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Urban Transformation: a Case Study on 7 Çukurambar, Ankara

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ABSTRACT

The social and economic development in mid 20th century Turkey has inevitably resulted in a rapid urbanization process that has determined the form of big cities. As society experienced huge social transformation, the cities have been powerfully shaped by the illegal squatter settlements, built by the immigrated population for their urgent needs for shelter on seized lands. The demand for shelter has transformed into a complex social, economic, cultural and political problem that could not be solved yet. The aim of this paper is to analyze the urban transformation to find some clues for the solution of gecekondu and urbanization problems. For this, the paper focuses on the Çukurambar neighborhood, an original gecekondu area in Ankara that differs from many examples developing on public land. Çukurambar is an interesting example with a strategic location in Ankara, where the land is privately owned. This area without an organized urban transformation project, left to market mechanism in a speculative way, ignoring gecekondu population living there. Hence, the paper explains the rapid transformation of the Çukurambar neighborhood, from gecekondu area into high rise housing blocks, highlights its socio-spatial impact on the character of the urban space of Ankara and identifies a unique market led solution in this case.

Keywords: Urban transformation, gecekondu, high-rise residential buildings, Çukurambar, Ankara

1. INTRODUCTION

The social transformation following the Second World War has brought important changes to the cities in Turkey. The strict state control on economy has loosened and investments have sped up in these years. Within these conditions, the new social atmosphere has brought hope for better living conditions in cities and has attracted the rural population to urban settlements. In contrast to this development, some have argued that the main force behind the urbanization was mechanization process at rural areas. Although the mechanization may have played a role, the fact that until the end of 1960s there was plenty of uncultivated land shows that the rural labor force preferred to migrate to cities instead of opening new lands to farming practice. This process is related with the land ownership character of rural, which has also influenced the form of urbanization through gecekondus. The rural-to-urban migration has dramatically influenced the

spatial distribution of population. However, both industrial growth and urban development could not respond to the

whole new coming migrants. Burdened with all the problems of urbanization, cities became the subject of dramatic crises as gecekondu, low job opportunities for the growing unskilled workforce, environmental degradation, unclean water, improper waste disposal, and deterioration of existing infrastructure.

This study queries the gecekondu analyzing the urban transformation in an original gecekondu area, Çukurambar, Ankara. In the socio-spatial transformation process of Çukurambar, there are two important turning points. First is the transformation from rural settlement to urban gecekondu area in the 1970s.

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Second is the transformation from gecekondu area to legal luxury (high-income) urban residential area, after the legitimization of the area in 1993. Today, by the application of the revision plan², two contrasting urban patterns co-exist in the area. There is an ongoing replacement process of the pre-existing pattern of the unauthorized settlement by the newly built environment. The new physical environment represents the new face of Çukurambar with its single, isolated and at least 11- storey high-rise housing blocks. Yet, this physical change has also resulted in a social transformation that is analyzed through the case study.

In the case study, in-depth interviews were realized with the key persons of transformation process of Çukurambar between February 8th 2004 and February 28th 2004. Before the field study in Çukurambar, an interview was realized with the chief of development department of Çankaya Municipality about the planning process of this area. In Çukurambar the interview with the Çukurambar headman, four developers, and with new and old inhabitants were completed. The Çukurambar headman who is one of the first migrants of Çukurambar told the story of transformation of Çukurambar from the 1970s to 2000s, and explained the social structure and communitarian environment of Çukurambar. Developers also gave details from their construction experience in this area. On the other hand, the number of interviews with inhabitants could not provide acceptable representativeness for numerical examination of Çukurambar as regards to social and economic structure. Moreover, these interviews provide us general information about their problems, expectations and critics for transformation process of this area. In the field survey photographs from different phases of transformation present the visual document about transformation. It could be said that these type of in-depth interviews makes possible explanatory methods in handling socio-spatial transformation process of Çukurambar.

The first section of the paper is devoted to debates on emergence of squatter housing (gecekondu) and transformation of gecekondus in Turkey, the second section provides a brief discussion on gecekondu transformation projects on Ankara. In the light of these discussions, the case section analyzes the socio-spatial transformation process of Çukurambar gecekondu area with a critical perspective. Then, the socio-spatial shift at Çukurambar, and the planning process are examined in detail. Finally, some clues about an alternative transformation for sustainable communities and viable urban environment are discussed.

2. TRANSFORMATION OF GECEKONDU NEIGHBORHOODS IN TURKEY

In the 1950s, Turkey has met the fact of mass migration from rural to urban areas. The national population was

19 million in the year 1945, and the population living in the cities was 25% of the total. In ten years time, the urban population ratio increased to 32 %. In 1980, this ratio reached to 44%, and in 2000, to 65% [1]. The so-called quick process was not only the change at the spatial organization of population. It occurred as a series of important changes in economic, political, social and cultural levels. The government could not produce adequate shelter to the new 'urban population' and migrated groups built their own dwellings creating a special and original form of housing-“gecekondus”. In the 1950s, the government began to see the large amount of population living in the gecekondus as potential votes. With the Law of Gecekondu (no.775), these areas gained infrastructure, new roads and streets, and almost a new view of low-middle-class-residential character. After the 1960s, gecekondu, which had started as individual solutions to the housing need of urban poor, grew in number and changed character. Since the public land stock was already eroded during the 1960s, it became impossible for poor individuals to invade public land and build their own gecekondu. Some of the newcomers had to become tenants of the gecekondu owners who had already constructed their second/third gecekondu in order to get rental income [1].

Between 1983 and 1988, a series of amnesty laws has been put into force. The main aim of those laws was to legalize the existing stock and solve the ownership problem of gecekondu districts. To fulfill this aim, treasury land was transferred to municipalities, implementation was entrusted to them in order to provide housing for low income groups. Development and upgrading laws provided the necessary condition for the transformation into proper apartment housing stock. This transformation had to be rapid and at a mass scale [2]. Apartment housing, in Turkey, has always been seen as the opposite of gecekondu. According to the modernist elite, the gecekondu symbolizes the informal part of Turkish urban society, while the apartment housing was used as the symbol of formal and 'modern society'. After the legalization, the transformation from gecekondus to planned apartment areas started with market dynamics and development plans. Rising land and real estate rents served to owners of gecekondus as an award with the impetus of market dynamics [3]. Gecekondu population was encouraged by the authorities to unite their parcels so that to be legalized and let multistory buildings be constructed financed by promised credits. Furthermore, the rent of the new developed areas is given to the settlers who had come from rural areas and occupied to governmental land, which is contrary to the rights of urban population [4].

Following the several amnesty laws, the population living in gecekondus started to expect maximum benefit and rent from their gecekondu. With the amnesty laws (no.2981) for gecekondu areas, 'Improvement and Development Plans' have been prepared for gecekondu areas. Since the 1980s, the district municipalities have been responsible for planning, approval and

² Revision plan is prepared when an existing development or improvement plan are not sufficient and suitable for the main characteristics of the area.

implementation of urban plans up to 1/1000 scale as well as issuing occupancy and construction permits. On the other hand, Greater City Municipality is responsible for preparing the upper-scale (1/5000) urban plans and controlling the compatibility of the plans in various scales [1].

Towards 2000s, gecekondu construction changed in character, lost its legitimacy and became a general unauthorized housing problem. The total number of legally constructed houses in 2000 has been estimated at nearly 10 million, which accounted for 62% of the total housing stock in Turkey [1].

Gecekondu have been defined as an urgent urban problem waiting for a solution to transform into more healthy and livable urban areas since 1960s. There are two main models that have transformed the gecekondu areas: the improvement plan model and the urban transformation project model. At the end of the 1980s *the urban transformation project model* and its positive aspects was introduced. In this model, the related area is handled with a holistic approach instead of parcel scale. On the contrary, in *the improvement plan model* gecekondu parcels are reorganized according to the improvement plan in market conditions. These plans provide new parcel pattern for the construction of apartment blocks, in which gecekondu owners become a shareholder [1].

According to the improvement plan the location of gecekondu parcels are important for the transformation. Three different types of transformation processes can be defined. The first one is the transformation of the best located and properly sized areas having maximum rent. These areas have been developed by big construction firms. The second is the transformation of the areas near to important transportation axis and/or in the periphery of prestigious residential areas, which are mostly built by small-scale firms or build-and-sell constructors. The last section is those areas located in the periphery and near to industrial sites, where urban transformation could not be realized. The population of these peripheral gecekondu refused the other solutions as they expected to get higher rents. By time, these type of areas get older and become the squatter areas of the city [4].

All these laws and transformation processes encouraged further gecekondu construction. Authorities have failed to control land speculation, and could not produce adequate housing for low income. Transforming urban land into commercial commodity, rents given to a group of individual and developers, unhealthy urbanization, degradation of urban environment through increased densities and deterioration of urban spatial standards are paid today by the whole urban population.

3. URBAN TRANSFORMATION OF GECEKONDU NEIGHBORHOODS IN ANKARA

Ankara, the capital city of Turkey, has important experiences with gecekondu areas and their

transformation processes. However, during the migration period, industry in Ankara could not develop much, and the city population was formed mostly by state officials and military forces that required a remarkable service sector. This condition forces the new comers to work not only in formal, but also in informal service sectors in the city centre. To decrease the cost of transportation, they choose close areas to their work to construct their gecekondu. In other words, gecekondu areas located in close proximity to the city centre in Ankara, compared with other large cities of Turkey [3]. The central gecekondu areas were on rough topography, which were not suitable to settle and they were important parts of the green system of the city, such as valleys. In the later stages of urban development, after 1950s the gecekondu areas formed a belt around the city centre with the expansion of urban macro-form.

In order to solve the problems of gecekondu areas and to achieve rapid urban transformation on a mass scale, transformation in gecekondu areas was first included in the Improvement and Development Laws in 1948 and after (no.775, 2981) [2]. Henceforward, improvement and development plans became important implementation tools for transformation of gecekondu areas. After the 1980s, Ankara Metropolitan Municipality prepared and implemented various 'gecekondu transformation projects'. Today, although the preparation process of improvement plans has been finished for almost all gecekondu areas in Ankara (Table.1), the implementation of transformation projects is limited.

Table1. Total Gecekondu areas and Improvement Plans by Districts in Ankara (5)

Districts of Ankara	Total Gecekondu Area (ha)	Improvement Plan Areas (ha)	Percents of Improvement Plans (%)
Altındağ	3034	850	28
Çankaya	2171	1385	64
Etimesgut	368	368	100
Keçiören	1970	1785	91
Mamak	4147	4147	100
Sincan	9	9	100
Y.mahalle	957	957	100
Total	12656	9686	76,5

The reasons for the limited implementation of transformation projects are related with the characteristics of the gecekondu areas and their location in Ankara. The gecekondu areas in Ankara are agglomerated in seven districts. In Keçiören and Sincan, only 'improvement and development plans' are used to transform the gecekondu areas. On the other hand, in Altındağ, Çankaya, Etimesgut, Mamak and Yenimahalle, additional urban transformation projects are produced in the light of the previously prepared 'improvement and development plans' (Figure 1). Especially gecekondu neighborhoods located close to the city center have been easily transformed due to their

high rent values. The transformation projects in Çankaya district have been implemented due to the central position of the area, high land values and their environmental values, such as, Dikmen Valley [6] and Portakal Çiçeği Valley projects. Dikmen Valley as

governmental land has a significant role in the green system of Ankara. It consists of five implementation zones. The first two zones takes place at the upper side of the valley and includes new housing constructions, while the valley bottom is left to green recreation [1].

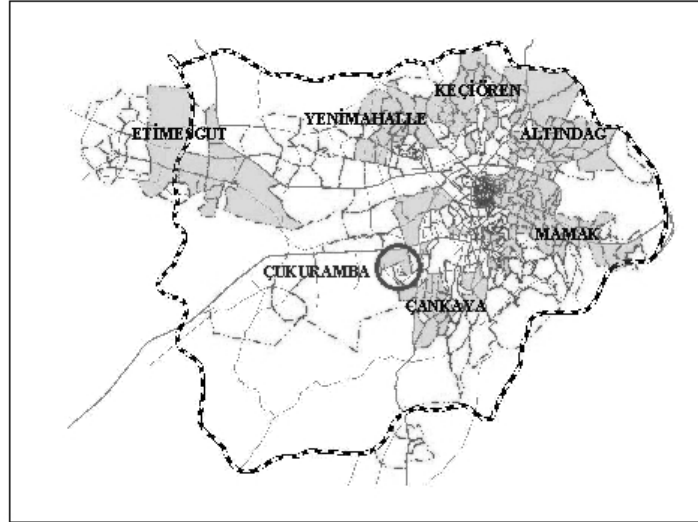


Figure 1. Implementation Plans in Ankara [5]

Portakal Çiçeği Valley also is a governmental land covered with green and partly with topographically unsuitable thresholds. PORTAŞ would buy the land from the shareholders with an agreement in return for a share from the construction in a proportion with location and dimensions of their land and distribute profits of the company [7]. The project included luxury housing, office and social facilities with green areas. The transformation through these projects could solve only the problems of physical spaces, but it could not be a solution to the social problems of Ankara. While high-income groups settle in these new residential area, gecekondu population leaves the transformed areas and re-builds their houses in other gecekondu areas in Ankara with similar characteristics to their previous gecekondu.

On the other hand, the gecekondu areas at peripheral positions in the city could not transform as easily as those located in central areas. For example, in Yenimahalle, Şentepe gecekondu area improvement plan was produced in 1985. However, although development and improvement plans exist, these areas could not be transformed due to the low rent values and due to their peripheral position in the city (Figure 1). Today, in contrast to other districts, the transformation process of gecekondu areas still continues in the Çankaya district through spatial projects or implementation plans.

Çukurambar has an important and special position among the gecekondu areas in the Çankaya district in the last few decades. With the expansion of the city, it became close to the city center and important

commercial investments took place in and around Çukurambar. This area has been transformed with the revision of the improvement plan instead of the special transformation project. With this feature the

transformation process of Çukurambar differentiates from the Dikmen Valley project and the Portakal Çiçeği Valley Project. On the other hand, private ownership of

land is dominant in Çukurambar, in contrast to other gecekondu examples developed on governmental land is observed [1][7]. In Çukurambar new development takes place in parcel level in the light of the revision improvement plan, opposite to transformation project approach. The transformation project examples like the Dikmen Valley project and the Portakal Çiçeği Valley Project involve a private firm to make the construction, public participation was an important issue, projects of housing, office and other social facilities were ready in design. Çukurambar had no chance to have such comprehensive approach. It is an unorganized place left to market and shaped with urban rent and improvement plans.

4. TRANSFORMATION OF ÇUKURAMBAR GECEKONU AREA

After discussing different transformation experiences in Ankara, in the following part of the paper the recent transformation story of the Çukurambar gecekondu area is handled and analyzed from the socio-spatial perspective. The meaning of the name 'Çukurambar' is 'a place with granary at low topography'. Çukurambar, as its name implies both its topography and historical

land-use, was a productive agricultural area in a plain, low topographical form where there have been wheat fields and storehouses for cereals. In general, slight slopes from different directions define the topography.

The Çukurambar neighborhood is located on the southwest of Ankara. The neighborhood is very near to the junction of important highways as at the north there is the Eskişehir Highway, which is the main west axis in Ankara, and at the east, there is the Konya Highway. The south part, which is near to Yüzüncüyıl Neighborhood, is alluvial land but the rest is stable. Also Çukurambar is situated on an important point which is very close to the city center Kızılay, and the Parliament, which has increased the attractiveness of the area for the parliaments, and is at the cross-section of the transportation network of Ankara, very near to subway stations (Figure 2). The neighborhood area is about 250 hectares [8]. The population of the area was approximately 2400 inhabitants in the beginning of 1980s and it rose to 4919 in 2000 [9].

Çukurambar eventually shows three different urban settlement characters; a residential district, a continuing construction site, and a transformation area. Since the 1960s, it became a gecekondu area. After 1993, when the implementation and revision plans have been prepared for the neighborhood, and put into force, the spatial and social face of the area started to change. Today, Çukurambar reflects a new scene of Turkey from an urban transformation experience with 'luxurious' multi-storey apartment buildings, where high-income inhabitants are accommodated, together with one storey gecekondu that is subject to transformation and replacement by new blocks in a short time (Figure 2,3,4). Few gecekondu buildings in the old parts of Çukurambar still exist.

4.1. Socio-Spatial Transformation Process in Çukurambar from 1960s to 2000s

In the 1960s, the gecekondu became an important problem in Ankara. In this period, migrants came both to the centre and periphery. The rural periphery of Ankara attracted population mostly from Ayaş, Beypazarı, Bala, Haymana, and Kızılcahamam, and particularly from other provinces of Turkey such as from Kars, Sivas, Nevşehir, Erzurum and Çankırı. *"The first migrants did not feel unfamiliar at Çukurambar with its rural characteristic occupied by agricultural activities in the 1960s. In this transformation process from rural to urban, the existing inhabitants of Çukurambar sold their cultivated field to the new comers in order to improve or build their own houses. They construct their houses on their own lands, without having construction permission."* (interview with Headman of Çukurambar). In other words, Çukurambar differs from other gecekondu areas of Turkey, which were settled on public lands, as discussed above. In the end of the 1960s, the number of gecekondu increased in Çukurambar and the 1967-1974 period is the most rapid

construction and urbanization process for Çukurambar. Lack of electricity and running water, transportation problems, muddy and inadequate roads, etc. were severe problems of Çukurambar in the early phase of first transformation.

Both the existing population and the new comers shared common social, spatial and economic problems in the same neighborhood. The emergence of problems forced the members of community to come together and to discuss to find solutions. Search for solutions to vital problems improved solidarity and community culture in Çukurambar. Thus, already in the beginning of the 1960s, the community had founded an association for the improvement of the Çukurambar neighborhood, in order to solve social, spatial and administrative problems (interview with Headman of Çukurambar). One of the first comers of Çukurambar who is the member of association reports that *"...our problems at public institutions are more easily solved when we apply through the association, instead of applying personally"*. The association worked hard and solved the electricity and running water problems in 1965. In the following years, the primary school and health center were opened at Çukurambar as a result of the efforts of association. Land of service areas, such as education and health services, were provided by field owners in sense of community (Interviews with the headman of Çukurambar), similar to other developing countries [10].

Although the number of new comers and gecekondu had increased, Çukurambar had a rural identity with low-density until it had been proclaimed as a neighborhood of the Çankaya district. In 1972, Çukurambar became an independent neighborhood of the metropolitan municipality and the Çankaya district. The sewage system was the last facility brought into the neighborhood in 1987. However, in the gecekondu area, primary education and health services were very limited and with the second transformation process, the existing services could no longer respond to the needs of all new inhabitants. There is only one primary school with 10 classes and 815 students.

The regular inhabitants of gecekondu stated that the neighborhood community played a vital role in their lives. They used to meet with each other in houses, gardens and especially on the streets during the day. This collective life enabled the families to act in solidarity with their neighbors and they are pleased with this social environment in Çukurambar. One inhabitant explains the daily life in Çukurambar gecekondu area as *"before the transformation, when we had to go somewhere we did not need to lock our doors and did not worry about our children"*. She states that everyone knew each other and shared their lives at houses and gardens during the day. Thus, solidarity and mutual help through neighborhood relations increase trust among them and this situation makes life easier for the community at the harmful conditions of the metropolitan cities.

While social facilities and environmental conditions transformed, the sense of community in the gecekondu area kept its importance until the recent transformation process. After the planning process, the existing gecekondu area has been transformed into the prestige residential area of Ankara. While in Çukurambar gecekondus have been replaced by high-rise housing blocks, people of gecekondus have left their houses and the Çukurambar neighborhood, in order to move to other gecekondu areas at the periphery of Ankara. In other words, this transformation could not achieve coexistence of two income-level groups in the same space. Therefore this process ends up with the voluntary exclusion of low income groups from the new prestige residential area. The reasons of old gecekondu owners' movement to the periphery are twofold. Firstly and

economically, the gecekondu owners sell the new flat at a high price and buy many flats in the periphery to guarantee the future of their children. Secondly, some gecekondu owners cannot adapt to the way of life in the flat and tries to find another detached house with a garden in the periphery to move freely in much space with many children. Furthermore, with the coming of high-income groups, the sense of community lost its importance in the area. Among new comers, nobody knows his or her neighbors today. Within this socio-spatial transformation planning as a legitimization process has played the role of catalyst.

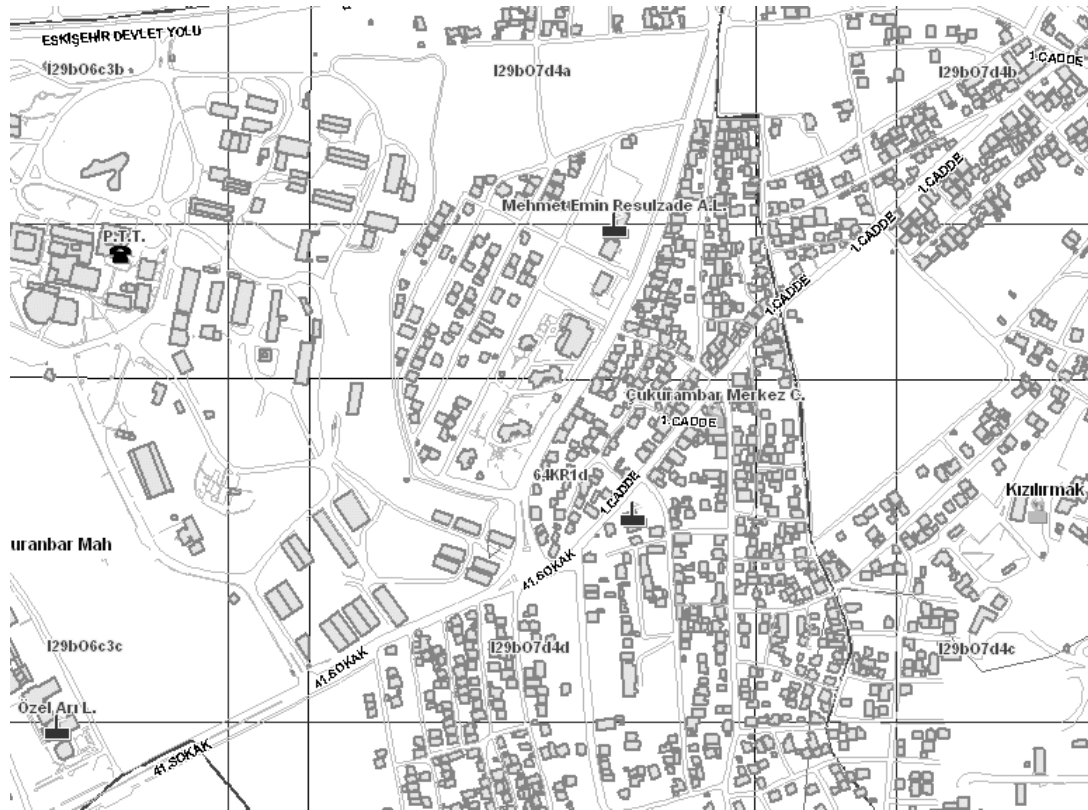


Figure 2. Çukurambar Neighborhood with many gecekondu in 2000 [8]



Figure 3. Çukurambar Neighborhood with few gecekondu in 2003 [12]



Figure 4. Çukurambar Neighborhood without gecekondu in 2006 [13]

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In the first half of 1980s, with the amnesty laws, illegal houses were legitimized and an improvement plan was prepared for Çukurambar (1/1000 scale) and approved in 1984 to transform the gecekondus. In this plan minimum plot area was 2500 m², minimum distance between houses and road was 10 meters and minimum distance among houses was 5 meters. In this plan two-storey houses were planned. In addition it accepted the local development plans and gave development decision only for planned areas.

In 1993, the Greater Ankara Municipality prepared the 'revision plan' of Çukurambar (1/5000 scale), that has changed the future and status of Çukurambar. In the previous improvement plan, Çukurambar was planned to be a low density residential area, but the 'revision plan' increased the population density. While the current population density of old gecekondu settlement was about 150 people per hectare on those dates, the density in the metropolitan plan proposed 200 people per hectare and then the density in revision plan determined 350 people per hectare as a proposal [11]. The reason behind the increasing density of the area is its closeness to the city center, and to the new developing axis on the west city entrance of Ankara. In addition to high densities, the area of education and health services has also been increased in the revision plan, but only the residential area has been built today, not the services. On the other hand, the first zone has been left to commerce in linear form.

The transformation of the Çukurambar gecekondu area has started with the revision plan and it continued with the implementation plan (1/1000 scale) prepared by the Municipality of the Çankaya District. According to the planning law no 3194, the functions and properties of plots are clarified in the implementation plan, in the light of land use and density decisions of revision plan.

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4.2. Planning Experiences and Its Effects on Çukurambar

The planning process in Çukurambar started in the 1970s by providing a partial planning approach, prepared for 40 percent of the neighbourhood [11]. However, the turning point for this area came with the metropolitan plan for Ankara, prepared by Ankara Metropolitan Planning Bureau and approved in 1982. This plan proposed the decentralization of urban population in Ankara. In the decentralization process, west axes, on which Çukurambar area takes place, has been decided as the main and new growth direction of the city. This plan decision has affected the destiny of Çukurambar settlement. In the metropolitan plan, the population density in this area has been planned as 200 people per hectare.

The size of plots in this area is higher than other parts of Ankara (about 3000m²). Floor area coefficient is about 2, and height of building is given as 34-31 meters.

High buildings and high population density, determined in the planning process, has made the transformation of this area easier due to the high urban land values at this zone of Ankara. Therefore, every gecekondu owner has expected to exchange their lands with flat of apartments. Today, as the result of the ongoing transformation, the old one storey gecekondus and high-rise 'modern' buildings are together in the area (Figure 5). However, in a short time, there will be no more one storey gecekondus in Çukurambar (Figure 4).

4.3. New Çukurambar Residential District: Spatial Transformation on Plots

After the plans had been put into practice, separated high-rise building blocks have been placed in the middle of each urban plot that has created a new description of built environment in Çukurambar. The implementation and revision plans were prepared according to the subdivision of building plots and islands. The direct effects of some values like base area and floor area coefficients determined the building character. However, the main determinant of the physical form in the Çukurambar is the previous land-ownership pattern.

The land-ownership structure in Çukurambar was complicated due to the character of the gecekondu. The spatial transformation started plot by plot, but it was not easy for the leading landowners to find and agree with each landowner in the implementation process. The gecekondu owners had to come together in order to unite their lands, and to get the construction permission. Sometimes, one plot belonged to 50-60 people together. They had to come together and find a contractor for having a high-rise apartment block. The build-and-sell

contractor only came to the area if the landowners had already agreed and if there was high urban rent. They sign a contract with 50 percent building rights and then the developer gives some money to them as rent during the construction time. Generally, the developer finishes the building in two or three years- time. The developers argue that because of the 50 percent share, the landowners who have less right could not afford to buy and live in those dwellings, and they sold their share of percentage (Interviews with developers). Finally, high-income groups, come to settle in these new buildings. The result of the transformation is a monotonous residential environment that consists of single, isolated

and similar buildings with strange ornaments on the facades. Hence as there is no project or design guide for this area, all new high-rise buildings are more or less the same, with no urban or architectural identity. They are about 10-15 storeys on plot about 2000-4000 m² (Figure 5). The apartment buildings cover 25% of their plot. The rest of the plot is left to car parking area and to a large garden with green spaces some of which are planned with urban furniture. The open and underground car parking area is planned and implemented in most cases.

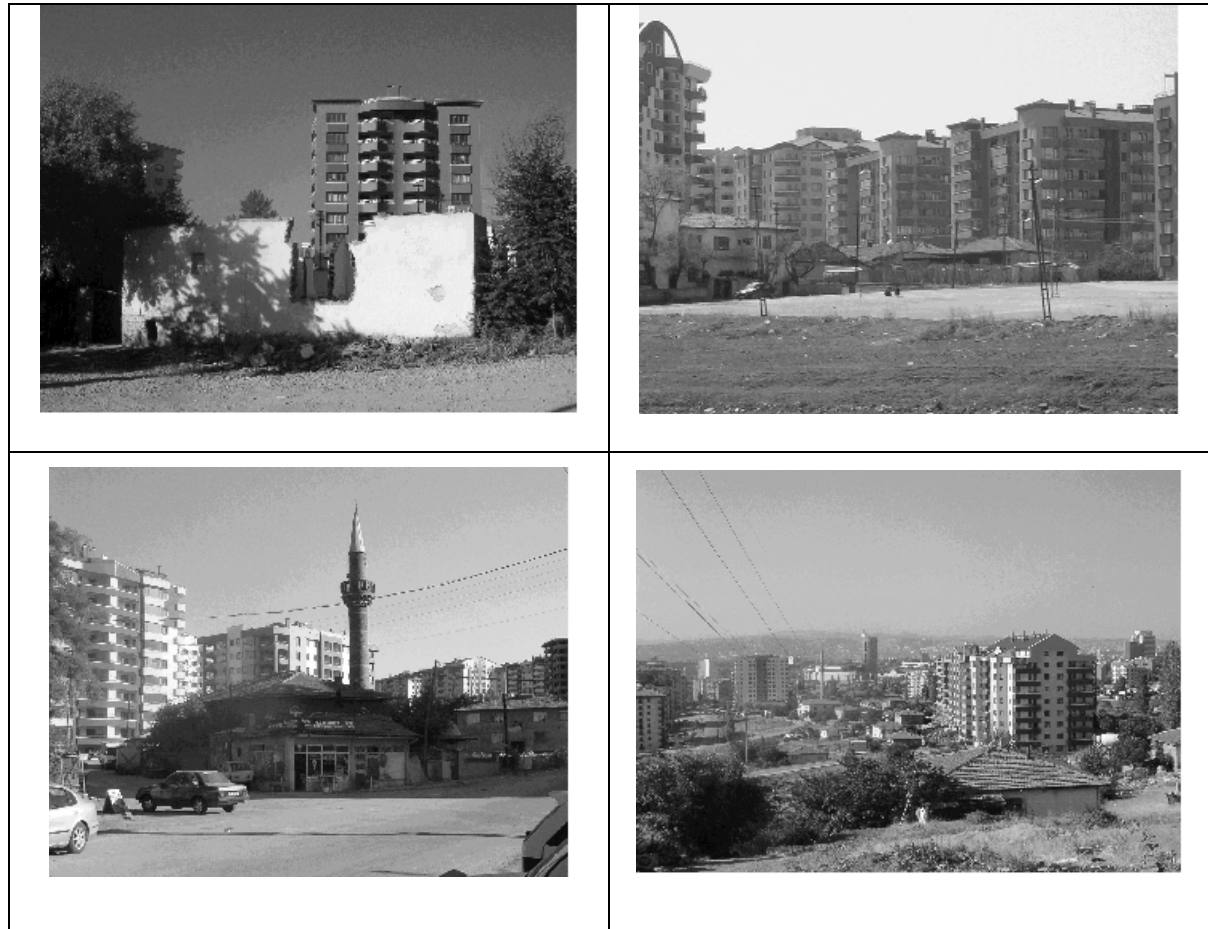


Figure 5. Photos of transformation in details

Due to its high urban rents and because of the strategic location of this neighborhood near the city center, the greater municipality gave high density residential land use decision for Çukurambar. Planners could not bring low density to the agenda for this area. However, during the preparation of the improvement plans in 1/1000 scale, planners did not use any design guides or any other tool that would have directed urban design and also the urban transformation process. Yet, the increasing value of the lands in Çukurambar, has caused the previous landowners to leave the neighbourhood during the transformation process.

5. CONCLUSION

Today the Çukurambar neighborhood is in a transition process from gecekondu area with many clues of rural life, to luxury high storey residential area for high-income groups and bureaucrats in the capital of Turkey. During the ongoing transformation process, this area keeps both types of life styles and environmental conditions (Figure 5). It could be said that transformation process itself includes some special difficulties.

One of the difficulties in the transformation process is that while in the remaining gecekondus, old gecekondu population and building workers of new apartments live in very difficult living conditions, the high-income groups and some of the parliament members of the Turkish Republic already started to live in new apartments. Not only building workers, but also gypsies, who came to the neighbourhood in the last few years, are seen as an important social problem by new coming high-income groups. Furthermore, in the transformation process, social solidarity and trust environment of old gecekondu neighbourhood have collapsed completely. According to the headman of the neighbourhood and other inhabitants, with the coming of building workers and gypsies, criminal events have increased in the area.

In addition to social problems, unfinished infrastructure has also caused some difficulties for inhabitants. Although all high storey new buildings have been almost finished, construction of streets, green areas and social facilities continue in the area. Neither sport areas, nor infrastructure, or cultural areas exist in the neighborhood today. Consequently, there is a big gap between the conditions of new luxury flats and the conditions of streets and social facilities. This problem requires simultaneous construction of residential areas and urban facilities. However the way of transformation could not allow this simultaneous process, which necessitates an alternative transformation.

The urban transformation process of Çukurambar is an appropriate and legitimate example of the Turkish planning system as regards to a legal and administrative perspective. Yet, although the problems that emerge with the legitimate improvement plan procedures are obvious, as discussed in the paper, there is no clear legislative framework for transformation projects and

for more innovative transformation models as alternative to the improvement plan procedure. This argument has been supported by this study and other transformation studies [1] [2], [6], [7].

When improvement plans and urban transformation projects are compared [1], urban transformation projects provide higher quality urban environment and more fair distribution of urban annuity among stakeholders. The transformation experience of Çukurambar shows that the improvement plan process does not answer the needs of the city and the area. The comparison of the improvement plan and the transformation project shows that, transformation project practice is more adequate for gecekondu areas that have high urban rent values and are subject to transformation. Hence, it is possible to argue that transformation projects should be preferred instead of improvement plans to overcome the problems. For this, a new legislation is required, in which rights of stakeholders, role and responsibilities of authorities in preparation and implementation processes are defined. However, only the preference of a transformation project does not solve the isolation of Çukurambar from the rest of the City and west axis in particular.

In the newly constructed urban environment of Çukurambar, there is no unique identity due to the absence of a comprehensive planning process. The development of Çukurambar has little relation with the needs of the Ankara City in common. The transformation area is located in the west axis which has been planned as the prestige area of Ankara. However, neither the transport, nor the social and cultural needs of the west axis is taken into consideration during the planning process of the improvement plan. There is need for a holistic and comprehensive approach to establish the relation between the neighbourhood and city so that transportation, social and cultural facilities, infrastructure and other urban investments are realized within maser plans.

The planning decision ended in an isolated residential area in Çukurambar that transfers its character to the plots. In the light of the 'revision plan', architects have built their stereo-type apartments in their plots, without projecting any common language in the neighborhood. It is possible to argue that this neighborhood represents the problems of planning approaches and procedures in Turkey. The transformation of the gecekondus ended with spatial transformation form which has no concept, just for the market demand implementation and their probable results were not considered. In fact, the types of implementation in the world examples, their organizational and financial solutions were not queried. The improvement plans plays a dominant role at determining the environmental quality and identity of the area to the developers and land owners, leaving the planners outside the process. To realize an urban area with identity, high environmental quality, and adequate social facilities, there is need to involve both planners and residents to the transformation process. Especially in transformation projects planners determine urban

design criteria for the neighbourhoods that gives identify to the area. This also limits the developers inappropriate, problematic applications in single plots.

Besides the environmental quality problems that emerge due to the improvement plan, the transformation process has also caused social problems. Today, the examples of renovation in city centers and old industrial areas and making new urban attraction points in the world brought some new concepts to Turkish authorities such as 'public-private joint ventures', 'urban management', 'project partnerships'. Within the application of the transformation projects, one of the main goals should be "not to dismiss the original populations" of the gecekondu areas. Allowing the existing gecekondu population to remain in the transformed area is a desirable aim, but cannot be achieved in the long-run. Urban transformation should prevent social exclusion. However, the Çukurambar experience has left the previous landowners of the neighborhood out of the transformed settlement. They

move to another area in the periphery of the city to make their own gecekondu again, so this is a shift, a cycle and it is not the way to solve the gecekondu problem through improvement plans, like in Çukurambar.

Improvements plans that give significant role to the developers cause such social exclusions due to the legislative limits and procedures of the improvement plans, as discussed above. Increasing the participatory planning processes, involving the stakeholders to the process, and not leaving the plan to the manipulation of urban rents can prevent the social exclusion, and increase integration of existing and new coming residents. For this, in addition to comprehensive-holistic planning and participatory practices, there is need for intervention to plot scale applications of the developers and architects to direct and establish an urban design language in the area.

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