ASSESSING THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE SCOPE OF URBAN TRANSFORMATION, CASE STUDY: HAMIDIYE REGION, KAĞITHANE, ISTANBUL, TURKEY

ABSTRACT

The term urban transformation is not a new notion, however rapidly spreading in all countries. It carries impressive effects on the change of mega-cities or creating new approaches. Istanbul, like many other metropolitan cities is experiencing urban transformation projects, in coping with the effects of globalization. Therefore, the effects of changes in this city are literally debatable. One of the subsequent events happening after the urban renewal is the change of quality of life. Since urban transformation and the quality of life are two variable phenomena, the data derived of each survey may be different. However, the results may help to develop the similar areas with more success from the view of quality of life.

Although some totally implemented urban renewal projects have been undertaken in Istanbul, some are yet under development. Kagithane a vast district has been influenced by urban transformation partially has been chosen as a case study in this research, because it provides the opportunity of comparing of life quality within the area itself.

Acknowledging the important factors and their roles in improving of resident’s quality of life is the main target of this research. It is not doubtful that the facts derived out of the quality of life analysis would pave the way for a better life and built urban environment strategies. There have undertaken various studies in terms of discovering the indicators that offer a better quality of life. In order to offer such a successful quality, it is logical to assess the satisfaction issues of the community. Satisfaction is the criteria key that can intensely measure the amount of quality of life. To study the scopes of the term satisfaction, the both fields of objective and subjective indicators should be assessed simultaneously. On the basis of this fact, a high quality environment that generates a sense of satisfaction can be created by means of attitudes that may be physical, social or symbolic (Lansing and Marans, 1969). Different scholars have considered the satisfaction as the main criteria to make a better quality of life (Baba and Austin, 1989; Ha and Weber, 1994 see, Campbell et al., 1976). Satisfaction declares the reciprocal relationship between human and the environment which has an important influence on the overall quality of respondents’ life.

The rate of happiness and satisfaction can be measured by observing the events in the living proximity, producing questionnaire or interviewing people (Hourihan, 1984, p.375). The paper discusses a number of appropriate purposes for conducting surveys and suggests ways in which the survey can be used in providing information to consider upcoming decisions to improve the quality of dwelling areas and preventing the same mistakes to happen in similar places.

This paper has been prepared in the course of Housing Research Methods and Techniques in spring 2012-2013.
I. INTRODUCTION

The main target of the urban transformation is to revitalize physically and socially deteriorated areas and squatters in order to promote welfare and the quality of life.

Urban transformation and urban change can help whether to develop the quality of life or ruin it in terms of economic, environmental, social and physical. The term of quality of life is a wide concept with different description in different disciplines. There are many factors affecting the quality of life. The intense of the impression varies according to place, time and residents’ expectations from place to place. In other words, quality of life in every area has to be studied separately. In this study the item of housing quality is questioned by people and via observing the condition of Hamidiye to discover factors influencing housing quality.

Factors analyzed in the realm of quality of life certainly can help for the decision and design strategies of other future urban transformation projects.

In this paper, Hamidiye area situated in Kagithane district, as an area that has experienced urban transformation and migration has been chosen as a case study. The most transformation is conducted personally by contractor. The master aim of the study is to assess quality of life’s factors that have been changed or developed by personal urban transformation. The factors analyzed can help to provide the residents with their desired quality of life and help for the similar projects implemented in Istanbul.

**Key words:** urban transformation, quality of life, housing quality,

**Hypothesis**

Personally conducted urban transformation which tries to response residents’ expectations, promotes the quality of life and so increases satisfaction.

**Objectives**

In this paper, the aim is to assess the residents’ expectation and their perception of a higher quality of life for housing in Hamidiye which has undergone transformation. This can help to recognize factors affecting quality of housing to satisfy people. In subsequent steps, obtained data provide factors which help for a better housing quality in Istanbul and similar areas.

**Methodology**

- Observation and photography
- Interview: a poll regarding housing quality and residents’ expectations has been asked from 20 squatter and individually transformed houses in Hamidiye. Questions of the study are categorized in 5 items which influence housing quality the most.
II. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Definition of urban transformation

There are many texts referring to urban transformation definition which are different in aim, strategy and methods. However, it defines to represent strategies and actions that try to develop ruins in areas and houses in terms of economic, social, physical and environmental matters.

Urban transformation serves five main purposes:

- Basically, to investigate the causes of social deterioration, the elimination of urban areas that prevents it from becoming deteriorated,
- The elements influencing city context should be always flexible to the physical changes
- To make strategies for a successful urban welfare and quality of life
- To make strategies for a better use of urban areas and avoid urban extension
- To meet and form the urban strategies by ensuring the participation of nongovernmental organizations and people.

In this study, quality of life is the concentrated factor that has been investigated in the scope of urban transformation. To respond the residents’ expectations of the house, the sole way is to understand their thoughts and needs. On account of this matter, this part focuses on the meaning of housing and its relation with satisfaction and quality.

The relationship between urban transformation and quality of life

In both developed and developing countries, there are efforts for revitalizing and upgrading the cities. Specially, in the process of urban transformation the aim is to develop economic and physical aspects of the cities to improve the matter of quality of life.

Components of quality of life

Mercer has designed an objective way of measuring quality of living for expatriates based on factors that people consider representative of quality of living. Once a year, Mercer conducts a quality of living study in over 380 cities worldwide based on detailed assessments and evaluations of 10 key categories and 39 criteria or factors, each having coherent weightings reflecting their relative importance. The categories and factors are shown in the table below:
Urban transformation; quality of life and housing relations

One of the major factors that contribute to quality of life is housing, because it aims to serve the individual’s living area. If houses transformed in urban transformation process satisfy the users’ expectations of the interior parts of the house, the house would be with higher quality and more functional.

Housing quality components

Housing quality criteria definition varies among authors. The mutual factors are defined in 5 groups:

1. **Functionality**: with the intend of product use
2. **Durability**: the degree of product function under the different power effects
3. **Security**: to secure the users’ actions
4. **Aesthetics**: to apply visual features in terms of appreciation
5. **Flexibility**: residential housing and its elements to fluctuate over time.
6.
Housing quality and satisfaction relationship

When it comes to users’ satisfaction:

1. Organization of the place
2. Functional relationships
3. Hierarchy of the place
4. Flexibility and
5. Aesthetics

Factors refer to the characteristics of the place as the main quality parameters. Users’ personal assessment helps to specify quality requirements of residential housing (Songur, 2001).

III. ALAN ÇALIŞMASI

Kağıthane History

Kağıthane is district of the city of Istanbul, Turkey, in a valley inland from the upmarket Etiler. Built along a stream that runs into the Golden Horn. It has experienced both Roman and Ottoman periods. Real growth came to Kağıthane from the 1950s onwards, as the area was settled by migrants from Anatolia, who came to work in the factories, workshops or building sites. They built small cottages on the valley sides, and then brought family, friends and neighbors from the village to live in one of the rooms while they built their own cottages nearby. From the 1970s onwards as the second generation grew up the cottages have been pulled down and replaced with grubby, bare-walled six-story apartment buildings to house the offspring of these families. It separated from Sisli district in 1987 to an independent district. In 2005 it was chosen as an urban transformation area and Hamidiye has been the first choice of the district.

Case study - Hamidiye Area, Kağıthane District, Istanbul, Turkey

It is in the proximity of Seyrantepe, Nurtepe, Gültepe, Çağlayan ve Kağıthane center. It has the highest residential area in Kağıthane. Mobility in Hamidiye quarter has increased by urban transformation projects. Until 1999 the biggest immigration has been from Karadeniz area whilst, nowadays the most is from Sivas.
IV. HAMIDIYE POPULATION ANALYSIS

As an average every area in Kagithane holds 4,000 - 5,000 people while this is 3 times bigger (12,000 people) in Hamidiye. It is obvious that it is the effect of urban transformation that has caused the increase.

| Population Distribution in Kağıthane neighborhoods |
|---------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Mahalle                         | 2000      | 2007      |
| Çağlayan                        | 20,425    | 23,575    |
| Çeşiktepe                       | 28,600    | 34,115    |
| Emniyet Ev.                     | 7,788     | 9,148     |
| Gültepe                         | 12,627    | 14,828    |
| Gürsel                          | 22,527    | 27,509    |
| Hamidiye                        | 24,286    | 32,056    |
| Harmantepe                      | 10,568    | 22,291    |
| Hürriyet                        | 17,587    | 21,230    |
| M. Akif Ersoy                   | 10,688    | 12,736    |
| Merkez                          | 18,218    | 23,047    |
| Nurtepe                         | 14,705    | 18,723    |
| Ortabayır                       | 20,904    | 25,386    |
| Sanayi                          | 28,419    | 34,960    |
| Seyrantepe                      | 15,406    | 19,435    |
| Şirintepe                       | 17,010    | 21,679    |
| Talatpaşa                       | 28,959    | 34,391    |
| Telsizler                       | 10,268    | 12,705    |
| Y. Kemal                        | 16,028    | 18,762    |
| Yesilce                         | 9,214     | 11,653    |

V. HOUSING CONDITION OF- HAMİDİYE DISTRICT – OBSERVATION

Soldan sağa: yeni-bir katlı gecekondu-kaç katlı betonarme gecekondu  
Fotoğraflar kendime aiyet

VI. EXAMPLES OF THE PLACE

a. Girne st. -Hamidiye-personal transformation

Girne st. -Hamidiye-personal transformation  
Photos taken by myself
b. Onur St. -Hamidiye-Personal transformation

Onur st. -Hamidiye-personal transformation
Photos taken by myself
c. Hamidiye-Squatter settlement

http://kacmazemlak.com/emlak/

Hamidiye-squatter settlement
Plan sketched by myself
VII. INTERVIEW ASSESSING

1. Immigration time and period – residing reasons

According to the questionnaire, people in both squatters and transformation projects %75 are immigrants coming from (Nevşehir-Samsun-Tokat-Elazığ). Squatter settlements have arrived there in 1980 – 1990 years while the transformed housing projects have begun in 2005. The both settlers (squatters and new developed houses) do not have the tendency to go back to their own homelands. The reason is that they mostly (%80) work in this place and their children have an attachment to the place and the schools there. Consequently, it is understood that they are permanent migrants.

The 4 of 5 of the migrants in Hamidiye, work in this place and 1 of 5 have migrated because of the matter of replacement in urban transformation (migrated from Seyrantepe and Sanayi Mahallesi). 4 of 5 of the squatter settlements want to move to Bagdad Avenue and the rest prefer to just get away from Kagithane. The 2 of the 5 personally transformed houses’ owners desire to leave for Bagdad Avenue as well.

Expectations

Housing type preferences

The 3 of 5 of the squatter settlements want spacious, detached houses with gardens inside. 1 of 5 just wants to live in apartments and the rest wishes to live in luxurious houses. In personally developed houses people prefer to live in their own houses but when it comes to choose, the want to live in detached houses.

2. Functionality

Functional relationships - space Hierarchy

In both squatters and the transforming buildings, the entrance is opened to a dividing hall and the sitting area is just next to the kitchen. The whole rooms place in the second level of the house that are somehow in distance with the entrance and form a semi-private part of the house. However, the squatters do not have a designed plan; therefore a part of the space is mostly useless and has no functionality.

Number of rooms

3 of 5 in squatters have 3 rooms, 1 of 5 has 2 rooms and 1 of 5 has 1 room as obtained data. Nevertheless, most of the families complain for more rooms because the population of the family is big. In the other category the 2 of 5 people are satisfied by the size and number of the rooms.

Kitchen

Generally, kitchens are separated by a thin wall from the other spaces. in transformed projects 2 of 5 of the kitchens are integrated with the sitting rooms.
VIII. RESULTS

This study is conducted in Kağıthane, Hamidiye area which is based on the settlement of squatters and is still experiencing urban transformation which is mostly personal and tries to evaluate the quality of the houses of the transformation. The paper hypothesizes that the level of satisfaction is boosted by the increase of quality of life. However, satisfaction is measured by considering the residents’ expectations and housing quality in terms of: functionality, durability, security, flexibility and aesthetics. The results show that the squatter settlements wish for more spacious and functional houses that are exactly durable for earthquake disasters. Since transforming experienced houses have previous plans that reduce unnecessary places and make the house more functional. As if the quality of the building in the squatters is so low, they are satisfied with their houses and their only concern is to make a more durable house for earthquake events and so assist urban transformation. Moreover, they are living in fear. The transformed buildings outweigh the squatters from the points of aesthetics and security but squatters behave better in the matter of flexibility. The most concerning matter in transformed building is the matter of transportation that they always complain of the long distances.

IX. REFERENCES


Robert W. Marans (2003), Understanding Environmental Quality Through Quality Of Life Studies: The 2001 Das And Its Use Of Subjective And Objective Indicators, elsevier, Landscape and Urban Planning 65, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI 48106, USA, pp 73–83.