

# *Changes in Housing-User Profile and Its Spatial and Social Effects in Istanbul*

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*Abstract*—Globalization and effects of changes in life-style on urban environment; in parallel with incessantly increasing rate of migration, have led to some problems such as unmethodical expansion of cities and merger of peripheral areas to urban ones. Social, economic, cultural and technological changes in cities have changed housing pattern and its customers. Peripheral areas faced this rapid alteration and transformation especially after 1980. Turkey, as a developing country, experienced these remarkable changes in the process of globalization and the mentioned problems are entrenched patterns in Istanbul. In consequence, problem of housing with regard to the its social and cultural aspects should be investigated. This study aims at scrutinizing the changes of relation between houses and their users in Ikitelli region, a popular suburban area attracting enterprisers, in Istanbul after 1980. This paper mainly focuses on the changes of quarters in the vicinity of mass housing projects and how they are affected by these new housing patterns. Housing characteristics, user profile, changes in the region, and expectations of users in Ikitelli are the main parameters to be studied. Ikitelli was situated in outside part of Istanbul in 1960s; where concentration of central business district (CBD) in city center and movement of industrial estate to this area caused a rapid increment in its population. Due to the fact that the area is open to improvement, it is a matter of paramount importance to evaluate the future housing allocation planning, considering today's conditions. The study is supported by interviews with residents of the district. It was revealed that the changes in the region cannot keep the pace with existing urban transformation project and it is rather people-oriented since it is clear that where people cannot adopt themselves to the mandatory social, economic and cultural alterations, this may lead to further changes and problems in their urban life, particularly from the point of social relations.

**Keywords-** *housing; change; social relations; urbanization; Istanbul*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Undoubtedly, one of the basic features for human nature is to change in the process of time. Thus, the history of alteration

is as old as the history of creation of human being. The formation of expected quantitative and qualitative changes amongst the members of a whole compared to former members may be referred as alteration. Alteration may be deemed as a spontaneous phenomenon [1]. According to Scott, alteration, in general term, is either planned or unplanned conversion of a process or environment to another one. From Tezcan's point of view, alteration is not an oriented concept, inasmuch as it can refer to a setback rather than progression [2]. After the 20th century, the rate of alteration in many aspects such as changes in lifestyle of the society has been remarkably accelerated due to the globalization, especially in developing countries. Hence, housing as one of the most important requirements of human being, has been widely affected by this alteration.

Housing; is a structure, defining the socio-economic features of a society by considering its functional and structural base. Since human being's creation, the rudimentary role of housing was to physically protect people, but in the process of time, changes in behavior and thought systems led to some different functions for housing. It gradually changed its role as a simple shelter for people to a complex social organizational system [3]. One of the most important factors causing this complexity and higher rate of urbanization was the use of machinery in production process in parallel with globalization. Therefore, the existing housing areas and their users were changing and novel production platforms and settlements for people were established.

Improvement of technology was an initiator for differentiation in social relations and status, changes in demands, and massive alterations of housing types and areas. These alterations commenced to be observed in Turkey in 1950s. Primarily, urbanization process was observed in houses, due to transition to nuclear family and the fact that the houses missed their former role as a potential productive unit. Settlement plans and housing types had to be standardized as well as generated industrial productions [4]. Industrialization accelerated the rate of migration from the country to town and as its consequence, different cultures were gathered and formed various synthesis and all these were reflected in living areas. Doctrine of Truman, coincided with Second World War and subsequent support from Marshall, mechanization of agriculture and formation of highway networks stood up for

process of migration from the country to town [4]. Thus, the housing deficit was increased with regard to the housing needs of immigrants.

In 19th century, industrial settlements were established simultaneously with differentiation in production styles. For life cycle to be continued, production lines had to perform mass production and cover a wide geography. This, remarkably affected the settlement system and led to formation of novel living areas. These areas were either close to places with better transportation facilities or extant living areas and formed new housing styles [5]. Formal and informal structuring in cities increased and the cities were getting extended with improvement in means of transport. As for peripheral areas, they were occupied with immigrants and they erected illegal slums in unhealthy areas [4]. As a result of this fact, squatting, with all related ecologic and security problems still survive today. One of the main problems of this matter is that the human factors are switched to background in erection of urban areas. Consequently, houses as the smallest units of cities and their changes' direction in urbanization process are matters of paramount importance.

In Turkey, as an example of a developing country, the rate of industrialization and development and resulted rapidly increasing population in big cities was high; on the other hand, job opportunities and public services could not keep the pace with them and squatting manifested itself [6]. When the seven different geographical regions of Turkey are being analyzed from the point of urbanization rate, it is obvious that there is a unidirectional mobility towards west of Turkey, especially Istanbul [7]. Istanbul faced these rapid and irreversible changes. In this construction process, some new trade centers gained importance rather than former traditional centers of Istanbul and historical roots of the city with their traditional centers gradually lost their former importance. With regard to this trend, some newly constructed centers and areas began to be erected. These areas may be introduced in six main titles: Zincirlikuyu-Maslak, Altunizade-Baglarbasi, Kozyatagi-Atasehir, Gunesli-Ikitelli, Beylikduzu-Haramidere, and Kavacik axis [8]. In this study, Kucukcekmece-Ikitelli area is being analyzed since it attracted a remarkable volume of migration in industrialization period. It was also extended to its own peripheries and because of all mentioned points, it is worth studying this sub-center. This study mainly aims at scrutinizing the social, economic, political and technological changes, especially after 1980s and their effects on housing and user profiles. In other words, by knowing the effects of extant changes in the region on social relations of people, the relation between changes in physical and social aspects is studied by considering a small district, Ataturk.

## II. CASE STUDY: KUCUKCEKMECE REGION

Being located in northwestern Kucukcekmece, Ikitelli district is one of the important industrial areas of Istanbul. Even its residential units have been formed and spread in the vicinity of the industrial zone. Fig. 1 shows the location of Kucukcekmece in Istanbul.

Up until 1987 socialization process, citizens living in this area were basically dependent on agriculture. Being a new

industrial zone in the city resulted in changes in economic situations and further alterations in labor and user profile. In this process, some workers of industrial areas and those had moved from city centers to peripheries and erected some illegal living areas in this region. As time progressed, many of these slums were being built in even seven stories due to the higher rate of housing demand and increment in land prices and this led to the formation of apartment slums. Increasing number of houses affected residence quality, infrastructures, transportation and environmental issues. Ikitelli region covers a broad spectrum of squatter's houses, apartments, gated communities and mixed-use buildings and is one of the important sub-centers of the city. In Fig. 2, demographical information of Kucukcekmece is given.

## III. ANALYSES

Housing zones with different profiles may be categorized in three groups with regard to either fabrication styles or quantity: Legally developed planned houses, planned but contrary to the planned regulations and illegally developed housing areas [9]. Ataturk district is belonged to the second group of this classification, but the number of legally progressed planned houses is on the rise. In Fig. 3, the land use of Kucukcekmece is illustrated.

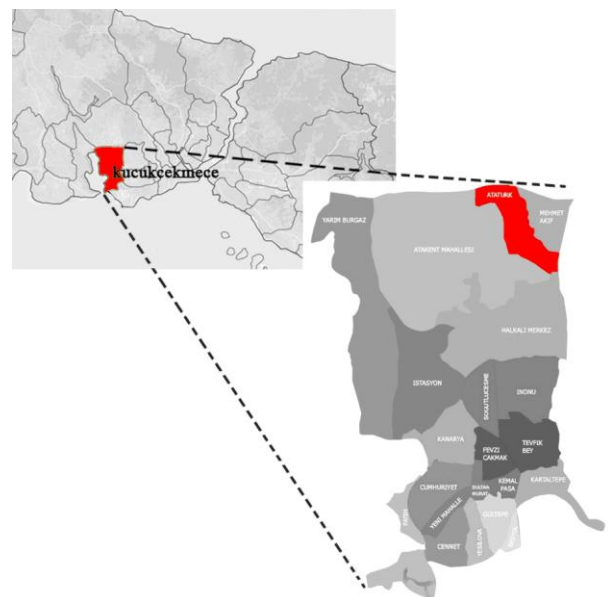


Figure 1. Location of Kucukcekmece in Istanbul.

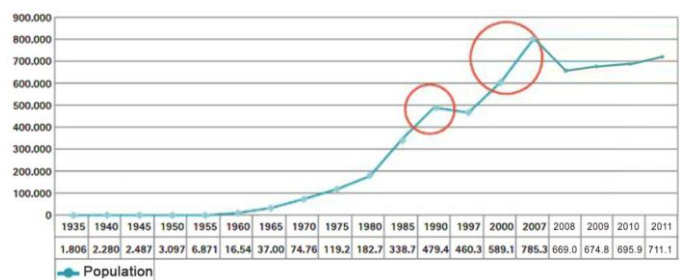


Figure 2. Demographic changes in Kucukcekmece region.

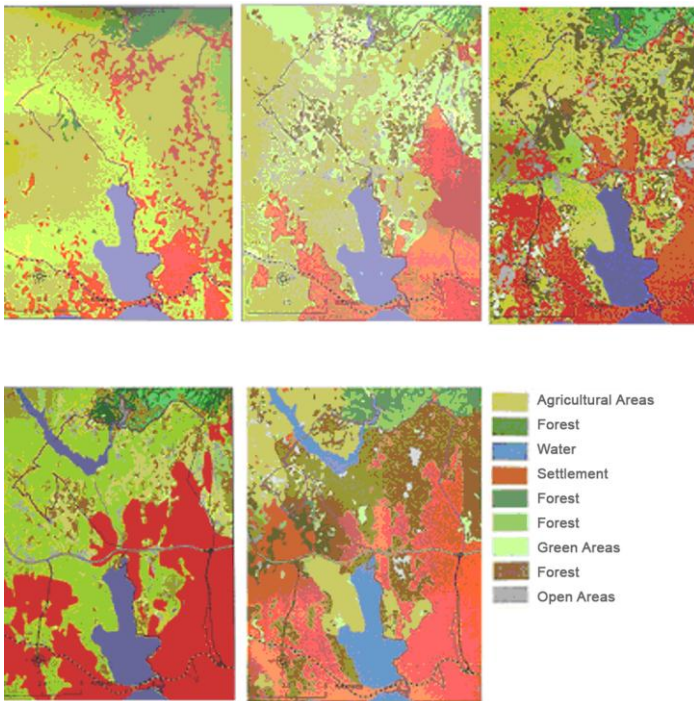


Figure 3. Map of land use in Kucukcekmece by time going on.

#### A. Settlement Plan Analyses

A remarkable number of investments such as “My World Europe”, “Bosphorus City”, “Istanbul Lounge”, “European Houses”, “Mall of Istanbul”, “Istwest”, and “Nish Istanbul” projects are situated in the vicinity of Ataturk district. Beside the erection of new projects, Ayazma shantytown in north of the district was included in the scope of urban renewal. The majority of dwellers in Ayazma were immigrants from eastern part of Turkey. After urban renewal, some dwellers of Ayazma became homeless, while some others were placed in Halkali Bezirgenbahce houses. Meanwhile, some ethnical problems, conflicts with main residents, and repudiation of apartment culture by newly located people were some of the observed problems [9]. Abrupt physical changes in the environment could not alter the traditions, customs and culture of new residents. People, moved from Ayazma to Bezirgenbahce mentioned the difficulties in their celebrations of marriage, funeral or feast day ceremonies and the conflict of these matters with their values. Therefore, the study of social changes being affected by physical alterations is of vital importance. Existence of some shopping malls such as “212” and “Arenapark” in Ataturk district has also influenced the residents’ free time and consequently, consumption patterns have led to some changes.

Ataturk district has experienced the mentioned changes and still is facing them. Bordered by Atakent district in west and highways in north and east, Ataturk and Mehmet Akif districts

exhibit a densely populated area with storied shanties. Luxurious and prestigious housing areas in the vicinity of the region have made the location even more important. In Ataturk region, some important changes especially in housing issue is extant. Contractors destroy shanties and erect apartments instead of them. Façade characteristics of the new buildings made by construction companies are considerably analogous and this may make changes in the silhouette of the region in a total content. For the immigrants moving from rural areas to towns who were used to living in houses compatible with their cultures, offering these new houses with the mentioned similarity is fairly like a housing estate being presented to them in the district scale. In Fig. 4, the housing density of Kucukcekmece region in 1982 and now is compared.

#### B. Housing Analyses

In general, district’s structure has attached buildings with dense housing formations. New buildings are also being erected in attached forms with others due to the positions of lands. In study region, there are 50 newly constructed buildings (after 2008), 41 buildings with renewed facade similar to new ones, 7 buildings under construction and 157 old ones. Hence, it is clear that there is a kind of change in nearly 39 percent of the 255 buildings. With this rate in study area which is only a fraction of the main region, one can comprehend the scale of changes in whole area. In alley No. 10 of the case study where is studied in details, ten of the buildings have commercial utility, 40 buildings have commercial usage in ground floor and residential usage on upper floors and 4 of them have completely residential use. Trading areas on the street are being expanded to the upper floors in process of the time. In study zone there are two open public spaces. Fig. 5, Fig. 6, and Fig. 7 are showing some classifications of buildings in study area.



Figure 4. Superposition of housing density in 1982 and today.

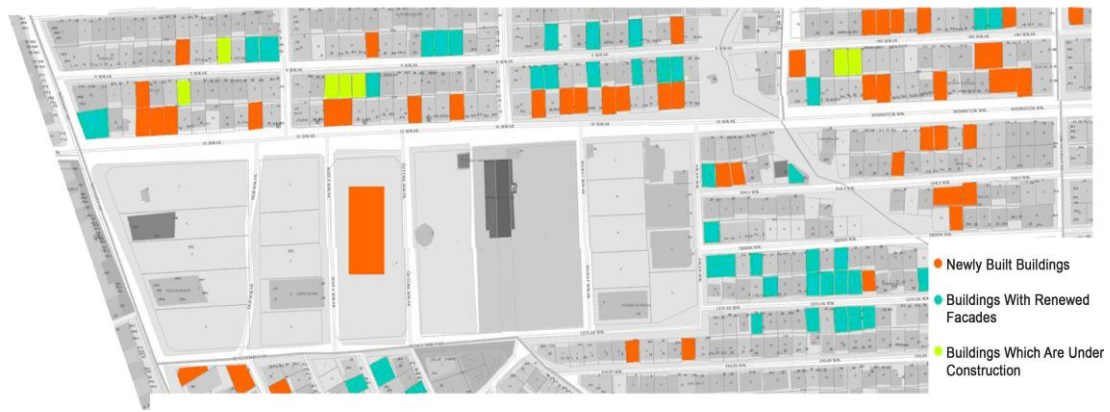


Figure 5. Classification of changing houses.

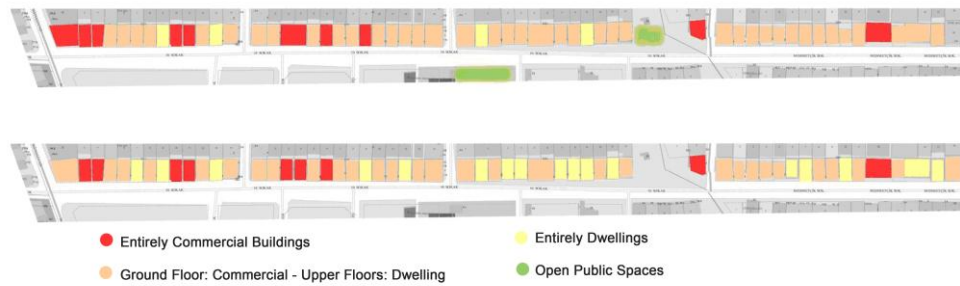


Figure 6. Classification of structures with regard to their functions. Top: present situation. Bottom: Before 2005

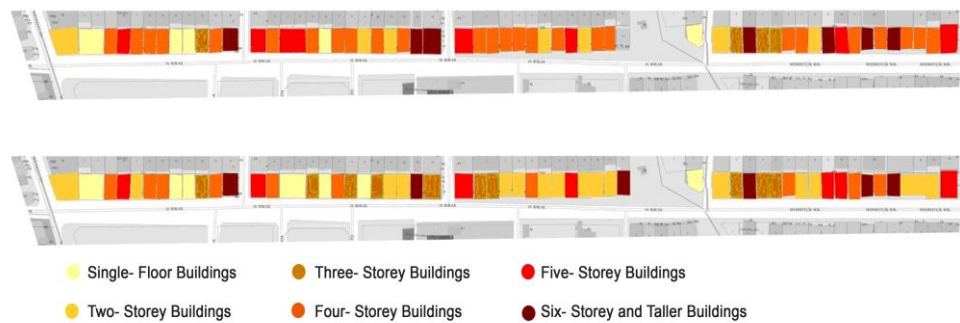


Figure 7. Classification of structures with regard to their floors. Top: Present situation. Bottom: Before 2005

Within the scope of the study, interviews with neighborhood residents, association members, real estate agents, and mukhtar of the quarter are done to obtain information about the changes in neighborhood, evaluation of user profile, income and ownership status, changes in houses' and lands' value, concept of citizenship, being satisfied or dissatisfied of these changes, their expectations, alterations in life styles, and neighborhood and social relations.

In neighborhood mukhtar's opinion, considering the industrial progress of the district in 1980s, the immigrants living in the district were trying to persuade their relatives and acquaintances in rural place to immigrate to Istanbul and this district and this led to an increment in population. Those days, economic-related apprehensions had more importance and

people were willing to go everywhere to find job. However nowadays, people are selective about their living places and jobs. Hence, beside the district, people themselves have been changed.

Like many other fields, urbanization has intensely affected the relations between people. In mukhtar's opinion, the social and neighborhood relations amongst district residents are still being continued. According to him, people coming from rural areas were used to living in vicinity of each other or they would even purchase a common land and share with relatives. Although life conditions and job opportunities have urged people to live physically in distant places, they try to keep social relations. A milestone in occurrence of physical and social changes of the district was the earthquake of 1999,

where some people destroyed their homes and erected in better quality.

Residents of the neighborhood are generally belonged to low and medium-income level people where a major proportion work in textiles and factories. As for wealthier people, they mostly live in gated communities in the vicinity of the district. Population of the district, except for unrecorded people was approximately 50.000 in 2005, while presently, this value is 64.024.

In parallel with the changing needs of the increasing population, public affairs have faced many alterations, too. A cultural center of 500 people and its conference hall, health care center with 24 rooms, commercial high school, and an additional building to the grade school with 24 classrooms are being constructed in the district. Stealing and snatching were typically being observed until 10-15 years ago in the district. These kinds of crimes are not prevalent any more. Youngsters are also being changed and they have made themselves compatible with environment. To recap on the ideas of the mukhtar, it is worth saying that he finds the changes very useful and he is pleased with them and asserts that the changes have not led to severance of the social relations among residents. On the other hand, existence of an Azerbaijani mosque and "Cem" Foundation beside 22 village societies has gathered different ethnical characteristics to the district. In addition to them, establishment of a district-wide fraternity is the point in question, that may update the social ties.

According to an immigrant real estate agent from Zonguldak, who is living in Istanbul, prices of lands and houses gained a remarkable increment, especially in last five years. Tendency to newly erected four-story buildings, constructed by contractors is obvious. The agent also believes that despite the existing physical changes, neighborhood relations are still strong. His ideas match those for the mukhtar. According to the agent, changes in user profile are undeniable. In the past, finding a house with proper price was the only important factor. But, nowadays, people ask for the story of the building, existence of natural gas pipe line, orientation of the house and distance to public transport facilities and these factors are playing a crucial role in their choices. On the other hand, majority of former low-income families are currently changed to medium-income ones and people with different levels are living in harmony with each other. Proper prices and bank loans, being low-rise and earthquake resistant account for this high rate. Briefly, the agent is completely satisfied with these changes and believes that these changes will continue.

A member of "Diyarbakir" society notices the importance of the concept of neighborhood. Rise of mass housing projects in the vicinity of the district is a positive step in his mind, due to the fact that it can maintain the home prices in a logical rate in their own district. Although there are clear differences between these two home types, there is no conflict among the people, residing in them. According to this society member, Lack of job opportunities in their hometown attracted people to Istanbul, otherwise they would not immigrate.

Another resident of the district cleared the poor conditions of the district such as lack of existing infrastructures like roads, when he first settled in it, in 1992. Problems related to

sewerage system and heating of the house were commonplace, those days. The initial house of the resident was in a shanty form, but, in 2009 it has been replaced by a four-story building, constructed by a contractor who has shared the stories with the main owner. Most spaces of the home have found new functions compared to the original time.

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS

House, in its concept, is the quintessence of human's living area. They are shelters for human being and worth to be protected by their dwellers. House may reflect the social intellectual structure of individuals, as well. Therefore, different social structures in the society may have various housing considerations and expectations. Furthermore, places inside the house with their functions have to serve for a number of purposes and houses have changed by civilizations related to many factors such as geography, climate, demand, money, subtlety, inclination and etc. [10]. Fig. 8, shows the changes in housing in Ikitelli district.

Economic and social changes after 1980 in Turkey, resulted in serious alterations in sheltering styles. Housing gap, resulted from the increment of migrations to big cities and related changes in life style, urged the agricultural lands to be zoned for housing by private sector [11].

In the study, basically concentrated on alley No.10 of Ataturk district, a remarkable physical change has been observed. Anyway, this change has not affected the social relations negatively. Unlike the Ayazma urban renewal project and mass housing projects in Atakent, Basaksehir, and Kayasehir, all in immediate vicinity of the district, kinship and neighborhood ties are still alive. Although the majority of the settlers of the district are people migrating from rural places to the city who have faced changes in their life styles, a number of them are continuing their former rural cultures. Changes in physical structure, typology of house plans, and facades of the buildings in Ataturk district might not coincide with residents' former houses and cultures, but again, they are willing to adopt these new conditions. Hence, the district is worth to being analyzed. With the process of physical changes in district, people with various cultural backgrounds have faced new houses with novel characteristics, and it is obvious that residents have been becoming the same. Architecture of newly constructed buildings in Ataturk district is open to discuss. But, the main focus of this study is to investigate the reflection of extant changes into the social relations. On the other hand, residents are mostly pleased with the mentioned changes and they are not opposed to harmonizing themselves with their new houses. The main reason for this may be the unchanged social relations. Finally, alteration may be an inevitable process. Therefore, the orientation and trend of this change is a matter of paramount importance, since the results of it may heavily affect the societies and their living areas.



Figure 8. Scheme of changes in housing in Ikitelli region of Istanbul.

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