

Changing Profile of Housing Policy in Turkey

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Abstract

A huge amount of housing units is created in Turkey in spite of the need of the low-income class during the early urbanization process. However, this stock's presence shows that the housing policy couldn't partly become a social policy. These housing units are low quality in terms of physical environment and it means there is no design policy. Moreover the resource management policy hasn't been developed. Existing housing stock improvement and conversion of housing areas into livable environments have the highest priority. It is clear that working on new sharing types in existing housing stock instead of building more houses will enable more appropriate resource utilization. With this purpose, housing policy will be considered and suggestions will be made to solve the housing problem of low and middle-income groups in this study.

In order to do so, development of housing policy in Turkey will be examined in five stages. The stages are 1923-1945, 1945-1960, Planned Period (1961-1980), Interim Period (1980-1983) and Liberal Period (1984 and after). Each period varies in terms of defining housing problem, its features and solutions to it so will be discussed stage by stage. Additionally, the period we are in will be detailed in terms of housing policy of Turkey and by the help of the examples from different cities, moreover, the examples especially taken from the housing projects done by Republic of Turkey Prime Ministry Housing Development Administration of Turkey (TOKI) which is a public institution has a share of 25% according to the construction permits in the total national housing production thanks to the loans it granted and the housing projects it undertakes from design to land providing and application. After defining the problems of the housing policy of Turkey in detail, the solutions that can be used for housing will be discussed.

1 Introduction

Although Turkey had a housing deficit during the early urbanization process, it is known that it created a significant amount of housing stock in spite of the housing need of the low-income class. While creating this stock, it also developed new presentation types and production processes that can produce several housing units. So it can be understood that the housing policy has changed its profile time to time according to the housing shortage. The idea of the study is to analyze the development of housing policy after (1923) proclaiming republic of Turkey with a critical perspective in order to reach mostly the useful conclusions of the country's experience.

In the study development of housing policy in Turkey is examined in five stages. These stages are the periods of 1923–1945 and 1945–1960, Planned Period (1961–1980), Interim Period (1980–1983) and Liberal Period (1984 and after) [1]. Each period varies in terms of defining housing problem, its features and solutions to it.

So with this perspective, the paper would like to address the problems reflected in the following questions: In which way is the profile of the housing policy changed from 1923 until today? How much can we talk about social policy or design policy or resource management policy as a component of housing policy in Turkey? How can we delineate the future aspects by using the conclusions of the country's experience?

2 Brief historical overview of housing in stages

2.1 The period between 1923-1945

As the urbanization rate was low in this period, houses that were produced with individual housing supply forms could meet the need. However, Ankara became the capital city by proclaiming republic in 1923 and was growing with a rate of 6%. So housing was becoming a problem. Between 1923 and 1945, firstly, state had given more importance to produce houses (Fig. 1.) for the employees as Ankara became a city of bureaucracy.



Figure 1: Sumerbank public housing, 1944, Ankara [2].

Secondly, there were immigrants who were citizens of Ottoman Empire coming from West Thrace to Anatolia and because of that there became a shortage of housing. In this stage in order to use the existing housing stock, state had limited the rent costs and the limitation had continued until 1963. By looking at the housing examples of these years, we can say that the first examples of the housing presentation forms which get widespread in the following periods occurred in Ankara in this phase.

2.2 The period between 1945-1960

During the 2nd period, the urbanization rate in the entire country went up to 6%, the existing housing production was insufficient and two new housing presentation forms were created: shanty houses (Fig. 2) and build-and-sell system houses (Fig. 3). State had taken prohibitive assumption against building slum houses and for the realization of prevention searched ways of increasing the housing production rates. The first basic way had become to construct “Turkey Estate Loan Bank” in order to give chance to the citizens to own dwellings. And second way was the try in raising authorization and responsibility of the local governments. But because problems in housing and progress had been undertaken apart and the relation between housing sector and the economy hadn’t been taken into consideration in this period the numbers of slum houses increased day by day.

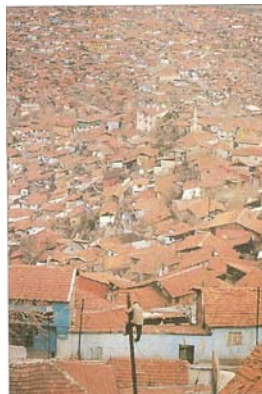


Figure 2: Slum houses that can be seen in any city



Figure 3: Build-and-sell system houses that can be seen in any city [2]

2.3 Planned Period (1961–1980)

Urbanization continued and shanty houses together with build-and-sell system usage increased during the planned period (Fig. 4). In those years, mass housing was considered as a solution and there was an attempt to develop and institutionalize it [3].

With this purpose, four five-year development plans were prepared and studies were conducted under the framework of five-year development plans. In these plans solutions of the sheltering problems are taken into account as a part of the health benefit and because of that ‘corresponding the necessity’ is mentioned instead of ‘doing everyone home owner’ [1, 2].

- I. Five Year Plan (1963-1967): This is the first period that housing problem is studied as whole in relation to the progress. But the approach to housing problem with an economic perspective such as producing more housing units by using the same budget caused negative results. Houses built in these years were too small but cheap. So the point is that in order to increase the numbers of units the system abdicates the standards to live. The only positive result of the stage is the new concept: social housing [1].
- II. Five Year Plan (1968-1972): In the second plan, states’ role in the housing sector is defined evidently. It had role of controlling the housing market, emboldening the individual house producing financially by giving credits. The prohibitive preventions about slum houses have changed. Slum houses started not to be collapsed without showing a new sheltering to the user and the ones that had already built began to be legalized. This second plan is detached from the first one as it abstained from limiting the rent costs [1, 2].
- III. Five Year Plan (1973-1977): The approach to the housing problem is much closed to the first plan. The plan has the idea of sharing the responsibility of producing units with the private sector but unfortunately it couldn’t have opportunity to realize the idea. Moreover, the plan gave importance to cooperative trading system.
- IV. Five Year Plan (1978-1983): The last plan of the Planned Period couldn’t go forward and it reiterated the ‘good wishes’ of the first three plans. According to it, there would be preventions for the speculation in the city land. The infrastructure work would be limited especially in the slum housing areas. But because of the additional effect of the political instability in the country, the period has a willy-nilly impression [1, 2].

2.4 12 September Period: Interim Period (1980–1983)

The interim period is the stage when the first law on mass housing was issued. However, the law could never be enforced although it remained in force for 2.5 years. One of the most important properties of the new law on mass housing that was put into effect in the liberal period was that loan granting to individuals was made possible. Personal loans were granted to not only house buyers but also house producers [1].



Figure 4: Cities as a result of the build-and-sell system, 1980 [5]

2.5 Liberal Period (1984 and after)

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- V. Five Year Plan (1985-1989): The fifth five year development plan became a formal instrument of the competence of the periods' political party. To bring infrastructure to the slum areas, the rehabilitation of them, normalize the case of their ownership, to compose a Mass Housing Fund and privatization in housing sector are the basic principles of the plan. This plan couldn't be able to have the positive results about public housing, cooperative applications, slum houses, obviating land speculation, mass and village housing because of the unsteadiness in economy and especially the inflation rates which couldn't be taken into control [1].
- VI. Five Year Plan (1990-1994): It is wanted to reduce the housing units size and give enough chance to the ones who doesn't have place to be owner in this plan. It consists of the ideas about housing like doing legal arrangements in order to produce units for both sell and rent, having governments' work for infrastructure and arrangements for prevention about building new slums [1].
- VII. Five Year Plan (1996-2000): Between 1996 and 2000, the housing problem increased by the rapid urbanization and growth of population. Right along with housing production, home ownership is encouraged. For this purpose, the aim of the plan is to develop proper financing models which wouldn't adduce additional charge to the public. There is no explanation in the plan about the models but special importance is given to generate new sources like using the small aggregations and to do legal arrangements in order to enhance capital market. Moreover, to build up the developments in housing technologies, to institute a

Housing Data Bank in order to update the data about housing, to do house census and to bring this time bound is predicted [1].

- VIII. Five Year Plan (2001-2005): The plan has been prepared so as to include the recovery of the loss caused by Marmara and Duzce earthquakes. The basic principle of it is to increase the production of housing and home ownership. Additionally, a new perspective is mentioned as escalation in the quality of both the housing areas and their environment, conservation of the historical and natural values [2].

3 Recent Years New Profile Helps The Conclusion

When the entire process is taken into account, it is understood that the studies conducted were composing of policies and user solutions applied with the purpose of decreasing quantitative housing deficiency. Actually, it could be possible to accept that the problem has been solved or is just about to be solved if housing were used only for shelter needs. However, in addition to serving as a shelter, housing is also a produced commodity, consumer good, assurance for families, means used for reproducing social relations and an investment tool protecting the value of money against inflation [3]. Moreover, it is important that house is a building block in its relations with its environment, mutual interaction and increasing the quality of its environment when it is considered as a part of the city.

In this context, it can be accepted that a large housing stock is available today as a result of new presentation forms and production processes with a high volume of housing production. However, the existence of this stock shows that the housing policies are planned depending mostly on production. At this point, it should be mentioned that the 'social policy' is one of the most important components of housing policy. When creating a housing policy, it should be included in the development plan in accordance with the national development plan purposes, comply with urban and regional development policies and have a priority according to the housing need [1]. A housing policy, which does not have any priority such as social class, income level and house sizes, would not create a solution if it cannot build a balance between housing needs and economical possibilities and not comply with urban and regional plans.

In recent years, Republic of Turkey Prime Ministry Housing Development Administration of Turkey (TOKI), which is a public institution, today has a share of 25% according to the construction permits in the total national housing production thanks to the loans it granted and the housing projects it undertakes from design to land providing and application [4]. Housing projects are conducted on TOKI land for low and middle income groups while shanty house conversion projects are conducted under the scope of urban conversion projects. However, the produced houses are low quality in terms of

physical environment and have properties that do not comply with human nature and characteristics. The housing policy that is applied with the purpose of decreasing quantitative deficiency is actually conducted without the other two components of the housing policy. These components are ‘Design Policy’ and ‘Source Management Policy’.

Being fastly produced and named as ‘social housing’, these houses should have design policy at least for those to be planned and built in the future. Otherwise, these houses can be considered as multi-storey shanty houses in upcoming years. However, this situation will be different from shanty houses built without any license. Demolition or reproduction of these buildings that are completely legal will not be as easy as evaluating shanty houses under the scope of the urban conversion projects.

When considered statistically, it seems that these housing projects (Fig. 5) conducted by TOKI fastly meet the housing deficiency for low and middle income groups. However, the most important point neglected while the productions are carried out is that Turkey produced excessive housing projects during the urbanization process. Therefore, if the necessary importance is given to Source Management Policy, which is another component of the housing policy, it may be possible to find a solution for housing problem with proper usage of existing sources. Emphasize should be given on how to make the best use of existing resources such as improvement of the existing housing stock, restoration of the abandoned urban areas for use of the city and making and implementation of principle decisions related to rental housing.



Figure 5: Housing area produced by TOKI [4]

Consequently, it is obvious that the housing policy that has been conducted until today and is still conducted is completely structuring based. To develop housing policy in Turkey; ‘Social Policy’, ‘Design Policy’ and ‘Source Management Policy’ should be studied separately but connected to each other. It will be seen that studying on the components of the whole in coordination will convert the whole and make housing policy and housing programs become more efficient. Because it is impossible to say that conducting a housing policy is not healthy with only one organization undertaking one

fourth of the housing production in a country. Housing policy can be successful if the objective, which is ‘as fast as possible no matter what’ is changed as ‘produced/converted/reproduced areas with healthy and livable environments’. It is very important to study carefully on urban areas in big cities such as Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, Adana and Antalya that have already been subject to intensive construction in order to protect these cities from new constructions. Thus, all housing projects that will be produced/converted/reproduced and of which the production will be supported or inspected will be of high quality and our cities will be more livable.

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