

EFFECT OF THE URBAN TRANSFORMATION ON THE PERCEPTION OF SECURITY IN ISTANBUL, FIKIRTEPE SETTING

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Abstract. Over the past decade, urban transformation initiatives have been instigated in certain precincts of Istanbul, a city experiencing both population growth and irregular urbanization. However, while alterations in living arrangements ensuing from urban transformation have influenced certain social perceptions, investigations concerning individuals' assessments of security – a fundamental criterion in shaping habitation – are notably scarce. This study examines the relationship between urban transformation and perceived social security in the Fikirtepe district of Istanbul. The study surveyed 30 individuals with diverse backgrounds and found that prior to the urban transformation, security in the district was rated as 'completely inadequate' or 'inadequate'. However, after the transformation, security was predominantly rated as 'sufficient' or 'completely sufficient'.

Keywords: urban transformation, security, Istanbul, Fikirtepe, survey.

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the past twenty years, the government has supported various urban transformation initiatives in certain parts of Istanbul to address the challenges brought about by rapid population growth and unregulated urbanization. These initiatives have resulted in significant social, economic, and cultural changes within these areas. However, despite the impact of these changes on people's living conditions, there have been few studies conducted to assess how these transformations have affected people's sense of security, which is a crucial factor in determining their quality of life.

Considering the limitation, comprehensiveness, and holistic approach of urban transformation theory, an approach in which the physical, social, and

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economic dimensions of urban transformation come to the fore and the increasingly important environmental dimension is also included stands out [1]. Furthermore, this integrated approach not only broadens the scope of urban transformation theory but also enhances its applicability in addressing contemporary urban challenges, ultimately contributing to more sustainable and resilient urban development practices.

Recently, urban transformation initiatives have been instigated in certain precincts of Istanbul, a city experiencing both population growth and irregular urbanization [2]. These endeavours have engendered various socio-cultural shifts within these localities. Notably, public involvement in government-led endeavours has been limited, compelling residents to conform their living spaces to the outcomes of these initiatives [3,4]. However, while alterations in living arrangements ensuing from urban transformation have influenced certain social perceptions, investigations concerning individuals' assessments of security—a fundamental criterion in shaping habitation—are notably scarce.

2. METHODOLOGY

This inquiry scrutinizes the nexus between the urban transformation process, catalysed by evolving demands and requisites, and the construct of social security within the Fikirtepe locale of Istanbul. Fikirtepe is situated within the administrative jurisdiction of the Kadikoy district on the Anatolian side of Istanbul. The northern sector of this locale is traversed by the prominent D-100 (E5) State Highway, and it has a geographically important location with its proximity to the Bosphorus Bridge on the Anatolian side. Thus, individuals tend to migrate and make irregular settlements in the area due to its proximity to working places. In addition, the high crime rate makes Fikirtepe advantageous in terms of examining the change in security perception due to urban transformation [5]. The study asked people in Fikirtepe about their opinions on the improvement of security after urban development.

The study implicated a survey administered to 30 individuals manifesting diverse demographic attributes (Age, gender, marital status, education level and monthly income) in Fikirtepe area. It solicited reflections on how security perceptions in Fikirtepe evolved in tandem with urban transformation, employing a five-choice evaluative scale (completely inadequate, inadequate, hesitant, adequate, and quite adequate). Fraction of total analysed for the parameters with the use of GraphPad Prism 9.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Demographics

When analyzing the sample, 43.3% were male and 56.6% were female. Of the sample, 63.3% were married and 36.6% were single. Based on the sample, the age distribution was: 16.6% for ages 18–25, 33.3% for ages 26–35, 23.3% for ages 36–45, 20% for ages 46–55, and 6.6% for ages over 55. As per the monthly income distribution in the sample, nobody had an income below 8500 £. 23.3% of people had incomes between 8500–15000 ₺, 56.6% of people had incomes between 15001–20000 ₺, and 13.3% of people had incomes between 20001–30000 ₺.

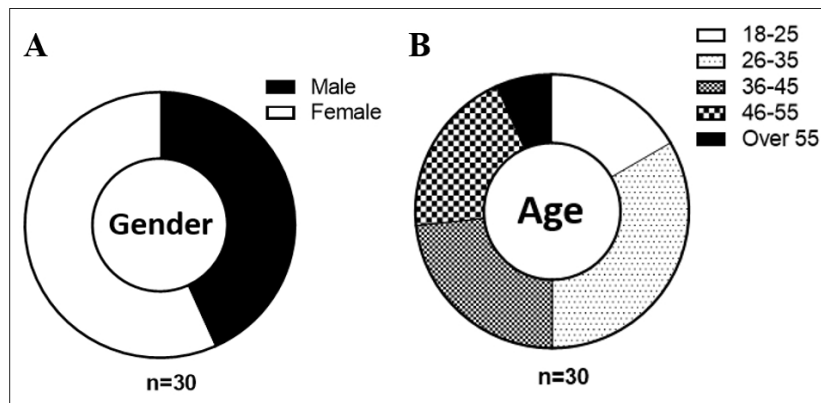


Fig. 1. Demographic breakdown of survey respondents by gender (A) and age (B)

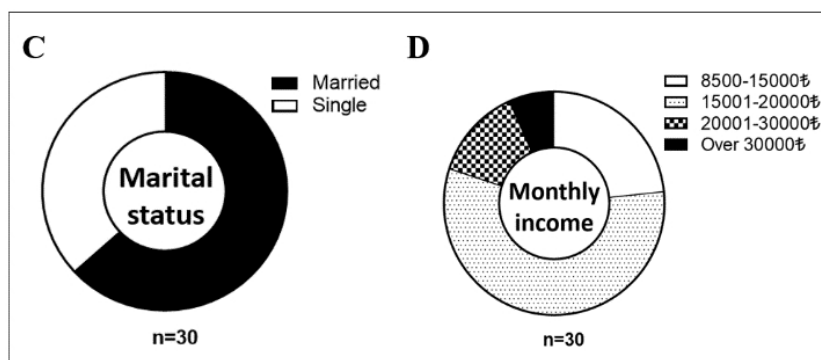


Fig. 2. Demographic breakdown of survey respondents by marital status (C) and monthly income (D)

There were 6.6% of people who had an income greater than 30000 ₺. When we analyze the distribution of educational levels in the sample, we find that 3.3% are primary school graduates, 46.6% are high school graduates, 23.3% have an associate degree, 23.3% have a bachelor's degree, and 3.3% have a postgraduate degree.

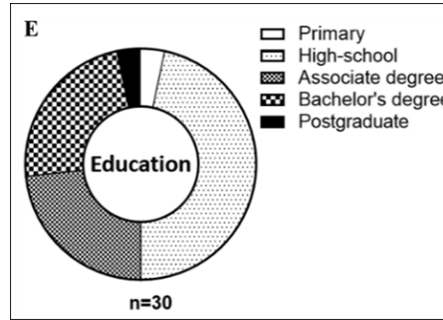


Fig. 3. Demographic breakdown of survey respondents by education (E)

3.2. Times of being in the area

According to the data, when the sample population is categorized based on the length of time they have lived in Istanbul, it shows that only 6.6% of the people have lived in Istanbul for less than one year. The percentage of those who have lived in Istanbul for 1 to 3 years is 3.3%, while the percentage for those who have lived in Istanbul for 3 to 5 years is 10%. Additionally, the percentage of people who have lived in Istanbul for 5 to 10 years is 6.6%, while those who have lived there for 10 to 20 years represent 16.6% of the population. The majority of the populace, i.e., 56.6%, has lived in Istanbul for more than 20 years.

When we examine the sample according to the duration of living in Fikirtepe, we see that 26.6% of the individuals have not lived in Fikirtepe for more than 1 year. 20% of the individuals have lived there between 1 and 3 years, another 20% have lived there between 3 and 5 years, and 3.3% have lived there between 5 and 10 years. The rate of people who have lived there for 10-20 years is 10%, while the rate of people who have lived there for more than 20 years is 20%.

3.3. Security adequacy

As per the findings, before the urban transformation, the Fikirtepe district was mostly deemed 'completely inadequate' (26.67%) or 'inadequate' (56.67%)

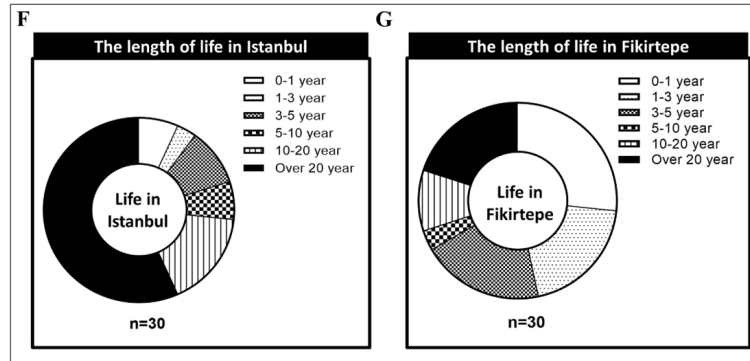


Fig. 4. Length of life for survey respondents in Istanbul and Fikirtepe

in terms of security. However, after the transformation, the perception of security has improved, with the majority of people rating it as ‘adequate’ (46.67%) or ‘quite adequate’ (36.67%).

Additionally, there was no significant change in abstaining votes. Therefore, it can be concluded that urban redevelopment has had a positive impact on the perception of security in the Fikirtepe district.

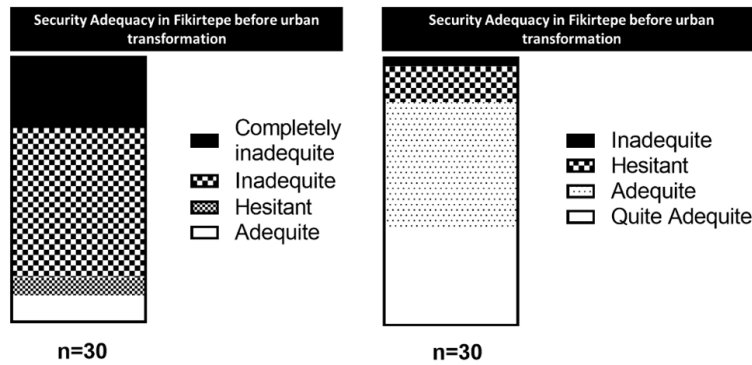


Fig. 5. Security adequacy in Fikirtepe before and after urban transformation

4. DISCUSSION

Over the past two decades, the Turkish government has actively supported various urban transformation initiatives in specific areas of Istanbul, responding to challenges posed by rapid population growth and unregulated urbanization. These endeavors have yielded significant socio-cultural, economic, and

cultural changes within these localities. Despite the transformative impact on residents' living conditions, few studies have systematically assessed the influence of these changes on people's sense of security, a critical factor in determining overall quality of life.

The holistic approach of urban transformation theory, highlights the importance of an integrated framework that encompasses physical, social, economic, and environmental dimensions. While the theory provides a comprehensive foundation, its practical implementation remains a subject of inquiry. The integrated approach not only widens the theoretical scope of urban transformation but also enhances its adaptability to address contemporary urban challenges, promoting sustainable and resilient urban development practices.

Our study specifically focused on the Fikirtepe locale within the administrative jurisdiction of Kadikoy district, situated on the Anatolian side of Istanbul. Fikirtepe's strategic location, intersected by the D-100 (E5) State Highway and close to the Bosphorus Bridge, has attracted individuals seeking proximity to workplaces, leading to irregular settlements. The region's elevated crime rate provides a unique context for examining changes in security perceptions resulting from urban transformation. The research employed a survey administered to 30 individuals, capturing diverse demographic attributes such as age, gender, marital status, education level, and monthly income. Participants' reflections on security perceptions were evaluated.

The demographic analysis revealed a balanced representation across gender, marital status, age groups, income brackets, and educational levels. Understanding the duration of residency both in Istanbul and specifically in Fikirtepe provided valuable context, indicating the majority of respondents had a long-standing connection with the city.

The core findings indicate a positive transformation in security perceptions following urban redevelopment in Fikirtepe. The district, initially characterized by a majority rating of 'completely inadequate' or 'inadequate' in terms of security, saw a notable shift post-transformation. The majority of respondents now perceive security as 'adequate' or 'quite adequate,' signifying an improvement in the overall security perception.

While the positive impact observed is noteworthy, the discussion underscores the need for continued and expanded studies across diverse regions and larger sample sizes. This practice is essential for aligning resident expectations with the actual conditions post-urban transformation. Such comprehensive investigations can unveil latent factors requiring prioritization in future projects, contributing to the alleviation of economic and social burdens associated with transformations.

In conclusion, the study's findings provide valuable insights into the intricate relationship between urban transformation, demographic characteristics, and security perceptions in Fikirtepe. The discussion lays the groundwork for future research endeavors aimed at fostering sustainable and resident-centric urban development practices.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Consequently, it has been demonstrated that the societal perception of security has experienced a favourable shift in Fikirtepe due to urban transformation. Nevertheless, it is imperative to undertake further research by scrutinizing the social constituents that underpin security, thereby delineating elements necessitating consideration in subsequent urban transformation initiatives, including but not confined to health, education, transportation, parking facilities, green spaces, infrastructure, and seismic resilience, particularly tailored to the sociocultural milieu under investigation. In addition, the effects of Fikirtepe's urban transformation should be investigated in future studies with larger sample groups and focused survey studies.

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