

A Look at the Neighbourhood Concept in the Context of Urbanisation in the Ottoman Empire

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Abstract: The term neighbourhood has drawn different pictures in people's minds depending on their cultural backgrounds. The eastern view has embraced and defined the term comprehensively when compared to the western philosophy. Both views had reflected the life style of people living in the same environment such as a live organism. The term has been consubstantiated with the entire elements including religious, social, political, economic and cultural. Indeed the philosophy of Islam has provided incontrovertible contribution for the term in the context of civilisation and its institutionalisation. Particularly in the Ottoman period the term had been the indispensable part of the governmental system as the lowest level. During the 600 year-life of the Ottoman, neighbourhoods had played a great role in the urbanisation process by reflecting all their life styles to their unique physical environments including masjids/mosques, houses, fountains, Turkish bathes, streets and squares, schools, eating houses for poor people etc.

Key words: Islamic civilisation · Neighbourhood · Neighbourhood management · Ottoman Empire · Urbanisation

INTRODUCTION

The article emphasizes the importance of the neighbourhood system by focusing on its urbanisation and administrative functions in the Ottoman. It requires shedding light on the important contributions of forming the Islamic civilisation and its institutions.

The study has been prepared by analysing different sources including some of the Ottoman sources such as sharia court registers "Şer'iyye Sicilleri". It also articulates the topics including; the definitions of some terms related to the topic of this study, the context of the neighbourhood term used in the Ottoman and understanding of neighbourhood in the Ottoman by focusing on its historical background, organs and functional zones.

The Definitions of the Terms

Neighbourhood: In order to be able to comprehend the study the term neighbourhood has been elaborated in

depth. The differences in the east and west concepts of the term have been put forward and these differences have formed the term neighbourhood and hence its functions.

When looking at the definitions of the term of neighbourhood defined by scholars, we come up against two major comprehension differences when referring to the western and eastern points of view. In general the western scholars have described and adopted the term into their terminologies by focusing on exclusively as a geographical-physical unit [1].

As the eastern scholars have ascribed to the term a comprehensive meaning by emphasising its not only geographical-physical characteristics but also its religious, social, economic, cultural aspects. They saw the phenomenon as a commencing point, a corner stone and also a tool contributing to the civilisation process of Islamic countries rigorously.

As is seen the points of view to the term reflect different understandings and beliefs. In this paper the eastern point of view is to be dealt with.

The neighbourhood term originally comes from an Arabic word derived from the root of the word of “hall”. It means that it is the place to be lived or to be settled. It was later adopted into the Turkish Language [2]. It refers to an administrative unit of many Islamic countries. Particularly in the Ottoman administrative system it was the lowest level local authority.

Bayartan in his study defines the neighbourhood term by interrelating with the term of accommodation. According to him, neighbourhood is a place, where there is an accommodation facility. Another definition of the term has been identified with the number of population and religious sanctuaries, which are called masjid(s). In this context the term is stated as, “A settlement unit of which population consists of approximately one thousand people of whom worship in the same masjid”. Another definition had taken place in an Ottoman Law (the Ottoman Province Law) in 1871. The law approached the term, as “A settlement unit consisting of at least fifty dwellings.” As for the sociological point of view the term has been identified, as the settlement units where people of cultural and regional differences live together within the framework of certain rules and ethics [3].

Perhaps the functional approach regarding the term is indicated in the study, which was conducted by Kivrım who determines the term by aggregating the three major meanings. One of the meanings is that the neighbourhood is a place where people, who have familiar characteristics in the identity context, live together in a neighbourhood or a city or town. The second approach is in the social-cultural context. In the context the term is explained as a community (communion) consisting of people who behave as a big family and who are responsible for and help each other and also who vindicate and solve and deal with their problems. The final meaning of the term neighbourhood is derived from one of the important Ottoman official sources, which is called Tax Registration Books “Tahrir Defterleri”. It contains detailed information having been saved on the book individually with respect to the people, who at the same time are the taxpayers, living in the same community [4].

Tax Registration Books “Tahrir Defterleri”: Tax registration books are one of four basic document types used in the Ottoman Empire and were called the book of the khan [5]. The books had been used to register the population and the ownership of land and property and the taxation issues [6].

Sharia Court Registers “Şer’iyye Sicilleri”: The sharia court registers “Şer’iyye Sicilleri” are one of the four major documents in the Ottoman official registration system [7]. These registers provide us precious information as the primary sources with respect to administrative, social, economic, cultural, political and martial structure of the Ottoman Empire [5]. Qadis, who are the judges in sharia laws, also responsible for the sharia court registers which comprise official correspondences with the central authority and the requests and complaints of the people and imperial orders. The most important function of the registers is to reflect the information related to the neighbourhood’s social, cultural and economic structure [8].

As a Concept: Neighbourhood: The migration process from the scattered and nomad life style to the settled one has been a corner stone in forming neighbourhoods. At first as the term of neighbourhood were defined as a couple of houses in today’s world parallel with population growth the content of the definition has changed [3]. The term has not only been described with the fact of population however social, cultural, economic and administrative facts have also been burdened to it. With all the facts neighbourhoods have been the cores of the perception of Islamic urbanisation process and have laid the foundation of Islamic civilisation.

In Islamic civilisation the term of neighbourhood reflects not only the community living in an area surrounded with borders it also reflects a life style comprising a social-cultural and economic life kneaded by Islamic beliefs. Therefore a neighbourhood, which is the integral part of comprising Islamic cities, is a phenomenon sheltering in its structure functionality and social-cultural integrity.

One of the important characteristics of Ottoman cities affected by Islamic beliefs was that they consisted of neighbourhood units as in the other Islamic cities. These units had unique ethnic and religious structures. People having the same religious and cultural and even ethnic backgrounds had preferred to live together. Therefore the beliefs had defined and formed the neighbourhoods in the Ottoman [4].

Contrary to the statement explained above, there are also many examples in Sharia Court Registers regarding the people having cultural and religious differences who prefer to live in the same neighbourhood unit. Hence it proves that it is not a rule to live in an area for people with the same backgrounds in Ottoman neighbourhoods [4].

In the spatial context meaning the term neighbourhood expresses that it is the smallest physical part of a city or a town. However in the social context it means the society, which has organizational relations amongst them. In the urbanisation context the neighbourhood is defined as the smallest settlement unit which has social, cultural and educational institutions such as masjids/mosques, primary schools “Sıbyan Mektebi”, drinking fountains “Çeşme”, Turkish baths “Hamam”, complex of buildings adjacent to a mosque “Küllüye”, groceries, Turkish coffee houses “Kahvehane”, parks and play grounds. As for the social point of the view it is the primary relations area based on neighbourly relationships [2].

Neighbourhood in the Ottoman: Neighbourhoods had played a significant role in the administrative system of the Ottoman Empire. As the smallest unit in the administrative system belonging not only to Ottomans but also pre-Ottomans it had described and reflected the freedom for the community living in it. Ortaylı in his study underlines the fact that the neighbourhood system in the context of identity had been designed by considering the diversity of the community by the Ottoman. Site is open to togetherness yet it is closed to commotion of cultural identity. The identities having different backgrounds had lived together without any prejudices by turning the life style into an institution [9].

There were certain internal rules including unwritten ones implemented in neighbourhoods. These rules were so powerful that immoral behaviours and/or actions in the unit were minimised. One of these rules was that the bachelors were not allowed to settle in the area they chose. The Imams decided and showed the place that they could settle [10].

In general there are three types of neighbourhoods in the Ottoman, which are Muslims, Non-Muslims and Living-Together (Harmonic) neighbourhoods. Religion and ethnicity had always been a key factor in the organisation and forming of neighbourhoods. The vital purpose of this organisational model had been to sustain different identities and to provide an environment for the consisting people who have a consciousness of living in harmony. A neighbourhood unit at the same time acts as a local control mechanism [2].

There were five organisational levels in the Ottoman. These were Province “Eyalet”, County “Sancak/Livâ”, District “Kazâ”, Township “Nâhiye” and Village “Köy” and the Qadis had served for the level of Eyalet,

Sancak-Livâ and Kazâ [5]. As administrators; while Imams having been appointed by the Ottoman Padishahs had administered the Muslim neighbourhoods, on the other hand, Priests and Rabbis parallel with their religions had administered the Non-Muslim Neighbourhoods and they all had reported to the Qadis [3].

Historical Background: The concept of neighbourhood goes back to the commencing of Islam. This perception has made great contribution to the civilisation of Islam. The basis of the neighbourhood perception had begun to be formed by the Prophet of Islam in the City of Medina in Saudi Arabia. And it had been developed and sustained by the Four-Caliphs, who were the presidents of the state of Islam after the Prophet, depending on the spreading and development of Islam.

After the Four-Caliphs, in the Omayyad and Abbasid period, the state of Islam had commenced to institutionalize.

In this period, the neighbourhoods were administrated by people called Chieftain “Reis” and Sheikh “Şeyh”. As Chieftains were appointed by the Governor yet Sheikhs were not. However they were acknowledged by the Governor. Equiposing and controlling the tribes against each other was one of the significant roles of these administrators [2].

The Seljuks had developed the neighbouring system by combining the previous three-periods-experiences in order to acquire the more efficient and sustainable administrative level. Hence they generated and reflected their own cultural identities and experiences to the concept of neighbourhood. In this period neighbourhoods were administrated by the chiefs named “İğdiş” who were elected by the people living in the neighbourhoods. They were appointed by Qadis. Their duties included representing local people for Qadis and Sultan, collecting local taxes and announcing the Sultan’s Order to local people [2].

Regarding the Ottoman period, the term of neighbourhood not only had reflected in the physical meaning it also had embraced its social-cultural features.

Therefore neighbourhood in the Ottoman means that it is a complete social-economic structure beside its physical elements such as school, madrasah, masjid/mosque, square, drinking fountain, Turkish coffee house (café), shops and bazaar, health centre/hospital, eating house for poor people and the Turkish bath [2]. Each of the neighbourhoods forming the Ottoman cities reflected their unique social, cultural, economic and physical features.

Perhaps the vital point of the features of Ottoman's neighbourhoods is that they had been formed as harmonic structure disregarding the differences such as level of status or cultural identities. So much so that a general "Pasha" and a civil servant had lived together in the same street [2].

The positive communication between the parties having social, cultural and economic differences had always been ensured and therefore it had been an area of mutual living without discrimination. This had caused a strong and sustainable empire and hence had structured the path of the building blocks going to an empire lasting for about six hundred years.

The Organs: Basically the prominent organs of neighbourhoods in the Ottoman had consisted of Imams and Trustee of Neighbourhood "Mahalle Mütevellisi". Nevertheless there was not a strict organisational structure in the neighbourhood system. It had been possible to come upon such an example of having a Leading Person called "Kethüda" representing the neighbourhood for the third party as deputy of Imam.

Imam: As a principle the neighbourhoods in the Ottoman had been formed around a masjid/mosque. The lowest level administrative unit in the empire had been the neighbourhoods governed by the Imams consisted of educated people having the level of madrasah education, which refers to university nowadays. In these madrasahs Imams had to have knowledge of particular subjects including Islamic jurisprudence, the study of hadiths, interpretation of Quran, utterance method, logic, philosophy, eloquence, syntax and etc [11].

One of the reasons why the Imams had an exclusive place in the eyes of people was that they were appointed directly by Padishah whereas the Qadis governing the cities were appointed by the high official in the Ottoman judiciary "Kazasker" [4]. The second reason was that the Imams had collected the local taxes [2].

The main duties and responsibilities of Imams serving also as deputy of Qadis were as follows:

- To lead the salaah prayers in the masjid/mosque.
- To determine the amount of the local taxes and to collect them by keeping the records.
- To keep registration records of people living in the neighbourhood such as birth, death, marriage and divorce etc.
- To maintain the order and security issues.
- To audit people in the context of ethical and religious values.

- To solve problems and disagreements amongst people.
- To provide and maintain the educational environment.
- To give permission and/or vouch individuals who want to move in to the neighbourhood.

The imams had lived in the same neighbourhood with the local people. This had caused for the increase of the communication between the imams and the people. Hence they had the significant amount of information with respect to the local people including the number of households and rental houses, the names of leading people, artisans and individuals living alone, goods and properties and also jobs and occupations they had [3]. This had helped Padishahs to get information regarding the local people from the Imams.

There sometimes had been more than one masjid/mosque in neighbourhoods. In these circumstances the imams had shared the streets in order to define the borders of responsibilities amongst themselves.

The local people had the designation power of the Imams. They controlled and observed their attitudes and behaviours and in case of any negative consequence they informed and complained to Qadis. Hence as long as the local people did not want them the imams could not be appointed.

The people sharing the same environment had taken responsibilities for each other by vouching. In the Ottoman there were certain rules for people who want to settle in a neighbourhood. One of which was that the person who wished to settle had to prove that he/she had a good character of person and also had a guarantor vouching for him/her. Otherwise the imam had to guarantee him/her [2]. Hence all the people living in the same neighbourhood were vouching each other successively. This system had helped to maintain the security and safety issues in the unit.

Trustee of Neighbourhood "Mahalle Mütevellisi": Another organ responsible for the unit was Trustee of Neighbourhood. Their main responsibilities included auditing and managing of "pious" foundations. These foundations consisted of land and buildings and money made over by the local dweller for the benefit of their neighbourhood. The foundations fulfilled the needs of not only the poor people living in the unit they also fulfilled the housing need of the Imam, the needs of the neighbourhood or a part of the taxes by the Central Government [12]. One of the vital institutions in relation to these foundations was a drifter foundation called

“Avarız Akçası Vakfı” reinforcing social cooperation amongst the residents. The local expenditures such as construction, maintenance, illuminating and heating of masjids/mosques, schools, drinking fountains and paying salaries for imams, muezzins and teachers had been received from the foundation [2]. The foundation had been the essence of the idea of maintaining not only social order but also establishing the core of the civilisation transforming into a world empire.

The Main Functional Zones in the Ottoman’s Neighbourhood: A neighbourhood in the Ottoman reflects not only the physical element resulting in the civilisational process it also refers to a social, economic and cultural environment. Hence as a result of the reflection of the Ottoman’s world-view, the neighbourhoods had been formed and designed as functional zones serving for local people’s needs.

In general these elements consisted of Mosque and Masjid, Housing, Streets and Square, Drinking Fountain, School, Coffee House (Turkish Café), Temples for Non-Muslims, Dervish Convent, Eating house for Poor People, Library, Shops and Turkish baths.

Mosques and Masjids: The mosques and masjids had taken place in the kernel of the system. These units had not only been a place of worship at the time of the daily prayers, the Friday prayer, the funeral prayers and the prayers of Eid it had also been a place where social communication was established amongst locals. Every single problem had been addressed, evaluated and then decided. The decisions with respect to the issues concerning their neighbourhood had been dealt with at mosques. From this aspect mosques had been the decision-making centres in the Ottoman.

Mosques have courtyards and have been established with the particular buildings including fountains used for ritual ablutions and usually located in the middle of a mosque courtyard, Turkish baths, madrasahs, funeral washing houses “Gasilhane”. There are certain differences between mosques and masjids. Mosques have minarets and domes yet masjids have not. Mosques are bigger structures having artistic and architectural characteristics as for masjids consist of plain structures forming four-walls. Another difference is that the funeral prayers, the Eids and Friday prayers were not performed at masjids yet they were at mosques. Masjids have served to the smaller dwelling units for the daily five-time prayers.

It is possible to see masjids along with a mosque in the same neighbourhood in the Ottoman. Most of these masjids had been located in certain areas in the neighbourhood units and were constructed with the wooden system involving wooden roofs, which were structured onto wooden posts “Baba Direği” consist of square-section sized 30X30 cm or 40X40 cm or the circular-section in diameter of 25-35 cm.

In the context of structure the Ottoman mosques had evolved from masjids having square-shape-plan and had only one-dome. The half and quarter domes being added to square-plan masjids had emphasized the fact of unique centralist place. As for the main dome had reflected the centre of the mosque.

The most of the mosques formed as “Küllüye” style (complex of buildings adjacent to a mosque) have the Selâtin mosques characteristics and they had been devoted to the charitable foundations. Such an example of this is the mosques in Istanbul had been endowed to the Foundation of Mecca-Medina. Selâtin mosques are mosques commissioned by a padishah who personally led a military campaign. Padishahs had built them with their personal fortunes. They are large mosques with several minarets. All the expenses of these “Küllüye”s consist of mosque, Turkish bath, madrasah, medical centre, shops and eating house for poor people had been satisfied by the Ottoman bazaar “Arasta” located around the outer walls of “Küllüye”s. In small-scale neighbourhoods the idea was similar. There were “Arasta” around the outer walls of the mosques or they had received a share from the income of the nearest Selâtin mosque [13].

Housing: Neighbourhoods had generally consisted of one or two-floor houses. Housing system had been established based upon the principle of privacy in the Ottoman neighbourhoods. For the security context houses had been structured so they could easily control the streets however it was not possible to see not only their courtyards but also their interior from outside. The aim and objectives of structure were the same in the unit. The materials used such as wood and rock and the workmanship observed were frequently the same.

Houses are based on the principle of the terms oriel “Cumba-Çıkma” and they rose on the principle “Fevkâni”. Roofs of houses have wide rooftrees and do not have rain drainage system. The rainspout “Çörten” system is used for rain drainage. The houses in the hot climate regions have houses without roofs called “Dam”s [13-17].

Courtyards play a great role in houses due to providing privacy. These courtyards had been surrounded by high walls and had functions such as cellar “Kiler”, barn “Ahır”, hayloft “Samanlık” and ornamental pool. Hence the courtyards of the houses had taken up a large (wide) space. Iwan “Eyvan”, a vaulted room with one side open to a courtyard, is another vital functional part of houses. Iwans had been the place where people came together for drinking Turkish coffee with their neighbors and accepted as a communication tool. They were covered with wooden curtains called “Muşabak”. In general their three sides are open and they are covered with roofs or wooden planks [13-20].

Streets and Squares: The formation of streets is organic. The morphological, physical environmental and functional causes have played a significant role in forming the organic structures of streets [21]. They have been formed from the natural rocks having rain drainage system (gutters) “Yağmur Suyu Harıkları” locating at the centre or both sides of the streets. The widths of the streets are narrow and the pavements have been formed on the main streets. Squares are one of the important landmarks in the Ottoman neighbourhoods. They are the places where people can gather together or separate from each other [13].

Drinking Fountains: Cleanliness is one of the major principles of Islamic philosophy and rules hence Muslim community in the neighbourhood had taken into consideration the principle by applying it to their daily life. As a result of this fountains and Turkish baths have been formed and built with the endowments in the neighbourhoods [22].

Fountains as a conspicuous landscape have provided positive contributions to the city aesthetics. Those days bringing water opportunity into the houses had not been possible by using a pipe system. Only in the palace, the Turkish bathes, water-tank with a fountain called “Şadırvan”, mosques and masjids and big mansions could bring water with clay water pipes. Hence the local community in the neighbourhood could provide their water need from the fountains by carrying it with a special container “water-skin” called “Kırba”. There also were special people called “Saka” who brought water with the containers to the houses. Due to the privacy concern the “Saka”s could not go into the houses and they emptied their container to the small tank made from rock

and located outside of the house called “Saka Deliği”. The water, hence, could be stored in the small tank connected to the big tank called “Küp” with primitive pipes. The “Saka”s could not get the water from all fountains in the neighbourhood. They could get it from the fountains given permission called “Gedikli Saka Çeşmesi” [23].

Fountains built along the waterways and providing running water served for people as drinking and cleaning purposes. They generally had three-taps. However it was possible to see that the fountains locating at central places have four, six or eight taps. Some of the fountains leaned over the blind-walls of houses, mosques or masjids and schools. Others took place in squares and all four sides were open. There were also types having roof and wide fringes. Even though the fountains roofs were covered with lead sheet there were also roofs covered with corrugated roof tiles.

Schools: Basically it is possible to categorize schools under two sections one of which was the religious educational institutions called “Madrasah” the other one was primary schools called “Sıbyan Mektebi”.

Madrasahs were the educational institutions locating at a “Küllüye” and providing boarding facilities for students. They had reflected the same architectural structure with “Küllüye”s. They had a courtyard system and the rooms of Madrasahs had been located inner side of the system so that they were open to the courtyard. The heights of the rooms’ door were between the ranges of 65-70 cm; their widths were generally 60 cm. The reason for the small doors was to provide a requisite saluting for teachers from students who wanted to come in to the class by bending their heads coercibly due to the door’s height.

Madrasahs had an ordinary plan type consisting of rooms swathing the courtyard like a chain. Masjids or mosques take place in the corner of the courtyard adjacent to a small cemetery called “Hazire” surrounded by fences or walls where the people building the madrasah or their relatives or professors called “Müderris” had been buried.

Regarding the primary schools called “Sıbyan Mektebi”, these schools had played a role in preparing children aging between 6-12 years for other educational institutions such as middle schools and madrasahs. They looked like a normal house consisting of two floors or sometimes one floor. The room capacity was between 8 and 10. They had also courtyards having a fountain and

a toilet facility. In addition to these two main categories there were also schools built and managed by the minority people in neighbourhoods [21].

Turkish Coffee House: In the Ottoman neighbourhoods certain places provided for social-political communications such as Turkish coffee houses called “Kahvehane”, courtyards of mosques, squares, hookah gardens called “Nargile bahçeleri”, teashops called “Çay ocağı” or barbers’ shops. Within these places the Turkish coffee houses have taken a great place.

The Turkish coffee houses had been built of wood including the roof system and the roofs had been covered with corrugated roof tiles. The buttresses and beams could be seen easily when looking through the inside of the roof. They had been surrounded with wide windows. The floor level was between 3.80 and 4.20 m and they had wide fringes.

Temples for Non-Muslims: The understanding of freedom of religion and conscience had been one of the vital characteristics in the Ottoman administration system. Such that it has been mentioned above where the minority people live predominantly in neighbourhoods had been administered by Rabbis and/or Priests. In this period many churches (Orthodox and Catholic) and synagogues have been built [21].

The architectural structures of churches and synagogues were different from mosques and masjids. The buildings and structures of churches and synagogues itself are a study topic individually. Therefore in this paper these structures will not be dealt with in depth and will be contented with the information of existing temples for non-Muslims in the Ottoman neighbourhoods.

Dervish Convents: The dervish convents had not only been religious institutions but they also had been the place providing great contributions to spreading, expanding and keeping alive the Ottoman culture based on the social, economic and religious circumstances [22].

There were two types of dervish convents in the Ottoman neighbourhoods. The first type had been built by Padishahs in order to get the Sheikh’s prayer and as for the second one was built by people. There are certain structural differences between them. In general dervish convents consist of a hall locating at the centre and small rooms, which are the places in which a dervish undergoes a period of trial and suffering called “Çilehane”

surrounding the hall. In addition there were also small Turkish bathes called “Gusülhane”, toilets and fountains used for ritual ablutions in dervish convents resembling mosques functionally.

The dervish convents having been built by the local community had been in the appearance of a house. They had been structured with wooden materials. Depending on the increase in the number of population of dervishes some additional parts had been added to the dervish convent buildings. The cemeteries “Hazire”s in the dervish convents had also been expanded. When the building reached a certain scale an “Aşevi” which is the place where the poor people could eat for free had definitely been built. One of the most important dervish convents in the Ottoman period had been the lodge used by Mevlevi dervishes called “Mevlevihane” having octagonal plan.

Eating House for Poor People: It is a confraternity called “Aşevi” having been established for providing food or eating service for poor people and students for free. The “Aşevi”s had been located in “Külliye”s together with mosques and the dervish convents. Everyone could come and eat in these buildings without any question in neighbourhoods. These facilities had been supported by local people and padishahs.

In Ramadan, a holy month for Muslim people, the people such as madrasah’s students, dervishes and poor people living in the same neighbourhood could come together in “Aşevi” and break their fasts. In addition to this foods or meals were given to people through a small window opening to the outside-wall. The sitting area for eating was not necessary because the courtyards of the mosques and the dervish convents had been used as an eating area. The “Aşevi”s had simple structural features consisting of a room where only meals had been cooked called “Ocaklık/Ateşlik” which was generally square-plan or rectangle-plan and sometimes had been located in the basement and a cellar opening to the room directly. The dimension of their windows generally was 50X60 cm and they had not an iron window shade so that the evacuation process in an emergency situation such as fire could be carried out easily and quickly. They had also been located near the entrance of the building’s courtyard.

Library: Libraries had been one of the crucial parts of the educational life in Islamic countries particularly in the Ottoman period. There had always been a library next to an educational institution. When madrasah came to mind

it could not be thought that the madrasah did not have a library used by the students. Even though libraries had been located inside madrasahs they were formed as a separate part of “Selâtin” mosques. They had not had a certain characteristic with respect to their structure or plan [13].

Shops: Shops in the Ottoman neighbourhood had formed in squares or on the intersections of the significant transportation axis named “Arasta” which were shops of the same trade built in a row and were covered. They were called shopping arcades in the west as for in the East they were called “Bedesten, Han or Kapalı Çarşı” meaning covered Turkish bazaar. It is possible to find many historical shops “Arasta, Bedesten, Han, Kapalı Çarşı” in today’s neighbourhoods of Turkey [21].

Turkish Bath: As mentioned before in the section of fountains cleanliness was the core of daily life. There were Turkish bathes not only in palaces and mansions but also there were many Turkish bathes in the Ottoman neighbourhoods for the local community. Turkish bathes had also played a significant role in providing social communication between the locals. They had been used by both men and women at different days. Their incomes coming from the locals had belonged to the mosques’ foundations.

Turkish bathes consisted of certain parts such as cold rooms called “Soğukluk”, warm rooms called “Ilıklık”, hot rooms called “Sıcaklık”, central massage platform locating in the centre of the hot room called “Göbek Taşı” and the place fit for lighting a fire called “Ateşlik” locating in a special room in the basement level of the building called “Külhan”.

Regarding their structures they let light through the round glasses used in the windows of their domes. There was not a Turkish bath having accustomed roofs or roofless system called “Dam”. They had been built with the Horasan mortars poured out to molds and had been covered with the small dome-rows of which diameter is between 1,5-2 m and their height is approximately 50-70 cm.

CONCLUSIONS

Neighbourhoods had always been the cores of the administrative system of the Ottoman Empire. They had also played a significant role in its civilisation lasting approximately 600 years. In this paper the basic

characteristics of the Ottoman neighbourhoods reflecting its social, economic and political institutions have been dealt with and have been tried to be analysed and the below consequences have been reached from the research carried out.

Neighbourhoods were the smallest administrative units and the most important part in urbanisation not only in the Ottoman Empire but also in the early years of the first Islamic state established by the Prophet (SAW) of Islam. The term of neighbourhood had not only defined the area surrounded with physical borders but it also had been described and seen as an organic structure with its social-cultural, economic and political unique features. From this aspect the western approach to the term has definitely separated from the eastern understanding.

Neighbourhoods in the Ottoman had been administered by Imams. Imams not only had religious duties but many services with respect to the neighbourhoods also were carried out by them. They had played a mediator role in providing communication amongst the locals. They had also been an institutional memory of neighbourhoods by collecting or possessing information regarding the locals and neighbourhoods. Even though the neighbourhood had been administered by Imams, basic human rights and freedom of conscience were so developed that minority people living in certain neighbourhoods as majority had been administered by Rabbis or Priests depending on their religious background.

Designations of Imams were made solely by Padishahs without any intermediate level of administration unit such as Qadis, emphasizes the importance given to neighbourhoods in the Ottoman Empire. The reason why the empire considered the neighbourhood fact important was that neighbourhoods were the smallest integral parts of its system and hence they had been seen as cells in a human body. Just as how the change or degeneration in a cell in a human body causes cancer similarly the degeneration or negative changes in a neighbourhood system could harm the whole system.

They had also been the first and the important step of collecting taxes and establishing the control mechanism in the tax system of the empire.

With regards to the local institutions they have also played a significant role in the development of Islamic civilisation. Many institutions in this period have been formed and have evolved through neighbourhoods. These institutions had been established by the

foundations having been built in neighbourhoods by the local community. They had been the key factor for the Islamic urbanisation and civilisation. The institutions had consisted of mosques/masjids having been the focal point and madrasahs, Turkish baths, fountains, dervish convents, primary schools, squares, eating-houses for poor people and etc. All these institutions had been formed based on the consequence of the local people's worldviews.

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