




Housing typologies from different markets and prices throughout Istanbul

Evren Ozus* 

Abstract

During the last two decades, Istanbul experienced rapid growth due to national and international migration. In addition, multi-center development of the city, and construction of peripheral highways, bridges, and metro systems have affected the economic, cultural and physical structure of the city. The purpose of this paper is to illustrate the changes of the housing types and prices from the center to the periphery. While some of the fashionable neighborhoods lost their importance through time, some new neighborhoods became fashionable due to their modern buildings in the green areas. The great impact of Bosphorus and Marmara Sea shores amenities on the type and price of housing was emphasized. Economic development, globalization, restructuring and strategic locations have contributed to improve the quality of housing and to increase their prices. Due to increasing income gap, there is a widening difference between the types of low-income and upper-income housing.

Keywords: housing types, location, housing prices, restructuring, Istanbul

1. Introduction

During the last two decades, rapid growth of Istanbul, globalization, modern housing projects in the periphery, restoration of historical neighborhoods and restructuring of squatter areas resulted in a large spectrum of neighborhoods with different urban life characteristics in the city (Oruc et al., 2017). Globalization has provided construction with advanced technologies and international business services that enable a new way of working within an international framework. Because this process is based on advancing the global economy and is realized through the international market, the globalization of the architectural practice is sensitive to economic conditions (Stiglitz, 2002). In addition, the national and international migration changed not only the physical characteristics of urban structure but also their political, cultural, and social life of the city as well as its buildings and their prices (Jones and Leishman, 2006). It would be interesting to examine the nature and extent of the urban transformation with its corollary changes in demographic, economic, and social structures. It is possible to display the results of economic development, globalization, and changes in lifestyles by detailed spatial examination of the response of distinct housing markets within Istanbul (Keyder, 1999; Ozus et al, 2011; Islam and Sakizoglu, 2015; Oruc et al, 2017). The purpose of this paper is to illustrate the different housing types and their prices in these neighborhoods with different historical, economic, technological, cultural and social characteristics in order to see the re-shaping the geography of opportunities, in other words, place effects in global perspective as already illustrated by Briggs (2003).

There are several studies which study housing typologies in Istanbul. Bozdogan (2013) investigated residential architecture and urban landscape in Istanbul since 1950. This date is the

*(Corresponding author) Assoc. Prof. Dr., Researcher, Turkey, [✉ evrenozus@gmail.com](mailto:evrenozus@gmail.com)

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preface of the intensive rural migration as well as the development of large squatters near the industrial sites which played an important role for shaping the landscape of the city and politics. Another comprehensive analysis was made by Gur and Yuksel (2019) about urban housing typologies in Istanbul starting from the most luxurious seashore mansions to the squatters as a large spectrum of housing types.

On the one hand, social polarization in Istanbul as gated towns as a result of globalization (Akgun and Baycan, 2011) and country-side mansions, on the other hand restoration of historical neighborhoods, providing lofts as housing (Ozker, 2014) and transformation of large squatter areas into high-rise housing complexes have enlarged the already existing large spectrum of housing segments in Istanbul. While high-status individuals who are strongly attached to the global economy and have benefitted from global integration prefer to live in gated towns (Genis, 2007), continuous rural migrants are obliged to work on low-paid jobs and can only afford to live in squatters.

Despite the large segments of housing in Istanbul, it is observed that smaller amount of housing segments was taken into consideration by the American authors, such as Chandler et al. (2010); the detached house, the row house and other low-rise housing, the mid-rise housing. Higher economic levels and the importance of individual life for the American people keep housing segments limited.

At the same time, economic and demographic changes play an important role on the housing typology which is produced. During the second half of the last century, in European countries housing was greatly subsidized by the governments until the post-modern period when subsidies were decreased. For instance, in Sweden, after 1960s, more multi-family housing was built than single family housing. However, after 1990s, only single-family housing was built to a smaller amount due to economic and demographic changes despite the population increase (Turner Center, 2017).

Differences between the spatial organization of modern urbanized societies in terms of the proportion of detached houses as against apartments are quite dramatic, especially between North America/Australasia and continental Europe. Seventy percent of dwellings in Greater Stockholm comprise apartments, compared only 22 percent in Greater Sydney. The overwhelming majority of dwellings in Australian cities are houses and moreover, detached houses, while the majority of dwellings in Swedish cities are apartments. In England, only 45 percent of Greater London are apartments and not similar to Swedish cities. The difference this makes to the socio-spatial organization of the cities, of these countries is profound, yet almost unsearched (Kemeny, 2001).

In the developing countries, similar to Istanbul, there is a large spectrum of types of housing due to wide income gap starting from villas, security apartments to squatters, such as in Mexico City (Gilbert and Varley, 2002), Rio de Janeiro (Pino, 1997), Sao Paulo, and Cairo (Harris and Wahba, 2002). This is a neglected research issue and there is need to do more research on this problem.

The organization of this paper is as follows: Background information is given about population and physical growth of Istanbul and its multi-center and transportation development in section two. In the third section, selected housing segments are given with different social, economic, aesthetic, technological, cultural and social background to show the wide income gap between the rich and the poor in the city as in other large cities of developing countries. The final section is devoted to a conclusion and suggestions for further research.

2. Background

Population growth and changes in demographic composition are important factors to effect demand for housing. While many cities in Europe and North America face urban decline (Alden, 1996), between 2010-2018, Istanbul's population grew from 13,255,685 to 15,029,231 due to national (Yazgi et al. 2014) and international migration (Toksoz, 2006) from different parts of the country as well as different parts of the World. This is a general trend for the third world large cities in the periphery of the world system (Lyman, 1992). In addition, the rise of living alone and the

number of small size families have contributed to fuel the demand for housing as in some of the other European countries (Ogden and Hall, 2000; Ogden and Schnoebelen, 2005). Both the population and its density are unequally distributed among the metropolitan region's 39 districts. At the same time, Istanbul is an old city whose long history has been reflected in its interesting spatial development with multi-cultures inherited from three empires. Population growth caused traffic congestions and thus stimulated suburbanization. Multi-center development of the city has contributed to decentralization of jobs and population with the help of construction of peripheral highways and bridges over the Bosphorus and metro system (Dokmeci and Berkoz, 1994). In order to answer to the housing demand as a result of population growth, large modern housing projects were built around multi-centers which display a new way of life as in the other post-modern cities (Clark and Kuijpers-Linde, 1994). Mass housing was greatly supported in this period of time. Gated towns were developed in the periphery of the city as a result of globalization impact (Baycan-Levent and Gulumser, 2007) which is also observed in other developing country cities such as Metro Manila (Shatkin, 2008), Santiago (Salcedo and Torres, 2004) and Beijing (Wu and Webber, 2004). Especially, during the post-modern period, the aesthetics, design and styles of consumption became increasingly diverse, as the marketplace became even more sophisticated as regards to what it knew and what it wanted to know about its consumers (Lee, 1993). Gentrification of the historical neighborhoods has contributed to improve the living quality of the building and their environment (Yetiskul and Demirel, 2018; Gur, 2015). In addition to planned housing areas, illegal housing was also developed by the low-income migrants on the government land. Planned and unplanned housing areas are the two main segments of the Istanbul housing areas. Planned housing areas represent 70% of the total whereas unplanned housing areas represent 30% of it (Alkay, 2008). Later, in order to improve the quality of housing and environment of squatter areas Transformation Law 6306 was implemented. This housing development process results in different types of housing in different neighborhoods with various economic, social and aesthetic characteristics (Oruc et al, 2017). As a result of globalization and economic development many shopping malls, entertainment places and fast-food restaurants were opened and spread throughout the city (Keyder, 1999; Terzi et al., 2006; Ayatac, 2017).

Thus, the long-established high income and social disparities have been aggravated by the deterioration in conditions for the working poor and improvement in the wealth of the new rich, especially those associated with the partisan economy similar to other developing countries (Richardson and Bae, 2006). This situation has reflected in the spatial distribution of housing quality, form and style as a wide disparity between the high- and lower-income neighborhoods which is also increasing in the US (Dong, 2018).

3. Housing Types from Different Housing Markets in Istanbul

Housing market in Istanbul is very heterogeneous due to long history of the city, long seashore amenities, different cultures, dynamic topography, globalization and a wide gap of income distribution.

In Istanbul, the residential landscape was shaped by industrialization and migration forces and expressed the economic and demographic structure of the city developed under laissez faire approach to urban planning and housing production (Genis, 2007). Especially, during the recent government relaxing density regulations resulted in haphazard development in the third dimension caused terrible traffic congestions.

Data for this study is obtained from study by Dokmeci and Erdogan (2021) which is based on 840 neighborhoods in 36 districts and collected from internet advertisements in October 2018.

Although there are several housing segments in Istanbul, in this study, as a method, only eight housing segments are taken into consideration based on the study by Oruc et al., (2017): Sea-shore summer residences, hill-side mansions, city apartments, restored apartments, mass housing, gated towns, luxurious villas and farm housing, squatter and restructured squatter buildings in order to illustrate wide gap between the income and living conditions of different social groups. Underlying

each typology there will often be a thesis that explains how the types comprising the typology are generated and sustained.

The first group of housing segments consists of seashore summer residences along the Bosphorus shores (Dokmeci and Erdogan, 2021). Their high-quality design and antic quality increase their value. They were built during the Ottoman period by wealthy businessmen and administrators as summer resorts (Eldem, 1993; Koramaz and Dokmeci, 2008). Now, they are habited by the wealthy industrialists and oil riches of the Arab world. Their advertised prices are between 30- 150 million dollars.

The second group of housing segments consists of konaks (hill-side mansion) located on the hills of Bosphorus, on the Marmara Sea shores and, on the Princes, Islands. They are multi-storied, usually wooden historical buildings with high-quality design and antic value. While konaks have significantly diminished by the changing family structure from extended to core family type and for the sake of modern building comfort in the second half of the twentieth century (Karaosmanoglu, 1920), modernized and restored konaks have been preferred nowadays as Istanbul housing market has become open to the global markets. Their asked prices vary between 30 and 45 million dollars. They are preferred by the upper-income people also because they fulfill the conspicuous consumption characteristics of the post-modern lifestyle (Breitung, 2012).

The third group of housing segments consists of villas (Oruc et al, 2017) and recently 10+ rooms villas are mostly located on the Bosphorus as well as countryside mansions. They are higher-income residential units surrounded by green areas and they are isolated from the other residential areas with middle or lower income. Istanbul has a larger villa type housing market than its own capacity since the owners of the industries in the surrounding provinces prefer to live in Istanbul. Some of these villas was designed in order to express conspicuous consumption of new rich owners. On the other hand, some of them were especially designed with more than 10 rooms according to the social needs of Arab families with multi-wives.

The fourth group of housing segments consists of city apartment flats in modern style as observed in traditionally in Sisli and Nisantas and later in all the districts. In place of 1-2 storey traditional houses, multi-story apartment buildings were built to maximize rent of urban land at the expanse of increasing demand for urban facilities, infrastructure, transportation and social services from the local authorities (Gur and Yuksel, 2019). Their prices change according to their locations such as proximity to the Bosphorus had been the determining criterion of status distinction between middle- and upper-class apartments (Dokmeci et al., 1996). Location, view, size and especially living room size play an important role for their prices (Ozus, et al.,2007). Their sizes and the number of rooms were increased as also illustrated in the US (Altshuler, 2005).

The fifth group of housing segments consists of the revitalized neighborhoods in the historical districts and they have quite high housing prices, for instance in Beyoglu district, Gumussuyu and Cihangir neighborhoods due to having a strategic location in the center of the city, beautiful historical buildings, being near the Istiklal Street which is the most important shopping and entertainment area of Istanbul (Dokmeci and Ciraci, 1999; Dokmeci, et al., 2007; Ozus and Dokmeci, 2005; Ergun, 2004). It is interesting to note that restored historical apartment flats which are more expensive than the new flats with the same size in the same neighborhoods. They offer a new lifestyle enriched by the history, and culture of the higher-life style of new inhabitants (Uzun, 2013). However, some studies claim that gentrification increases the inequality in the neighborhoods (Lyons, 1996; Christafore, 2019) while some others argue that local contextualities render the gentrification process to have a relevant degree of place specify (Carpenter and Lees, 1995).

The contributions of historic preservation and restoration to housing and economic development were illustrated also in other countries (Liskotin et al., 1998).

Lofts are a recent trend to build at the top floor of apartments (historical or new) as duplex flats. Their prices are higher than the lower flats since they provide wider view than the surrounding buildings which is already illustrated by the previous studies (Ozus, et al., 2007).

The sixth group of housing segments consists of large housing projects which include all the necessary cultural facilities, swimming pools, tennis courts, shopping markets, restaurants and coffee shops. They have first started with the Italian architect, Prost's proposal in Atakoy, in the 1960s. After 1980s, the public and private sectors constructed large housing projects extensively at the metropolitan level to meet the shelter needs of high-density population. Although the prices of large housing projects change according to their location, they are mostly occupied by the upper middle class and middle class such as in Atakoy. The results of the study by Ozus et al., (2007) suggest that planned housing developments have higher apartment flat prices than the developments on a piecemeal base.

The seventh group of housing segments consists of gated towns. Starting in the 1980s, gated towns were the result of neo-liberal urbanism which has accompanied neo-liberal economic restructuring, seek to expand the role of market forces in the housing and real estate sectors, privatize the provision of urban and social services, and increase the role of elites in shaping urban landscape (Genis, 2007; Breitung, 2012). Inward investment of FDI becomes interested in not only cheap labor for manufacturing industries but also cheap land with a high potential for value increase. Developers wanted to produce community and lifestyles isolated from noise, pollution, and traffic congestion of the city for the upper-class families of Istanbul. However, cultural facilities, clubs swimming pools, and tennis courts socially nourish the development of community concept in these establishments, their isolation from the rest of the city may cause psychological problems in the future. In addition, homogenous socio-cultural profiles of gated towns is not only outcome of market forces, but also they are the results of careful design of traditional wealthy detached suburban housing identity such as in Fenerbahce and Erenkoy (Oruc, et al., 2017). This can be to protect traditional cultural pattern from the erosion of globalization.

The earlier examples of gated towns are so successful that they worked as a trendsetter in the market for many following their leaders (Genis, 2007) and they contributed urban fringe development. Thus, post-modern landscape of diffused urbanity has been made feasible and promoted by improvements in transport infrastructure and the development of high-technologies permitting electronic access to information, services and facilities (Gospodini, 2006).

The eighth housing segments consists of squatters which usually located in the periphery of the city and were built illegally by the urban poor and rural migrants, on the public land without any infrastructure (Tas and Lightfoot, 2005).

While the squatters were single level at the beginning, in the following period, they have transformed into apartkondus. The main reason is two-fold: to meet the spatial needs due to demographic increase of existing families; to gain extra income by renting the extra space. Some solidarity might have been obtained in the meantime so that at least the neighborhood has received the basic urban services (Gur and Yuksel, 2019).

Earlier main reason of migration was industrialization. During the last two decades, other reasons of high migration to Istanbul were the government policies to close down public factories in the Anatolia and to relax the restriction of importation of agricultural products which caused unemployment in the countryside (Yazgi et al., 2014; Koramaz, et al., 2017).

Although earlier squatters consist of homogenous social characteristics, in the 1970s, declining wages of working classes and government employees resulted in heterogeneous squatter areas (Erder, 1996). In 2012, development of high-rise residences in the squatter areas at the strategic locations with easy access to transportation arteries and job locations, according to the implication of Transformation Law No. 6306 income and cultural gap was increased among the different social groups as well traffic congestions since density increase was not calculated by taking into consideration road capacity in their surroundings. Maximum benefits of the entrepreneurs were the primary purpose of the government for these projects (Kuyucu and Unsal, 2010). Finally, public participation should be taken into consideration for the success of these development projects.

Thus, the review of different housing segments reveal that their production are decided mainly not according to the housing need of different income groups but to maximize the profits of the entrepreneurs. Even in the case of public-private partnerships, the real housing need of the community stays unanswered. While low-rise residential buildings are preferred in the countries which have earth-quake risk, such as Japan and California, US, high-rise residential buildings are built even in the transformation areas of the squatter areas in Istanbul for the seek of profits despite the earth-quake risk of these zones. In addition, transformation cannot be a solution to lower income housing without solving their economic problems, since the squatters simply will be relocated to another area which is prone to become another squatter area. Also, haphazard development of metropolitan areas resulted in unsolvable traffic problems which is an economic burden to people as well as to the economy. Many researchers suggest (O' Regan and Quigley, 1996; Quigley, 1998) that crime and victimization increases with urban scale. Finally, without making plans at the metropolitan and country level for the better distribution of population, under the pressure of global forces and income inequality, housing problems cannot be solved at the metropolitan level which are beyond the economic capacity of developing countries (Sassen, 1994). Moreover, there is need to decrease income inequality in order to have more integrated and socially healthy cities.

4. Conclusion

During the post-modern era, integration with the world economy resulted in social polarization and polarization of income and thus a large spectrum of housing segments. Following this trend, population growth due to government policies which encouraged migration, economic development and globalization fueled demand for housing as well as types of housing varies according to the increasing multi-cultural characteristics of the city. In Istanbul, the number of housing segments is increasing while expanding through changing actors in the urban market, restoration, revitalization, easing density restrictions and planning regulations as well as transformation policies. The restless urban landscape is the result of migration, economic, socio-cultural and technological change and the transformation of the metropolitan Istanbul.

Great differences in the housing types exist between neighborhoods due to historical and socio-economic conditions, seashore amenities, real estate prices, provision of services and facilities, dynamic topography differences and unbalanced provision of transportation systems. As the income, education and cultural gap increases, housing segments variety increase also. Especially, its strategic location contributes to enlarge the type of housing demand at the international level.

The present study investigates the different types of housing taken from different housing segments. Although there are several housing segments in Istanbul developed throughout the history according to the changing socio-economic conditions, culture and demand of people and policies of the governments, here, only eight segments were chosen. Analysis start with the most luxurious sea shore residences, continues with historical konaks, 10+ room villas or country mansions, city apartments, restored apartments, large housing modern complexes, gated towns and squatter housing. The results of the analysis reveal that there is tremendous differences between the top and lower quality housing segments which reflects the large difference between the income, education and culture of the housing groups.

The review of the spatial distribution of housing types reveals that geographically the most luxurious housing locations were on the Bosphorous Sea Shores which benefit from seashore amenities associated with existing upper income neighborhoods, near the new CBD of the city and traditional beautiful housing as it is also illustrated by Bitter (2014) in the US. Low-quality housing is located in the transition zone and in the squatter areas in the periphery of the city.

As a new trend, 10+ room villas are mushrooming as a result of desire of nouveau rich family's conspicuous consumption as well as in order to answer to the need of oil rich Arab families with many wives. They are mostly located on the hills of Bosphourus or as country mansions in the periphery of the city near the forests with sea or lake view.

Lofts are another new concept which take place at the top of the apartment buildings, as duplex flats with wider view and high prices. They can be found even in the squatter areas since the owners hope to charge higher prices than their vicinity.

Large modern housing projects represent another group of housing segment which are stimulated by the multi-center development of the city as well as they contribute to the development of these sub-centers. Residences are mostly upper- or middle-income people. They offer all the necessary cultural and shopping facilities, services and transportation required by the modern urban spaces and globalization. They usually provide well-kept landscape amenities for the residences.

Restored historical apartments represent another group of housing segment which are preferred by the wealthy families as a result of post-modern movement in the urban development and revitalization of the historical neighborhoods which offer more entertainment and social activities than modern neighborhoods. At the same time, this trend can serve the preservation of the historical atmosphere of the old neighborhoods.

Under the influence of globalization, although gated towns provide all the luxury with respect to building comfort, necessary facilities and services and environmental amenities as well as security for upper class families, they are isolated from the city's social life. It is already illustrated by the previous studies that this isolation can be the cause of certain psychological problems in the future.

Despite the enormous support of the government for the transformation of the squatter areas by implementing the Transformation Law, the results were mostly for the benefits of the entrepreneurs rather than their inhabitants. Although better quality buildings were built in the squatter areas based on this law, their residents were obliged for relocation since they cannot keep up with their continuous expenses and despite nothing is done to improve their low-income status.

The results of the study can contribute to investigate the urban dynamics, landscape transformations, density and morphology of the city. They help to understand the emerging housing markets and the development of the metropolitan structure. Finally, the results can be useful for the urban planners, architects, sociologists, realtors, entrepreneurs and policy makers. To analyze the urban impact of haphazard development of different housing segments and to solve the socio-economic, political and traffic problems caused by them are left for further research.

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Resume

Assoc. Prof. Evren Ozus was graduated from the Faculty of Architecture (MSU) in 1998; she received Ms.c. in 2001 and Ph.D. in 2005 from ITU. She worked on the long layout and project development in different projects. Academically, REITs in Turkey, changing location in real estate, temporary accommodation prices are useless as it looks. She has many publications and conferences in national and international journals. She continues to give graduate and doctorate courses at universities such as ITU and Bahçeşehir.
