (URL-3). Ulaanbaatar, with a total area of 4,740 km², has experienced significant growth since the mid-21st century, establishing itself as the country's primary urban center. Although relatively small compared to many other Asian capitals, its continuous expansion has led to an increasingly unstructured and unplanned urban form and architecture (Purevtseren et al., 2018, p. 3). The city is in a valley at an altitude of approximately 1,350 meters (Ganbat, 2013, p. 535). Positioned on the Tuul River, it lies on a windswept plateau (URL-4). Located over 47 degrees north of the Equator, the city lies within a discontinuous permafrost zone and is among the coldest national capitals globally. Winters are generally long and dry, while summers are relatively short and humid (URL-5). These geographical conditions have played a crucial role in shaping the region's architecture and interior design, influencing building materials, construction techniques, and spatial organization to adapt to the extreme climate and terrain.

In Mongolia, a segment of the population living outside urban areas maintains a nomadic lifestyle. These communities generally migrate seasonally in search of pasture for their livestock. Nomads have traditional rural dwellings called "yurt (ger)" (Çilekar, 2019, p.

38). Ger tents, constructed from traditional materials such as wood and wool felt, offer a sustainable housing solution with easy assembly, adapting seamlessly to Mongolia's hot summers and cold, windy winters, while optimally supporting the nomadic lifestyle (Caldieron, 2013, p. 467). The settled lifestyle of the Chinese empires, which dominated the region for centuries, created a contrast with the traditional nomadic lifestyle of the Mongolian people and their ger dwellings. This contrast played a significant role in shaping the development of permanent architecture, particularly in the Ulan Bator region (Hongwei & Fanguang, 2023, p. 119).

The development of social housing and high-rise buildings in Ulaanbaatar over the past century began after Mongolia declared its independence in 1921. Governed as the world's second communist state with the support of the Bolsheviks, the country remained within the sphere of influence of Soviet Russia for many years. During this period, with the onset of the Cold War, Mongolia benefited from Soviet financial aid. This financial support and Russian influence had various effects on architecture and interior design. In particular, the Soviet architectural approach, emphasizing functionality and simplicity, was also reflected in the interior layouts of social housing. When the Cold War ended, the cessation of Soviet financial aid and Mongolia's desire to break free from Russian influence led to new developments in both architecture and interior design (Türk, 2013, p. 109).

Mongolia's transition to a market economy after 1990 accelerated urbanization, leading to rural depopulation and increased population concentration, particularly in the capital, Ulaanbaatar (Shugatai et al., 2021, p. 48). This process has also influenced architecture and interior design, fostering a shift from traditional dwellings to contemporary living spaces.

After the 2000s, with political and technological advancements, Western influences on interior design became more prominent. The involvement of private companies led to luxury, Western-style housing designs, especially in the capital. Features such as American-style open kitchens, apartments with balconies, varied square meter options, multi-room luxury apartments, and separate bathrooms in master bedrooms have appeared in Ulaanbaatar's branded housing projects (Enkhbaatar, 2013, pp. 61-71).

In the housing designs of Ulaanbaatar, in addition to the influences of the Soviet Union and the West over the last century, the effects of Chinese culture are also evident (Wang, 2020, p. 11). As a result of Chinese influence, the teachings of Feng Shui are reflected in contemporary interior designs. Feng Shui, based on ancient Chinese philosophy, represents a worldview that sees the earth, sky, and humans as a unified whole, and also believes that the positive energy in the environment shapes human behavior (Erdoğan, 2007, p. 87). The concept of Feng Shui emphasizes the balance between yin and yang through the synchronization of opposing elements such as light and darkness, opening and closing, as well as movement and stillness. In Feng Shui-based interior design, spatial balance and energy flow take precedence over visual aesthetics; the placement and arrangement of furniture and objects are considered essential to maintaining harmony and enhancing the positive energy within a space (Ahmadnia et al., 2012, p. 145). Feng Shui interior design focuses on balancing the flow of energy (Chi) and creating harmony within spaces. Spaces are categorized based on Yin and Yang: "Yang" energy, representing activity and vitality, is found in social areas like living rooms and entrances, while "Yin," symbolizing calm and rest, is present in private spaces such as bedrooms and bathrooms (URL-6). In interior design guided by Feng Shui principles, it is essential to arrange furniture to ensure a smooth flow of energy, avoiding clutter and disproportionate elements. Plants contribute to vitality and positive energy by

purifying the air. Bathrooms, due to their water element, should be located away from the central areas of the home, and their design should prioritize simplicity and functionality. Overall, balancing the five elements and ensuring harmony in the space enhances the energy of the living environment (Karyağdı, G. & Koyuncu, E., 2024, pp. 1038-1039).

From ancient times to the present, Feng Shui has influenced the architectural and interior design of Mongolia, particularly in China, by integrating interior spaces harmoniously with the natural environment. Although contemporary interior design has reached a highly advanced stage, many interior designers still adhere to certain Feng Shui principles when designing spaces because its culture remains closely connected to the natural surroundings. (Wang & Keat, 2024, p. 21139). Several features of this ancient Chinese teaching are also evident in the apartment designs analyzed in Ulaanbaatar as part of this study, with several reflections of Feng Shui principles observed.

For the sample apartment design conducted by Gonye Design in Ulaanbaatar, the goal is to offer potential buyers a Western-style contemporary lifestyle – as Turkey is perceived as part of the West for them. Consequently, after a detailed examination, it is observed that some points in the apartment design incorporate reflections of the end-users' culture in a user-centric manner. Within the project, two different thematic designs have been developed. The examined Lucent-themed apartment emphasizes form, aiming to create curves and transitions between materials, resulting in a design where natural tones are preferred over dominant, striking colors, reflecting cultural connections (Figure 11).

Figure 11. Encanto Project Moodboard (Gonye Design Archive)

The floor plan of the project (Figure 12) was restructured by Gonye Design based on the draft drawings sent by the project owner company, aligned with their requests regarding the dimensions and qualities of the apartments. Therefore, the spatial typology is similar to the plan type implemented in the Mona94 Istanbul case. Regarding cultural differences related to plan layout, interpretations can be made based on the initial drawings sent by the project owner. For example, it can be observed that in the drawings initially sent by the project owner company, the entrance door of the apartment opens outward before starting the interior design. This choice is related to climatic conditions or the desire to create a transitional space before entering the house. Because the outward-opening doors of Mongolian yurts help maintain the traditional social order inside while also

preserving warmth and preventing wind from entering directly in Mongolia's cold and harsh climatic conditions (Che et al., 2023, pp. 8-11).
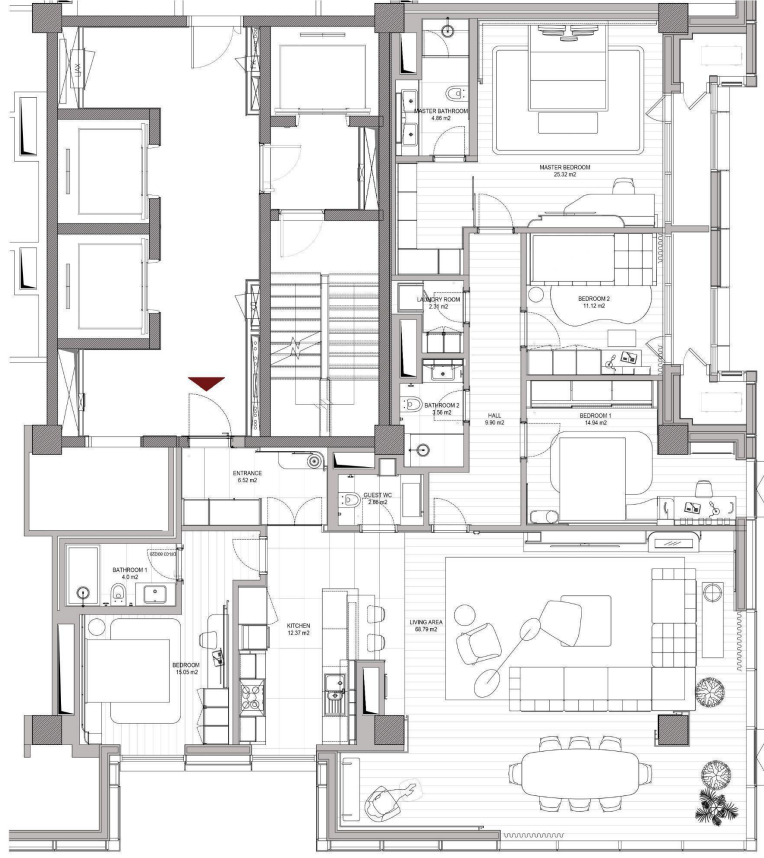

Figure 12. Encanto Project in UlaanBaatar Plan (Gonye Design Archive)

For example, the entrance area (Figure 13) is preferred as a separate space with a door from the rest of the house, serving as a distinct area between inside and outside. According to Feng Shui beliefs, the entrance area should not directly open into living spaces. It is desired for the entrance to be a bright welcoming space with high, majestic doors, mirrors that make the space appear larger, and flowers that elevate the chi energy (Çilekar, 2019, p. 107).

Figure 13. Encanto Project Entrance (Gonye Design Archive)

According to the design team, to mitigate the cold perception associated with the local climate, the design of the living room deliberately avoided using natural stone in the TV unit (Figure 14). Also, laminated parquet was chosen instead of laminate to prevent expansion issues in low temperatures. According to the response to the survey questions sent to the customer by the Gonye Design team, leather upholstery was chosen for the living room furniture for easy cleaning, considering climatic factors such as potential mud and dirt brought by visitors. Similar reasons led to the decision not to use wallpaper in the kitchen, as observed in the project Mona94 Istanbul.

Figure 14. Encanto Project Living Room (Gonye Design Archive)

In the kitchen, the use of an extractor hood instead of a hood highlights the desire for kitchen surfaces to look more integral and aesthetic (Figure 15). The use of an open kitchen is preferred for a more spacious living area, and a high bar seating area is added as a second dining space. This choice indicates that the issues of cooking odors and relatively small kitchen usage, which were not preferred elements in the Istanbul example, did not pose problems. The use of an open kitchen did not cause odor issues in the living room.

Figure 15. Encanto Project Kitchen (Gonye Design Archive)

The use of marble in the master bedroom is not preferred due to the perceived coldness of the material (Figure 16). Instead, materials that evoke a sense of warmth, such as fabric, carpet, parquet, and wallpaper, are preferred. Metal details included in the interior design are canceled due to both the cold sensation and the perception that specialized craftsmanship would not be of high quality. In bedrooms, the bed does not face the mirror

as it is not in line with Feng Shui principles, and the design is revised. This is because having a mirror in the bedroom where one can see their reflection while in bed can cause discomfort, leading to anxiety and frequent awakenings during the night (Farran, 2018, p. 48).

Figure 16. Encanto Project Master Bedroom (Gonye Design Archive)

Similar to the Istanbul project, the children's room emphasizes features that nurture physical growth and creativity rather than incorporating cultural elements (Figure 17). Due to the temperature dropping to -30 degrees Celsius in winter months, climate plays a significant role in design. As it is visible in Figure 17, Balcony use in Ulaanbaatar is designed with mostly enclosed balconies to create a heat corridor.

Figure 17. Encanto Project Children's Room (Gonye Design Archive)

Large doors are preferred for transitions between spaces, a choice that can be evaluated in the context of cultural influences. In bathroom use, it can be seen from the initial plan drawings sent by the project owner company that spacious, wide areas are not sought, similar to Istanbul (Figure 18).

Figure 18. Encanto Project General Bathroom (left) and Master Bathroom (right) (Gonye Design Archive)

4. Results and Discussions

Within the scope of the study, various effects of cultural and geographical factors on the interior designs of branded housing projects are analyzed. In the examination of the interior designs of two different branded housing projects of Gonye Design office in Istanbul and Ulaanbaatar, it is revealed how the cultural and geographical differences of the projects are reflected on the designs, as well as the various common features of the two projects that show similarities in their design languages and segments.

Culture is the total of the various traditional life, thoughts and art assets that form a social perception and ideological unity. While coming from the past and moving towards the future, it also brings along various social interactions on this journey. The cultures of societies with dominant influence in the period and geography in which they live have generally influenced the cultures of less dominant societies. In terms of interior design, various interior architectural design movements, styles and periods throughout history have been formed in this way and have shown various similarities and differences by developing in interaction.

The primary objective of sample apartment designs is to showcase the maximum potential of the home to users and allow them flexibility in terms of space usage. In the project located in Istanbul, where sales are more prominent, interior designs that can capture the liking and interest of many people stand out. In addition to sharing the same primary objective, the project in Ulaanbaatar also reflects cultural and climatic influences as part of its sales strategies.

In both examined projects, the concept of privacy is reflected in the organization of entryways and hallways. According to Sezginalp (2017), a home's transitional areas are used only temporarily and are located between the public and private areas. The public, or the social backdrop, is reflected in the entrance halls (p. 159). In the example from Istanbul, the entrance provides access to public living spaces such as the living room, kitchen, and common bathroom. In contrast, the apartment in Ulaanbaatar features an entry hall that is designed separately from all other parts of the house. The choice of a door-separable entry area in Ulaanbaatar can be considered not only as a privacy measure but also as a precaution against the extremely cold weather conditions, serving as a thermal buffer.

It is observed that both projects have maximum use of daylight especially in the living room, in all areas. In cold climates, achieving healthy and comfortable indoor thermal

conditions while maintaining efficient fuel consumption requires effective insulation and optimal exposure to sunlight, which help retain warmth within the building (Givoni, 1969, p. 291).

The use of a large dining table can be associated with Turkish culinary culture. Setting the table and showing hospitality are significant customs and aspects of Turkish culture (Toprak, 2019, p. 80). It is also observed that the emphasis on maximizing the size of the kitchen table is primarily driven by a functional approach aimed at increasing the apartment's marketability rather than by cultural traditions. This strategy ensures the creation of a living space that appeals to the target customer profile. Similarly, in Ulaanbaatar, the kitchen layout reflects a contemporary design approach, similar to that in Istanbul, and is structured to enhance the apartment's sales potential by aligning with the target buyers' interest in modern living.

In the children's rooms of the projects examined in two different cities, a design approach that prioritizes child development rather than cultural influences is observed. Like the kitchen area, this approach appears to be aimed at enhancing the apartments' marketability.

In the master bedroom of the Ulaanbaatar project, cultural influences are evident in the design. Due to the belief in Feng Shui that mirrors accumulate negative energy, the client specifically requested the absence of mirrors in the bedroom. Additionally, factors such as the bed's orientation and its relationship with the door are key considerations in Feng Shui principles.

In Ulaanbaatar, balcony usage serves as a protective measure against harsh geographical conditions. Due to the extreme climate, with temperatures dropping as low as -30 degrees Celsius, the balcony incorporates a heat corridor to enhance thermal insulation.

In the analyzed projects, beyond the influences of culture and geography, it is observed that the key factors shaping interior design are daily living habits and the expectations of the target user group. This impact appears to be more pronounced in the Istanbul project, where interior design reflects a user-centered approach that prioritizes the everyday needs of contemporary life. This approach can be seen as part of the city's socio-demographic and economic transformation from the late Ottoman period to the present. In the Ulaanbaatar example, the historical interactions of the country with surrounding cultures have contributed to the presence of Feng Shui as a cultural element influencing interior design. Additionally, due to the country's cold climate, geographical conditions have a stronger influence on interior design in Ulaanbaatar compared to the Istanbul case.

As a common tendency, both cities are adapting global and present elements from their respective Wests into their lives. However, it can be argued that Ulaanbaatar has design perspectives that are less detached from its culture, with the Far East having design views that are less disconnected from its culture. In this regard, Ulaanbaatar's later entry into the race to become a global city and its centuries-long adherence to traditions significantly different from the West contribute to this distinction.

The scope of the research, which is limited to two examples selected among the projects designed by Gonye Design due to their compliance with the research criteria, constitutes the limitation of the study. The outputs of the research, which are deepened through two

branded housing projects, provide a basis for future research on the subject through new and diverse examples.

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Author Contribution

The study was designed by all authors. Literature reviews, information gathering, analysis and visualization were carried out by all authors. The text was written by the primary author, Amara Köprülü, MA, Interior Architect, and reviewed and edited by the second author, Yunus Emre Boz, PhD Candidate in Interior Architecture. The third author, Yelin Türer Evcen, Architect, contributed to the critical review and editing process.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors of the study declare that there is no financial or other substantive conflict of interest that could influence the results or interpretations of this work.

Research and Publication Ethics Statement

This study was conducted in accordance with research and publication ethics, and did not require ethics committee approval.

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