

# **Social Networking in the Neighbourhood: A Field Research in Istanbul**

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## **Abstract**

This study discusses the life in the neighbourhoods stuck between the gated communities recently built in the district of Sancaktepe, in terms of neighbourliness and social networks in the neighbourhood. In this context, in-depth interviews were conducted with the residents of the neighbourhoods about their lives, experiences, relations, urban structure, urban transformation and the rise of gated communities. All interviewees stated that they were generally content with where they lived, and, for most of them, the key factor for this satisfaction was the neighbourly relations. Contrary to the prevalent opinion that urbanization weakens the neighbourly relations, the neighbourhood residents emphasized the intensiveness of the neighbourly relations and its determining role in their lives, and they distinctly distinguished themselves from those living in the gated communities by virtue of these relations.

**Keywords:** Neighbourliness, neighbourhood, social networks, urbanization, gated community

## **Mahallede Sosyal Ağlar Kurmak: İstanbul'da Bir Saha Araştırması**

### **Öz**

Bu çalışmada İstanbul'un çevre bölgelerinden biri olan Sancaktepe ilçesinde son yıllarda inşa edilen güvenli sitelerin arasında kalan mahallelerdeki yaşam, komşuluk ilişkileri temelinde ele alınmıştır. Mahallelilerle buradaki yaşamları, deneyimleri, ilişkileri, kentsel yapılanma, dönüşüm ve siteleşme üzerine derinlemesine görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Görüşülenlerin tamamı yaşadıkları yerden genel olarak memnun olduklarını, büyük çoğunluğu ise bunda en önemli etkenin komşuluk ilişkileri olduğunu belirtmiştir. Komşuluğun kentleşme ile zayıfladığına yönelik yaygın kanının aksine, mahalleliler komşuluk ilişkilerinin yoğunluğunu ve

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hayatlarındaki belirleyiciliğini vurgulamakta ve kendilerini sitelerde yaşayanlardan belirgin biçimde bu ilişkiler ile ayırmaktadırlar.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Komşuluk, mahalle, sosyal ağlar, kentleşme, güvenli site

## Introduction

As a consequence of domestic migration, urbanization gained speed in Turkey as from the 50s and brought along such phenomena as urban sprawl and squatting. In the 80s, differentiation or diversification experiences and segregation tendencies left their marks on the urbanization process especially in Istanbul; we started to see at one extreme the urban poor in the urban fringe; somewhere in between the middle class joining the fight for seizing their share from the urban space through their investments in cooperative apartment houses and setting their eyes on the large lands in the urban fringe, and at the other extreme the upper class living behind high walls protected with special security systems on the lands they snatched from the most prestigious spaces of the city.<sup>1</sup> The middle and upper classes were stuck within the settled areas of the city with no chance of expanding,<sup>2</sup> and this played a decisive role for their desire to expand to the peripheral regions. In the following years, districts rose up especially in the peripheries of the city where squatter houses, neighbourhoods and gated communities intertwined, which led to a complex urban structure where the lower, middle and upper classes settled in areas physically close to each other. Questions about the social outcomes of this process, to what extent adaptation to the urban life reached while the urbanization gained speed, how this process affected the traditional relations, and how the lives in neighbourhoods and neighbourliness changed are sociologically of great importance.

Increasing urbanization in Istanbul brings along the discussions about the neighbour relations in the city. Neighbourliness, which refers to the social relationships among neighbours, was defined in studies as, “a specific form of social support that benefits individuals”, and “the extent of interaction, trust, and reciprocity between neighbours”<sup>3</sup>. Mann divided the concept of

<sup>1</sup> Oğuz Işık and M. Melih Pınarcıoğlu, *Nöbetleşe Yoksulluk: Sultanbeyli Örneği*, İstanbul, İletişim, 2005, p. 128.

<sup>2</sup> Murat Güvenç ve Oğuz Işık, as cited in, Oğuz Işık and M. Melih Pınarcıoğlu, *Nöbetleşe Yoksulluk: Sultanbeyli Örneği*, İstanbul, İletişim, 2005, p. 131.

<sup>3</sup> Coulthard et al., as cited in, Amy Wilkerson et al., “Neighborhood Physical Features and Relationships With Neighbors: Does Positive Physical Environment Increase Neighborliness?”, *Environment and Behavior*, 44 (5), 2012, pp. 595-615,

neighbourliness into two types, "manifest neighbourliness" and "latent neighbourliness". The former "is characterized by overt forms of social relationships, such as mutual visiting in the home and going out for purposes of pleasure" whereas the latter "is characterized by favourable attitudes to neighbours which result in positive action when a need arises, especially in times of crisis or emergency".<sup>4</sup>

Analysing neighbour relations in neighbourhoods within the scope of the integration theory of Durkheim, who is one of the founders of the functionalism theory, one sees that neighbourliness principally fosters the sense of belonging to the social sphere where people maintain their lives, thereby generating the social cohesion in the neighbourhood.<sup>5</sup> Social integration boosts solidarity among neighbours, strengthens the social support network, and consequently prompts them to develop common attitudes and take common actions against all kinds of potential threats to the neighbourhood, and hence the neighbours and themselves (e.g. the security of life in the neighbourhood, and attempts of gentrification such as the rise of gated communities which will destroy the life in the neighbourhood).

Such questions as if neighbourly relations in cities have completely disappeared or weakened, and which factors can explain these changes are the leading ones in the discussions about neighbourliness in urban life. Many people studying in the fields of sociology and urban studies have supported the claim that neighbourly relations have weakened due to urbanization. For instance, writers such as Wirth, Beck, Young and Putnam have asserted that neighbourliness has weakened in cities due to increased social mobility, individualization and engagement of women into the business life.<sup>6</sup> For example, in 1999 Young argued that "the greater mobility of people in modern society results in a decline of communities" which "results in a significant drop in information, about neighbours, acquaintances, or chance encounters in the street".<sup>7</sup> Similarly, Putnam argued that people "are spending significantly less time nowadays with friends and neighbours than" they used to do.<sup>8</sup> He added

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<http://eab.sagepub.com>, p. 600.

<sup>4</sup> Peter H. Mann, "The Concept of Neighborliness", *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 60, Issue 2, 1954, pp. 163-168, p. 164.

<sup>5</sup> See Emile Durkheim, *Division of Labour in Society*, London, Pgrave Macmillan, 1994.

<sup>6</sup> As cited in, Isabella Boyce, "Neighbourliness and Privacy on a Low Income Estate". *Sociological Research Online* 11(3), 2006, <http://www.socresonline.org.uk/11/3/boyce.html>

<sup>7</sup> Jock Young, *The Exclusive Society*, London, Sage, 1999, p. 70.

<sup>8</sup> Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, New York, Simon and Schuster, 2000, p. 109.

that informal social connectedness has declined in all segments of the society, it was down among both women and men, and both married couples and single people, in all age categories and all parts of the country.<sup>9</sup> In the same way, some other writers such as Fischer et al., Downs, and Guest and Wierzbicki explained the decline in the importance of neighbourhoods and traditional ties with reference to privatism and individualism.<sup>10</sup>

Approaches arguing that the known effects of modernization have weakened neighbourly relations in all social categories independently from such variables as age, class, educational status and gender, usually underestimate the decisiveness of social factors in establishing and maintaining social relations. As Forrest and Kearns underlined, the neighbourhood should be seen as a series of overlapping networks, rather than a territorial bounded entity.<sup>11</sup> As Talen asserted, although many researchers have agreed on the positive or negative effect of physical space on the “sense of community,” many others think that this effect is exaggerated. Following the footsteps of writers such as Webber, Fisher, Wellman and Leighton, sociologists criticizing the Wirthian<sup>12</sup> approach based on the decisive effect of size, density and heterogeneity argued that “community is ‘liberated’ from the confinements of local space, and relationships are formed from the entire metropolitan region via complex social networks”.<sup>13</sup> Within this non-place sense of community paradigm, Campbell and Lee argued that “socioeconomic status, age and gender were the most important factors in determining resident interaction”. Some other researchers, such as Haggerty, emphasized the effects of stage in life-cycle and labour force participation, whereas others, such as Hunter, underlined the importance of shared values.<sup>14</sup> Non-territorial factors such as social networking, homogeneity, and length of residence have often been linked to sense of community.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 108.

<sup>10</sup> As cited in, Yushu Zu et al., “The Changing Meaning of Neighbourhood Attachment in Chinese Commodity Housing Estates: Evidence from Guangzhou”, *Urban Studies*, 49 (11), 2012, pp. 2439–2457, p. 2440.

<sup>11</sup> As cited in, John G. Bruhn, *The Sociology of Community Connections*, New York, Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 2005, p. 174.

<sup>12</sup> Louis Wirth, as cited in Emily Talen, “Sense of Community and Neighbourhood Form: An Assessment of the Social Doctrine of New Urbanism”, *Urban Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 8, 1999, pp. 1361-1379, p. 1367.

<sup>13</sup> Emily Talen, Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> As cited in Emily Talen, Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Emily Talen, Ibid., p. 1368.

Instead of arguing that neighbourliness as a whole continues or has gained strength or weakened, one shall see that different neighbourliness experiences might occur due to effects of various factors. Harvey asserts that local community provides a social environment which yields different sets of value, aspirations and expectations.<sup>16</sup> Within this community, the class and gender category to which the individuals belong to, kinship and *hemşehri*<sup>17</sup> networks, and status of participation to labour force have effects to various extents on the preservation of customs and traditions, integration to the city, individualization, and therefore how neighbourly relations are to change.

### **The Objective and Methodology of the Research**

In recent years, İstanbul has been subjected to urban restructuring as a result of neoliberal policies; as the territory on which the city expands enlarges, business centres, new peripheral neighbourhoods, housing estates and gated communities are built into the traditional neighbourhoods and squatter areas. In addition to the gated communities located in the peripheral regions, which had previously not been zoned for construction, gated communities built around the neighbourhoods largely filled with squatters and apartment buildings grow in number year after year. In consequence of this process, the old residents of these neighbourhoods happen to face long and high blocks, walls and secured gates rising up around them. Sancaktepe is just one of the districts which turned into a settlement region where squatter areas, traditional neighbourhoods and gated communities are intertwined. The main objective of this study is to analyse how and through which practices and factors the neighbourly relations are shaped or changed.

The geographical region of the current municipality of Sancaktepe had remained as a quiet rural area in the east of the provincial borders of Istanbul until the 70s. Stuck between the two most industrialized provinces of Turkey (i.e. Istanbul and Kocaeli), this region became thenceforth the target of the intense migration especially from the East Anatolia and the Black Sea region.<sup>18</sup> Having developed in the form of single-floor squatter houses at the outset, the region later turned into one of the urban sprawl areas as people built multi-

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<sup>16</sup> David Harvey, "Sınıfsal Yapı ve Mekansal Farklılaşma Kuramı", Bülent Duru and Ayten Alkan (ed.), *20. Yüzyıl Kenti*, İmge, Ankara, 2002, pp. 147-172, p. 163.

<sup>17</sup> *Hemşehri* means "those who come from the same region or city".

<sup>18</sup> Sancaktepe Municipality, "General information about Sancaktepe", 2010, Available online at: <http://www.sancaktepe.bel.tr/tr/icerik/129/7023/2014-yili-sancaktepe-ilcesi-nufusu.aspx> (accessed 25.01.15)

floor buildings in time. In order to meet the economic, social and administrative needs of the residents in the region attracting migrants from within Istanbul in the following years as well, the municipality of Sancaktepe was established in 2008 by combining the neighbourhoods of Sarıgazi and Yenidoğan of Ümraniye district and Samandıra neighbourhood of Kartal district.<sup>19</sup>

This study discusses the results of a field research carried out in the neighbourhoods of Sancaktepe between February and June, 2013. The research consists of in-depth interviews conducted with 36 residents. Average age of the interviewees is 36, being 18 for the youngest and 82 for the oldest. In-depth interviews with 13 females and 23 males were recorded and decoded literally and the transcriptions were evaluated through the data analysis made available by Atlas.ti software. At the end of the statements obtained from the interviews, the interview number, gender, age, educational and employment statuses are sorted within parentheses.

### **Kinship and *Hemşehri* Networks**

One of the first noticeable data about the neighbourhoods within the residential areas of Sancaktepe district is the dense population of people who have kinship and *hemşehri* ties with each other within the community in this region. This case of clustering<sup>20</sup> is especially common in the squatter settlements in Istanbul, and it is a phenomenon generally seen in the urban areas with dense settlement of successive migration from villages to cities. It is interesting to observe that almost all of the interviewees living in a squatter or an apartment building as the owner or tenant stated that they had relatives or *hemşehris* residing in the vicinity. It is, therefore, possible to assert that *hemşehri* ties keep forming the basis of the current social networks in the region of the study.

*I can say they are my neighbours, or rather 'köylülerim'<sup>21</sup>, but they are my neighbours in the end. They all live around here... (Interviewee 5, F, 42, primary school graduate, housewife)*

<sup>19</sup> Arif Kolay, *Sancaktepe Tarihi*, İstanbul, Sancaktepe Belediyesi, p. 16.

<sup>20</sup> Sema Erder, *İstanbul'a Bir Kent Kondu: Ümraniye*, İstanbul, İletişim, 1996.

<sup>21</sup> 'Köylülerim', means people from the same village with me.

Living together with close relatives in the same building or street, or in different flats indicates that traditional extended family format is maintained in a metamorphosed style. Groups of nuclear families living in the city in the same building or street and maintaining the extended family relations have replaced the extended families living in the country in a single house.<sup>22</sup> For example, having been asked to tell what they did together with the neighbours, some interviewees expressed that they lived in the same building with their relatives, while some others said they had a lot of relatives all over the neighbourhood.

*As we live in the same building with **our relatives**, they also pay visits, like my uncle and his wife for example... (Interviewee 1, M, 26, university student)*

*I have friends, **wives of my in-laws, daughter in-law of my uncle**; they all live here. (Interviewee 6, F, 43, primary school graduate, housewife)*

*There are the **kids of my older brother and his wife, she's old**; and there are the **kids of my older sister**... We pay visits to these neighbours. (Interviewee 28, M, 53, uneducated, construction worker)*

It is seen that, those who had migrated from villages and particularly those who had settled in squatter areas and preserved their *hemşehri* networks have created communities in the peripheries of the city, which looks like the 'extension of their villages'.<sup>23</sup>

*There are **lots of relatives** and friends as well. I mean we have many fellow people here... We could say we're still living **as if in a village**. (Interviewee 2, F, 47, primary school graduate, housewife)*

It is apparent that relatives had settled in the same streets in a neighbourhood and maintain the close relations to some extent. Autonomous

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<sup>22</sup> Having noted that the majority of the migrants from the rural areas in Turkey come to the cities as nuclear families or as individuals belonging to a nuclear families, Duben asserts that extended family and extended kinship relations have always played a very important role in all social classes in Turkey despite the long-existing high rate of nuclear families both in the rural and urban regions in Turkey. See Alan Duben, *Kent, Aile, Tarih*, İstanbul, İletişim, 2002.

<sup>23</sup> Nur Vergin, as cited in, Zeynel Abidin Kılınc and Bünyamin Bezci, "Kentleşme, Gecekondu ve Hemşerilik", *Akademik İncelemeler Dergisi*, c. 6, s. 2, 2011, pp. 323-344, <http://dergipark.ulakbim.gov.tr/akademikincelemeler/article/view/5000049791>, p. 334.

nuclear families sharing the same cultural values and following same customs and traditions tend to establish neighbourly relations with their close relatives. Therefore, neighbourliness might come along inherently/inevitably as a result of kinship rather than development of relations with foreigners.

Sayfa/Page | 30

İGÜSBD  
Cilt: 2 Sayı: 1  
Nisan /  
April 2015

*Our neighbours and relatives live in this vicinity. **Sons of my uncle** live in that building, and this one... People here are all **our relatives**. We see each other every day. (Interviewee 36, M, 53, primary school graduate, artisan)*

However, living in the same street does not always bring about traditional maintenance of the relations. Despite the spatial proximity among the relatives in the urban life, break offs in social relations due to such variables as age, education, employment and length of residence draw attention. It is apparent that composition of almost the whole social circle of relatives is more valid for the old than the young, the unemployed than the employed, the undereducated than the higher educated, and the first generation of migrants than the second generation (those born in Istanbul). As the level of integration into the urban life enhances, relations with the relatives weaken. This points to adaptation to the urban life, and therefore, to the fact that individualization and more modern relations are replacing the traditional relations of kinship and *hemşehri* ties. For example, a working woman at the age of 25 underlines that she has limited relations with her relatives despite living in the same street.

*Those living in the same street with me are **my relatives**. But, I don't actually know what they do. **As I work**, I don't see them a lot... We only pay visits to each other when we have 'mevlüt'.<sup>24</sup> And we just greet each other at the door, that's it. (Interviewee 16, F, 25, junior college graduate, finance specialist)*

### **Intimacy and Sincerity in Neighbourly Relations**

The importance of 'greeting' was one thing mostly emphasized by those interviewees who stated that the most favourable thing about living in a neighbourhood was the close communication they established with the other residents. The most observable effects of the urban life compared to rural life on the lives of people are estrangement, alienation and isolation. While migration from villages to cities brings about these results, sincere relations

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<sup>24</sup> Mevlid, an Islamic memorial service. Mevlid ceremonies are generally organized after burials in the house of the deceased.

re-developed in the neighbourhood prevent prejudices against and fear for the urban life, thereby driving the interviewed residents to frequently express their satisfaction about greeting others.

*When we go out, at least we can **greet** each other with smiling faces; we can say **good morning** to each other. We see and talk to each other. (Interviewee 34, F, 30, student in open high school, textile worker)*

*For instance, I prepare the breakfast table on the balcony, just like the neighbour across. Everybody has breakfast in this way, **greeting each other**. (Interviewee, F, 37, primary school graduate, cook)*

*I mean we are generally satisfied with the facts that we have a neighbour next door to resort to when we have a problem, friends **to greet**, that we can share common things, experience similar feelings in both good and bad times, that we have this neighbourly culture here. (Interviewee 25, M, 55, uneducated, retiree)*

It is noteworthy that the importance and meaning attached to neighbourliness by the residents has a vital function in terms of solidarity and social cohesion in urban life. Interviewees have underlined that their neighbours are as important in their lives as their *hemşehris*, relatives, friends, and even families.

*Because I get along better with my neighbours, you know... For me, **they come before my relatives, my own family**. (Interviewee 33, F, 37, primary school graduate, cook)*

*I have a very good dialogue with my neighbours. For me, a **neighbour is closer than a friend; a neighbour is closer to me than everything else**. (Interviewee 34, F, 30, student in open high school, textile worker)*

Consequently, 'good' and 'close' relations with the neighbours meet the needs of socialization, while strengthening the sense of belonging and commitment to the neighbourhood at the same time. Interviewees expressed how well they knew their neighbours and how close they were to them while verbalizing their satisfaction about the life in the neighbourhood.

*We know the neighbours very well. We **know all the neighbours** in our building; I mean we regularly pay visits to each other. (Interviewee 1, M, 26, university student)*

Erder associates the *hemşehri* relations in squatter areas with the concept of 'fictive kinship' defined by Eisenstadt and Roniger.<sup>25</sup> This fictive kinship manifests itself in the relations established with the neighbours in the neighbourhoods of Sancaktepe regardless of *hemşehri* ties.

***Everybody knows each other very well** here. You go out into the street, we have good neighbourly relations. We really have sound relations. And it doesn't matter if our hometowns are not the same; we can easily establish good relations with neighbours from different cities. (Interviewee 5, F, 42, primary school graduate, housewife)*

Neighbours do not care about having come from different hometowns and backgrounds, and include each other into fictive kinship relations, thus they might have more importance in each other's lives than the *hemşehris*, relatives, friends, and even families. Duben asserts that increase in urbanization and industrialization has not undermined the importance of kinship relations, but rather led to wide range of social relations among non-kinmen maintained in line with kinship code.<sup>26</sup> For the interviewees, 'neighbour' can be synonymous with relatives or *hemşehris*.

*I know them because I have known them for twenty seven years now **just like a relative**. I mean I know them so well that I am pretty sure that they would never do harm to me. (Interviewee 2, F, 47, primary school graduate, housewife)*

Sezer and Özyalçiner stated that in the past neighbourly relations in İstanbul were of greater importance than kinship, and people would reiterate such expressions as "*ev alma, komşu al*" ("don't buy the house, buy the neighbourhood") and "*komşu komşunun külüne muhtaç*" (even in the smallest of matters one neighbor can help another).<sup>27</sup> In the neighbourhoods in Sancaktepe where the interviewees lived, it is seen that these sayings are still valid and important. Majority of the neighbourhood residents stresses that

<sup>25</sup> Sema Erder, "Nerelisin Hemşerim?", Çağlar Keyder (ed.), *İstanbul : Küresel ile Yerel Arasında*, İstanbul, Metis, 2013, pp. 192-205, p. 200.

<sup>26</sup> Alan Duben, *Ibid.*, pp. 97-98.

<sup>27</sup> Sennur Sezer and Adnan Özyalçiner, *Bir Zamanların İstanbulu*, İstanbul, İnkilap, 2005, p. 35.

their relations with the neighbours are more important than such structural disadvantages as noise, pollution, expensiveness, inability to buy a house and poverty.

*We thought we didn't care about the money; we wanted to have friends and **neighbours, that's how we decided to buy this house.** (Interviewee 2, F, 47, primary school graduate, housewife)*

*Friendship, neighbourliness... The house isn't important itself. Even though you live in a tent or in a squatter house, **you might see it like a palace if you have good neighbours.** I won't move out from here. We live in the fifth floor; my husband doesn't want to climb up the stairs any more. He sometimes says 'Let's move into a second floor.' And I say 'We have been living here for so long now. Who knows what the new place will be like if we move out?' And that's why we keep living here. (Interviewee 33, F, 37, primary school graduate, cook)*

### **Neighbourliness and Gender**

In the families living in different squatter houses or apartment buildings in neighbourhoods, it was seen that, those who have established and maintain the relations with the other persons, families and groups were the women mostly. It is possible to explain the fact that women in general are more active and sociable than men in terms of neighbourly relations as an extension of the traditional gender roles in addition to the longer hours spent in house by women. For example, Campbell and Lee have found that women are better neighbours "because American gender roles encourage women's extensive involvement with others, including neighbours".<sup>28</sup> However, women who establish closer and more intense relations with the neighbours are mostly the ones who does not work in a paid-job and engage in the labour market. Therefore, it is possible to assert that women falling into the category of 'housewife' assume a role of maintaining the social relations, in addition to being a spouse and mother, and carrying out the household chores.

Having no chance to socialize outside the vicinity of the house in spaces such as school or workplace, 'housewives' miss out the other possible means in order to gain 'social capital' or enrich what they already have. Therefore, neighbourly relations play a central role in the social lives of these women. For Hanifan, who was the first one to use the concept of "social capital" in 1916,

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<sup>28</sup> As cited in, John G. Bruhn, Ibid.

“The individual is helpless socially, if left to himself... If he comes into contact with his neighbour, and they with other neighbours, there will be an accumulation of social capital, which may immediately satisfy his social needs and which may bear a social potentiality sufficient to the substantial improvement of living conditions in the whole community”.<sup>29</sup> It is clear that utilizing neighbourly relations to construct social capital plays a more decisive role for housewives than the other groups. Limitations for housewives to access alternative relation networks nearly oblige them to establish social relations at different levels of intimacy with their neighbours.

Although it's a frequent phenomenon to see relatives settle in houses close to each other in neighbourhoods, this is not the case for all of the interviewees. Furthermore, due to the pioneering role of men in the migration process and thereby the dominance of patrilocal settlement, the relatives in the neighbourhood can be those of the husbands; and even if the relatives of the women live in the same city, they are likely to have settled in different peripheries of the city.

*My parents live in the European side of the city. And my elder sister lives in Bakkalköy. **There is no one else here** from my own family. But now we have made a circle of friends here. (Interviewee 33, F, 37, primary school graduate, cook)*

Interviewees whose relatives live in different regions of Istanbul do not see them very often due to such reasons as the vast size of the city, distance of the peripheral neighbourhoods to each other and expensiveness. For example, a female interviewee underlining the positive effects of neighbourly relations on easing the sense of loneliness links the primary position of neighbourliness in her social relations to the limitedness of her financial opportunities:

*I like neighbourly relations a lot. Because you feel lonely. You cannot go out all day long anyway. Why? Because we have **limited financial means**. There aren't any other options. There are huge differences between the lives in a luxurious district and one like this. (Interviewee 34, F, 30, student in open high school, textile worker)*

However, neighbourly relations in the neighbourhood are not limited to only those among women; men also establish neighbourly relations with their

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<sup>29</sup> Lyda Judson Hanifan, as cited in, Robert D. Putnam, *Ibid.*, p. 19.

neighbours at different levels of closeness. In fact, some say that they have so intimate neighbourly relations that they can enter their neighbour's house, which is accepted to be the private sphere of a family, uninvitedly or unannouncedly.

*I have such good relations with my neighbour from Çankırı. He is one of the neighbours who **I can visit uninvitedly**. We have such a good dialogue with him. I have another neighbour from Erzincan. I can also **pay a visit to them unannouncedly** and bother them. (Interviewee 15, M, 36, high school graduate, company owner)*

However, most of the male interviewees indicate that those who maintain the relations with the neighbours are their wives; the neighbourly relations of men, who can spend more time in the social spheres outside the house or neighbourhood circle and experience different socialization opportunities, are weaker and less close in comparison to the women's, who mostly lack such opportunities.

*I don't know most of them anyway, my wife knows them. I mean, as I work, I actually don't know many people. I just know the imam in the mosque. And he knows me. (Interviewee 8, M, 28, high school graduate, security guard)*

*I don't know many people. But, my wife knows the neighbours better as she is a housewife. **I don't know them, but she is in touch with them.** (Interviewee 18, M, 46, high school graduate, jeweller)*

*Sometimes men go to work; **ladies come together**, in a different house each day. (Interviewee 28, M, 53, uneducated, construction worker)*

However, depending on the length of the time spent at home and in the neighbourhood, the fact that neighbours occupy a large place in women's social relations is mainly determined by whether they are employed in a paid job outside the house or not. It was seen that women engaging in the labour market substantially differ from those who are not employed in a paid-job in terms of the rhythm and practices of their daily life. This differentiation brings along the fact that women employed in the labour market have rather weaker relations with their neighbours than housewives, which is similar to the case of men.

***As I work**, I don't have much to do with the neighbours. I mean, I can barely go to work and return home. And when I come home, I can rarely, just once in a month or two months, have the chance to pay a visit to my neighbour. And I don't have a lot of neighbours, just one. And I have another in the old building I used to live. There are no other neighbours I have close relations with. (Interviewee 16, F, 25, junior college graduate, finance specialist)*

*I just exchange hellos with the neighbours in the building we live in **when we see each other at the door**. (Interviewee 4, F, 30, master's degree, nurse)*

### **Length of Residence in the Neighbourhood**

It is apparent that length of residence in a neighbourhood plays a role in the intensity of the relations established with neighbours to some extent. Increased length of acquaintance gives the neighbours the chance to get to know each other better, to accept each other as they are, to increase the things they share with each other, to help each other and to develop mutual trust. Thus, a sustainability similar to family and kinship relations dominates the neighbourly relations.

*I have a very good relation with a neighbour, and I know him since 1994. It means we have known each other for almost 20 years now. **And I also know the times of birth of his kids...** (Interviewee 15, M, 36, high school graduate, company owner)*

However, close neighbourly relations in the neighbourhood is not only valid for those who have been living there for a long time, but also for those who have recently moved in to the neighbourhood to a large extent. It is seen that people moving in to this district from other places adapt to the encompassing cultural environment of the neighbourhood after a while.

*As different people move in day by day, **the newcomers adapt to the old-timers**. When they look around, they tend to adapt to those living here. There have been lots of newcomers, and they all adapted to each other. I mean, this is something very good. We like living here more in this case. (Interviewee 6, F, 43, primary school graduate, housewife)*

*I can't say that we have known each other for a long time; just for three years now. But, we all **have general idea and judgment** about each*

*other's personality and character. (Interviewee 34, F, 30, student in open high school, textile worker)*

### **Paying a visit "to sit" with a neighbour and other social activities**

While expressing their thoughts about what they do when they come together with the neighbours, interviewees mostly reiterate the expression of 'sitting with' the neighbours in someone's house or in the street. 'Sitting with' or 'paying a visit to sit with' the neighbours have such cultural senses as chatting, sharing, spending time together, eating and drinking together in Turkey. For the neighbours paying a visit to sit with, this action is an important part of the daily routine as a practice of socialization.

*We come together; some of us are relatives, some others are just friends... Sometimes one of us invites the others, saying 'I'm available today, **let's come together and sit.**' (Interviewee 2, F, 47, primary school graduate, housewife)*

*We **sit with the neighbours.** We chat, drink tea. We spend time this way. (Interviewee 6, F, 43, primary school graduate, housewife)*

*Both her and my husbands are young. We **sit together and chat.** (Interviewee 16, F, 25, junior college graduate, finance specialist)*

In addition to 'sitting' at home, it is seen that, meeting in the street and in front of the doors is quite common. Some interviewees express that they sit and chat with the neighbours in front of the door in the street in the daytime, while some say they do this in the evenings.

*We are always together especially during the summer time. **We are always in the street.** We don't go into our houses, thank God. We sit at the door and chat, drink tea or coffee together. This way, everybody can see each other, make the daily chat. (Interviewee 5, F, 42, primary school graduate, housewife)*

*We talk, eat and drink tea **in front of the door.** (Interviewee 23, M, 19, secondary school graduate, motorized courier)*

*While going home in the evening, I see them **sitting and chatting in front of the door** (Interviewee 16, F, 25, junior college graduate, financial specialist)*

Neighbours seem to pay home visits mostly to spend time together, but they also come together with the neighbours during such special times as religious holidays, weddings, funerals and birthdays, and at mass picnics organized at weekends. Social activities such as weddings, funerals and picnics not only have “manifest functions” such as entertaining, sharing the pain and having a good time, but also they have “latent functions”<sup>30</sup> such as strengthening the sense of belonging to the neighbourhood and fostering the integration among the neighbours through neighbourliness. Thus, participation to the social activities increases solidarity and social cohesion.

*Sometimes we **organize a mass picnic**; we go altogether by vehicles. We come together at the picnic place, see our neighbours and catch up with the hemşehris we haven't seen for long. We certainly visit each other **during the religious holidays**. (Interviewee 25, M, 55, uneducated, retiree)*

*Sometimes we hold **birthday parties**; the other day it was my nephew's birthday; ten friends of mine came among the neighbours. (Interviewee 23, M, 19, secondary school graduate, motorized courier)*

*We spend time together; sit with each other at home, usually women. Sometimes we take the kids to the park, such things we do together... We attend the **weddings, birthday parties**... (Interviewee 33, F, 37, primary school graduate, cook)*

### **Social Support and Solidarity**

In the neighbourhoods, it was seen that, residents provide emotional support to each other and help each other in a number of other ways. It is obvious that neighbourliness has an important function in terms of providing social support in neighbourhoods; especially when it comes to kids or the elderly, solidarity and cooperation become more observable.

*When **my kid was small**, I could easily leave it with the neighbour for an hour to go somewhere and come back; there are a lot of people like this around me and **I can ask them for help**. (Interviewee 2, F, 47, primary school graduate, housewife)*

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<sup>30</sup> Robert Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure, revised and enlarged*, London, The Free Press of Glencoe, 1968.

According to Bruhn, “neighbours and neighbouring retain greater importance for the ... elderly”.<sup>31</sup> Guest and Wierzbicki, and Henning and Lieberg also found that “informal relationships with neighbours are more important for certain groups such as ... the elderly”.<sup>32</sup> Similarly in 1994 Logan and Spitze, and in 2004 Hashas argued that “senior citizens and children who spend more time in the residential environment ... are more dependent on the locality for intimate ties”.<sup>33</sup>

*The neighbour upstairs is **an old lady**; sometimes we pay a visit to her with my wife, to ease her sense of loneliness, to keep company. We just ask her if there is something we could help out, and then come back. (Interviewee 18, M, 46, high school graduate, jeweller)*

*We have next door neighbours; they are an **old, retired couple**. In the end, we should check on them sometimes, because they are old after all. Their kids stop by sometimes, and they also ask us to check on them; they say they can't reach by phone always and come over often. So, they **ask us to check on them now and then**. (Interviewee 8, M, 28, high school graduate, security guard)*

Relations among the neighbours retain the quality of being the continuation of the traditional relations to a great extent, and build up support mechanisms especially at times of crisis. It is possible to say that neighbourly relations minimize the individualizing effect of modernization and the accompanying sense of loneliness, thereby easing the traumatic effect of the rapid and extensive changes likely to take place due to new lifestyles. Ties with the neighbours function as a “buffer mechanism”<sup>34</sup> preventing the alienation and atomization of neighbourhood residents.

*If I get into trouble, **my neighbours** are the first to offer help before my parents or sister can arrive. Because I have gone through harsh times, **really bad days**. I thank God for giving me such neighbours. May God bless them. I received a great deal of support from them. (Interviewee 33, F, 37, primary school graduate, cook)*

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<sup>31</sup> John G. Bruhn, Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> As cited in, Amy Wilkerson et al., Ibid., p. 597.

<sup>33</sup> As cited in, Yushu Zu et al., Ibid., p. 2442.

<sup>34</sup> Adnan Tekşen, as cited in, Zeynel Abidin Kılınç and Bünyamin Bezci, “Kentleşme, Gecekondu ve Hemşerilik”, *Akademik İncelemeler Dergisi*, v. 6, n. 2, 2011, pp. 323-344, <http://dergipark.ulakbim.gov.tr/akademikincelemeler/article/view/5000049791>, p. 334.

*Even when I have a trivial problem, I first resort to my neighbours or they are the first to reach out. That's why I think a neighbour is the most important of all. Neighbourliness is very important, more important than the house itself. (Interviewee 34, F, 30, student in open high school, textile worker)*

Sayfa/Page | 40

İGÜSBD  
Cilt: 2 Sayı: 1  
Nisan /  
April 2015

Neighbours help each other with the daily chores, too. They generally see cooking and eating together as a means of spending nice time. However, it was found that such modern urban life practices as meeting outside the house at a restaurant or cafe to eat or drink together are not common. Eating and drinking with neighbours at home, which is a cultural continuity for the families who had moved from villages to cities, is a direct extension of the low level of income at the same time. Spending some time out incurs extra costs, and lower and traditional middle class member residents either cannot bear these costs or see them as a luxury/expense. Moreover, while the upper class buys services from others for such chores as cleaning, cooking, repairment and painting, lower and traditional middle class neighbours in the neighbourhood carry out such chores themselves through mutual assistance. For instance, while narrating how his wife spends time with other women in the neighbourhood, an interviewee says:

*They eat at home, and chat. Sometimes they **do the cleaning together**; they **help each other**. (Interviewee 18, M, 46, high school graduate, jeweller)*

Mutual assistance in cleaning, which is just one of the daily chores done by housewives, includes both sharing the daily routine with the desire to socialize and receiving free assistance for something a housewife needs help.

*For example, she does something or has a chore to finish; she says '**Let's do it together** and finish it off quickly; then we can sit together.'* For instance, she makes cake, and I make pies. This way we collaborate. (Interviewee 33, F, 37, primary school graduate, cook)

In a similar way to the cooperation of women for such chores as cleaning and cooking, a kind of cooperation for daily tasks among men was also found. Male neighbours are likely to receive help from each other for such tasks as repairment, painting, gardening and small construction works. A male interviewee summarizes this relationship of mutual assistance with these words:

*When they need someone to paint the house, or to repair something, **I help them**. Most recently, I painted the house of the neighbour at the end of the street. Then I had a modification work to be done in my garden. I asked for his help, and fortunately he didn't turn me down. We erected the wall around the garden together. I'm grateful to him. (Interviewee 25, M, 55, uneducated, retiree)*

Cooperation among the neighbours can sometimes be in the form of monetary exchange. It is seen that borrowing from a neighbour for a short time is customary, and borrowing from the closest neighbours in cases of emergency is a frequent case.

*Sometimes, when I have an **urgent need**, or don't have the financial means at that moment, I ask the neighbours I know to lend me some money. And sometimes they ask me for the same. This is how we **help each other**. (Interviewee 25, M, 55, uneducated, retiree)*

*I **borrowed from the neighbour** on the third floor. I would pay the rent... I called, and she said the kids could give it to me; I didn't even knock on the door, just lowered a basket down and they put the money in it. The next evening, I paid back. (Interviewee 33, F, 37, primary school graduate, cook)*

### **Living Among the Gated Communities**

In the construction of the neighbourhood identity and ensuring the social cohesion, both the positive neighbourly relations and practices such as moral and material social support, and gated communities, which are seen as a potential threat to these relations and practices and conceived as the other, play important roles. While considering the questions about how they see the recently built numerous gated communities and the life in them, all of the interviewees state that they think there are no neighbourly relations in the gated communities. As none of them has lived in a gated community before, they seem to reach this judgment due to their predictions, observations or what they hear. Some interviewees express their satisfaction about living in the neighbourhood by comparing the neighbourly relations in the neighbourhood and the gated communities.

*For instance, while the residents of the gated communities don't know even the neighbour next door and exchange hellos, **it's not the case here**. (Interviewee 1, M, 26, university student)*

*The social life is weak in gated communities. That's why I don't like the life there. I can't live in such a place. So what happens if I do? I can't socialize. I don't know anyone who has such good relations with the people in their building as mine with my neighbours. I have never seen such a person. People don't even know the neighbour upstairs or downstairs. (Interviewee 15, M, 36, high school graduate, company owner)*

***They can't find the joy that I find here in a gated community.** In summers, this is a fun place to live; you don't even want to leave. In the evenings, we sit in the streets or gardens, crack sunflower seeds, drink freshly brewed tea from our samovars... I mean we have good neighbourly relations. If I live in a gated community, I won't be able to find this social setting in it. They climb up the stairs, but don't exchange hellos. (Interviewee 34, F, 30, student in open high school, textile worker)*

*I wouldn't live in a gated community, and you know why? Because it destroys humaneness, friendship and neighbourliness. I mean you can't just knock on the door and go in there, but **I can easily do that here in my building.** (Interviewee 33, F, 37, primary school graduate, cook)*

*There is absolutely no neighbourliness **out there.** But **we have it here.** (Interviewee 5, F, 42, primary school graduate, housewife)*

Some interviewees state that they are not content with the gated communities rapidly rising around the neighbourhood in the recent years. What causes this discontent is principally the concern that the traditional neighbourhood will disappear and gated communities will replace the current buildings and streets.

*The houses we built twenty or twenty-five years ago are now stuck between the large areas of gated communities. We hear that contractors will come some day in near future to buy the old houses or those where the owners don't want to live anymore, and build gated communities instead. We are, of course, **scared by this.** Because, we hear that there are no neighbourly or friendly relations in big apartment buildings or gated communities as we have in our villages, here in our neighbourhood. **We are afraid of losing these values, the culture of neighbourliness.** (Interviewee 25, M, 55, uneducated, retiree)*

The underlying reason for this concern is the possibility that neighbourly relations might disappear; neighbourhood residents believe that life in the gated communities is weaker in terms of social relations in comparison to neighbourhood.<sup>35</sup>

*As they renew the region, I just wish that we don't lose our friendship, neighbourliness and humaneness, nothing more. (Interviewee 25, M, 55, uneducated, retiree)*

*I actually think it's something bad. Because we see them at every step now. Let me talk about my friend living in a gated community. I know that they don't know the neighbour next door, exchange hellos. I know they don't exchange hellos with those upstairs or downstairs. I think these **gated communities destroy neighbourliness, friendship and the environment.** (Interviewee 16, F, 25, junior college graduate, finance specialist)*

*I don't want them to build gated communities; I don't want neighbourliness to die. They can build apartment buildings, but I just don't want them to construct very large buildings; they can be five-floor apartments. (Interviewee 34, F, 30, student in open high school, textile worker)*

*I think it **harms the neighbourly relations**, because you can't just... You reside with a lot of people that you don't know. You can be somehow **more prejudiced and cautious** against each other. (Interviewee 4, F, 30, master's degree, nurse)*

It seems that acting prejudicedly and cautiously against the strangers in urban life is not only valid for the people living in the same building in gated communities but also for the people living distantly in the same vicinity. Responses to a question about their acquaintance and conversation with those living in gated communities around their houses reveal that interviewees living in the neighbourhood have very limited or no relations with them.

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<sup>35</sup> Many studies have showed that the increase in the number of gated communities has weakened the close neighbourly relations. For instance, a study on the life in the gated communities in Ankara indicates that those who had moved into such gated communities from the old neighbourhoods of the city missed the intimacy in their old neighbour relations, solidarity, unannounced visits, trust and sincerity. See Aysu Kes Erkul, "Konut Tercihi ve Sosyo-Mekânsal İlişkilerde Kültürel Sermayenin Rolü: Koru Sitesi ve Or-An Sitesi Örnekleri Üzerinden Bir Karşılaştırma", Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi, 15(4), 2013, pp. 625-647, p.636.

*These gated communities are something new, only in recent years. I have **no acquaintance** at all, I know nobody living in one. (Interviewee, M, 36, high school graduate, company owner)*

Sayfa/Page | 44

İGÜSBD  
Cilt: 2 Sayı: 1  
Nisan /  
April 2015

*In order for us to establish relations, we must first get to know each other. We see that the newcomers, especially those living in gated communities are quite **colder and more distant**. As the older residents of this region, we know each other, but we have great difficulty in approaching those people. And we feel that they see us differently, as rural people. We see them more distant from ourselves as they have luxury cars at their doors, more luxurious houses and a little higher levels of income than us. (Interviewee 25, M, 55, uneducated, retiree)*

The reasons of this distant stance of the residents in gated communities against the neighbourhood residents largely coincide with the reasons of choosing a life in these gated communities. Kurtuluş argues that the new middle class wants to dissociate themselves from the traditional middle class and the urban poor, and that's exactly why they settle in these gated communities.<sup>36</sup>

*One **should at least greet** upon seeing, that's the order of God. They drive a motorbike or car, and they directly go home. They don't even stop or look at you. That's what they do. I feel as **they look down on us**. (Interviewee 35, M, 24, primary school graduate, worker)*

Interviewees explain the lack of their relations with the residents of gated communities with either the lack of dialogue even among the people living in the developments, or the differences in income levels.<sup>37</sup> Residents of neighbourhoods, which are generally the living spaces of the lower class, working class and traditional middle class, see the fact that the new middle class members living in gated communities do not communicate with them as a proof of disdain and contempt.

<sup>36</sup> Hatice Kurtuluş, "Gated Communities as a Representation of New Upper and Middle Classes in İstanbul", İ.Ü. Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Dergisi No: 44, 2011, pp. 49-65, p. 54.

<sup>37</sup> As Bartu-Candan and Kolluoğlu argued, in gated communities residents "have little if any contact with other social groups. The only contact they have with the working classes is through the services they receive from waiters, delivery boys, porters, security personnel and caddies, and most intimately from nannies, domestics, drivers and gardeners". See Ayfer Bartu-Candan and Biray Kolluoğlu. "Emerging Spaces of Neoliberalism: A Gated Town and a Public Housing Project in İstanbul." *New Perspectives on Turkey*, no. 39, 2008, pp. 5-46, p. 34.

## **Conclusion**

Studies examining the effects of urbanization on neighbourliness usually discuss the impacts of such factors as the physical structure of settlements, region of the country, social class, age, gender, length of residence, family ties, marital status, and ethnicity, and mostly argue that urbanization weakens or destroys neighbourly relations. However, neighbourliness continues to be the primary source of socialization experiences as it was in the past.<sup>38</sup> Although one cannot underestimate the individualizing and segregating effects of urbanization, it is evident that neighbourhood residents maintain the traditional relations in various ways.

This study has found that people in Sancaktepe substantially preserve the neighbourliness patterns. It is possible to assert that the most decisive factor ensuring stability is the fact that most of the neighbourhood residents have relatives and *hemşehris* living in the same vicinity. Therefore, neighbourhood residents already have a social circle. However, kinship and *hemşehri* networks are not always the basis of the neighbourly relations; some interviewees have stated that they were not in touch with their relatives or *hemşehris* even if they lived in the same neighbourhood. Here, individualization caused by urbanization or different socialization experiences in various environments seem to be effective. Especially those interviewees who were born in İstanbul or had come to İstanbul at a young age, the young, students, and those employed in a paid job have weaker relations with their relatives and *hemşehris* in the neighbourhood as they have a greater chance to replace those relations with different ones.

For the interviewees of this study, it is not possible to reiterate such suppositions for urban life as estranging people, isolating them, and confining them into a life without communication and greeting with others. Neighbourhood residents frequently expressed their satisfaction with having people around to exchange hellos and communicate friendly. Warm relations among neighbours might lead them to see each other closer than their *hemşehris*, relatives, and even family members. Thus, a fictive kinship appears, and the residents' senses of belonging and commitment to the neighbourhood gain strength.

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<sup>38</sup> Newson and Newson, as cited in, David Harvey, Ibid.

Women tend to play a greater role in establishing close relations with neighbours, but it is necessary to underline that this is only valid for those who do not go to work or school regularly. Especially housewives appear to be very active in establishing and maintaining neighbourly relations owing to the facts that the time they spend at home and in the vicinity in their daily life is long and that they are usually deprived of other means to develop their social capital. Conversely, women working in a paid job have weaker relations with their neighbours similarly to the most of the men.

Total length of residence and the daily length of time spent in the neighbourhood influence the place neighbourly relations occupy in the lives of both women and men. As expected, it becomes more possible to establish closer relations as the length of acquaintance increases. Nevertheless, there are many examples indicating that the newcomers to the neighbourhood easily adapt to the neighbourhood and the relations within it. Therefore, it is possible to say that the cultural environment in the neighbourhoods of this study easily embraces the newcomers.

It is also possible to assert that paying a visit 'to sit' with a neighbour, which stands for chatting, spending time, eating and drinking together, as well as having such symbolic meanings as trust and sharing, is the most common socialization practice among the interviewees. They commonly sit with their neighbours in front of doors and in the street as well as at home. Moreover, neighbours come together for weddings, funerals, picnics and birthdays, ensuring the maintenance of solidarity and social cohesion.

Neighbourhood, which has a heterogeneous structure in terms of social class and culture, functions as a tool to meet the social needs of its residents through informal methods by means of neighbourly relations. In urban life, neighbourly relations play a crucial role for kids, youngsters and the middle-aged to socialize in particular. However, in the urban settlement regions where the public authority fails to provide such social services as nursery, retirement homes, nursing and residential care or where access to such services is limited, neighbourliness rather signifies social support for the mothers, the elderly and the sick. Caring for the kids and the elderly in particular are the principal spheres of assisting each other. In addition, both women and men help each other in daily chores, and neighbours borrow or lend money among themselves. Apart from these, the key effect of the continuing neighbourliness on the lives of the residents is probably the fact

that it provides support spheres at crisis times, and functions as a buffer to ease the effects of traumas.

It is noteworthy that the interviewees made comparisons in terms of neighbourliness while sharing their thoughts about the gated communities built in the empty lots in the neighbourhood and around their houses. Interviewees defined the life in these gated communities in terms of weak neighbourly relations, while none of them said they would like to live in a gated community. It is remarkable that none of the interviewees knew anybody living in the gated communities around them except for exchanging hellos with some of them distantly from time to time. While some interviewees thought that residents of the gated communities had weak relations among themselves anyway, they believed that they looked down on neighbourhood residents.

In conclusion, restructuring urban spaces in the form of traditional neighbourhoods and gated communities leads to segregation of the residents in both sides from each other, and group closure. While the closure in the gated communities is shaped by the physical design, the closure in the neighbourhoods is indirectly affected by this design and results in preservation and reproduction of the traditional ties. Whereas one would expect urban life to weaken the traditional relations in heterogeneous communities in comparison to rural life, this study shows that, in Sancaktepe, residents of the neighbourhoods surrounded by gated communities establish close ties, maintain solidarity, and ensure social cohesion through neighbourly relations.

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Sayfa/Page | 49

İGÜSBD  
Cilt: 2 Sayı: 1  
Nisan /  
April 2015

## Özet

*İstanbul'un gecekonduların, mahallelerin ve sitelerin iç içe geçtiği yerleşim yerlerinden biri olan Sancaktepe'de yapılan bu araştırma, buradaki mahallelerde komşuluk ilişkilerinin nasıl ve hangi pratiklerle biçimlendiği konusunu ele almaktadır. Araştırma kapsamında, 36 mahalleli ile komşuluk üzerine derinlemesine görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Araştırma sonuçları her ne kadar kentleşmenin bireyselleştirici ve ayrıştırıcı etkisi azımsanamayacak olsa da, geleneksel mahalle ilişkilerinin çeşitli biçimlerde sürdürüldüğünü göstermektedir.*

*Bu istikrarı sağlayan en belirleyici etken mahallede oturanların çoğunluğunun akrabalarının ve hemşehrilerinin de aynı civarda yaşıyor olmasıdır. Ancak bazı görüşülenler aynı mahallede oturmalarına rağmen akraba ya da hemşehrileriyle temas halinde olmadıklarını ifade etmişlerdir. Özellikle İstanbul'da doğmuş ya da küçük yaşta İstanbul'a gelmiş görüşülenlerin, gençlerin, öğrencilerin ve ücretli bir işte çalışanların, bu ilişkileri farklı ilişkilerle ikame etme şanslarının daha fazla olmasına bağlı olarak, mahalledeki akraba ve hemşehrileriyle ilişkilerinin daha zayıf olduğu görülmektedir.*

*Komşular arasında kurulan sıcak ilişkiler, birbirlerini hemşehrilerinden, akrabalarından hatta ailelerinden daha yakın görmelerine neden olabilmektedir. Böylece bir tür kurgusal akrabalık ortaya çıkmakta, mahalle sakinlerinin mahalleye duydukları aidiyet ve bağlılık da güç kazanmaktadır.*

*Komşularla kurulan yakın ilişkilerde kadınların rolünün büyük olduğu görülmektedir, ancak bunun düzenli bir işe ya da okula devam etmeyen kadınlar için geçerli bir durum olduğunun altını çizmek gerekir. Ev hanımları günlük yaşamda ev ve çevresinde geçirdikleri sürenin uzun olmasına ve sosyal*

*sermayelerini geliřtirebilecek bařka aralardan çoęu zaman mahrum kalmalarına baęlı olarak, komřuluk iliřkilerinin kurulmasında ve srdrlmesinde bir hayli aktifken, cretli bir iřte alıřan kadınların, erkeklerin çoęuna benzer biimde, komřularıyla iliřkilerinin daha zayıf olduęu grlmektedir.*

Sayfa/Page | 50

İGSBD  
Cilt: 2 Sayı: 1  
Nisan /  
April 2015

*Grřlenler, yařadıkları mahallelerdeki boř arazilere ve evlerinin evresine inřa edilen siteler ile ilgili grřlerini aktarırken de, komřuluk zerinden karřılařtırmalar yapmıřlardır. Bazı mahalleliler sitelerde yařayanların kendi ilerindeki iletiřimin de zayıf olduęunu dřnmekle birlikte, mahallede yařayanlara da tepeden baktıklarına inanmaktadırlar.*

*Kentsel alanların geleneksel mahalleler ve kapalı siteler olarak yeniden dzenleniři mahallede yařayanlar ile sitelerde yařayanların ayrıřmasına ve her iki tarafın kendi iine kapanmasına neden olmaktadır. Sitelerdeki kapanma meknsal tasarım ile biimlenirken, mahallelerdeki kapanmanın dolaylı olarak bu tasarımdan etkilenmekle birlikte geleneksel baęların korunması ve yeniden retimiyle sonulandıęı grlmektedir. Devam eden komřuluęun mahallelilerin yařamındaki en nemli etkilerinden biri kriz zamanlarında destek alanları yaratması, travmaların etkisini hafifletecek bir tampon iřlevi grmesidir. Kent yařamının kırsal yařama kıyasla heterojen topluluklar iinde geleneksel iliřkileri zayıflatması beklenirken, sitelerle evrili mahallelerde komřuluk iliřkileri ile yakın baęların kurulduęu, dayanıřmanın srdrldęu ve i yapıřkanlıęın saęlandıęı grlmektedir.*