

Assessing change in quality of life following rehousing from slum settlements to social housing

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Abstract

This article is the result of a study which aimed to evaluate how a group of resettled residents have adapted to their new houses in Istanbul. The removal of squatter dwellers and their relocation to social housing units affect their quality of life after the removal. To assess the quality of life of residents who have now been living for a long time in social housing after their slums were demolished by the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, interviews were conducted with the aid of a questionnaire. A total of 506 interviews was completed in the districts of Eyup, Kartal and Sisli. The results of this research shall serve to provide valuable information, from which improvements in future social housing projects can be made. In the analyses of interview and questionnaire data, seven areas were identified: (1) living conditions, (2) physical factors, (3) environmental factors, (4) comparisons for social relationships, (5) access to services, (6) economic factors, (7) general satisfaction. At the completion of the research, it was found that the users seemed to be more satisfied with the physical factors than the social factors following the demolition of the slums. This study is important insofar as it helps to show that some methods are essential to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of social housing produced by the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality. In addition, the study may enable practitioners and policy makers to identify ways of improving the quality of life for social housing residents and the sustainability of new social housing developments.



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Keywords

Life quality, Slum, Slum demolition, Social housing.

1. Introduction

To cope with the problem of housing, a basic human necessity, in Turkey, people resort to constructing unauthorized buildings, or *gecekondu*s in Turkish (Bodur, 2012). The *gecekondu*, which is known by different names (squatter house, slums, shanty, ghetto, rancho, favelas, gourbeville, and bidonville) in various countries, has emerged in Turkey as unauthorized and illegal buildings erected in plots that do not belong to the person(s) building on them. An example of a *gecekondu* in the district of Kâğıthane is shown in Figure 1. In this study, we examine how *gecekondu* owners have experienced the change in their living conditions after moving to social housing in Istanbul. As part of the study, a clear analysis of the relationship between quality of life and social housing policies are explained in order to arrive at indicators and measures for the determination of quality of life. The primary limitation of this study is that it involved a very specific target group, namely, residents who live in social housing units developed by the Housing Department of the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality after the demolition of *gecekondu*s. Theoretical studies based on quality of life were examined once the problem, aim, assumptions, limitations, methods and steps of the present study had been determined and the study's contribution to the relevant literature had been confirmed. Additionally, quality of life studies conducted in developed and developing countries which involved the indicators used in this study were reviewed.

The quality of life of families can be strongly influenced by various needs, challenges and obstacles (Soliman et al., 2015). Throughout the world, especially in the developed countries, it has been observed that starting towards the end of the 1970s, housing environments have created an atmosphere of discomfort and dissatisfaction for people (Zainal et al., 2012). The mass migration and urbanization actions that resulted from intensification of industrial productivity, especially after the Second World War, have increased the need for housing and thereby has generated a housing crisis of sorts (Gur,



Figure 1. A *gecekondu* in Kâğıthane district.

2009). Today, the rapidly changing living conditions have fundamentally altered expectations and priorities in life. In this post-modern globalized era, where economic growth and disparities co-exist, studies on human welfare and quality of life take on even greater significance (Jha and Tripathi, 2014).

According to UN-Habitat, a UN program devoted to promoting a quality, sustainable urban future, a housing residence and its immediate surroundings should be of sufficient quality, such that an individual and his / her family can meet their physical and psychosocial needs and be satisfied (UN Habitat, 2016).

Slum clearance and resettlement schemes have become an increasingly common feature of life in the world. However, resettlement in new homes is not easy for residents (Camarogo-Cavaleiro and Abiko, 2015). Improving the lives of slum dwellers has been recognized as one of the essential means to ending poverty worldwide (UN Habitat, 2016). Social problems, disparities, well-being and quality of life are the new domains of geographic study in this post-modern era. Quality of life studies are becoming more relevant in the pursuit of the inclusive development of society and country (Jha and Tripathi, 2014). Starting from the beginning of the twentieth century, rapid and often uncontrolled urban development has not only had a negative impact on nature, but has also led to the deterioration of quality of life for individuals (Oren and Yuksel, 2013).

Since the 1960s, the social housing projects being undertaken in developing countries have focused on relocating people from the slums surrounding the largest cities, (Pulat, 1992). In recent years, certain government agen-

cies have been involved in this effort of relocating the urban poor (Booth and Camp, 2007). The rapid, malformed development and growth of cities has led to a decline in the quality of life of the city's inhabitants (Oren and Yuksel, 2013). Moreover, although a review of the international literature shows that studies on quality of life have been conducted regularly over a long period of time, in Turkey, quality of life research is relatively new (Seker, 2011).

The quality of urban life is negatively affected when there is an increase in the people's demand for city services. In Turkey, this is a particularly serious problem, in the sense that services are not able to be presented effectively and efficiently by municipalities (Ucer, 2009; Karasu, 2005). States and local municipalities have, however, begun to focus on social housing in an effort to find solutions to low-income housing problems and to prevent *gecekondu*, the effects of which shall serve to improve the quality of life in Istanbul, Turkey. Within the context of this study, a general evaluation is made on the relocation process of residents who were forced to relocate to social housing units. Furthermore, the changes in the quality of life of former slum dwellers who had been forced to move to these units are discussed and proposals are made based on the results of the study.

2. Studies on life quality

Quality of life is a subject that has been being investigated for more than forty years. Research on the quality of life in today's sense is based on the *movement of social indicators* in the United States in the 1960s (Yavuzcehre and Torlak, 2006). It has been stated that the concept of quality of life emerged in part in order to investigate the differences and inequalities in social conditions and living conditions (Koramaz, 2010).

The quality of life research agenda gained particular importance at the end of the restructuring process following World War II in order to achieve a better living standard and improve the welfare of the people (Ersin, 2012). Because of various life demands, challenges, and barriers, families are faced

with conditions that influence their quality of life (Soliman et al, 2015). In recent years, research on quality of life has been developing towards analyzing the components of quality of life and understanding the affecting factors (Jha and Tripathi, 2014). Investigations today focus on multiple dimensions, such as affordable and quality housing, comprehensive quality services and access to them, and the quality of life in urban areas (Ucer, 2009).

The concept of quality of life has numerous definitions, yet no single agreed upon definition has emerged over time (Ucer, 2009; Koramaz, 2010; Atik, 2014; Ulengin et al., 2001). In the literature, there are more than a hundred definitions for quality of life (El Ariane, 2012). Quality of life is a complex, multi-dimensional concept, requiring multiple approaches from different theoretical perspectives (Seker, 2011). According to Andrews (2001), in bad conditions, descriptions focus on basic needs, such as business, food, shelter and security facilities. In contrast, the definition of quality of life in good conditions is expanding to include a successful personal and professional life, access to entertainment and recreation facilities, a happy society, and a clean environment (Andrews, 2001).

On the other hand, the quality of life in research is measured by different methods, in line with different goals and objectives. Research scales also differ from each other in this respect (Pacione, 1982; Wish, 1986; Felce and Perry, 1995; Cummins, 1999). Quality of life research carried out on a local scale, that is, in a city or neighborhood unit, aims to redirect local policies to identify local problems (Koramaz, 2010).

Although there are different definitions of quality of life, Marans (2007) argues that the definitions generally fall under one of two different aspects, namely those that are related to the individual himself/herself and those that are more environmental in character and subjectively shaped by individuals (Marans, 2007).

Land (1983), Diener and Suh (1997) and Rogerson (1999) point out that it is possible to speak of three main approaches. First, a normative ideal ap-

proach, which is based on the basic value of the good life, health, education, urban framework, ethical values; second, a satisfaction approach, which focuses on quality of life in terms of emotions, preferences and expectations; and finally, a social indicators approach, which is based on individual experience as it relates to social conditions (Land, 1983; Diener and Suh, 1997; Rogerson, 1999).

Felce and Perry (1995) posited four different indicators: objective indicators of living conditions; subjective indicators of individual satisfaction; indicators involving a combination of living conditions and personal satisfaction; and indicators involving a combination of individual values and personal satisfaction (Felce and Perry, 1995).

Hagerty et al. (2001) developed three approaches: (1) input (environment, public policy); (2) throughput (individual choices); and (3) output (happiness, survival, contribution) (Hagerty et al, 2001). The satisfaction model developed by Campbell is used to analyze how objective indicators, such as housing, recreation, social environment, income, and health status, affect the level of overall life satisfaction (Turkoglu et al., 2008). Furthermore, Ozsoy et al. (1995), in their work titled "Quality Assessment of Behavioral Variables in Mass Housing", aimed to develop criteria related to the psycho-social characteristics of quality of life (Ozsoy et al., 1995).

In the study by Dulgeroglu-Yuksel et al. (1996), titled "The Purpose of the Research on the Environmental Analysis of the Qualitative Values in Mass Housing", the housing qualities related to the existing residential environments of the users and the qualities which are preferred by the residents were identified and discussed within the framework of a quality model integrating three parameters; physical, visual, and social interactive. Results from the research showed that there was a common characteristic shared by the households in all the regions covered in the research; that is, the users seem to be affected more by the physical factors of the houses than by the visual or psychological and social factors (Dulgeroglu-Yuksel et al., 1996).

Pacione (1986), Dissart and Deller (2000), Ferris (2006) and Cummins (2000) all concluded that there was an unlimited number of factors associated with the inner (subjective indicators) and external indicators (objective indicators) of quality of life.

The answer to the question of which indicators should be used to measure quality of life remains unclear. There is no consensus on the criteria for the indicator types used to measure quality of life (Van Camp et al., 2003; Koyuncu, 2011; Atik, 2014). Factors related to quality of life can change over time, depending on the circumstances (Yavuzcehre and Torlak, 2006).

In recent years, there has been a rapid growth in quality of life research in developing countries, while research on this subject in developed countries has been advancing at a slower pace. Quality of life studies in Turkey did not begin simultaneously with the conduct of these studies in Western countries nor did they move forward at the same speed. Studies conducted by various government agencies are intended to develop an understanding of quality of life (Koyuncu, 2011). In Turkey, the quality of life studies done at the corporate level can be divided into two groups, one which focuses on measuring quality of life, and the other which focuses on identifying the quality of life indicators (Ucer, 2009). Although the number of studies conducted in Turkey on quality of life has been on the rise, this number is still insufficient (Koyuncu, 2011; Aktas, 2007).

Efforts are also being made to improve the quality of life for conventional and underprivileged households and to measure the quality of life satisfaction of people. The concept of quality of life in Turkey is included in the five-year development plans, the latest of which is the 10th Five-Year Development Plan (2014-2018), in which it is mentioned that priority will be given to transformation projects that generate high utility and value in production and common use areas, especially areas bearing a disaster risk, and that contribute to growth and development and widespread increase in space and quality of life (Ministry of Development, 2013). However, the principles, policies

and measures introduced by the development plans to address the housing problem have not been sufficiently implemented, and the problems related to the speed of urbanization have even gradually increased (Bodur, 2012).

A number of studies have been carried out in Turkey to improve the quality of life in the social housing area. In the next section, information on the studies related to improving the quality of life in social housing is discussed. A review of the literature showed that approaches to the concept of quality of life that have been used in different studies vary according to purpose, method and scale. Given the nature of this subject, it is not possible to make a generalization about the scale on which the quality of life indicators will be assessed.

3. Social housing and recent studies

After the housing shortage problem first began to emerge following World War I, western governments were forced to start thinking about solutions to this issue. Since then, national governments in the West have played an active role in the generation of social housing policies, as well as in the solutions to this problem, by supporting local governments (Kara, 2012). Developed countries have been able to successfully address the problem of housing with the social housing policies they put into effect after World War II (Bayraktar, 2009). As a result, the thirty year period after World War II can be called the golden age for social housing, as it was during this time that many of the social housing policies had been implemented (Reinprecht et al., 2008).

However, the number of houses generated for the low income groups continues to be one of the major problems affecting both developed and developing countries (Soliman et al, 2015). In the literature, social housing is referred to alternatively as state dwellings, public housing, and affordable housing. Social housing is affordable for the poorest or lowest-income families and is standardized to meet the needs of housing (Akdemir, 1998). Officially, the definition can vary according to each country (Whitehead and Scan-

lon, 2007). Priemus (2010) proposed a definition of social housing that described it as housing that is aimed to house predominantly households with a weak negotiation position on the housing market, such as low-income households, physically and/or mentally handicapped persons, ethnic minorities, immigrants and asylum seekers (Priemus, 2010).

While social housing practices in developed countries have commonalities, there is no standard social housing practice and policy applicable to every country (Whitehead and Scanlon, 2007). Social housing emerged in the form of cheap rental housing for citizens constituting middle and low income groups in the western developed countries. In developing countries, however, social housing involves the sale of low-interest housing and long-term housing loans (Kunduraci, 2013). In some countries, only the poorest segment of the population can benefit from these residences, while in others, low-wage segments or middle-income segments can benefit from them (Kunduraci, 2013; Blanc, 2010).

Starting in the 1980s, social housing activities were gradually incorporated into the social policies of developing countries. Different developmental trends have been observed for each country. Yet, the number of developing countries active in this area and the prominence of social housing in housing policies is continuously rising (Bodur, 2012). In Europe, the construction of social housing is carried out by many different institutions, including central and local governments, non-profit public or private organizations, volunteer organizations or foundations, and cooperatives (Kutsal, 2012). It is very difficult to discern whether or not there is standard social housing in Europe (Tutin, 2008). On the other hand, in the United States, as a result of the economic crisis of 1929, social housing projects were, and continue to be, specifically implemented as a need (Kunduraci, 2013). However, these social housing areas, once inhabited by the poor, have been transformed into places where there is a dominant culture of poverty and social exclusion (Keith, 1973). The evolution of the planning approaches

and methods applied in Europe and the United States has not been positively reflected in Turkey (Mutlu, 2007). Urban renewal activities in Turkey are implemented as slum transformation processes (Bayraktar, 2009). It is impossible, therefore, in Turkey to speak of a systematic public policy of social housing, as applied in European countries and the USA (Alkiser and Yurekli, 2004; Tasar and Cevik, 2009). At the end of the 1980s, with the local governments as the main actors, urban renewal projects in Turkey were implemented in high rentable areas and served as an alternative to the improvement plans (Mutlu, 2007). From 2003 to the present, significant changes have been seen in housing policy, particularly in terms of the main actors in the industry. As a result, today, TOKI, which is the National Housing Development Administration of Turkey, has become the most authoritative institution in the nation when it comes to housing. For its mass housing projects developed on its own lands, TOKI's target group is low and middle-income families who are not able to own a housing unit within the existing market conditions in Turkey..."(Url-1).

Metropolitan municipalities have recently also become very important players in the housing production in Turkey (Kara, 2012). As a role model to other municipalities and a leader in the field, the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality states its mission for the production of housing as "...to offer local services to all residents with the understanding of providing efficient and effective governance..." and its vision as "...to make the city a sustainable world city which has a high quality of life for its citizens..."(Url-2). The Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality Directorate of Housing has continued its activities within this context. These activities are reported on each year on a regular basis to senior authorities. For example, in the 2013 annual report, one of the four basic elements of the Directorate's vision is to improve the quality of life of slum dwellers (Directorate of Housing, 2013).

The Housing Directorate allocates the social housing that is available and ready to be acquired to the gecekon-



Figure 2. Social housing areas in Istanbul.



Figure 3. Completed social houses in Eyup district.

du owners. In this allocation process, gecekondu owners can be given social housing in a different district. Accordingly, between 1988 and 2013, 4606 gecekondu serving as apartments or individual dwellings were demolished, and 10,638 residential units were produced. Social housing areas in Istanbul are shown in Figure 2, and the completed social housing units in the district of Eyup are shown Figure 3.

These relocations involved moves from slums to social housing, and all of these moves were to existing, ready-to-use social housing. Approximately 3,381 housing units were allocated to gecekondu owners while the remaining were sold under the gecekondu law to low income families. Figure 4 shows the migration to social housing present in the district of Eyup between 1988 and 2013. As a result of this housing liquidation, displaced households from different districts are now residing on the same block.

According to the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, the Housing Di-

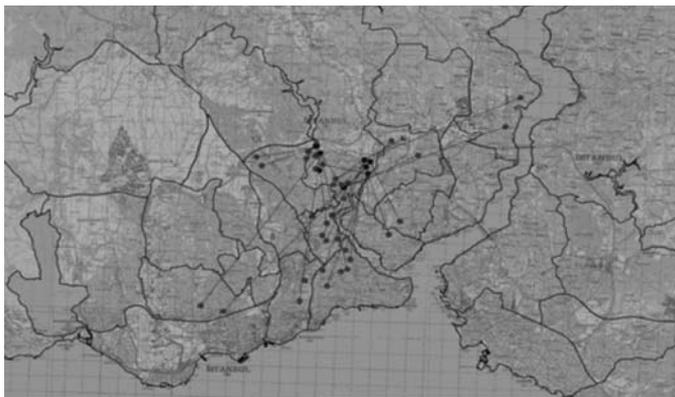


Figure 4. *Eyup district moving plan.*

rectorate was tasked with constructing social housing throughout the city in order to prevent slums from threatening Istanbul, to prevent the construction of new slums, to transform the slums into healthy urban areas, and to provide settlements in healthy neighborhoods for the low income population living in the city. However, recently, mass housing projects have been increasingly viewed to be a social, economic, technical and aesthetic failure (Dulgeroglu-Yuksel et al., 1996). In the present study, a survey was performed to determine the quality of life of the slum owners who were transported to municipality-generated social housing in Istanbul, followed by an in-depth assessment of the subject.

4. Methodology

The principal aim of this research was to evaluate how gecekondu owners have experienced the change in the lives after moving to social housing in Istanbul. During interview sessions conducted in March of 2016, residents were asked about their housing situation and quality of life before and since their arrival to social housing. The universe of the research included slum dwellers who moved to the social housing units developed by the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality Directorate of Housing.

In this study, research on the concept of the quality of life, which is defined by different perspectives and different approaches in the literature, was reviewed for the purpose of identifying and applying the terminology commonly employed for this subject, as well as for the purpose of establishing proper indicators for social housing.

The studies that have been carried out show that the concept of the quality of life involves more than one dimension, as it covers a wide area, emerges with different purposes and has been explained by different indicators and different variables, depending on the specific aims and targets. The indicators presented in this study were prepared on the basis of the pilot survey questionnaire and the relevant literature. The questionnaire created for the evaluation included the following items: (1) living conditions, (2) physical factors, (3) environmental factors, (4) comparisons for social relationships, (5) access to services, (6) economic factors, (7) general satisfaction.

The research sample was created on the basis of the data obtained from the universe. Social housing units in Eyup, Sisli and Kartal were designated as pilot areas on account of the fact they include people whose living quarters in another district or remote areas had been demolished and who, as a result, have had to adapt to different cultures, even within the same city.

The questionnaire was created as part of the research model, which included completion of a pilot survey to determine the questions for the questionnaire. With the project support of Istanbul Technical University Scientific Research Center and the help of a research company, a total of 506 face-to-face interviews (378 in Eyup, 93 in Kartal and 35 in Sisli district) were completed. Before the research, a 1-day training program was administered to the pollsters. As part of the training program, information was given to them about the research and they were introduced to the documents to be used in the field survey. On January 29, 2016, some parts of the pilot survey, including questions, were removed, while some notes were added. By the end of the pilot survey, a total of 21 revisions had been made to the survey. On February 24, 2016, minor changes were shared with the company, and the survey took on its final shape on February 26, 2016. The survey was conducted between 02-14 March 2016. The SPSS program was used to conduct analyses. Factor, cross and mean analysis were used to describe the general

information of the respondents and the level of satisfaction. A reliability test was done to check the internal consistency of the measurement items. Reliability of the variables was tested by using The Cronbach's alpha value calculated in the reliability test of the variables was 0.958, which is "highly reliable according to Kalaycı's 4-Reliability scale (Kalaycı, 2005).

Following the completion of the determination of the sampling area and development of the survey, the field study was started. Field work was carried out with a questionnaire survey, and field studies on the spatial properties of a sample were completed. According to the results obtained from the survey questions, the questionnaire study for the implementation of the preparatory phase was updated before being completed and the goal was considered to be within the scope of the information gathered.

5. Findings and evaluation

In the survey, socio-demographic information, such as the age of the participants, gender, marital status, educational status, place of birth, profession, social security status, and the average monthly income, was gathered.

According to the result of this survey, nearly half of the respondents were between the ages of 36 and 55, and almost half had emigrated from the Black Sea Region of Turkey. The sample included 204 males and 302 females. More than half of the participants were elementary and junior high school graduates, and the majority were married, with almost half of the respondents being housewives. The majority of the participants had social security, and more than half of the households living in social housing were supported by the work of one person. Most of the families were living on a monthly income of between 1,000 TL and 1500 TL (equivalent to US\$282.25- US\$423.38) (Url-3).

To continue, almost all the participants had a washing machine (98.8%) and a dishwasher (84.4%), while 52.4% of them had a computer and 44.7% had internet access. The percentage of the participants who had a car (29.1%) or owned a credit card (35.8%) was low. 21.5% of the participants had lived in

gecekondu for 6 to 10 years at most, while 46.4% had been living in social housing for 6 to 10 years at most. The participants who had lived in the slums for 10 years or less were found to be more satisfied with their quality of life in their new homes according to this survey. Similarly, findings in the study showed that the longer the period the participants had been living in social housing, the higher the satisfaction they had. Yavuzcehre and Torlak (2006) pointed out in their study that long-term residents in social housing can improve their living conditions over time.

According to the majority of respondents, an ideal house should have a single-storey and a garden, it should have a good view (28.3%), be close to the city center (35.2%) and be located in an area that has potential for increasing property value (27.5%). The participants also stated that the idea of quality of life involved living in a secure city (22.3%), free of livelihood difficulties (20.9%) and with good health facilities (14.7%). More than half of the participants (61.5%) did not want to move out of their social housing, and 37.3% expressed that the larger and more comfortable home was the main reason for their move.

Education and the learning process have positive effects on the development of urban quality of life for the people (Yavuzcehre and Torlak, 2006). From the survey, it was found that the participants' level of education was low and then when the level of education increased, the level of satisfaction in social housing decreased.

In general, as seen in Figure 5, physical and environmental factors play an important role, the former to a lesser degree, in quality of life as it relates to social housing.

The availability of municipal services tends to have strong significance for the people living in social housing, as shown in Figure 6. Save for the factors of proximity to hospitals, entertainment and cultural areas, and shopping facilities, service factors were found to be the most prominent factor for quality of life as it relates to social housing. Improvement has been seen in some of the service factors, while in

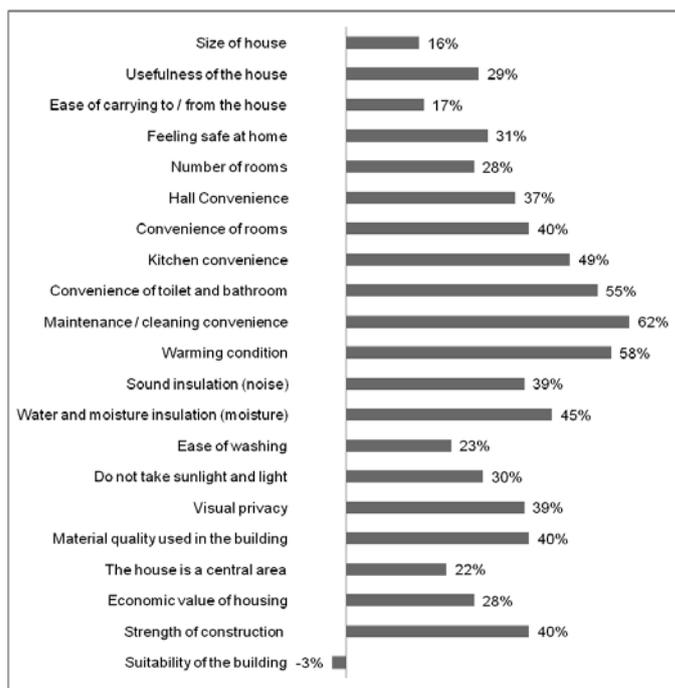


Figure 5. Housing preferences by physical factors.

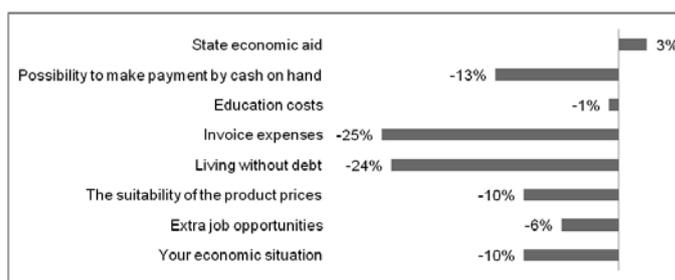


Figure 6. Housing preferences by economic factors.

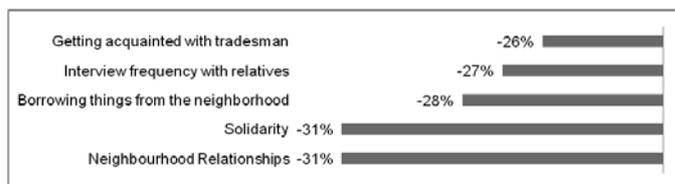


Figure 7. Housing preferences by social factors.

other service factors related to social housing there has been little to no improvements. In terms of the economic factors, it was found that other factors, besides that of the economic aid provided by the state, were better when the people had lived in the slums. In other words, the economic factors generally do not improve in social housing.

Studies in slum areas have generally been carried out with the aim of developing social housing with a better functioning system (Kintrea, 2007). The destruction of a neighborhood is a serious consequence of the changing landscape of cities (Eke, 2000). The number of relatives and friends

on the periphery is an objective indicator for the existence of social relations (Türkoglu et al., 2008; Salleh and Badarulzaman, 2012). Being from the same region is very important in the slum areas. In the course of conducting this study, it was found that no preliminary work has been done by the municipality on the impact the demolition of the slums and the people's relocation to social housing will have on the existing relationship between the citizens. It was also discovered in the course of the study that the demographic characteristics of the households undergoing this transformation process have not been evaluated by the municipality.

Bolt et al. (2010), and Phillips and Harrison (2010) stated that the state agencies demolished not only the houses but also the social relations existing within the slum dwellings. In the work of Clampet-Lundquist (2004), it was shown that many people in America wish to move closer to their former home. Furthermore, studies by Kleinhans (2003), Gaumer et al. (2014), Cavalheiro (2015) and Icli (2011) have shown that the social interaction between neighbors was lower in the social housing as compared to the interaction in their former living arrangements. When the perceptions of the factors related to social relations were examined in this research, similar to other studies, the results revealed that the social relations were much better in the slum life, having deteriorated after moving to the social housing areas. The participants' perceptions of social relations are shown in Figure 7. From the results, it can be said that rather than being constructive, moving from the slums to social housing is a rather shattering affair insofar as it relates to the deterioration of social relations. Displacement, along with this deterioration of social relations, has played a role in maintaining the people's loyalty to the past as opposed to increasing their sense of belonging to the social housing that they have been moved into.

In general, the results of this research have revealed that significant positive change took place in the physical, environmental, access to services, and general satisfaction dimensions of

the lives of those who had been relocated to social housing; but in social relations and economic factors, the participants valued these more so in the slums than in social housing, and expressed that social relations were better in the slums. These findings suggest that the municipality-generated social housing in Istanbul has not been successful enough in improving the gecekondü owners' quality of life after their displacements. For this reason, the municipality should do more to strengthen these displaced people's sense of belonging in order to reduce the acclimatization period in social housing and to increase satisfaction in social housing.

6. Conclusion

The increasing world population, inefficient consumption of resources, destruction of natural habitats and the diminishment in quality of life for individuals are issues that are gaining increasingly more importance with each passing day. Despite these adverse conditions, serious works are being done to ease the burdens of life and thereby improve the quality of life on a global, national and local scale. The aim of this study has been to determine the characteristics that contribute to the quality of life of slum dwellers who have been relocated to social housing. To achieve this aim, the relationship between upgrading the quality of life and social housing allocation was analyzed. With the results, recommendations can be made for future improvements to the quality of life of social housing dwellers.

The benefits of providing good quality social housing to urban dwellers will be reflected on the entire city, but this issue needs to be addressed in a holistic manner. In Istanbul, the social housing provided by the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality is satisfactory from the physical point of view. However, according to this research, greater effort needs to be directed towards building better social relationships between social housing dwellers. If the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality does not work on building social relationships, the solution of "improving life quality of social housing dwellers" will not be fully realized, and the targets related to

social objectives will fail to be achieved. The general perception of households is positive, in terms of living in social housing. However, lack of knowledge of the demographics of the families living in social housing adversely affects perceptions of quality of life. Social and demographic features of the family should be taken into account, as well as the wishes and needs of the people, in social housing allocations.

Local governments have very important roles according to quality of life studies. In order to improve the quality of life in social housing developed by the local administrations to replace slum dwellings, indicators should be determined. By collaborating with other organizations, such as universities and trade unions, a more holistic approach can be applied in identifying these indicators, so as to improve living conditions in every sense. To date, there are no life quality indicators set by the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality regarding social housing developed in Istanbul. Particularly in the gecekondü areas to be demolished, it is necessary to carry out repetitive studies with a view to determining the demographic structure.

Serving as a model for Turkey, the life quality studies in developed countries have dynamic processes. Municipalities in Turkey should likewise demonstrate greater dynamism in their approach by regularly conducting studies for the purpose of improving the life quality of social housing dwellers. The municipalities must make result-oriented practices and evaluate these every year. Similar studies should be repeated at regular intervals, as done in developed countries, and an information system should be established whereby all data can be entered into one system. In this way, changes in life quality of social housing dwellers can be monitored and evaluated. To help motivate local governments to be successful in their development of social housing projects, strategic objectives of municipalities should be directed towards these studies. If the municipalities want to achieve their strategic goals, they must understand the significance of problems related to social housing.

Central and local governments have initiated many activities to prevent certain problems, such as unemployment, economic problems, housing, infrastructure deficiencies, and uneven urbanization, which have arisen due to rapid urbanization in Turkey. These studies, where housing demand is one of the first targets, show that quantitative qualification is at the foreground in discourses carried out for improving activities related to environment and quality of life. As of recently, it has been observed that the solution to the problem is expressed in numbers and different ways at arriving at a solution are regularly being investigated.

As one of the limited number of studies that have been conducted in Turkey on the quality of life, this study can serve as a guide to improving the quality of life in the social housing settlements that have been built to replace the slums that have been demolished. The number of gecekondü in Turkey is still an important issue, considering how many of them constitute part of the total number of housing units. As one of the consequences of rapid urbanization, the issue of what how to transform the slum areas is now on the agenda. Along with this transformation, it has become a priority to improve the living conditions of the slum areas and to ensure that they have a healthy structure.

One of the aims of social housing production should be to reduce unemployment by increasing the workforce and thereby improve the living conditions. In Istanbul, the social housing developed by the municipality with the aim of improving the quality of life seems to have not reached its target in this sense. Accordingly, it is necessary for the municipality to take greater measures from here on out to increase the income of those living in social housing units.

One of the most important contributions of the study to theory and practice is that the social services offered by municipalities should be reflected in social housing practices according to the characteristics of the target population. The demographic characteristics of the target population are as important as the characteristics of the

house they lived in previously. Considering that the aim of social housing production is to produce a happy life in a healthier and higher quality environment, it is impossible to achieve this aim without knowing the characteristics of the target group. The solutions and applications related to the housing problem which have emerged with the increasing rate of urbanization will continue long into the future. Sustainable solutions to these problems and the success of the municipalities go hand in hand with the participants and actors coming together and taking into consideration the current conditions.

Lastly, in looking at the study results from a broad perspective, it can be seen that the issue of quality of life remains the most multifaceted, practical problems that needs to be solved in order for Turkey to achieve sustainable social housing production.

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