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Research Article

CREATING VIBRANT NEIGHBOURHOODS IN PLANNED SETTLEMENTS

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ABSTRACT. This research identifies the public spaces in informal settlements which are one of the most dominant issues today in both social and physical conditions as to understand the measures that create vibrant neighbourhoods. The thesis plans to find the parameters that can be brought from informal communities to planned neighbourhoods to allow the vibrancy to exist in the context of a build environment. What makes an informal settlement an informal settlement is also one of the subjects of this research, as well as the role of public spaces in them, the differences between the informal and planned settlement types in terms of neighbourhood and how the public spaces help develop a sense of community in planned neighbourhoods based on informal settlements. This thesis is created upon two case studies, which are both obserational. These are Kadifekale and Uzundere in Izmir/Turkey.

Keywords: *Informal settlements, vibrant neighbourhood, planned neighbourhood, sense of community, public spaces*

1. INTRODUCTION

Cities are places that are dominated by high populations which work mostly in commerce, industry and service industry in terms of economic activities instead of agriculture. Their population is generally shaped by rural to urban migrations. Nowadays, our cities are facing a huge challenge in terms of migration dynamics. Aravena (2014) describes this challenge with a term called 3S: Scale-Speed-Scarcity. Our cities are changing because of the population growth. People migrate to cities more often because of the opportunities in business, education or health. Because of the increased migration and due to the low-income, people are forced to build their own houses to survive without a regulation. This situation creates informal settlements in cities. In order to stop the growth of informal settlements and increase the life standards in cities, governments came up with a solution called ‘‘planned neighbourhoods’’ and started placing people in these developments.

As a solution, planned neighbourhoods affect communities’ psychology in a negative way contrary to what is believed by governments. This interferes with the dynamics of the communities and their built environment formed organically in informal settlements. The examples of Sulukule in Istanbul and Uzundere in Izmir taught us some important lessons in terms of loss of vibrancy in neighbourhoods after transformation to move to planned neighbourhoods.

This research focuses on identifying and characterising public spaces in informal settlements in physical and social terms in order to understand the measures that create vibrant neighbourhoods. The thesis questions the measures that can be transferred from informal communities to planned neighbourhoods to keep the vibrancy in the context of build environment. The research questions how we can define a place as an informal settlement, what the role of public spaces in informal settlements are, what the difference between informal and planned settlements in terms of neighborhood is and how public spaces increase the sense of community in planned neighbourhood based on informal settlement.

The study examines the examples of Sulukule and Uzundere informal settlements while comparing Kadifekale area and TOKI Uzundere Public Housing Project in Izmir in terms of the aspects of informal settlement and planned development.

2. VIBRANT NEIGHBOURHOOD AND SENSE OF COMMUNITY

According to Lau (2015), vibrant neighborhoods supposedly have affordable housing, commercial services and retails that meet the needs and requests of the residents, and some public space to create a sense of community. In general, sense of community is defined as a feeling that residence feel faithful, secure and safe in a specific place and increased well-being, participation in public affairs and civic responsibility (Francis et all, 2012) According to Francis et all.(2012), the neighbourhood public spaces are significantly and positively associated with sense of community.

It is vital for planners and researchers to find ways to improve the sense of community inside residential neighbourhoods. A stronger sense of community has been linked with less surface parking, more commercial floor spaces to land area ratios, lower levels of land use mix (Wood, Frank, & Giles-Corti, 2010), and living in neighbourhoods perceived as safe and interesting (Lund, 2002) for the built environment. Mullan (2003) also found that vehicle traffic and parking affected the perceptions of helpfulness and area friendliness and safety negatively.

Public spaces, such as parks and piazzas, are some elements of the built environment that may foster sense of community by facilitating chance encounters between neighbours (Talen, 2000). Therefore, before understanding both the physical and social relationship between sense of community and public spaces, first we have to comprehend the term ‘‘public space’’. There are many definitions of public space within the published literature. ‘‘If a place is equally accessible to everyone, irrespective of their physical abilities, age, gender, ethnicity, income level and social status, it can be called public space. ’’ (Madanipour 2010, 242) Also, Relph (1976) informed that these places are ‘‘public ’’ because they are created and known through common experiences and involvement in common symbols and meanings.

2.1 Informal Settlements and Sense of Community

Nowadays, almost one billion people are living in informal settlements or slums. Informal settlements are places that mostly grow due to rural-to-urban migrations. It’s called ‘Informal’ because they occur without any registration in terms of land tenure, urban planning, design and construction (Dovey, 2013). Such settlements are mostly identified as marginal, illegal and poor in some matters like sanitation or ventilation.

However, the new literature argues that informality is not necessarily a problem, rather than it can be an opportunity. In reference to Dovey (2016), the characteristic features of informal settlements are high density, being car free, walkable and transit-oriented. They are low-carbon, sustainable and organic areas because of recycled materials which are used in the construction of their buildings due to the low income of the community.

The Informal Settlement World Map (2011) shows how dominant informal settlements have become and will become. Current slum populations are represented as orange squares distributed in a checkerboard pattern over black squares, which show overall population. Future population projections are depicted in shaded tones.

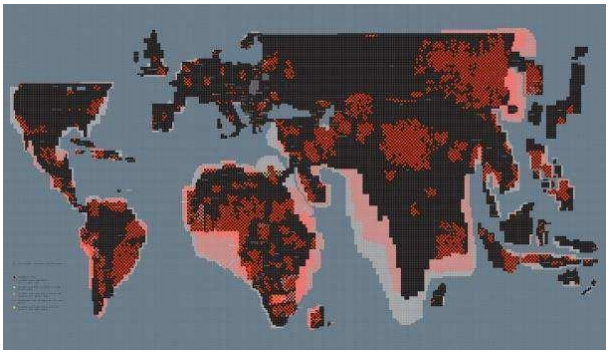


Fig 1. *The Informal Settlement World Map (Christian Werthmann, Elizabeth Randall and Fiona Luhrmann, 2011).*

According to Mccloud (2010), the sense of community is much stronger in an informal settlement than a city like London. It is possible to clearly see that in the documentary of ‘‘Slumming it’’ (2010), informal settlements have much more vibrancy in their built environments. Each building has a view of the street and it is surprising that in some terms they are much more secure places than planned neighbourhoods. The girl that was being interviewed in the video said that she and her friends can easily walk in the streets and feel safe in at all hours of the day and night. However, governments build planned neighbourhoods in order to create formalization and, formalization often standardizes private space in to tiny apartments that are separated from the street network, producing access spaces that are less flexible and less productive. (Dovey, 2016) Therefore we are losing the sense of belonging and security. According to Jacobs’ (1993) term called ‘‘eyes upon the street’’ indicated that if buildings face the streets, they can insure the safety of both residents and strangers and create a desirable neighbourhood where the most successful residents do not feel the need to leave. For this reason, it can be argued that informal settlements have a much more vibrant neighbourhood than planned neighbourhoods.

Public spaces in informal settlements have a significant position in physical and social interaction and as in the case of housing, they are generally improved by local people. The relationship and exchange between the dwelling place and the open space is another characteristic in these settlements. Open places are usually seen as an extension of the house which is often small and limited. There is also a close relationship between the interior and exterior (Hernandez-Garcia, 2013).

Of course, these neighbourhoods have low quality housing and some other problems. According to McCloud (2010), one of the most prominent issues is the poor sanitation. As an example because of the lack of infrastructure and toilets in Dharabi – India, people end up having to throw their trash directly to the outside. Generally, most of the sewers are open and running through them are fresh water pipes. When these crack, they draw in raw sewage directly. Moreover, kids inevitably find themselves playing in contaminated water and the results are high levels of diseases such as Diphtheria, TB and Tyohoid. Doctors are estimated to be dealing with 4.000 cases caused by poor sanitation a day.

2.2 Planned Neighbourhoods and Sense of Community

Planned neighbourhoods are generally represented as the solution created by the government to support people with low income in order to improve their living conditions, promote skills and new jobs. After providing these ‘’suitable’’ living conditions, the municipality aims to give them the modern city-life necessities to make sure their children grow up in a rather healthy environment. As Ghannam states, the image of modernization is matched with progress, scientific solutions, rational planning, statistical facts, the importance of international investment, separation of the home from the workplace, creating personal and public hygiene, family structure, clean environment, child rearing, etc. (Ghannam, 2002)

Planned neighbourhoods are called TOKI in Turkey and are created as a solution by the government to solve the issue of the ever increasing amount of informal settlements across the country. Housing Development Administration of Turkey aims to produce solutions to the issues plaguing housing and urbanization in general in the entirety of Turkey by creating good housing in healthy urban environments.

The social housing program of TOKİ is made mostly for the low and middle class people who can’t afford or already have housing unit in today’s market conditions. The social housing program is made out of projects for the mentioned low and middle income families, poor group and urban transformation projects as well as projects for disaster management and restructuring for when needed.

According to the documentary of ‘’Ekümonopolis: Ucu Olmayan Şehir ‘’ (2012), it is clear that there are problems in the development of planned neighbourhoods like how they are mostly located rather far away from public transportation and many other services. This creates discrimination both physically and psychologically. Another side of the problems of the planned neighbourhoods is the adaptation issues of people moving there. Kadifekale-Uzundere is a prime example of this very issue. Neighbourly relations of people living in Kadifekale were based on their sense of community and their problems adapting to the apartment life after moving to Uzundere social housing projects reached a critical point (Mirioğlu, 2013). Moving to multi-story housing pronounced the lack of a sense of community and neighbourly relations in these kinds of neighbourhoods for the ones that just moved there. They also felt more unsafe and thought that on top of having less of a sense of community, the neighbourhood was less livable overall and lacked vibrancy.

This research will compare Kadifekale and Uzundere in Izmir in terms of certain parameters which are affected by the vibrancy in the neighbourhoods. The parameters are as follows; view of the street, walkability, transit-oriented and car free streets.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS :

CASE STUDY OF KADIFEKALE AND UZUNDERE

The research methodology in this paper is comparative case study of Kadikale and Uzundere districts of İzmir- TURKEY. Date collection was based on second-hand information and first-hand data gathered through site visit.

3.1 The History of Kadifekale

Kadifekale is a dominant port area overseeing the Izmir Gulf and was built in BC 3rd century by the orders of Alexander the Great to one of his generals named Lysimachos. It is built 186m higher than the sea level and consists of a 6km area. One of the best places to watch over the whole city, Kadifekale, is one of the major landmarks of Izmir is also aptly named ‘’Yukari Kale’’ as well. As a place that has housed many civilizations, Kadifekale is regarded as one of the major cultural assets that has survived for Izmir. Kadifekale turned to ruin approaching the 18th century as it wasn’t used as a residential area for a long time. The stones of the castle have been used on the building of the lower regions after this century and this resulted in buildings like the stadium and the theatre to be destroyed. Kadifekale has been opened to be populated again after the 18th century and Ottoman style architecture was started to be seen.

According to Karayiğit (2005), urbanization movements in Kadifekale in the years 1950 to 1960 were first started on the northern hillsides to the western side, from the valley base and climbed up till the back of Kadifekale. He also added, that the investigations showed that there were 7.324 housings. This place was deemed a disaster zone by the council of minister in 1978 but this couldn’t stop the settlement. Karayiğit (2005) has shown that the estimated total population of the area was around 30 thousand people with nearly all of the said population being of eastern or southeastern descent, the majority consist of folk from Mardin.

Kadifekale’s texture has been described in three categories by Kayın (2009); its history, geography and physical conditions, and its social structure. These are summarized as follows:

Being an ‘’Aegean-Mediterranean city’’, a ‘’port-coastal city’’ and a ‘’ commerce city ’’. a multi cultural social structure because of the visitor groups who stay for short or long periods and create sub-groups in the city. Dilemma between different characteristics like being ‘’a large city’’ and ‘’coast village’’, holding economic-cultural potentials and disorganization, being ‘’open’’ or ‘’closed’’ to the outer world (Kayin, 2009).

Through all these characteristics, Izmir and eventually Kadifekale has become an important center for drawing their inhabitants from other cities, beliefs, values or cultures.

3.2 Government Solution: Uzundere Planned Neighbourhood

The government decided to construct Uzundere housings as a solution because the population within the area was increasing by way of as excessive as 10 percent. Demolitions have been commenced through Izmir Metropolitan Municipality in September 2007. As of 2011, the area has been freed from slums and afforested. The task estimated the relocation of the population of the Kadifekale city transformation area to public housing to be built in Uzundere. Within the scope of the assignment, 3080 high-rise houses of four distinctive housing types have been produced in Uzundere on a surface location of 469.425 m2 (Izmir Metropolitan Municipality).



Fig 2. *Kadifekale Area Before & After (Izmir Metropolitan Municipality)*

According to Demirli (2011) the planned neighbourhood project in Kadifekale can be divided into positive and negative aspects. In the pros side, the governmental organizations, municipality offerings and its press devices present the project as the population will flow to a new environment, that's farther away from the potential landslide locations and is able to support all the needs for present day living. On the opposite hand, the terrible viewpoints strain the consequences of dislocation, the erosion of socio-cultural values through publicity to a brand new form of urban existence and the possible damages in the communication network of the population, which aren't simply taken into consideration by the press that supports the governmental strategies.

Demirli (2011) also mentioned that while the TOKI Uzundere is represented as a solution to provide modern practices and life standards through improving the physical and social conditions, it can be seen that the physical properties of the housing units aren’t planned taking the inhabitants’ daily life there into consideration

3.3 Sense of community in Kadifekale

Kadifekale streets are one of the areas in the neighbourhood tradition in which humans interact. The streets between the neighbourhoods are lively. They are playgrounds for children and talk venues for women.

The primary geographical location of the castle is a critical area wherein the population can perform their activities. From Kadifekale to the city middle for work and buying purposes, the Kordon as the only point of contact with the sea, reachable within walking distance, is an important practice that lets in the residents to interact immediately with the city.

In the development of the feel of belonging, it is a very crucial factor for the residents to come into contact with the city where they live. However, those who were in close contact with the city centre for reasons such as business or shopping were obliged to live in an environment built around the city that was very different from what they had experienced before. New living areas for the residents of Kadifekale, who moved into high-rise public housing constructed in Uzundere, brought considerable deprivation and new expenses for them. Transportation is considered one of the problems in this new habitat. They had to cover the extra transportation costs in Uzundere public housing area while walking from Kadifekale to the city center to meet their needs and work in the workplace. Access to urban services has decreased, transportation costs have increased, instalments paid for public housing have created new spending items in the family budget. The households who settled in Uzundere public housing place have been given the right to shelter, but the problems of lack of infrastructure, lack of social centers and transportation problems remained unresolved.

According to Kılıç E. & Göksu A. (2018), the ones forced to move from Kadifekale to Uzundere public housing were not happy. It was no longer the geographical, historical, social and aesthetic functions of the place that made human beings feel velvety, however the common goals, memories and feelings of the inhabitants of Kadifekale. For the emigrated population of Kadifekale, the castle is a new living area where existence is fought and held inside the city. According to interviews by Kılıç E. & Göksu A. (2018), a few examples from these interviews about what the residents said:

“ I worked very hard to build my own house in Kadifekale. With kids, I carried bricks to the development site. However, they destroyed my residence and driven us out to the this mountain (Uzundere). I had to move, there has been no different option. This area is like prison for us but we have to live here anyway. ’’



Fig 3. *Uzundere Planned Neighbourhood (Author Personal Archive, 2019)*

“ This was a huge mountain, it was excellent and we regularly climbed that, we took flowers, roses, we took photos. Children were playing in Kadifekale, however Uzundere isn't like that. It isn't always appropriate for our life style. I got sick. We got used to staying in Kadifekale because I moved to there while we were youngsters but now we're like in old age asylum in Uzundere. ’’

3.4 Public Spaces in Uzundere and Kadifekale

Balconies of homes in Kadifekale all have an important function as out of doors space in the daily life of residents. Ghannam (2002) gives an instance for outdoor area utilization in everyday life. The use of balconies not only includes the needs of the house members, but also they can be used as a platform for information negotiations, a level to talk with others and present the self to the public. For instance, a blanket or the clothes that are hung up outside the apartment's balcony can be understood by means of other ladies as the indicators that display the financial situation of the family, or they may be used as a hallmark for 103 the neighbors approximately the present day changes within the private existence of the family, consisting of a beginning of baby or marriage of the daughter (Ghannam, 2002).

According to Demirli (2011), as an instance of use of outdoor areas in housing scale, balconies and gardens may be analyzed. In the interview, a nineteen year old participant living with his own family declared that since he uses the living room as his bedroom for nights, he uses the balcony part as a place where he spends his leisure time on his computer and smokes without making his parents notice or sometimes chooses to sleep there on hot summer nights. In another example, a participant woman who explained that since their house is on the ground floor, she turns her balcony into a small shop where she can sell groceries.

In TOKI Uzundere, there is a balcony part extended from kitchen, and it is so small in scale that only one person may stand outside. Consequently, it is not possible to use it for drying laundry, keeping it as storage, or transforming it into a work place . From this point, it may be considered that though women have a socially limited life within the borders of their homes in Kadifekale, some of them find opportunity to work and take part in the family economy.



Fig 4. *Balconies in Uzundere (Author Personal Archive, 2019)*



Fig 5. *Balconies in Kadifekale (Demirli, 2011)*

The gardens of the slums are places of production and socialization where the residents can grow some crops, trees, and sometimes spend time with their neighbours. One of the resident said that (Kılıç E. & Göksu A. 2018):

"We had a mulberry tree, we had a grape tree…" one neighbourhood resident said of his garden. ''I made grapes. Our garden, our roof, our terrace, we'd go to the rooftops, we'd sit, we'd get up, we'd make couches. I mean, everything was as nice as it could be, we were very comfortable. The lights, the castle was beneath us. Ahhh... But the rest is a lie. Why did they do that? Now they're going to go down to the sea... My grapes are on the roof. I planted trees in the garden. It was full of grapes. I had grapes wrapped in vine leaves. We were sitting in their shadows, eating and feeding, and I was giving it to the neighbours…"

The streets, on the other hand, are the shortcut routes known only to residents who live in Kadifekale, which enable residents to be connected by walking from Kadifekale to the city center as "on foot" with the expression of the residents of the neighborhood. The organic irregular streets between the slums are also social places where women sit in front of their doors, chat, and children play.

It is also very difficult for the elderly and children especially to reach from place to place on foot between the blocks in Uzundere's public housing area. In one of the steepest slope in one of the Uzundere's public housing area's retaining walls of a primary school is written" these stairs tire me very much " as the way of outcry, protest was observed.



Fig 6. *Roads in Uzundere Planned Neighbourhood (Kılıç E. & Göksu A., 2018))*



Fig 7. *Car parking areas in Uzundere (Author Personal Archive, 2019)*

The present streets of Uzundere consist of large vehicle roads and car parking places. The green areas between the houses consist of long blocks rather than the low buildings used by the residents of Kadifekale. There are some children's playgrounds in the area, but none of them are used.

Kadifekale residents are usually able to watch their child play while chatting in front of the house and provide security while Uzundere parking spaces are insecure to them. Living in high houses mean that they are unable to control their relationship with public spaces and therefore, cut. It has also undermined neighbour relations. The only supermarket in the region is not much preferred.



Fig 8. *Public Space in Uzundere (Author Personal Archive, 2019)*



Fig 9. *Shopping Area in Uzundere (Author Personal Archive, 2019)*

CONCLUSION

In conclusion as part of city the renewal challenge of Izmir Metropolitan Municipality, the population of Kadifekale are pressured to depart their district and relocate to exclusive point of Izmir. Considering the financial issues, many inhabitants don't have any choice, but to relocate to the public housing project, called TOKI Uzundere. Uzundere Planned Neighbourhood is built without thinking the life style of Kadifekale residents and damaged the sense of neighbourhood, the security and vibrancy in the streets. High Apartment blocks without any connection with the outside, large vehicle roads, car parking areas and undefined playground parks are not suitable for this group's daily life activities. There should be car free roads, low height buildings with large balconies connected with street. This planned neighbourhood solution killed their culture and the vibrancy of their lives.

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