Reading the ‘urban mixitie’ through residential environments in a mega city: case Istanbul

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Abstract

Contemporary city has been known for heterogeneous composition of its population. It is reflected in the residential areas which are the most dominant zones in the urban geography. However, people with the same place of origin, with common interests, beliefs and values, similar expectations and life styles tend to concentrate in the same neighborhood. Especially in developing countries where the urbanisation rate is high and where the forces of globalisation are influential on the competitive use of valuable urban land, various social groups form their enclaves for their own security. Sometimes this may threaten the city by destroying its social, cultural and spatial integrity. The spatial separation causes by time socio-cultural segregation between these groups. The paper aims to inquire into this problem with the planners’ view of designing cities as one system, as a whole. In that way, the cultural and economical differences become not an obstacle but as a potential for enriching housing types and life-styles in a mega city which is the main force of national development.

Keywords: globalisation, urban segregation, residential environment, Istanbul, integrity.

Introduction: Case Specific Mixite: Housing in Istanbul

As Saskia Sassen once mentioned during the Housing Conference of TOKI (MHA: Mass housing Administration-Turkey), housing in Istanbul has to be urbanized. According to her cities produce a certain amount of culture, which can be defined as ‘urban knowledge capital’. Physical formats do affect the sociability, a tower does not necessarily mean high-densification, henceforth not all cities are urbane. (Sassen, 2011) Today’s economic system has brought an important dynamic to the city with the price of growing unequally losing it’s architectural heritages and language to monotone architecture of International Style but some cities are handling this set-backs better than others. The liveability of cities is going to be the dominating problem in the future.
The orthogonal intervention methods, and application of non-unique Western styles makes it impossible to achieve a natural and successful urban fabric, that preserves the aforementioned mixite. In this terms this paper does not intend to correspond to the cosmopolitan structure or touristic aspect of the city. Reading mixite through residential environments will grant the reader a wide perspective regarding how the segregation affects production paradigms and architecture of the living environments within city.

For some scholars mixite refers to diverse functions, while for others it is the revival of previous states of the city that once co-existed. However, these processes of revival are not applicable everywhere regardless the geography. Juhani Pallasmaa cites David Harvey in his book “The Eyes of the Skin”:

“Aesthetic and cultural practices are peculiarly susceptible to the changing experience of space and time, precisely because they entail the construction of spatial representations and artefacts out of the flow of human experience.”

One of the main tools to improve the hospitality and qualified urban life of cities is culture. While culture has been inarguably associated with the city since the Enlightenment, it is in the context of the search for new urbaniities that regeneration and development with culture as driving force have gained a key role in strategies to prestigious events such as European Capital of Culture through festivals, exhibitions and promoting city’s heritage to a more touristic state. Such events, however, are often criticized for producing a sanitized, idealized version of the city, a re-produce hyper-real city for the tourists from without, and for the citizens from within who eventually have to become tourists.

According to Siebel(2000) urbanity is a role associated with at least 3 qualities:

- Centrality
- Compactness
- Mixture of land uses

With the planning and design approaches of the 20th Century, Istanbul is stretching out on a vast surface, becoming rapidly multi-centred, the transport system is under constantly increasing big pressure, while the city center is either being gentrified or being stamped by prestigious projects wielding the language of trans-national postmodern style.

The previous state of layerization, which followed ethnicity and architectural references from throughout time, is being relocated by another social-stratification that is sorted after the income level. The consume culture of global economic orientation is the driving force behind the segregation, which has been eradicating the successful mixite that has been centuries long manifest in the narrow streets of Istanbul.

Forces behind the urban segregation are:

- urban zone planning methods
- traffic engineering
- segregation of people, by them setting no foot on common ground if any distinction of social-strata is present
- global urban rhetorics: world-city, brand city, finance center city: uniform style of western architecture and monotone architectural language in mass-housing units

Within framework of this study, 3 different housing typologies are chosen to read the mixite, or rather the fade of mixite within spatial and social organisation of Istanbul.

- informal settlements
- mass-housing units
- gated communities
Horizontal life in shanty-towns: *Gecekondu* (‘built overnight’)

In early Republican times, Istanbul shranked dramatically due politics of central government and economical struggles of new Republic after war. The role of Ankara as main city was taken back after years, especially after 1950. Three decades between 1950 and 1980 were the years of compensating the neglected times of industrialization, and this approach brought up the rapid urbanization as an inevitable result and side effect. The city regained its importance on national scale again.

The global identity of the city was not assigned yet, the potential however remained. Upon the economical crisis in 1958, the lack of funds made it impossible for the government to finance both the urbanization and the industrialization. A choice had to be made between them both to distribute and divide the limited sources. Industrialisation played a vital role to become part of the World system, therefore the urbanization was left to its own faith; unattended, it followed a period of unplanned, user-generated development pattern. The lack of funds and official interest for planned city development and shelter need were to be compensated via user generated zones of on-spot solutions, defined as ‘*gecekondu*’. (literally, ‘built overnight’). The emergence of informal housing belts around the city triggered the need of transportation in order to connect these to the city, the minibuses provided the needed connectivity; a transportation network identified with the informal housing zones. Migrants were the source of cheap and informal labour force, and those who were better integrated, were abusing their being of insecure, illegal inhabitants of the city (Yucesoy, Korkmaz: 2009).

This situation resulted in populist politicians taking advantage of these massive ‘vote-sources’; granting them amnesties every time short before elections and rapidly increasing house-ownership. Massive amounts of migrants from Anatolia rushed to Istanbul before every political election, and built their own *gecekondu’s* occupying public lands, empty spaces in the inner city or old industrial areas at the peripheries, following a vice-versa urbanisation pattern of shelters being constructed first and infrastructure being provided after (Ulusan, 2011)

The amnesties encouraged the *gecekondu’s* to get transformed into multi-storeyed apartments. But the urban layout remained as bad as it was before, no improvements were made at physical or social infrastructure. Due to these changes the current bad urban plot of *gecekondu’s* remained same, furthermore it continued with the overdense urban fabric with very poor construction quality. This transformation also represents a turning point for commercialization of *gecekondu* areas. Those who managed to obtain multitstorey apartments instead of their former one-room *gecekondu’s* have started to rent their extra apartments. An informal real-estate market has come to existence. *Gecekondu areas*, formerly enclaves of urban poverty were providing its dwellers solidarity networks to fight steamrolling destructive effects of metropol life. For new-comers, it was a survival mechanism, which was compensating the absence of formal social programs, the strong social environment was making it easier to survive the alienation in the mechanic order of modern metropol (Yucesoy, Korkmaz: 2009).

Imperial Istanbul was known with the mutual tolerance embedded in harmonical co-existence of diverse ethnic layers, which later on started to be replaced through implementation of neo-liberal politics with a new stratification based on class sorted after socio-economic level in these years. The social mixite is now fading this socio-economical segregation, as well as the diverse languages of residential typologies varied on background of the inhabitants. The postmodern consumption habits as the new way of identifying himself within public sphere for the new individual, is transforming the residential preferences, apartments, defined as new ‘ideal housing style’ of new upper-middle class, were rising everywhere. These years were the times, in which urban transformations were made through investments of small contractors. House-owners were assigning a contractor to build an apartment instead of their old building, of which one or two storeys would be given to the constructor as profit. The building stock produced during this time was rather a representation of an ideal life style than being practical. They were planned as an environment rather than a single building lot and all had a common language. This language was the outspoken rhetoric of Republican upper-middle class to
exclude the urban poor. This class was building an invisible wall around its enclaves to mark the differences with lowest social-layer. 

Upon the launch of global city discourse, the socio-economic gap between the urban poor and the new global elites has converted the cityscape into a series of islands emerging independent from each other. Every island saw the ‘others’ as something that had to be eliminated. That is at the same time the consequence of the gecekondu-globalization co-existence in the city (Keyder, 2005). The late 1980’s was a turning point for Istanbul: as a result of both global and local dynamics, the mode of co-existence established within the dynamics of rapid urbanization began to dissolve gradually. The massive rural movement towards the metropolis from throughout all country since mid 20th Century has triggered a change on the demographical structure of these areas. Istanbul and its citizens have grown a resistance against the newcomers by claiming themselves as the original owners of the ‘cosmopolitan imperial city’. This resistance to defence their superiority and being of more ‘modern’ resulted in increasing commodification of gecekondu; as a real estate market that was not controlled by the upper-middle class, with other words by the ‘global elites’. The main political issue today took priority over the question of whose culture would monopolize the urban public realm: either that of the ‘moderns’ or that of the ‘traditionals’, being the immigrants.

**Defining Gecekondu (‘built overnight’)**

*Gecekondu’s can be described as structures which are built against development and construction laws on public or private lands without permission of their owners.* (Law Nr 775) According to Urban Science Dictionary *Gecekondu’s* are defined as shelter types on public or private lands without notice, approval and permission of their landlords that are built by low income groups whose need for healthy accommodation is not fulfilled by local or central authorities. (Keles, 1998)

General preferences of *Gecekondu’s* are (Gokmen, 2009):

- Built against development and construction rules
- Built over corporate, public or private lands without permission as invaders.
- Very short construction time, unhealthy physical conditions
- Built by lowest income groups, immigrants from rural areas

Development of *gecekondu* family:

- Adaptation on urban life has started
- Financial partnerships in rural area are over
- Nuclear family structure is in progress

Figure 1. Gecekondu area amidst luxury housing

![Source: photo courtesy of Haluk Uluşan during field work in 2009](https://example.com/figure1.jpg)

- Slowly leaving agricultural living habits
Showing growing trends in punctual forms squatter areas are one of the oil flake forms that have been appearing in development process of Istanbul since early 20th Century. Although they started to spread with the rural movements past upon 1950 as for today squatterization is described as crime (Kuyucu, 2010). Squatters are one of the identity forms of urban poor within metropolitan area. They are also raising the urge of isolation for upper-middle class members, as the prestige of an individual among other society members is measured with consumption habits in postmodern cities.

In addition to their socio-economical background, the *gecekondu*’s in Istanbul contain an important amount of grass-root mixite, increased adaptation abilities on urban life and a different way of interaction with street and their surroundings regarding architecture. The inhabitants of the run-down shelters are sitting in front of their doors, neighbourly relationships are still alive and a small amount of agricultural production is tried to be kept alive through small gardens between small shelters. The invisible socio-economic walls separating them from their modern neighbours does not prevent them from integrating, but upon urban transformations they end up in vertical low-cost housing units at city periphery, never to revive their former social cohesion and the advantages of horizontal life.

Housing typology of urban poor in Istanbul (Gokmen, 2009):

in metropol centers
1. Formal Houses: Cheap rentals, physically damaged old houses, rental houses built for low-income strata, mass-houses, dormitories/pensions
2. Informal Houses: *Gecekondu*’s(with/out license), street residents

peripheral city
1. Formal Houses: Single houses or apartment with private ownership, rental houses, mass houses
2. Informal Houses: Houses built against laws (not squatters), rental houses, squatters (with/out license)

Squatterization process in Turkey before neo-liberalization can be examined in 3 periods:
1. Until end of 1960: Innocent shelter needs
2. Between 1960-1970: Horizontal movement, increasing number of storeys, increasing number of rooms for rent in informal settlements
3. 1970-1980: Complete commercialization of squatter construction, first appearances of *gecekondu* producing illegal organizations in forms of companies, vertical movement on construction process. The houses built during first phase are described as nouvel-houses and are consisting mostly one single room and a bathroom. This phase is called the orientation phase. The shelters in second phase have up to 3 rooms and are built for semi-temporary accommodation needs. This is the adaptation phase of the rural strata on urban life. The last phase is the integration phase and consists permanent houses including rooms for rent (Gokmen, 2009)

From the first day until today *gecekondu* buildings kept evolving, some of them are transformed into apartments as today. Infrastructure, distance to central city and motorways, population density are the indicators determining the characteristics of *gecekondu* area. Means of infrastructure such as connections to central city, electricity, sewer and clean water networks do not play an important role at the start when the first *gecekondu*’s are being built. But later on most of the problems occur due absence of those. Since the older *gecekondu* areas already contain these utilities they are always more popular among new coming *gecekondu* dwellers. This of course results in long term in social layerization within *gecekondu* society itself (Kongar 1998).

Vertical life: Apartments and Social Housing Units by MHA (Mass Housing Administration)

The urbanization process in Turkey went through two very important turning-points. First one is declaration of Republic in 1923 and second one is the Second World War with the industrialization period after it. In 1927 the share of urban population in Turkey was % 24.22. In 1960 it was % 31.92, in 1980 almost % 50 and in 2000 it was % 64.90. (Census: 2009) First housing cooperative was
established in 1934, after the Law for Cooperatives in 1969, cooperatives started to appear in an increasing number. Mass Housing Administration Turkey (TOKI), has been founded with 1978-1982-4th Development plan along with the first mass housing law of Turkey. Most of its income was provided by taxes from luxury trade wares and it was aiming to accelerate production of shelter. During these years the standards for houses started to be determined, and the state-housing policy was being reconsidered. The construction companies received bigger supports in this period, and those who invaded government lands have gained long term use permit for these, thus of the informal building stock became obvious (Dulgeroglu Yuksel, 2008).

Between 1984 and 2001, approximately 950,000 residential units across Turkey were financed through loans issued by TOKI and around 45,000 units were constructed by the administration itself. The vast majority of state-funded loans were used by middle-classes; lower income groups were unable to access these loans. Henceforth, TOKI policies managed to provide cheap housing for middle-classes but it failed to deal with squatter buildings which were produced by lower income groups, that moved to city for better work opportunities. After 2001 economical crisis the administration was granted broad powers and resources to develop its own projects and sell them through agencies. (Ulusan, 2011 via Kuyucu, 2010)

Spatial differentiations and its reflections to urban sphere in Istanbul can vary. Mass Housing Administration (MHA/TOKI) in this context is a major actor. With drastical measures of urban transformations, it has been shaping our surroundings simultaneously with emerging neo-liberalization and later on globalization. Mass housing made a remarkable impact on the major urban areas in developing countries. In this frame the shrinking role of official bodies too, be it local or central, has to be taken into consideration. Urban transformation has to be defined as the process of solving urban problems, the series of actions and visions to improve social, physical and enviromental issues of a deformed district in the city. Because of these reasons, it requires a multidisciplinary cooperation between sociologists, economists, ingenieurs, architects, urban planners, landscape architects and various other professionals. In a national and transnational economical environment with a remarkable labor force and capital activities, urban transformation is not allowed overlook and neglect localities. Isolating localities would result in social failure of the project. (Turok, 2005:25. Karadag, 2007)

Immanuel Wallerstein in his ‘world-system’ analysis suggests a center-surrounding antagonism. According to him the social and economic structure of cities result in certain classes living in central city, while others are being pushed towards peripheral city. But the reflection of this ‘central’ and ‘peripheral’ terminology to living areas is a complicated paradigm. For instance squatterization is being economically in central city but in terms of settlement it is being dispersed from central city. These happens only then, when participation in economic activities within central city, and the necessity of living isolated at city periphery come to existence at once. (Wallerstein, 2004)

The upper- and upper-middle classes in Istanbul have rediscovered their city as ‘tourists’ through their global consumption habits as the city has been reorganized and rebuilt to a tourist city ever since, with sterilized places and islands of consumption, large avenues and skyscrapers. For Oncu, the big meaning of owning a house is not something that came out of nowhere. What in this paradigm new is that an universal mythos through house ownership is being created. Middle-classes under the influence of global consumption culture are directed towards an ideal house-mythos. Due squatterization process after 1950, the apartments became proofs of being modern in contrast to slum dwellers in Istanbul. In this context the settlements of social houses are identical, multistory buildings produced by MHA or by related contractors and cooperatives. Oncu qualifies the urban transformations in last two decades around two main axis’. First one is the housing preferences of upper-mid socio-class through globalazied consumption behaviours and their ideal house mythos. Second one is about the ascendance of the capital accumulation and welfare of middle class due their access to every kind of consume product. For these classes it became vital to obtain a house at peripheral city to preserve their ‘symbolical wealth’ (Oncu, 1999)
Kuyucu describes the process of TOKI transformations in last decade as real estate transfers between different income groups. In 2004 squatter building (*gecekondu*) were described as crime areas for first time. With Law Nr. 5366, MHA got granted urban transformation rights in historical/preservation areas. In 2006 the new mortgage law changed the face of housing sector. (Ulusan, 2011 via Kuyucu, 2010)

**Changing Role of MHA, Critiques and Current Situation**

After 2003 the housing and urban transformation projects start to appear more often in political strategy plans produced by governments. Improving urbanization and life qualities became first priorities and regulations to organize and ease these actions have been added to field of authorities of MHA. In 2004 MHA got bound to Prime Ministry again, land and house production became it’s main duties.

An outstanding example on urban transformations, England, has experienced the transformation process’ in 1950’s as reconstruction, in 1960’s as revitalization, in 1970’s as renewal, in 1980’s as redevelopment and in 1990’s as renewal. (Eren, 2006:21) The main actors involved in urban transformations are local and central managements, private sector, local community, non governmental organizations and other related groups. (Turok 2005:27) The power balance between these actors is the key to success. (Barka, 2006:10) The partnership term in such cases is born in England due an agreement between political benefits. Effective urban transformation strategies were then achieved through a balanced partnership between public sector, private sector and local community. Direct participation of local community ensured the acceptance of the project by its future users. (McCarthy, 2005:99)

It acts as a fund provider, land provider and enabler at local level, MHA has had significant impacts on developments in economic market as sharing revenues with the private sector, cooperation with local government agencies, increasing labor capacity, reducing bureaucracy for mass housing production. In return, it is having immense pressure from private sector to increase residential density. Low education profile, low income level and low quality of building stocks is converting these areas into targets of possible urban transformations as being the ‘ugly face’ of the city. Kuyucu describes these areas as places of low social resistance against such transformation attempts. Earthquake and urban fear are being used as legitimizing arguments in these transformations. While on the other side enormous integration problems of squatter dwellers to their new homes are being mostly ignored. The social organization between these groups, that was imported from their former rural residences to their squatter neighbourhoods in Istanbul is fading away in MHA houses. Vertical organized buildings prevent one even from knowing his own neighbour for years. (Ulusan, 2011 via Kuyucu, 2010)
Target groups of MHA are mostly low-income groups, housing needs of this class are met through subventions created through construction of high-, middle-high income group residences. MHA is meeting the shelter needs of the middle-income groups most. The urban poor, who constitute the bottom end of the low-income groups and who usually have no ready assets for immediate purchase, are to be provided with housing in long run, which they can pay over 10 to 20 years. (Bayraktar, 2008)

The development plans of the city, which would guide planned growth of its population have changed to include periphereal settlements since last two decades. The new satellite towns and gated settlements built during the last several decades have made that inevitable. MHA today owns almost half of the real estate market. Most mass-housing projects have the planning principles of providing privacy at home, economical and fast construction of as much as possible units, yet they also have problems of flexible growth, sound and thermal insulation problems, excessive vertical density of high and wall-like or point blocks, unaesthetic city silhouette and to much space consumed on ground parking lots. (Dulgeroglu Yuksel-Pulat Gokmen, ENHR Conf. 2009)

Large transformation projects undertaken by MHA, are changing the city layout and social make-up, causing ownership problems (i.e change of hands, rent focus formation etc.) and a non-conforming urban texture. Low spatial quality, a neglected aspect of prestigious housing, furthermore the identity of the city is lost with the high blocks of residences and commercial buildings. (Birol, 2008)

As an evaluation criterion, user satisfaction is quite difficult to meet. On one side, limited housing typology for the economies of scale, and on the other, multi-culture and heterogeneity of urban populations, the values and needs of which vary greatly, are on the other. The issue is how to meet the sometimes conflicting needs in the same project. One consideration is related to quantity and the other one is related to quality. The dwellers of the mass-housing projects constitute too big of a population sample to properly exemplify in terms of their assessment of their homes. It is said that MHA’s construction methods are producing the same plan types and views in all cities. (Tomruk, 2009)
One of the major criticisms of the mass-housing projects in urban areas is related to those built at the periphereal city for the urban poor. Their far distance from their work places and social networks may turn out to be a disappointment in the future and may even be vacated by their dwellers. (Kumkale, 2009) The existence of a city is symbolized with its dwellings. A city’s majority is built of houses. For instance the share of houses within ‘share of additional buildings in terms of functions’ in Turkey is %90 and has the first place. (Turkish Statistical Institute, 2008:361) The housing policy in Turkey has been using the house production as a tool to boost economic growth to overcome economic crisis since 1950’s. To do this, urban lands have been used to provide capital accumulation. (Dincer and Ozden, 2002:103)

Secured Enclaves: Gated Communities

Gated residential communities in Istanbul are maybe one of the most important reflections of globalized economical and social structure in metropolitan area or with ‘corrected’ words in ‘periphereal metropolitan area’ after 1980’s. Alongside all the economical and social changes, a new residential spatial arrangement is recasting Istanbul’s urban space. Gated residential enclaves are representing a new life-style as an imitation of their Western examples. These housing trend of the new groups of wealth began to emerge in the mid-1980s. Their numbers made a rapid increase just in the late 1990s. The growth in the number of gated settlements is continuing on an accelerated pace since 2005.21 In other words, Istanbul’s urban plot keeps getting segregated and polarized with the new gated residential compounds with increasing security concerns, as well as consumption, leisure and production spaces that are kept under constant sterile environments through strict security measures. (Bartu Candan-Kolluoglu, 2008)

This whole situation has as result an exclusion of some groups from urban life concerning every way of living, the identities of individuals are being expressed through these new emerging ways of living and consuming. These closed enclaves bear new forms of social and political relationships between people, they are being managed with their own rules and are pretty much independent from the urban services the local management is providing for the rest of the city. An island formed expansion within the city is still in process, first it was through squatterization and later on through mass housing projects and finally as legal forms of sub-urbanizations like this. The gated developments have also a different marketing strategy then their respective examples in other countries.

Figure 3. Gated communities in Istanbul

Source:
The closed enclaves in America or Europe have been emerging mainly because of strong social contrast and security concerns, while the gated communities in Turkey and Istanbul represent also their owners prestige and social layer within other members of the community. Being a tool of proving the socio-economical class difference, these settlements are hosting residents with similar social and economical profiles as expected. According to the research conducted by Baycan Levent and Gülümser in 2005, there are four types of gated developments in Istanbul: “gated towers; “gated villa towns”; “gated apartment blocks”; and “gated towns”. Depending on the size of the development, gated communities in Istanbul have emerged in both the inner and outer city on both the European and Asian sides of the Bosphorus.

Today, in many locations, different types of gated communities can be found together. The self-defined privilege of living in gated suburbs is being used as a marketing strategy. In addition to the natural damage it causes, the location preference of gated communities has damaging effects on the social environment of their surroundings by making the social and spatial segregation visible. Specifically, secured enclaves located on the outskirts of the city result in animosity and tension between local families and new arrivals of higher income. The inequality between groups that can and can’t afford to live in these settlements makes one question the right to the accessibility to the privileged areas of Istanbul, which actually supposed to remain for public use and its greater good. Another and more serious result of gated communities is the decline of the proximity and interaction of diverse social groups and classes, which was once the cosmopolitan face of imperial Istanbul for hosting ‘every kind’ of people regardless nationality, religion, economical and social status. (Uluşan: 2011)

Urban fear as transformer

Upon the earthquake in 1999, a very strong public opinion has been raising questions about potential dangers of the low quality of Istanbul’s building stock. This has been suggesting a rapid improvement and rehabilitation of the physical and environmental qualities of the urban plot. The urgency, that is being injected through the natural disaster rhetorics to the public opinion, has brought up the necessity for more secure and newer buildings to live in. Bartu Candan-Kolluoglu (2008) mentions about the hype about crime, and its function to justify the rising need for urban transformations. The urban fear in Istanbul has always been an important actor in marketing strategy of housing sector. In this context, the immigrants, minorities such as gypsies, the chaos of transport system and the polution of the city are imposed as threats to the every-day life and therefore sterilized secure enclaves would offer their inhabitant the idealized ‘clean’ and ‘modern’ life. As a clear example of this situation, urban transformation and the public housing projects along this transformation are presented as the solution to “irregular urbanization” in Istanbul. Although the mentioned irregular urbanization is barely a matter caused by urban poor and different groups, many upper-class residents too have been a part of this matter, it is a very popular point of view to represent the urban poverty as the main indicator of the deformations on the urban sphere (Bugra: 1998; Erder, 1996). The urban transformations, which result in forced evictions of urban poor from their locations appear more often in press articles today. The punctual growth form shows itself here as well. The relocated groups are mostly moved to the mass-housing settlements outside the city. Formerly living in vertical organized squatter settlements like their original houses in rural areas, these groups show great adaptation problems to their new homes and end up searching other means of informal settlements. But the main issue is actually rather financial. A very simple formula is used to solve this problem. At one side there are natural disasters, the increasing crime, changing structure of the city and the increasing urban fear are constituting the problems, while on the other side the urban transformations and new settlements are promising to ‘solve’ these problems. The mass-communication tools are acting as a powerful instrument of imposition of these as consumption goods, while implying that these suburbs are a good living environment to prevent from ‘contacts’ with potential dangers. Gokturk for example is one of those closed enclaves emerged upon this implemented marketing angle that depends on urban fear. It promises its residents prestige, safety and a clean life. (Bartu Candan-Kolluoglu:2008) The on-going
urban transformation projects are yet another “cleaning up” wave in the city, and squatter settlements seem to be the primary targets. In his discussion of various “beautification” and “aestheticization” projects in the developing countries, Davis suggests:

“In the urban Third World, poor people dread high-profile international events—conferences, dignitary visits, sporting events, beauty contests, and international festivals—that prompt authorities to launch crusades to clean up the city: slum-dwellers know that they are the “dirt” or “blight” that their governments prefer the world not to see. (Davis, 2006)”

It could be argued that on the one hand a city that is chaotic, heterogeneous, old, rooted, and consists sign of a state and its rules, while on the other hand the citizen experiences his city in random places and in randomness, where he is not limited by his every day experience when his path crosses the aforementioned ‘islands’. Being one of the anonymous faces in the public grants the individual the freedom to taste the urban life as much as possible, but anonymous faces are at the same time the source of the urban fear that is being implemented. The spatial shrinkage ends up with increasing social and physical distances between different groups and classes. As Bauman argues: “Nearness and farness in social space “record the degree of taming, domestication and familiarity of various fragments of the surrounding world. Near is where one feels at home and far away invites trouble and is potentially harmful and dangerous.” (Bauman:1998). The white-collar and blue-collar co-existence is very much dependant on the demand for the services. This structure shows itself in re-organization of the city as well. The migration theories are mostly based on the mechanization of agricultural production and the mobilization of rural population. This group, formerly the main force of the industry, does not always serve as members of this industry army but also tends to provide other low-income services. The white-collar population, working most of the day, can afford these services and gains in exchange a certain flexibility to participate on “activities” to become a “modern” citizen. The prestige of having someone to do the small work is very important too. Apart from that, the blue-collar population is expected to stay out of sight with their residential areas and everyday life.

Conclusion

While the increasing popularity of domesticity and the family is growing against each others favor, they are eliminating different forms of sociabilities and relations. The private sphere is slowly conquering the public space and the local authority. These groups way of perceiving the World and its role within the World is revealed by what Sennett calls “an intimate vision of society” most clearly. In this context, the World outside the personal habitat appears to fail the individual, it seems to be empty. Sennett describes the appearance of this intimate vision as a disproportionated balance between an ever-expanding and ever-impossible-to-satisfy private life, and the evocation of public sphere as a growing trend since the begin of 19th Century (Sennett, 1977:5). Expansion of private life will have serious repercussions for the future of urbanity and the future of the city. Classical conceptualizations of the city and urbanity are emphasizing publicity and urbanity most. The pioneer of this vast landscape of urbanity is a social existence, that allows freedom through anonymity. As Wirth argued, even if the interactions in the city happen in a personal level, they are still superficial and fractal. This results in an indifference and protection against the personal claims and expectations of others, which set the individual free by his choices. This urban condition has created a civilized urban cosmopolitanism and isolation, even disconnected from the claims, whether definitions of anonymous, hétérogène and private urbanity capture everyday urban existence in specific socio-historical contexts. It can be argued that these features related with urbanity have restructured the various perceptions of the city by people. This reality is in Istanbul’s everyday life fractal but continuous.

The heterogeneity has been the condition of the culture-architecture link in Istanbul. Even the gecekondu’s, being widely defined as the backwards face of the city, contain important amount of indigenous architecture, as well as an impressive adaptation ability on the on-spot requirements. The transport network provided by Minibuses, as well as the strong social cohesion are far more superior to the planned development areas by means of reaction time and functionality. Aesthetics, being the part not responding to the demands of global norms of ‘beautiful cities’, has been putting these areas under immense pressure. On the other hand the alternative housing solutions to gecekondu’s such as
MHA housing units are failing on fulfilling their duty mainly out of being located at the fringes of the metropolitan area and their vertical life style totally alien to the former horizontal living habits of gecekondu’s. The uniform, monotone design language of these blocks are leading the housing architecture to a foreign, international style, that has almost no reference from local culture, climate and the socio-economical background of their target groups. The aforementioned gated communities are an imported version of their Western correspondants in developed and economically dominant countries. They, however, have far more different meanings for their inhabitants in Istanbul, as they have in their countries of origin. The postmodern design language of International Style, is trying to overcome the lack of meaningful social and spatial references via architectonic references from past classical styles, as well as imposing the consumption habits as a way to express the lost identity in times of modernity and nation-state through living in prestigious enclavements, where not everyone is allowed to get and live in. Architecture and planning is aiming to produce living environments for and by people to live in. Today, it is impossible to adress which building is specific for which area, or whether it is any good for its inhabitant, but nevertheless low-income groups have no choice but abide by rules. Urban mixité in residential areas contain good lessons for planners and designers. To support the mixed use with minding that there is no set standards and that the mixed-use applications all over the World cannot be applied to every geography could be a start. On the other hand the current segregation is distributing people from same income level to same areas, creating dangerous tensions, damaging the diverse urban life, which was manifest in Istanbul Metropolitan Zone for over thousands of years. There is almost no example among European cities where more than half of the buildings in the city are younger than 100 years like they are in Istanbul. Vienna or London still contain most of its architectural heritage, and planning the urban development according to preservation of these. Perhaps it is time for the planners to notice that the Western planning paradigms have to come to an end. Demolishing a district completely in order to rehabilitate appears to be creating more damage than good. In this context, the case specific mixité in Istanbul, which is slowly fading away, still has important discourses embedded in the narrow streets of the city.
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