

20th Century Housing Practices in Osmaniye: Analyzing the Veli Bağ House in the Context of Studio Apartment

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ABSTRACT

Due to the fact that secondary school and high school level schools are not available in every settlement in Osmaniye Province, it was not until the 1990s that school-aged individuals were sent to the city center to study. This situation has led to accommodation problems for students coming to the city for educational purposes, resulting in the proliferation of rental properties consisting of a single main room. The research includes the evaluation of the Veli Bağ house, which is the most well-known of these properties and one of the only surviving examples, in the context of a studio apartment. In this context, a literature review was conducted to identify the primary characteristics of the studio apartment typology. In the next stage, oral history methods were employed to determine the reasons for the emergence of rental housing in the city and the period during which it appeared, specifically in the case of the Veli Bağ house, and to reveal the spatial characteristics of this type of housing. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 people who had lived in the building. Based on the findings, the similarities and differences between the Veli Bağ House and the studio apartment typology were discussed.

Keywords: Studio apartment; oral history; Osmaniye; Veli Bağ House; housing

INTRODUCTION

The history of Osmaniye as a city date back to the second half of the 19th century. According to the new Provincial Regulation, Osmaniye was recognized as a district in 1866 and was connected to the Payas Cebel-i Bereket Sanjak, which in turn was attached to the Aleppo province. In 1874, the Payas Sanjak was relocated to Yarpuz and renamed Osmaniye Cebel-i Bereket Sanjak. With the proclamation of the Republic in 1923, sanjaks were transformed into provinces. Osmaniye was also administratively restructured and made a province, taking the name “Cebelibereket Province” (Kuru 2020). Osmaniye retained its provincial status until 1933, when it was reverted to district status (Tülücü 1993).

During the period when Osmaniye held district status, it is reported that there were approximately twenty sibyan mektebi (elementary religious schools) and two madrasas,

classified as traditional educational institutions. The establishment of ibtidai mektep (modern primary schools) did not occur until 1895. By 1900, there were three ibtidai mektep in Osmaniye, with a total of 65 students enrolled. These schools were for male students only, and in 1906, an ibtidai mekteb for girls was also opened (Aktürk 2021). The first numune mektebi, Yedi Kanun-i Sani, now known as Yediocak Primary School, opened in 1911. With the onset of the Turkish War of Independence, education in the city's schools was interrupted. After the proclamation of the Republic, the city gained a new school called Orta mektep in 1926. At the time, village schools provided education only up to the third grade, so students from villages and surrounding districts had to come to the city center to pursue higher grades (Arı 2010).

Kabasakal notes that in the 1940s, when the total population of Osmaniye was around 13,000, the number of students enrolled in the city's schools was approximately

350, about 200 of whom came from nearby settlements such as Ceyhan, Kadirli, Kozan, İslâhiye, Bahçe, and Dörtöyl (Kabasakal 1993). Due to the lack of middle schools and high schools in every settlement, school-age individuals were sent to city centers for education until the 1990s. (Kabasakal 1993; Arı 2010). This situation has led to accommodation problems for students coming to the city for educational purposes, resulting in the proliferation of rental properties consisting of a single main room. These houses, such as Veli Bağ House, Miniksar House, and Poyrazlar House, played a crucial role until the 1990s, when transportation from villages to the city center was not readily available, in addressing the housing needs of those who came to the city for education or work. Shaped by the socioeconomic conditions and user needs of their time, these houses are also an important part of the city's cultural heritage. However, they were not preserved and were demolished due to urban transformation projects. This study focuses on evaluating the Veli Bağ House, the most well-known of these dwellings and the only example that still partially survives, within the context of a studio apartment.

THE CONCEPT OF STUDIO APARTMENT

Housing, one of the fundamental needs of human beings, has found numerous spatial expressions throughout history. Developments in the early 1800s, along with the increased migration movements after 1830, triggered population growth in the United States and consequently intensified the demand for housing (Lubove 1962; Veiller 1903). This situation led to the emergence of the concept of rental housing. Rental houses provided a solution to the housing problem by accommodating multiple families in two- or three-story dwellings. In these houses, the main space, typically a large room, was divided in such a way that two or three families could reside within it. Toilets and kitchens were shared by all families on each floor. As waves of migration continued to grow, most of these dwellings became overcrowded, and the housing demand of low-income populations continued to increase (Kalk 2008). This persistent demand for housing ultimately gave rise to the housing typology known today as the studio apartment.

In dictionaries, a studio apartment is defined as “a flat or apartment containing a single main room.” A studio apartment is a type of dwelling designed with minimal features capable of meeting the basic needs of human life. In these dwellings, functions such as living, sleeping, and dining are accommodated within a single space, while the toilet and bathroom are located in a separate compartment adjoining the main room (Ergün 2010; Soyuluk & Yılmaz

2017). The earliest examples of studio apartments in the United States were designed as multi-story buildings and featured various layout types, such as 1+0 and 1+1. Toilets on each floor were shared among the apartments, and bathrooms were not included in the units. The natural lighting requirement of the apartments was met through light shafts (Collins 1904; Merriam & Webster 2013; Infranca 2016).

Although this housing typology began to appear in Turkey in later years, there is no precise information available regarding its emergence date. In the existing literature, contemporary sources on the subject are largely limited to theses (Ergün 2010; Ünlü 2014; Özkaynak 2017; İlerde 2019). Tanyeli notes that the proportion of single-room housing units commonly used in the 15th century and referred to as “cells” within the total housing stock had significantly declined by the late 18th century (Tanyeli 1996). Similarly, Görgülü states that the concept of rental rooms existed during the Ottoman period and that, from the mid-15th century onward, there were rows of rental rooms belonging to foundations (*vakıfs*) in major cities such as Istanbul and Edirne. However, he notes that by the 18th century, no examples of such rows of rooms remained in Istanbul (Görgülü 2016). Nevertheless, the single-room housing typology continued to be used to meet workers' housing needs, similar to the workers' dormitories seen in Istanbul and Ankara in the early 20th century (Cengizkan 2000). No sources have been found indicating that such single-room dwellings could be classified as studio apartments.

Özkaynak argues that the first studio apartments in Turkey were the 1+1 units located in the Ataköy Emlak Bank Housing Complex in Istanbul, designed by architect Rahmi Özgüner and built in 1987 (Özkaynak 2017). However, there are earlier examples. The bachelor dormitories in the Karabük Iron and Steel Factory settlement, whose construction began in 1937, and which consisted of units ranging in size from 18 to 27 square meters (Öktem 2009), can be considered examples of studio apartments. Similarly, it is known, based on visits to the area, that the bachelor dormitories built in the 1970s within the İskenderun Iron and Steel Factory complex represent an earlier example of the studio apartment typology. These cases necessitate a reevaluation of the history of studio apartments in Turkey. In this context, the present study aims to discuss the similarities and differences between this housing type, which holds an important place in Osmaniye's urban memory, and the studio apartment.

In this regard, the need has arisen to establish a framework for the characteristics of a studio apartment. According to the existing literature, studio apartments today are most often preferred by single individuals, childless couples, students, and those who come for

short-term stays for reasons such as employment in different settlements (Görgülü 2003; Akçaova 2019). Studio apartments can also be used as both a residence and a workspace (Ergün 2010). The literature presents differing views on the minimum size standards for this type of housing. Ergün (2010) notes that studio apartments are generally planned to be under 50 square meters, while Dinç (1986) and Degasis (2006), referencing the 1964 Public Housing Standards, define 63 square meters as the upper size limit for small dwellings. Balamir (1986) identifies 60 m² as the upper limit for small dwellings, whereas Dinç (1986) suggests that 14 m² per person should be considered the maximum (Dörter et al. 1988; Desagis 2006).

The primary determining factor in the emergence of this housing type is economic conditions (Soyluk & Yılmaz 2017). The concept of the studio apartment, which emerged as a means to gain space due to financial constraints, carries different meanings in different countries today. The studio housing model, which has been implemented in many countries for many years, stands out as an effective living solution. Changes in this housing type are generally considered a reflection of social and cultural trends rather than spatial necessities (Lifeedited.com 2013). In the context of Western countries, studio apartments are spatial models that balance economy, functionality, and aesthetic values, drawing attention as a reflection of modern lifestyles (Patel & Qahed Johar Dahodwala 2021). In the United Kingdom, increases in

household size, rising construction costs, and limited land availability have led to reductions in housing dimensions (West & Emmitt 2004). In metropolitan cities with a high density of tall buildings, limited space and low-income levels make it difficult for individuals to own or rent housing. Due to developments in education and employment opportunities, people migrate from rural areas to cities and metropolitan centers for settlement or to pursue higher education. This situation forces individuals to live in studio apartments with limited space. However, there is no reason why studio apartments cannot be quality, comfortable, and livable spaces (Richmond 2012). In many metropolitan cities in India, individuals are often forced to live in small, irregularly structured, and poorly furnished apartments with limited resources. In these regions, spatial area is a fundamental factor in terms of quality of life and a valuable resource; insufficient space, limited storage opportunities, restricted movement areas, and furniture incompatible with the space directly affect the structural organization of the apartments. Therefore, every small area in each studio apartment is used as efficiently and functionally as possible (Patel & Qahed Johar Dahodwala 2021). In Turkey, studio apartments became a trend concept in the 2000s and have today reached a position that can be associated with luxury (Aslan 2012). Based on the literature, the general characteristics of studio apartment a can be listed as shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1. General Characteristics of Studio Apartments

Criteria	Feature	References
Spatial Characteristics	1+1	Collins (1904); Özkaynak (2017); Öncel (2020)
	1+0	Collins (1904), Özkaynak (2017); Öncel (2020); Urban Land Institute (2014); Merriam-Webster (2017).
	2+1	Lau and Wei, (2018)
	<40 m ²	Soyluk and Yılmaz (2017), Ünlü (2014)
	<50 m ²	Ergün (2010)
	<63 m ²	Dinç (1986), Desagis (2006)
	<60 m ²	Balamir (1986)
20 m ² -135 m ²		
User Demographics	Students	Görgülü (2003), Dörter the others., (1988); Desagis (2006); Dikeç (2013); Patel & Qahed Johar Dahodwala, (2021).

continue...

...cont.

	Single-person Households - Individual Life	Öncel (2020); İlerde (2019); Görgülü (2003); Akçaova (2019); Patel & Qahed Johar Dahodwala, (2021); Mansuri, (2020); Gabbe, (2015); Lau & Wei, (2018); Potikyan, (2017); Clinton, (2019); Iglesias, 2014; Lau & Wei, (2018); Klinenberg, (2012); Shore, (2013); Nelson, (2013); Hankovszka, Végh, (2021).
Social and Daily Life	Neighborhood relations	Ulusoy and Özkaynak (2017); Soyuk and Yılmaz, (2017)
	Economic Structure	Aslan (2012); Ulusoy and Özkaynak (2016); Ball, (1980); Urban Land Institute, (2014); Infranca, (2016)

VELİ BAĞ HOUSE

The Veli Bağ House is situated in the Rahime Hatun Neighborhood, Osmaniye, on parcels 45 and 13 of Block 118, 9065 Street (Figure 1). The building is a sequence of spaces consisting of eight separate apartments attached to a three-room residence. Following the proclamation of the Republic, since village schools only provided education up to the 3rd grade, students from villages and surrounding districts came to the city center to continue their education

in higher grades. They stayed either with relatives or in rented rooms, as was the case with the Veli Bağ House. According to interviews, although the original owner of the house was Hüseyin Ünalı, it is understood that the house became known by the name “Veli Bağ” (Bey) due to its long-time use by Veli Şanlı, who was nicknamed “Veli Bağ.” This residential complex, generally rented to students, constitutes the sample area of the study because it stands out for being larger in scale compared to other buildings in the city and for partially surviving to the present day.



FIGURE 1. Location and Current Status of Veli Bağ House (Parcel Inquiry)

METHODOLOGY

In Osmaniye province, this study aims to evaluate the housing type shaped according to the socio-economic conditions of the period and user needs, and considered an important part of the city’s cultural heritage, as exemplified by the “Veli Bağ House” within the context of the studio apartment. Using the oral history method, the study seeks to determine the reasons for the emergence of these houses

and their historical period, to understand their spatial characteristics, and to trace the social and everyday life of the period between 1950 and 1980 by listening firsthand to individuals who lived in these houses.

Oral history, a method increasingly encountered in Turkey in recent times, allows us to understand the conditions of real life through the experiences of ordinary people (Öztürk 2013) and is important for making sense of current social, cultural, economic, and political changes (Durna 2022). This method records

memory-based narratives of everyday life and the ordinary people who experience it (Abrams 2010). Oral narratives related to the city and urban space hold great significance because they enable the production of knowledge that is nowhere else recorded and unique to that city about the past and present conditions of changing, transforming, or completely vanished urban spaces or built environment elements. The importance of knowledge gained through oral history lies not only in the histories of urban elements but also in the reflection of urban space in urban memory and its relational meaning within the city as a whole (Karpas 2009).

In selecting interviewees for the study, priority was given to individuals who had lived in the Veli Bağ House, the main focus of the research, and had witnessed that period. The original owners of this house, one of the primary examples of the studio apartment typology in the city, are no longer alive. Therefore, residents of the street where the house is located were interviewed, and through their testimonies, a key interviewee (Interviewee 1) was reached, who had lived on this street for 45 years and in the Veli Bağ House for 30 of those years. Through this key

interviewee, other residents who had lived in the house were accessed, and a total of 10 participants were interviewed face-to-face using semi-structured interviews. The interviews were conducted between July 25, 2024, and October 22, 2024. The study has received ethical approval from the Research Ethics Committee of Osmaniye Korkut Ata University, Faculty of Science and Engineering, dated July 19, 2024, with approval number E-58565088-100-188191. Participation in the interviews was voluntary.

The semi-structured interview form used in the research consisted of a total of ten questions; four of these addressed participants' demographic characteristics, such as age, gender, occupation, and duration of residence in the house; two questions concerned how participants learned about the house and their reasons for choosing it; and four questions focused on evaluating the spatial characteristics of the houses.

In addition to these questions, participants were asked during the interview process to roughly draw the house plans; however, only Interviewees 1 and 4 responded positively to this request.

TABLE 2. Information about the interviewees

	Gender	Year of Birth	Occupation	Duration of Residence
Interviewee 1	Male	1945	Retired	1950-1980
Interviewee 2	Male	1954	Retired	1968-1971
Interviewee 3	Female	1925	Housewife	1963
Interviewee 4	Female	1958	Retired	1970-1973
Interviewee 5	Male	1943	Retired	1956-1958, 1961
Interviewee 6	Female	1963	Midwife	1973- 1976
Interviewee 7	Female	1960	Housewife	1970-1973
Interviewee 8	Male	1949	Worker	The 1970s
Interviewee 9	Male	1939	Worker	1974-1975
Interviewee 10	Male	1956	Retired	1976-1978

The data obtained from the interviews were analyzed within the framework of the general characteristics of the studio apartment, as identified in Table 2. In this context, the similarities and differences between the subject building and the studio apartment were discussed.

FINDINGS

At this stage of the study, the data obtained from the interviews were analyzed under three main headings related to the scope of the questions posed to the interviewees: user profile, social and everyday life, and spatial characteristics. The first section of the study examines the profile of the residents living in these houses. The second

section addresses the reasons for the emergence of the studio apartment, its historical period, and traces of the social and everyday life of that era. The final section aims to reveal the spatial characteristics of the studio apartment.

USER DEMOGRAPHICS

The interviewees' narratives, indicating the purpose of use of this place, suggest that a significant portion of its population consisted of students.

“This house existed when I was born. At that time, we lived somewhere else. My father later bought this house from Hüseyin Ünalı. Back then, such houses were very common in Osmaniye. Especially those who were financially struggling

would add two rooms at the back of their house to rent to middle and high school students coming from villages as extra income. Since this place was actively used, everyone knew about it... Students coming from villages did not live alone here. Because their parents were busy working in the fields back in the village, their grandmother, midwife, or older sister would be sent to stay with the child to take care of them.

Different people stayed in these houses every year. These houses were built so that students would not have to look for a place to sleep after school..." (Interviewee 1).

"Veli Şanlı was a distant relative of mine; I found this place because I knew him. But this place was very well known. There was no other place this extensive elsewhere. The ones that existed were usually just one or two rooms. For example, a one-room place belonging to Latif Tülüçü, a little further down, and a room built under the Poyraz family's house... I know this place was built in the 1940s; Hüseyin Ünalı had it constructed—he was also another relative from the village... I came from the village in 1968 to attend middle school. I stayed here for three years. Usually, students like me live here; many people grew up here." (Interviewee 2).

"My late son stayed here while he was in middle school. We found this place based on a recommendation. Students always stayed here." (Interviewee 3).

"Student rooms were very common in the district. Since those places had only one or two rooms, they were not well known; everyone used to refer to the student rooms at Veli Bağ. The rents were also cheap here... We were going to school. We had come from the village to study. I was attending high school, and my sibling was in middle school." (Interviewee 4).

"There were houses like this, but this one was large and well known... I stayed here twice. The first time, it belonged to Ali Ünalı; I was a middle school student at the time. I stayed for three years. The second time I stayed, a private high school had opened in Osmaniye, and I studied there for one year. By that time, Veli Şanlı had purchased it." (Interviewee 5).

"I had just started the first year of middle school. We stayed for three years. There was no school in the village. My older brother found this place. Two girls stayed here, my sister and I. There were always male students in the neighboring rooms." (Interviewee 6).

"Everyone in the village knew Veli Bağ... We came from the village to study. I am among the first graduates of Osmaniye Vocational School. I stayed here for two years, between 1976 and 1978." (Interviewee 10).

Among those residing in Veli Bağ House were not only students but also people who came to the city center for work purposes. The narrators describe this situation as follows:

"In later periods, it was not only students who stayed here; I remember that single women also lived here. These houses had many tenants..." (Interviewee 1).

"Sometimes workers would stay here. Usually, two or three people would share one room." (Interviewee 2).

"At times, civil servants or single women who came to work also rented rooms." (Interviewee 3).

"There were workers in the neighboring rooms as well. Although most came to study, occasionally some came to work." (Interviewee 7).

"We stayed in those houses during the '70s. At that time, I was working in the iron and steel industry (İskenderun). We had come from the village. My aunt found this place, and we stayed together. My aunt would cook and clean the house while I went to work and came back." (Interviewee 8).

"I used to be a carpenter back then. I had five children. We stayed there out of poverty. It was around 1974–75. The children were young and none of them were school-aged." (Interviewee 9).

"I stayed alone, but some stayed in crowded conditions; there were families who stayed because they were poor." (Interviewee 10).

This section examines the identities of residents who lived at Veli Bağ House during various periods and the ways they shaped the space from a socioeconomic perspective. Narrative interviews reveal that, in the early years, housing was distributed by many villagers, but women, workers, and low-income families also resided in these spaces. Thus, Veli Bağ House became not just a place of shelter but a micro-community where different social segments temporarily intersected, where education and transitional struggles intertwined.

SOCIAL AND DAILY LIFE

In the participants' narratives about social and everyday life, there are expressions emphasizing the concept of privacy:

"My father did not want to bring students coming from villages into the house because he had four daughters. Therefore, he made sure they stayed in the rooms at the back of the house." (Interviewee 1).

"When we went to the bathroom, the men would enter inside." (Interviewee 4).

In the participants' statements, descriptions emphasize that neighborly relations were prioritized during their time, and that mutual assistance and solidarity were highly valued:

“I had a very good relationship with the landlord. He often didn’t charge rent from most of us. We would run errands for him and even buy bread for him. In the evenings, my friends and I would gather in one room to cook and then play games.” (Interviewee 2).

“Others staying in rented rooms would come over to visit us, and we would have tea. Neighborly relations were good. We also sat on the terrace with neighbors.” (Interviewee 4).

“People were respectful and helpful. We would exchange food with neighbors. Neighbors always carried water for us.” (Interviewee 7).

“I am disabled. One of my legs is limp. My aunt was old at that time. Neighbors would help us with everything.” (Interviewee 8).

“We are from the same region as our neighbors. We used to chat while waiting for the bathroom.” (Interviewee 10).

Interviewees 1 and 4 mentioned in their narratives a short film that was shot here but could not be released due to financial constraints. The interviewees described the film as depicting everyday life in the residence as follows:

“The late Hüseyin Ünalı (former president of the journalists’ association) made a short film about these houses and the lifestyle at that time. However, he could not continue because he lacked the funds to release it. He had brought an actor from Istanbul. The other extras were residents here. The actor also stayed overnight at our house. In the film, children waited at the bathroom door with tin pitchers.” (Interviewee 1).

Hüseyin Ünalı shot a film here. The visiting actor wore my clothes. My family used to bake bread in the garden. The children lined up for the bathroom as usual...” (Interviewee 4).

This section examines the daily life practices of residents at Veli Bağ House, their neighborly relations, and the space’s role in social memory. Interview data reflect a lifestyle where privacy, sharing, and solidarity coexist in this housing type. Participants’ memories of practices such as cooking together, gathering in the courtyard, and helping each other demonstrate that the space was not only a physical but also a social organizing space. These narratives concretely reflect the social values and culture of coexistence of the period.

SPATIAL CHARACTERISTICS

As a result of the interviewees’ narratives, everyday life practices and spatial characteristics in these apartments have been revealed. Interviewee 1, who spent their childhood and youth in this house, described the building’s architecture as follows:

“These rooms were detached, meaning they were single-story with doors opening directly to the outside. There were eight rooms lined up around a spacious courtyard. The toilet was outside and shared.. Sometimes, there would be a queue for the toilet. My father always told us that the stones used in building our house were brought from Karaçay. In some parts of the 60 cm-thick stone walls, there were built-in cupboards (with 40 cm wooden doors). Additionally, the foundations of the houses built for students from the village did not exist; they were added later. Their floors were handmade with mud made from white clay. Later, concrete was poured there. The exterior walls were made of adobe, and the interior partitions were constructed by nailing wooden planks filled with broken stones, then plastered with clay soil mud. Thanks to these infill walls, the rooms stayed cool in summer and warm in winter. In some interior walls, fences woven from murt bushes were used, and both sides of this weave were plastered with mud prepared from white clay. The rooms had no electricity or water.” (Interviewee 1).

The apartments in the residence consist of spaces attached to the main building, arranged in orderly rows with 1+0 and 1+1 plan types. Interviewee 2 describes the place where they stayed as a boarding house and mentions that there were about eight to ten rooms lined up side by side at Veli Bağ House, though they could not recall the exact number. This statement is also supported by the narratives of other interviewees:

“This place was very long, like a boarding house; the apartments were connected to each other. Like English houses. The difference from a boarding house was that most did not pay rent. Those who paid, paid; those who didn’t, didn’t.” (Interviewee 2).

“These were rooms lined up side by side with the door at the front and the window at the back.” (Interviewee 3).

“They were rental rooms lined up side by side. There were eight rooms. There were many tenants.” (Interviewee 4).

“Rooms in a row; we stayed in one of them. There were nearly ten rooms.” (Interviewee 7).

“They were like train compartments lined up side by side.” (Interviewee 10). (Figure 2).

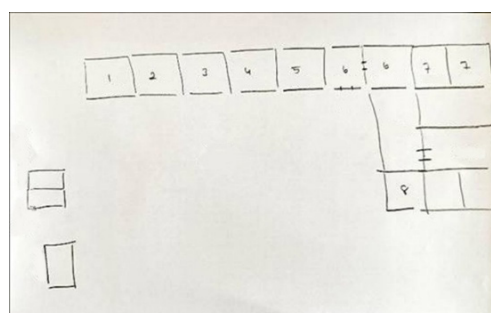


FIGURE 2. Veli Bağ House Floor Plan Sketch (Interviewee 4)

“Some rooms had a hearth, where they cooked food by lighting a fire. This hearth, about one and a half to two meters long, was used to hold matches, kindling, and oil lamps. Meals were prepared on it. Next to the hearth, there were mats where the children of the house would compete to sit. Sometimes, they even fought over it. In the corner of the houses, there was a ‘cağlak’, a one-square-meter area raised one step above the concrete floor. Water was carried here, and bathing was done in a basin placed there... Some houses had a divan, others had floor cushions. Tenants brought their own belongings...” (Interviewee 1).

“This was a single-room place. Approximately 4–5 meters long. Bathing was done inside the room on an oval concrete area. Some rooms had village-style hearths, but mine did not when I stayed. Meals were cooked there. The apartments met our needs, given the conditions of that time... There was no furniture inside the house. Everyone brought their own. Some tenants borrowed divans from the landlord. My mother and I stayed there; we used floor mattresses...” (Interviewee 2).

“At that time, I had the chance to see the interiors of many apartments. There was a stove used for cooking and heating in the rooms. An open bath area was located in a corner of the room. This area was also used for washing dishes and storing kitchen utensils... The floor of the house we stayed in was made of wood, with a well underneath. There were two carved shelves in the adobe walls. Houses had hearths... (The house number 8 in Figure 2 is being described.)” (Interviewee 3).

“Five of us stayed here. Our house had two rooms that were different from the others. The entrance room served as a living room, guest room/salon, bedroom, and study room. The floor was wooden... We had two divans that we brought ourselves. We also had a table where we studied and ate... It did not fully meet our needs. There was no toilet inside.” (Interviewee 4).

“We stayed three people in one room. We slept and studied on a floor mattress. We also had a small place for bathing. It was sufficient. Our condition was good. We ate meals at restaurants. Children in other houses also cooked... There was no furniture at home; I brought mine myself. We slept on floor mattresses...” (Interviewee 5).

“The architecture here was poor; the toilet being outside, the lack of water, and the small size of the bathing area made things very difficult for us. To bathe, we would carry water in a bucket and heat it over a wood fire... We had beds made of wooden divans lined up in a row...” (Interviewee 6).

“It was a secure room. There was a ‘cağlak,’ where we bathed. We also had a single gas burner to cook.” (Interviewee 7).

“We did all our activities inside one room.” (Interviewee 9).

“That was a student room of that era. There was a ‘cağlak’ in the corner. We both washed dishes and bathed there.” (Interviewee 10).

The interviews reveal that participants generally used the apartments without making any modifications. Only

Interviewee 4 stated that in their two-room house, one room was used for kitchen, storage, and bathroom purposes.

“We turned the room with the cağlak into a kitchen. We kept all our belongings there. There were only two divans in the other room. The cushions we slept on at night were placed in the kitchen during the day.” (Figure 3).

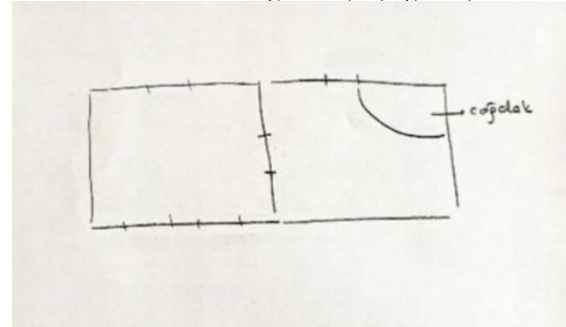


FIGURE 3. Sketch Drawing Illustrating Interior Space Usage (Interviewee 4)

In the Veli Bağ House, the courtyard space emerges as the primary element of daily life, driven by climate and lifestyle needs. The apartments in the residence have direct connections to the courtyard. The doors of the apartments, which serve limited uses, open directly onto the courtyard, where many daily life practices take place. The diverse uses of the multifunctional courtyard were described by the interviewees as follows:

“Children played dodgeball in the courtyard after school.” (Interviewee 1).

“On weekends, the neighborhood would make yufka (thin flatbread) in the courtyard. They would also share flatbread with us.” (Interviewee 2).

“I clearly remember children studying in the courtyard under the street lamp light.” (Interviewee 3).

“We would light a fire next to the fountain and wash the laundry.” (Interviewee 4).

“We played ball in this courtyard and in the empty area of Poyraz family’s orange orchard.” (Interviewee 5).

“We didn’t use the garden. It was mostly the men who sunbathed; we would put out the chairs and stay away.” (Interviewee 6).

“The children were in the garden all day long.” (Interviewee 9).

This section examines the spatial structure of the Veli Bağ House and the experiential relationship its users establish with it, based on narratives gathered through interviews. Participants’ statements demonstrate that this

single-story, row-style building, which opens onto a courtyard, was shaped to meet both climatic and social needs. The shared spaces, simple plan typology, and selection of local materials demonstrate the building's functionality and its adaptation to the living conditions of the period. This spatial order can be considered a material representation of a communal life form integrated with daily life practices.

DISCUSSION

This study examines the Osmaniye Veli Bağ House example within the framework of the studio apartment concept. In this context, the criteria addressed in Table 1 were analyzed using the oral history method, exemplified by the Veli Bağ House.

To determine the spatial characteristics of the building, a preliminary architectural plan draft was created based on roughly sketched floor plans obtained from interviewees and the spatial features mentioned in their narratives. The building features eight one-bedroom apartments and two two-bedroom apartments attached to the main residential space. These apartments serve basic functions such as living and sleeping. These limited spaces are designed quite simply and do not contain characteristic details in their interiors (Figure 4). This described building type shares similar spatial characteristics with the definition of a studio apartment discussed by Ergün (2010), Merriam and Webster (2013), Infranca (2016), and Soyuluk and Yılmaz (2017). Additionally, the shared use of toilets and the absence of bathrooms in the apartments resemble the earliest examples of studio apartment typologies that emerged in the United States.

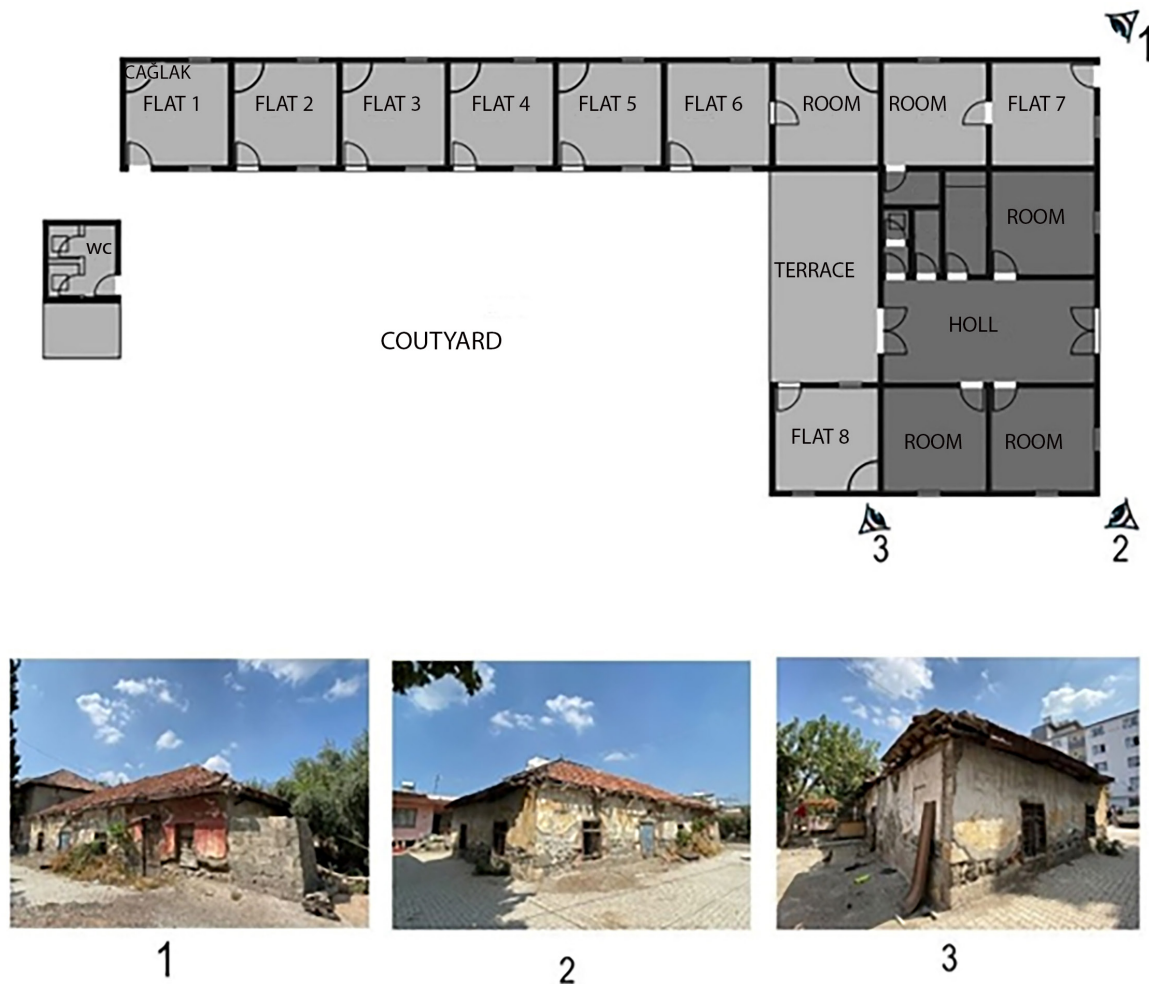


FIGURE 4. Veli Bağ House Plan Diagram (The dimensions of the main structure were measured on-site, whereas the studio apartments, having been demolished, were added based on informant accounts.).

When compared to contemporary studio apartments, it is observed that modern studios typically have separate wet areas, such as toilets and bathrooms, planned for each unit. Due to the non-detached nature of modern buildings, this arrangement negatively affects direct interaction with outdoor spaces, shared area usage, and consequently, opportunities for socialization. However, the fact that these apartments meet minimum standards remains valid today.

Although the dominant user profile emerging from the interviewees' narratives is students, it is also noted that these apartments were used, albeit in limited numbers, by singles, workers, and civil servants. This parallels the studio apartment user profiles defined by Görgülü (2003); Dörter et al. (1988); Desagis (2006); Dikeç (2013); Öncel (2020); İlerde (2019); and Akçaova (2019).

The financial constraints described in defining this housing type resemble the earliest examples that emerged in the United States, but differ from Aslan's (2012) definition, which associates the modern studio apartment with luxury. While Ulusoy and Özkaynak (2017) state that social relations among studio apartment residents are weak, the oral histories of the Veli Bağ example contradict this. The difference between this finding and the literature can be attributed to period-specific factors.

Based on the obtained data, it was determined that Veli Bağ House shares similar characteristics with a studio apartment in terms of spatial criteria, user profile, and economic structure.

RESULTS

In the United States, rental housing that became widespread due to migration movements and workers' housing needs emerged, in the case of Osmaniye, to facilitate access to educational opportunities in the city center. Interviewee 1 stated that they started living in the residence in 1950 and that the house existed at the time of their birth. Interviewee 3 mentioned that the house was built in the 1940s. Accordingly, it is thought that the Veli Bağ House dates back to the Early Republican Period. During this period, the limited economic conditions, inadequate education, and poor transportation facilities forced people to come to the central district for schooling, which also led to housing problems. Small apartments, as seen in the case of Veli Bağ, became a widespread solution to the city's housing problem. Therefore, the majority of apartment users were students. However, the narratives also mention that individuals who came to the city for work and lived alone resided in these houses. Unlike the concept of rental housing, a residence typically consists of rooms with independent entrances that are connected to each other.

The concept of privacy was also an important factor in the emergence of this formation. Due to the economic conditions of the period, the spaces are quite simple and respond to housing needs at a minimal level. This situation allows for the intensive use of common areas, such as terraces and courtyards, and enables residents to spend time together and socialize.

Interviewees stated that there was no furniture in the rental apartments, and everyone brought their own belongings. It was noted that common regional furnishings such as divans, floor cushions, and floor beds were used inside. These furnishings supported the multifunctional use of the space. Under the conditions of that time, it is understood that there was no designated kitchen area in these spaces. While toilet functions were located in the shared courtyard, *çağlak* rooms provided a solution for bathing and cleaning kitchen utensils. The film mentioned by interviewees 1 and 4 highlights the importance of the Veli Bağ House in terms of the sociocultural life of the period. It can be said that the housing type examined in the study shares similar characteristics with studio housing, consisting of a single main space that serves basic functions such as living and sleeping. The formation of the residence resembles the earliest examples of the studio apartment typology that emerged in the United States, particularly in terms of shared toilet use and the absence of bathrooms. Therefore, it would not be wrong to state that the apartments in Veli Bağ House are among the early examples of the studio apartment typology in Turkey. The research is significant in that it examines the development of the studio apartment typology in Turkey, taking into account the socio-economic conditions and cultural context of the period. The research sheds light on the socio-economic conditions of Osmaniye city between 1950 and 1980 by incorporating the narratives of individuals who witnessed the period, while documenting the tangible and intangible values embedded in the city's collective memory through these residences, which are part of Osmaniye Province's cultural heritage. These residences can be examined not only for their architectural and physical characteristics, but also for their cultural dimensions, including the lifestyles, social relations, societal norms, and daily practices of the period. Accordingly, the study offers a more comprehensive perspective on Osmaniye's cultural heritage, making visible the historical experiences, collective memory, and the relationships with space of the communities living in the city. In this context, the research findings contribute to the identification of values essential for the preservation and transmission of cultural heritage to future generations, while also encouraging new research areas and interdisciplinary studies aimed at understanding the city's historical fabric. Thus, the study makes a holistic contribution to the heritage of Osmaniye city, encompassing

not only the preservation of physical structures but also the preservation of social memory, identity, and cultural continuity.

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DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTEREST

None.

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