CHANGING NEIGHBORHOOD CULTURE: THE CASE OF 'KAPTANPAŞA'

NESLİNUR HIZLI[1]

ABSTRACT

In Istanbul, where many cultures lived together for centuries, it is obvious that there is a very rich housing accumulation. Since the end of the 19th century, living in apartments has become a well-known feature of urban life especially in more cosmopolitan and commercial districts such as Galata, Pera and Şişli.

The case of this study, Kaptanpaşa Neighborhood in Şişli, has a heterogeneous social pattern in terms of culture and lifestyle. There are many housing types built in the neighborhood at different times with different lifestyle practices. In Ottoman period, the neighborhood consisted of very few settlements and the large part of the neighborhood was covered with agricultural fields. In the 1960s, there were two large apartment blocks built for İETT employees, which are very important modern building examples both in terms of contemporary Turkish architecture and social state understanding. This process continued with the construction of other settlements and gated community. Today, there are site-style housing types with different typologies located linearly on three separate dead-end streets in the neighborhood.

The research aims to answer two fundamental questions; "How does the change of urban spatial composition affect neighborliness relations?" and "Is it possible to maintain neighborhood culture under the influence of changing urban living spaces?" For this purpose, the transformation of neighborhood has been examined in historical context via urban and spatial effects of housing built in different years and existing today. Conceptual and historical information and original data are obtained through author's personal archive[2], observations at study area and in-depth interviews with residents.

Keywords: Neighborhood culture, Housing Types, Neighborliness, Istanbul.

1. INTRODUCTION

Urbanization experiences of countries differ related to the qualities of their governments and political regime and the economic development strategies they follow. Each period creates its own unique city type. The settlement organization of Turkey constantly reorganizes itself to adapt to changes taking place in the world and in the country (Sayar and Süer 2004). After

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[1] Ress. Assist., Yildiz Technical University, Department of Architecture, ISTANBUL
[2] The author spent her childhood in this neighborhood, has been living in the same apartment for 25 years and had the chance to experience the neighborhood culture.

World War II, the evolution of economy to another dimensions and new political trends paved the way for rapid urbanization in Turkey. Various institutional regulations[3] have been made because of the failing to satisfy conditions in the face of the cases (Tekeli 2009).

There was only individual type of housing provision during the post-war process in Turkey. Rapid development and inability to increase improve land presentation, land prices increased in all cities. The middle-class lost the ability to make housing on a single parcel. Because of the large housing shortages becoming one of the biggest problem of post-war process, it was developed as a solution to have a floor in the apartment where more than one person comes together on a single parcel. Whereas, existing laws did not allow this form of ownership, with the amendment of notary public law, new forms of housing provisions defined *by build-sell, cooperatives and slums* become as a solution for housing needs (Tekeli 2009). In the meantime, the concept of 'mass housing' entered the field of architecture as a result of economic imperative. In Turkey, entering westernization process with the proclamation of the Republic, the concept of 'apartment' has come into our lives as a symbol of western life, but than it has been seen as the most appropriate solution for the increasing need for housing, as well. Currently, apartment building process continues its adventure with rapidly changing living practices and housing types under the name of urban transformation such as housing blocks, gated community, high-rise residential towers, residences etc. It's not easy to maintain the modernist approach which is aimed at forming the prevailing pattern in the city with new forms of these housing provisions. The problem is that these forms which move in parallel with capitalism, because the deterioration of the cultural fabric and identity loss of neighborhood, is one of the prominent issues in recent times.

The research area is Kaptanpaşa Neighborhood located in Şişli district in Istanbul, has been undergoing a spatial, social and demographic transformation in recent years. The basic assumption of this research is that the privatization of the neighborhood's public spaces through gated community settlement causes social differentiation because of the change of spatial organization of streets and lifestyle. Popularity of individualization and decreasing social interaction affect neighborhood relations badly. This research aims to evaluate the transformation of the neighborhood in historical context via urban and spatial effects of housing built in different years and existing today and seek answer the following research questions:

- What is the meaning of neighborhood for residents?
- Which transformations in the physical spaces of neighborhood affect neighborliness? Which urban spaces of neighborhood keep social interaction alive?
- Is it possible to maintain neighborhood culture under the influence of changing urban living spaces?

This research is based on a qualitative research methodology, which provides an exploratory attempt to capture an in-depth understanding of the transformations of Kaptanpaşa Neighborhood. The method selected for this research, in-depth interview, is carried out with 16 participants by asking them 9 questions to analyze the research questions. The results obtained digitized and represented with tables and graphs. As a resident of the neighborhood for 25 years, the author also presented her personal archive and observations.

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[3] These were; the establishment of 'Bank of Municipalities' in 1945, introducing 'law on municipal revenues' in 1948, the establishment of 'Chambers of Turkish engineers and architects' in 1954, introducing 'construction zoning law' in 1956 and a new planning approach and the establishment of 'Ministry of development and housing' in 1958 (Tekeli, 2009).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Reading neighborhoods, which represent different time and place relationships, provide significant clues to understand whole city (Aydın Sıramkaya 2014). Although the design of the city/the neighborhood/the building/the interior of a building have become separate areas of expertise, the concepts of house-street, house-community, and house-neighborhood unit should be considered within the context and integrated whole relations that have meaning in culture and they must be investigated with global, national and regional sensitivities (Gür 2000).

The neighborhood term is often used both for each one of the parts of a city/a town/a large village and for all the people living in that parts. As Galster defined (2001), neighborhood is "the bundle of spatially based attributes associated with clusters of residences, sometimes in conjunction with other land uses." A neighborhood is where residents share certain characteristics, values, mutual interests, or styles of living (Barker 2003). As an element of the housing environment it has a strong impact on residential satisfaction and the perception of residents' well-being (Berk 2005). There are three important points to these definitions. First, a neighborhood is based on a physical area. Second, neighborhoods provide places for people to reside and go about their daily living tasks. Third, neighborhood residents share something in common, such as religious affiliation, racial identity, socioeconomic status, or concerns about encroaching crime (Kirst-Ashman 2010).

As one kind of urban sub-divisions, a neighborhood is "a social/spatial unit of social organization, and that it is larger than a household and smaller than a city" (Hunter 1979). Keller (1968) has pointed out that most definitions of neighborhood involve two general components; the physical and the social, and she also defines neighborhood as a "place with physical and symbolic boundaries." In two main points of view; neighborhood as a spatial unit has comprised various physical elements such as residential units, services, connections and a set of related activities which emerge in different neighborhood spaces. Moreover, the neighborhood can be defined by specific land uses which can help to recognize the neighborhood boundaries through service spaces making simultaneous activities. Secondly, neighborhood as socio-spatial unit is as a local community. The social and spatial-physical features play an important role in neighborhood definition. The neighborhood is the primary form of social organization which includes persons with common root and history. Social interactions in neighborhood create setting for cooperation, sense of belonging and intimacy (Saghatoleslami Hosseinian 2014).

Warren Warren (1975) has investigated social organizations created by the residents and accordingly, they have established three criteria that distinguish neighborhoods from each other. The typology is constructed of three key variables; *interaction*, how frequently the residents get together; *identity*, the extent to which neighbors feel they have much in common; and *linkages*, the extent to which residents are connected to influential institutions and leaders in the larger community. Then, they identified six kinds of neighborhood model based on these three dimensions; Integral, Parochial, Diffuse, Stepping Stone, Transitory, and Anomic.[4] More specifically, the basic elements of a neighborhood are: *people, place, interaction system, shared identification, and public symbols.* Putting the elements together, neighborhoods as a population residing in an identifiable section of a city whose members are organized into a

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[4] For example, the integral neighborhood has a high sense of neighborhood identity, internal interaction, and external linkages. The same is true for the Parochial neighborhood, with one exception; it does not have a high sense of external linkages.

general interaction network of formal and informal ties and express their common identification with the area in public symbols. From the broader perspective, any change in people, place, interaction system, shared identification, or public symbols represents a type of neighborhood change (Schwirian 1983).

The neighborhood concept is a cultural value in traditional Turkish city. Neighborhoods form the urban tissue of the city both physically and socially. The physical setting of the neighborhood is mainly consisted of the mosque (worship area), the market (shops), the street and housing units. The social one is based on the values of social support, friendship, and the sense of belonging so as to form a rather closed community. In the traditional Turkish neighborhood community, it is common to find people from different religions, socio-economic status, and occupations in same neighborhoods (Berk 2005). The neighborhood life is made up of especially social relations among residents and urban-spatial compositions such as dead-end streets, the quality of residential surroundings. The integrated structure and relationship of urban spaces in the neighborhood is a significant feature that affects social relations among residents. The better organized of urban public areas, the higher socialization level will be. The dead-end street is the most characteristic physical layout arise from the privacy based neighborhood concept. The organization of the paths and walkways is in fact an extension of the housing privacy to outdoor space, is not in a straight line. This approach ineluctably includes communal decisions to the architectural forming of the physical environment.

As one of the oldest cities in the world, Istanbul has been redefined under the influence of different dynamics and rapid changes in the housing culture for many years within the scope of continuously expanding design network. Currently, it is possible to find only the physical structures of the traces old neighborhood life which has brought its own unique culture. The neighborhood is one of the life style of Turkish society and at the same time element of urban structure as cultural heritage transferred past to present. It has been observed that the semi-public space that has been built on the streets has undergone a significant change in recent years by the way of new housing environments. Gated communities and multi-storey buildings that contain a large population like in neighborhoods started to have different features than traditional buildings and the urban characteristics. Gated communities are residential areas with restricted access that makes normally public spaces private. Access is controlled by physical barriers, walled or fenced perimeters, and gated/guarded entrances. Gated communities include both new housing developments and older residential areas retrofitted with barricades and fences. They represent a phenomenon different from traditional buildings with security systems or doormen (Blakely Snyder 1998). Today, whether these new environments influence social activities and personal communication opportunities is discussed. Recent social transitions started to tarnish social meaning of neighborhood and social relations and some changes occur in neighborhood concept. To protect neighborhood relations is important in terms of social control and solidarity (Aydın Sıramkaya 2014).

3. THE CASE STUDY: KAPTANPAŞA NEIGHBORHOOD

Kaptanpaşa Neighborhood located in Şişli district in İstanbul between Darulaceze Avenue and Piyalepaşa Boulevard is adjacent to Halil Rıfat Paşa, Halide Edip Adıvar, Dereyolu and Gürsel neighborhoods, has a heterogeneous social pattern in terms of culture and lifestyle. There are many housing types built in the neighborhood at different times with different lifestyle practices. In Ottoman period, the neighborhood was consisted of very few settlements excluding the historical Darülaceze Building (1895) which was located on a large land adjacent

to the neighborhood, and the large part of the neighborhood was covered with agricultural fields. In the 1960s, there were two large and three smaller apartment blocks built for İETT employees, which are very important modern building examples both in terms of contemporary Turkish architecture and social state understanding. This quite large and high structure group is an important work that shows Modernist approach and represents multi-storey housing concept of 1950s in Turkey with its simple facade and massive block raised on columns. It is a reference structure to many housing groups to be built after itself that incorporates different housing types and functions and a large part of the parcel in which it is located is designed as open space. This process continued with the

Table 1. According to the dates of construction, Housing Sites in the neighborhood (photo-source: http://oyakemlak.blogspot.com.tr/2006/07/kaptan-paa-mahallesi.html)

	name	Year of Built	Typology	Type/floor	Design team/ Contractor
1	**İ.E.T.T Members Cooperative Building Society Apartment Blocks; Hilton, Yıldız, Small Blocks (Figure 1)**	1958 - 1962	Three different types; two sided Hilton Block and small blocks and Yıldız Block	For member of IETT/Hilton; 14 floors/Yıldız; 16floors/small; 7 floors/Hilton; two flats in a floor, Yıldız; four in a floor, small; two in a floor	Leyla A. Turgut[5] and Berkok İlkünsal
2	**Bilaş Sites and Famas Housing Blocks**	Bilaş: 1978-1982 Famas: 1986s	Bilaş A-B-C-D-E-F and Bilaş Famas A-B	Site (front garden, backyard)/ 6-8 floors/three flats in floor	Bilaş ind. trd. co. ltd; Famas ind. trd. co. ltd
3	**S.S. Ümit Cooperative Housing Society Blocks**	1982-1990s	Three same star shaped blocks A-B-C	Site, 18 floors /1 block 101 flats	Kemal Balsarı İN-TA ind. trd. co. ltd
4	**İdil sites**	1984s	8 blocks. İdil Famas A-B, no:1,3,5,7,9,11,13,15.	Site with front garden/5-6 floors/three flats in a floor	İdil ind. trd. co. ltd
5	**Middleist**	2007-2010	4 block/6 different plan	Gated community/ 182 flats	İ. Hakkı Moltay Mimta Arch. Ortadoğu Cons.

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[5] Leyla Turgut (1911-1988) is the first female architect in the academic team at the Academy of Fine Arts, the Department of Architecture.

construction of other settlements especially after the 1970s' migration (Bilaş Sites, Ümit Coop. Housing Blocks, İdil Sites) and gated community (Middleist residence) **(Table 1)**. The neighborhood has been undergoing a spatial, social and demographic transformation in recent years. Currently, there are site-style housing types with different typologies located linearly on three separate dead-end streets (these are; İdil St., İETT Blocks St., Halit Ziya Türkkan St.) in the neighborhood.

Figure 1. a. Hilton and Yıldız Blocks of İETT; **b.** The Big Block (Hilton Block) (Source: Gültekin Çizgen)

The Big Block is very similar to the Hilton Hotel -Turkey's first five-star hotel, which opened in 1955- with its architectural attitude.

With the apartment building process, common urban areas emerged. There are two children parks and one basketball court. The mass housing, like a small city, is built in a frame that contains many functions. Therefore, in these settlements, public spaces of residential users, which are located near private spaces, differ from public spaces in the city. The state of rupture from this city seemed to be much naiver in the beginning, but today it has caused very limited relations. Today's gated communities create limited publicity. Middleist blocks include both new housing developments and older residential areas retrofitted with barricades and fences. They differ from traditional buildings with security systems or doormen. Access is controlled by physical barriers, fenced perimeters, and guarded entrances **(Figure 2).**
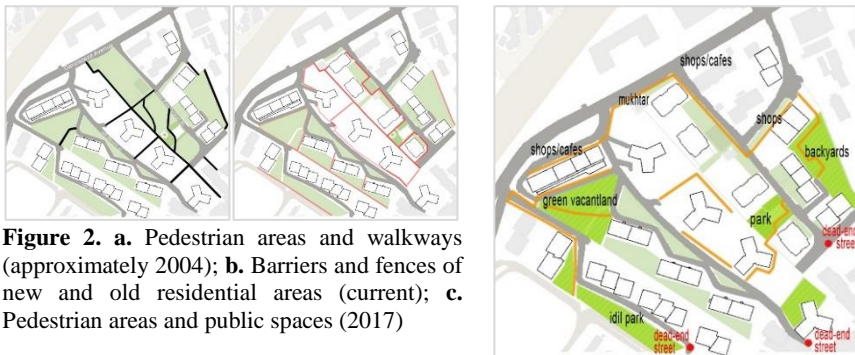
Figure 2. a. Pedestrian areas and walkways (approximately 2004); **b.** Barriers and fences of new and old residential areas (current); **c.** Pedestrian areas and public spaces (2017)

4. ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

The method selected for the study, in-depth interview, carried out with 16 participants by asking them 9 questions to get onto the concept of neighborhood culture and perception of the Kaptanpaşa Neighborhood. All interviews took place in the houses of the residents in a friendly manner. Some different opinions and perspectives were seen in some questions. [6] Conceptual and historical information and original data are obtained through author's personal archive, observations at study area.

1- Do you know the physical boundaries of the Kaptanpaşa Neighborhood? Could you describe/sketch it?


Figure 3. Red: boundaries administrative defined neighborhoods; cyan: residents' perception of boundaries

The purpose of asking this question is to compare residents' perception of the neighborhood boundaries with boundaries of administrative defined neighborhoods which municipalities consider. While urban managers see the neighborhood as a spatial unit for city organizing, residents consider the neighborhood as the place of their social life. Ten of sixteen people describe physical boundaries from Darülaceze Building to Okmeydanı Hospital. Others sketched right boundaries on the map. It shows that the great majority of residents think that the boundaries of the neighborhood in a wider frame than it is.

2- How often do you come together with your neighbors? Where and for what reason do you meet? (Everyday/Once a week/Once a month/Once a year/Almost never)

Many of the neighbors reported seeing each other once a week. Five of them answered 'everyday'. It is stated that they come together usually in apartments, especially apartment building management meetings. Apart from that, other answers; pastry shop, street, front of mukhtar's office so as to meet for tours, daycations, front of Hilton block, front of grocery store and common place at apartment.

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[6] **Resident 1-** 55 years old woman, has been staying in Bilaş F site for 25 years; **2-** 62 years old woman, Bilaş E site for 38 years; **3-** 75, woman, Bilaş D site for 45 years; **4-** 50, woman, İdil No.9 for 30 years; **5-** 55, woman, İETT small block for 45 years old; **6-** 25, woman, Famas A for 15 years; **7-** 28, woman, Ümit C for 15 years; **8-** 75, woman, Bilaş F site for 40 years; **9-** 45, man, Yıldız Block for 45 years; **10-** 55, man, İETT Hilton block for 45 years; **11-** 60, man İETT Small block for 45 years; **12-** 65, man, Bilaş F site for 25 years; **13-** 35, man, Ümit A for 30 years; **14-** 30, man, Middleist C for 6 years; **15-** 32, man, Middleist B for 7 years; **16-** 45, man, Bilaş C for 25 years.
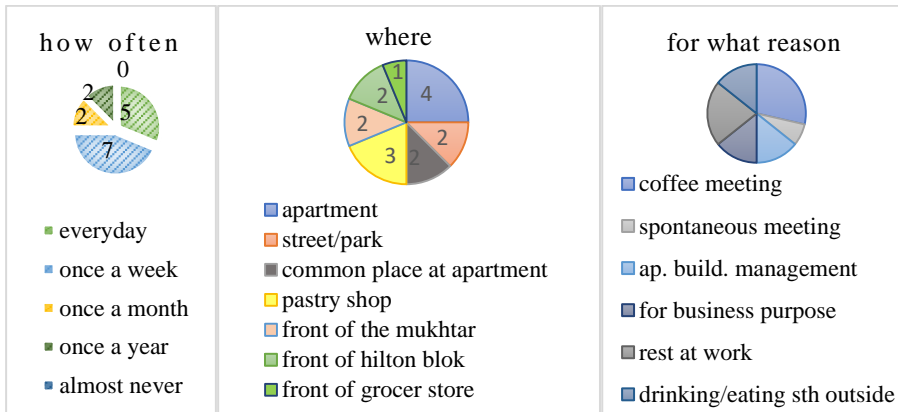
Graphic 1-2-3. Answers of Question 2

3- Where do you come across your neighbors? Apartment (elevator, corridors, entrance)/ Street/ Gated community/ Other
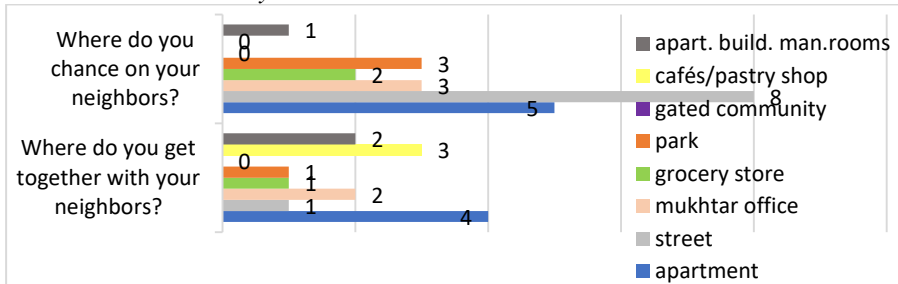
Graphic 4. Answers of Question 3

The most common answer is 'streets' as an open space, while the next most often answer is 'apartments'-especially waiting or getting off the elevator- as indoor spaces. One of the remarkable results here is that no 'gated community' response has been given.

4- Do you see the neighborhood residents gathered together in large numbers? What kind of activity do they come together for? Have you ever been in these activities?
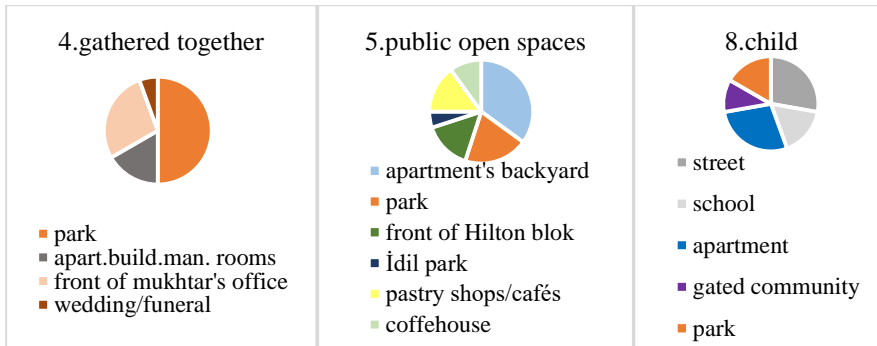In the neighborhood, there are two parks, a few backyards of sites and a green vacant land which have the characteristics of green areas and open to public access. Nevertheless, one of the biggest problems in the neighborhood is the lack of activities. The most common answers are 'park' and 'front of the mukhtar's office'. Generally, neighbors especially -children and their parents- gather together in the park to pass the time of day. Sometimes they meet front of the mukhtar's office to go on a trip or attend courses such as handcraft.

5- What comes to mind when you think of public open spaces in the neighborhood? Which one do you like most? How often do you use it?
The most common answers are 'apartment's backyards', 'park' and 'front of Hilton Block'. Most of residents often goes to backyards to drink tea at noon hours and to barbecue in some evenings. These gardens, have arbors among various trees, are quiet and a kind of an isolated area away from the noise. The other interesting answer, front of Hilton Block, has many functions for neighbors such as tailor, hairdresser, grocery store, play station cafes, shoe

repairer etc. This place provides strengthen social relations by helping both residents and tradesmen to communicate each other.

4.gathered together
- park
- apart.build.man. rooms
- front of mukhtar's office
- wedding/funeral

5.public open spaces
- apartment's backyard
- park
- front of Hilton blok
- İdil park
- pastry shops/cafés
- coffehouse

8.child
- street
- school
- apartment
- gated community
- park

Graphic 5-6-7. Answers of the Questions 4, 5 and 8.

6- After the recent Middleist Project, what has changed in the neighborhood? What makes you think that? If this area was left as a vacant land what would your positive and negative criticism be?[7]

7- Do you think that neighborhood relations changed after the Middleist Project?
In the answers given, it is stated that the area where the Middleist project is located had many advantages in terms of the activity of the neighborhood. Residents, from young to elderly, used to ski with plastic bags in the winter months, while in summer, they used to walk, hike, have picnics and play volleyball, when the area was a vacant land. Most of the residents remembered those old days and took a trip down memory lane. There were disagreements about the views on the Middleist project. Most of the neighbors indicated that people living here have an edge. Resident 4 said: "We are surrounded by people we do not know. New people came so it can be said that this situation brings vitality to the neighborhood, but these new people sitting in the residence are cold fish." In interviews with tradesmen, there have been positive returns on the economic and occupational status of these people. For example, tailor of the neighborhood said that apartment janitor's wives started to work as a janitor of these residences. They make cleaning and care babies with well-paid. He said he had many customers from there and he think that this project enhances the quality of the neighborhood. Resident 12 said that he feels safe thanks to security system in residences. There are street lamps on the garden walls surrounding the residences. This makes the neighborhood even brighter and safer.

8- Where does your child make friends in the neighborhood? Apartment/ Street/ School/ Gated Community/ Other
The most common answer is 'apartments', but this question has shown that children have much closer social relationship with each other than adults in the neighborhood. Although the adults are almost unfamiliar with the individuals living in the gated community, their children made friends from these residences apart from the apartment they live in.

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[7] The purpose of these questions is never to try to criticize the project in bad terms. It is only to learn ideas about the architectural project developed in the large empty space that is very well remembered by the neighborhood.

9- Now just think about your apartment, streets and open spaces of the Kaptanpaşa neighborhood, what words come to your mind when you think about the concepts of 'neighbor' and 'neighborhood relations'?

Resident 3, one of the eldest residents of the neighborhood, told a proverb: "A near neighbor is better than a far-dwelling kinsman." The most common words in answers are (from most telling to least) "family, friends, friendship, trust, Ashura, apartment management, home meetings".

5. IN LIEU OF CONCLUSION

Urban space is not a place consisting only of the structures. At the same time, it is a social and cultural phenomenon that social events take place and shape the relationship between people and environment. Therefore, urban space design has social and cultural aspect beside its physical dimension. Urban-architectural design cannot determine whether a spirit of neighborliness exists in a place but it has a strong influence. A well-designed urban and housing settlements must not only complement the streets aesthetically but also help residents to forge a healthy relationship with their neighbors by creating urban public spaces (such as spaces of encounter, park, yard etc.) that bring people together. Public space is the trigger of social relations. In the neighborhoods, multifunctional spaces should be created to support interaction and solidarity. As a result of the answers to the questions and field investigations, the criterions which are effective in neighborhood relations have been determined;

Neighborhood boundaries	Residents consider the neighborhood as the place of their social life, while urban managers see the neighborhood as a spatial unit for city organizing. Therefore, residents' perception of the neighborhood boundaries is important criterion. The size of neighborhood should be appropriate for participation unit in administration and can be determined again.
Activity spaces	The mukhtar's office should organize more meetings for tours, daycations, courses. Each apartment's apartment building management meetings can organize some activities for their residents.
Urban open spaces	The better organized of urban public areas, the higher socialization level will be. Therefore, the residential surroundings, streets, in-between spaces, backyards-front gardens, green spaces should be kept active with an integrated structure composition.
Urban accessories	They should be well-organized to bring residents together. The size and shape of barriers and fences should be in a quality that people can communicate with each other in the eye. In public spaces, there should not be gateways blocking passage.

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