

# Design Criteria for Staged Authentic Tourist Settings: Traditional Turkish House Interiors

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**Abstract**—Tourism is one of the main sector effects the sustainability of a cultural setting. In cultural touristic settings, the feeling of pleasure is conveyed through cultural attractions that involve cultural identity in accordance with cultural meanings. The majority of cultural heritage settings are reconstructed for touristic visits. The study aims to evaluate the reused cultural interiors of authentic settings. The study focuses on the multifaceted problems occur in reconstruction process. Thus, reconstructing a space influences both functional and the socio-cultural aspects of an interior.

Cultural motivation of a tourist has many different dimensions; from object based authenticity to existential authenticity. In a cultural setting the interior itself becomes the object that is exhibited. This reconstruction process can be named as ‘staged authenticity’. This study focuses on the authenticity dimensions of an interior space. The study aims to set this interior design problem in a context and develop design criteria for staged authentic tourist settings.

**Keywords**— Authenticity, Cultural Heritage, Interior Space

## I. INTRODUCTION

When a place is regarded as a cultural heritage there are many different aspects in the creation of its intrinsic value. This study focuses on the interior space values of cultural heritage. An interior space creates a place that can represent our past, present and even our future. It is the main medium that captures the cultural identity in itself. The interior space shapes the way we live.

There is a strong and multifaceted interaction between the interior environment and the user. Altman and Chemers, in their book *Culture and Environment*, present examples relating to the interaction between environment and culture. [1] Their study is focus on the idea that different people living in different cultures have diverse spatial perceptions. The authors then go on to establish that culture, environment and the individual constitute a whole. They argue that the parts of this whole cannot be discussed independently of each other and conclude that these interactions altogether constitute a social system.

In this system, by designing appropriate spaces, a designer can influence whether a culture value survives or becomes lost in peoples’ memories. Interior designer as a professional tries

to resolve issues of functionality, aesthetics, and cultural identity and soon on. IFI (International Federation of Interior Architects and Interior Designers) that is widely known as an international committee of interior designers define the profession as:

*“As a creative enterprise, interior design and interior architecture are a mode of cultural production. They are a place-maker that interprets, translates, and edits cultural capital. In a global world, interior design and interior architecture must play a role in facilitating the retention of cultural diversity.” [2]*

In a way, the designer is able to crystallize the cultural value, or help it survive with contemporary living habits. Recently, under the intense effect of globalization and standardization cultural settings have lost their authentic identities, As Hyung Yu [3] defined the cultural setting, “the heritage setting potentially plays a significant role as a specific social space within which individuals are able to conceive, define and reconstruct elements of national consciousness”. That means the sustainability of a cultural identity, is in relation with the sustainability of a setting/space that contains the identity.

From this stand point the study focuses on staged authentic Traditional Turkish house interiors. These houses are converted to restaurants that serve tourists. They all have been rearranged for a different function. The study focuses on problems in this reconstruction process and develops design criteria for the solutions to these problems.

## II. SPACE, PLACE, AND AUTHENTICITY

When the aspect of authenticity is considered in a space the concept of place emerges. Place includes space, time and people. According to Hay [4], when the human element comes into space, space becomes more of a place than a space. Law and Altman [5], have defined the place concept as the space which is given meaning through individual, group or cultural processes. “Place is an essential notion in architectural theory that is full of cultural meaning and social activities” [5]. In other words, people can transform spaces into places over a period. Thus, over the usage process, people create their own place identities and this transforms spaces into their own places. Place formation can be defined as the attitude the individual forms towards a certain environment. The concept of place involves not just a physical element but also

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emotional factors. Hay describes the three factors which affects the formation of the place concept as follows:

- Residence status in the place (superficial, partial, personal, a sense of place coming from the past)

- Age status; as a developing cycle of life

- Connections that develop in adulthood; generally marriage

This process is defined in the relevant literature as “place identity”. By this definition, identity is described as a biological organisation which develops through adjustment (settlement), assimilation and assessing the social world; and moves over time [6]. In short, the concept of place is fundamental to the individual and space interaction. Place should be perceived as a dimension of space which comes about in the individual’s use of the space. Through this identification the interior environment gains its intrinsic value of authenticity. In cultural tourism the authenticity of a setting is the main consideration. “Authenticity connotes traditional culture and origin, a sense of genuinity, the real or the unique” [6]. Authenticity is defined as an international/universal value and an essential motivation of tourists to distinct places [7]. Whereas, the act of tourism has emerged from a basic binary division between the ordinary everyday and experiencing the extraordinary. Cultural tourism is defined as “the movement of people to cultural attractions away from their normal place of residence, with the intention to gather new information and experience to satisfy their cultural needs. Similarly, a cultural tourist is termed as “someone who visits, or intends to visit, a cultural tourism attraction, art gallery, museum or historic site, attends a performance or festival” [8]

In heritage tourism, considerations regarding multifaceted tourism action, the meaning of authenticity has become a complex phenomenon. Due to this problem, the understanding of authenticity is defined and categorized in the literature from different aspects. Wang, in his comprehensive study about authenticity, classified the concept in three main categories. These are existential authenticity, objective authenticity, and constructive authenticity. In this categorization the term existential authenticity stands for the being of a participant in touristic activity. Actually it is an action of experience. Whereas, the objective authenticity stands for objects’ original authenticity and the constructive authenticity, is the symbol of the original. In literature, the constructive authenticity concept has been defined for the first time as staged authenticity by Mc Cannell in 1973. Mc Cannell set the term as “arrangement of social space in tourist setting”. Tourist setting is considered as a “stage set” arranged according to tourist demands. Front stage is the setting that hosts the tourist and the back of the stage is the setting for preparation [9]. Moreover, the concept is defined according to how tourists perceive authenticity. According to Goulding, there are three different tourist categories, namely;

- “Existential visitors: emphasizes the importance of enjoyment and escape and mainly perceives authenticity through exhibited artefacts.

- Aesthetical visitors: perceive history mainly trough art.

- Social visitors: emphasised the importance of learning and social and are especially interested in watching demonstrations and making purchases in museum shops.”

Actually these categorizations are not independent form each other. Tourists can also intend to perceive all experiences in one route. For each of these categories the place has a potential role in defining a specific culture. A case study [10], demonstrated that there is a two way influence between object based authenticity, existential authenticity and cultural motivation. Cultural motivation is considered as “ a set of cultural motives which are shifting towards a more general interest in culture”

In the context of reconstructing a cultural place, the interior space acts as an authentic object. In other words it can be defined under the concept of staged authenticity. However, in the course of an interior that has a cultural value, the preservation of that specific value become important. In a cultural setting, sustainability of a cultural value stands in how the value is presented to the tourist.

Cultural tourism is the main sector staged in a cultural setting. Creating a renovated image for various forms of cultural heritage has played a crucial role in the regeneration of declining urban, industrial and rural areas through tourism and conservation programs [11]. According to Uzzell [11], “interpretation needs to be planned and designed with that outcome in mind”. Uzzell also states that “both the motivations to visit and the kind of benefits derived from visiting heritage sites can be seen in terms of individuals seeking to identify with a place and, as a consequence, deriving from that identification a positive self-image.”

The study considers authenticity in a constructive; staged authenticity view point. In most of the interior spaces the problem of expressing the intrinsic value of culture occurs.



Fig. 1. Linear correlation of authenticity



Fig. 2. Linear correlation of staged authenticity

As expressed in the figures above, authenticity is an essential factor in the sustainability of a cultural setting. In the first figure the cultural identity conveys through authenticity of the original. In the second figure, this time, the cultural identity reflected with the staged authenticity. In the figure one the sustainability of cultural setting is directly provided. However, in the second figure the sustainability of a cultural

setting cannot be directly provided. Moreover, in cultural settings the identity is conveyed through authenticity. The next part of the study focuses on the typical features of a specific interior space that creates its intrinsic authenticity.

### III. TYPICAL INTERIOR SPACE ELEMENTS IN TRADITIONAL TURKISH HOUSE

Element of interior space are the major entities that give meaning to space. Elements of interior space take role in defining the space; create boundaries, and also take a prominent role in defining the function of a space. Especially these elements give identity and authenticity to the interior space. [12]

The authenticity of traditional Turkish house derives from its cultural origins. The typical formation has been derived from the nomadic culture in 15<sup>th</sup> century. According to Küçükerman belonging to a nomadic culture creates a disconnection between the feeling of belonging and the land, in a way this leads to an abstract formation of living environment [13]. Nomadic Turks have settled in Anatolia after they adapted Islam as their religion. Deriving from a nomadic culture, adapting to Islam and the environmental characteristics of Anatolia became the main factors effecting the formation of authentic Turkish House. Throughout centuries some of the features in the house reformed but major elements survived and these elements have formed what is now known as the typical features of the Traditional Turkish House.

The formation of the house is introverted. That means the exterior and the interior relation of the house is limited. The ground floor formed its shape according to the formation of the street but the visual relation between the street and the interior of the house is limited. The upper floor formation acts independently from the ground floor. Mostly, experiencing the outside is via an interior courtyard.

The house is mainly divided into two parts: harem which is areas reserved for female members of the family and selamlık which are areas reserved for male members of the family. According to Islamic beliefs, areas of the house for men and women are separate. Basically, house arrangement is limited to one storey; where the top floor is always accepted as the most important part of the house.

There are 2 main elements in the formation of typical traditional Turkish house these are; room, and the sofa (hayat). Sofa is the main hall that all the rooms are arranged around. Mainly, it is a circulation area between rooms. Moreover, it is used as a social area that contains sitting units. According to Küçükerman sofa is the “most important element of the form of the Turkish house and which influences its whole shape” [13].



Fig. 3. Room Interior Formation [14]

Another typical element of the house is the room. The room is the main unit that contains different functions. Each room contains basic living requirements such as; sleeping, eating, sitting, working and resting. Mostly, the plan diagrams of the rooms are square and each wall is a medium for a different activity. One wall of room can contain storage means, another one can contain fireplace, a sitting unit (sedir) or even a bathroom. There are also other specific functions for a single room such as a master room which is the main area and is used as a guest room for the head of the family. [15].



Fig. 4. Single Unit, Room Interior [16]

When furniture in the room are considered, the built in wardrobes are one of the main elements in the room used for storage purposes. The built in wardrobes contain the equipments for daily use; such as beds, rugs, cups etc. These elements are the main elements in the interior façade that gives an aesthetic value to the general atmosphere of the room. Most of the examples are made of carved wooden elements. Another typical unit is the fireplace that adds authenticity to the room. The fireplace is used for heating purposes. In some of the houses it is intensively decorated and adds extra value to the overall atmosphere of the interior.



Fig. 5. Built in Wardrobe in the wall [14]

The sedir is the main sitting unit in the room. Mostly these units are located under windows. They continuously surround the room and are elevated from the ground. The ground cover is also an important element in the interior environment. The importance is derived from its function. Most of the functions take place on the ground [8]. "If a respected visitor should arrive and there is no room on the sedir, the younger members of the family will give up their seats on the sedir and sit on the floor" [17]. All the ground is covered with carpet, kilim or cushion. These carpets express the typical aesthetic values regarding traditional Anatolian motifs that also add authenticity to the interior environment.



Fig. 6. Seating Unit [16]

Despite these furnitures, the ceiling is also an important interior element with its typical ornamentations. Ceiling decoration is built up of polygonal pendant wood elements fixed one on top of the other. On the walls there is a horizontal element that limits the height of doors and windows and can also be used as a shelf unit. This horizontal timber unit is a very typical element in the room. All furniture in the room is limited under this horizontal line. "the basic principle that utility areas should not exceed human stature brought about a tangible, visible upper limit" [13].



Fig. 8. Room Ceiling [21]

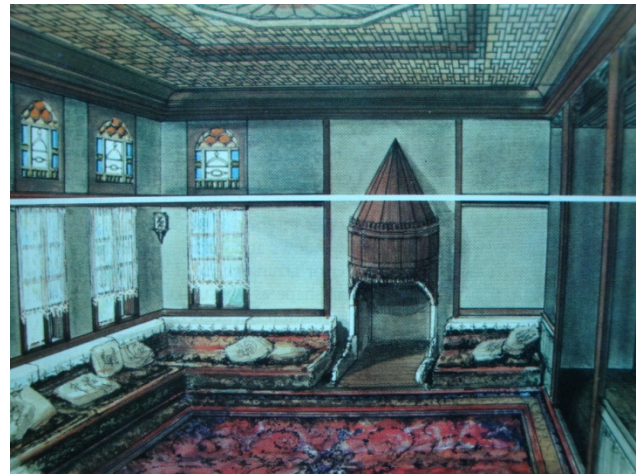


Fig. 7. Room Interior[13]

The authenticity of the interior is derived from these typical elements. These typical elements are vital in users' experience in a way that these typical elements reflect an image in the users' cognition. The cognitive process is formed by traditional types that are shaped through history. According to Schutz, people perceive the world through types and these types structure our cognitive schemes [18]. From this point of view, Auburn and Barnes summarize the approach as follows:

"the person's representation or stock of knowledge of the world, first, is social in that its typified content arises in and through the community and its history. Furthermore, typification is underpinned by language, or more precisely the 'vernacular of the collectivity'...". [19]

#### IV. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW: SOCIO-CULTURAL CHANGES IN TRADITIONAL HOUSES

In the Ottoman period, spatial organization of house derives from the social structure of family life. As it is mentioned, the areas in the house separated according to gender discrimination. Woman and the man lived in separate parts of the house; harem, selamlık and the number of family members were high.

The spatial separation of woman and man in the house changed after the declaration of new Republic in 1923. With the reformation in woman rights woman started to take role in the exterior social and working life. "The patriarchal family structure has turned to the basic family structure". [20] In addition, technological changes took place after the industrial development; effect the spatial organization of the house. Before these changes, limited number of houses had running water and electricity. Especially the kitchen usage changed both with technological developments and small sized families. Western lifestyle effected the family formation. Moreover, large agricultural family societies, turned in to small families in industrial societies. [21]

In 1930, the first social housing project applied in Turkey. At that time, foreign architects started to develop projects in Turkey. Most of the housing projects took references from these architects. In this way the organization the houses effected from these western approaches. Local people migrated to the big cities, left their houses for better living conditions. After the Second World War, with increase in

population housing demands increase. Housing concept changed from single family building to apartment complex. Also, Lack of awareness in protection ended up with demolished traditional houses.

With all of these complex social changes, Traditional Turkish House became areas that were behind the times, failing to keep up with Turkish society in general. These houses cannot adapt to new living patterns. This new western living style in industrialized societies not adapted to the traditional way of living. They adopted as it is stands. In recent years, with the development in cultural tourism these traditional settings attract attention. Especially with the effect of efforts in creating new destinations they started to reuse for different activities.

#### V. STAGED AUTHENTIC TRADITIONAL TURKISH HOUSE INTERIOR

In recent years, some of these typical traditional houses have started to be used as restaurants for touristic purposes. Mainly these approaches focus on representing authentic cultural values. In this reconstruction of authenticity process, the true image of cultural identity cannot be reflected. [12]

Unfortunately, these touristic affords ended up with reflecting false meanings. According to preservation regulation in the country, the exterior facades of these buildings are reconstructed in respect to its original. However, in the reconstruction of the interior space, there are no regulations.



Fig. 9. Boyacı Zagde Konagi 1



Fig. 10. Boyacı Zagde Konagi 2

The example photographs are taken from a staged authentic tourist setting in Ankara (capital city of Turkey). This typical traditional Turkish house was converted to a restaurant. Firstly because of its new function, the interior space has had just opportunity to reflect cuisine of the country. Both intangible and tangible cultural heritage derived from living habits have been undermined beforehand. In this case, the existential authenticity has diluted, totally. [12]

The tourist can just experience the authenticity through objects. Unfortunately, the organization and the types of furniture do not reflect the eating culture of its origins. The

table and chair organization in the space prevent the wholistic volume expression of the typical interior of a traditional Turkish house. Moreover, the stylistic origins of furniture do not reflect the Turkish traditions either. In this case, the object authenticity cannot be truly reflected as well. The case in result is a total constructive/staged authenticity that is far from reflecting the original cultural heritage of the country. The study about sustainable tourism insists on the value of local cultural restaurants and cafes as the media for increasing the value of destination. [8]



Fig. 11. Bozdayı Archives

Also photographs above are taken from another Traditional Turkish House interior converted to a restaurant in Ankara. In addition to the given example beforehand, the decorative elements are also different from the origins of the Traditional Turkish house. General atmosphere totally rejects its original roots. The staged authenticity does not reflect the true formations and meaning of Turkish culture. Under the restrictions of regulations, the exterior of the house is preserved but the interior space behaves independently from the original cultural identity. However, the tourist experiences a totally false authenticity via reconstructed interiors.



Fig. 12. Depiction of Traditional Eating Manners [16]

On the other hand, the meaning that the tourist shapes in his mind is a mix with other cultures' values. As it is mentioned, in Traditional Turkish House there are 2 main elements that

reflect the living habit of the culture. These are room and the sofa. In these spaces all, living habits of the culture is represented. However, in staged authentic examples, these room turns in to ordinary room. The picture above is a depiction of a single unit room in the traditional house. As it can be perceived the seating unit and the table is on the floor. This is actually depicts the eating manner of the culture.

Photographs are demonstrated the old and the new examples together. As it can be easily perceived, the staged authentic examples are far from depicting the original aesthetic identity. In the first example typical elements such as fireplace, setting units are totally removed. The tables and the chairs are typical western type of furnitures. The traditional setting way of setting with sedirs is also rejected. For organization of tables and chairs the wholistic space understanding demolished. In all three examples there are no traditional wooden art products. Decorative wooden elements removed from the interior. Especially in the second example all the furnitures are for from traditional identity of Turkish culture. Furnitures block the traditional wall applications. In other words, typical build in elements on the walls become invisible. In most of the reused interiors, the build in wardrobes removed for gain extra space.



Fig. 13. Traditional House Interiors and Staged Authentic Examples

When these reconstruction processes evaluated from the perspective of cultural meaning transmission, there are also different problems occurred. Table on the above aims to set the typical features' original and staged authentic function. Room as the main living unit in house started to used as dining hall. As room, the sofa turns to be a dining room. Also in most of the examples, the typical elements like, fireplace, horizontal wooden unit, builds in wardrobes and sedir are totally removed. The other elements such as fireplace and wooden ceiling features are used as a decorative element. As it can be easily perceived from the above table, the both tangible and in tangible feature in the living environment far from reflect the cultural identity of the country. In staged authentic setting the function changes, prevent the tourist experience the interior. The tourist can pensive the authentic through objects in the interior but, cannot experience the original authenticity. UNESCO (2003) defines intangible cultural heritage from many different aspects, such as "processes and practices rather than end products", defined as "sources of identity, creativity, diversity and social cohesion".

| Typical Element                     | Traditional Turkish House | Function  | Staged Authentic Function |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|---|---------------------------|
| Typical spaces                      | Sofa                      | Socialization   | Eating                    |
|                                     | Room                      | Basic living requirements (sleeping, eating, seating, working, etc) | Eating                    |
| Typical furnishings in the interior | Fireplace                 | Heating and cooking   | Without function,         |
|                                     | Sedir (seating Unit)      | Seating, resting  | Not used                  |
|                                     | Build in wardrobes        | Storing   | Decoration                |
|                                     | Ceiling decoration        | Decoration  | Decoration                |
|                                     | Ground floor coverings    | Covering  | Not used                  |
|                                     | Horizontal wooden unit    | Limit the horizontal line   | Not used                  |

Table1. Changing functions in Staged-Authenticity

## VI. DESIGN CRITERIAS

In order to create a staged authentic interior it is essential to depict the cultural identity of the specific culture. Depicting the true intangible and tangible cultural identity can be conveyed through using the typical features. However, these typical feature should not used as a decorative element. Organization of these elements should reflect the living; eating manner of culture that tourist can experience the authentic function. In other word, except take role in the authentic experience except tourist just watching the interior as an authentic object. Only by this way, intangible cultural heritage can be sustained.

On the other hand, it is very important to develop a conciseness in preservation of traditional values. Especially Administrational authorities have to take role in educating the citizens. Moreover the preservation rules should develop for reusing a traditional interior environment. Building preservation rules shouldn't restricted with outside face of the building. As exterior, the interior design project should meet the requirement to preserve the cultural values. In addition, these rules should meet the contemporary living habits. UNESCO claims that, "to be kept alive, intangible cultural heritage must be relevant to its community, continuously re-created and transmitted from one generation to another" [22]

The interior space does not have to be totally preserved in its original formation. It can be reinterpreted. The living conditions are changing. The historical environment should "harmonies conservation requirements with satisfying the current needs of life".[23] The main point is to reinterpret it with the help of its typical features. The staged authenticity cannot be constructed without original typical characteristics.

To list and summarize the above mentioned recommendations, it is necessary for:

- The design to incorporate culturally authentic forms that incorporate existing typical characteristics
- In the image construction phase, the contemporary interpretations of these typical characteristics are to be stylized
- The elements which constitute the image are to incorporate the layers of meaning that are fundamental to the authentic traditional house type
- In consultation with the owners of the establishment, the designer must offer an operational setup that enables modern living conditions (consumption manners).
- The preservation regulation must develop for the interior environment.
- The staged authentic environment should give change to experience the intangible cultural heritage.

## VII. CONCLUSION

Staged authenticity is a method for reused a specific tourist setting. Therefore, this method is an instrument to translate the cultural identity. In the same time, it is responsible to translate the cultural meanings. Therefore, designing a staged authentic interior is an important responsibility in sustainability of cultural heritage. It is an essential

responsibility both for sustainability of intangible and tangible cultural heritage. Sustaining the tangible parts and intangible parts of the cultural value is an interrelated phenomenon. Just preserve the material essence of the building cannot make people understand the cultural values, meanings. These values can assimilate to the tourist through the medium of intangible values, such as living habits, eating manners, etc. therefore the staged authentic Traditional Turkish houses should be a place to experience the living habits such as seating in sofa, experience the wholistic interior, etc.

The interior architect and designers should develop project be aware of their responsibility in sustaining a cultural heritage. Staging an authentic tourist setting is not a practice of fake artificial image making. It is an essential responsibility to sustain a cultural heritage.

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