A Study on the Public Service Areas in Ankara Gultepe Neighborhood

Güler Koca¹, Mine Avcı¹
¹Eskisehir Technical University, Architecture and Design Faculty, Department of Architecture, Eskisehir, Turkey

gkoca@eskisehir.edu.tr

Abstract. The industrialization in the 1950s has led to the rapid population increase in the Turkish cities. Unhealthy and illegal constructions have mushroomed to meet the growing demands of the population triggered by rapid urbanization, which has caused infrastructure problems, inadequacy of the spaces necessary for the development of the individual and society, and a decline in the quality of life. To eliminate such problems, urban transformation projects have been implemented in Turkey with the basic aim of creating an urban environment offering a healthy and high quality life for residents by reducing disaster risk in the cities. Public service areas are needed for the development of the individual and society in urban areas. There are legally-defined standards in Turkey for the adequate and accessible level in cities to serve as educational facilities, health facilities, religious facilities, cultural and sports facilities, green areas and play gardens. The first settlement in Gultepe Neighbourhood, located on Altındag Hill, started in the 1930s. Since it has a sloping land structure, the settlement is reserved as a green area in the urban plans. However, its close proximity to the Ulus trade center has caused low-income people from the rural areas to prefer this place for their unplanned and illegal settlement. The area, which had become a complete slum over time, was included in the urban transformation project that began in the 2000s. Through a survey, the people living in Ankara Gultepe Neighborhood where this urban transformation was in progress, were asked about the adequacy and accessibility of public service areas and the results were discussed.

1. Introduction
Changes in the social, economic and cultural life of people have been altering the physical structure of the cities. As a result of population growth, industrialization and intensive building, many urban services, especially those offering urban green spaces, are becoming inadequate. Following the industrial revolution that has been experienced by many developed countries of the world, the necessity of establishing a standard for public service areas has become evident, considering the disappearing environmental values in cities and deteriorating living conditions brought by the increasing population density.

Public service areas consist of spaces that can meet the needs of individuals in everyday life, enable them to communicate with each other and are necessary for the development of the individual and society. Areas such as education, health, religious, cultural and administrative facilities, green areas, outdoor and indoor sports facilities constitute all the spaces necessary for the development of the individual and the community, determining the quality of urban life. To meet the needs of the population in a settlement, each of the public service areas must be appropriate in terms of quantity, size, capacity, accessibility, frequency of use, and adequacy. Although standards for public service areas have been set
in Turkey to meet these conditions, the fact that these standards are based solely on population numbers has led to problems in settlements with different dynamics. In determining the standards, the physical, social and economic structure and needs of different settlements need to be taken into account [1].

2. Historical Development of Gültepe Neighborhood

With the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923, Ankara became one of the cities where rapid urbanization movements took place. An international competition was held in 1927 for the planned development of the capital Ankara, which Herman Jansen won. The Jansen plan, adopted in 1932, is the first zoning plan made for Ankara. Under the Jansen plan, Ulus district was chosen as the urban center, which became the hub of trade. The fact that the service and trade businesses in Ulus were the only source of employment caused the emigrants to rush in an unplanned way to settle in the areas close to this district, however unsuitable for construction they might have been.

Settlements in the Gültepe Neighborhood, located on Altindag Hill, began to be built in the 1930s. According to the Jansen plan adopted in 1932, the neighborhood was left as a non-residential area and marked as a green space due to the fact that the neighborhood was located on a riverbed, and had a sloping structure that was unsuitable for settlement. Furthermore, Jansen stated that there should not be a settlement on Altindag Hill, which has a very sloping land structure, as he thought that if there were to be a construction of over 900 meters around the Kale (Castle), the silhouette of the castle would be disturbed. Being located very close to Ulus district, which was the commercial center of the period providing the only source of employment, and being an unplanned and unsupervised, Gültepe Neighborhood was the place of choice for the low-income people coming to the city from the rural regions of Turkey [2].

The faster than anticipated increase in Ankara's population in the 1950s rendered the Jansen plan ineffective. People who migrated to the city built illegal constructions in off-plan areas to take care of their housing needs. During this period, the number of slums in Gültepe increased rapidly. Due to the fact that the Jansen plan was no longer operational, the new zoning plan came into effect in 1957. In the 1970s, the population of Ankara continued to increase rapidly, and since the newly-introduced zoning plan was insufficient, unplanned urbanization dominated every part of the city.

In the 1980s, when Ulus lost its quality as the city center and the business moved to other parts of Ankara, Gültepe Neighborhood began to develop as a settlement for lower income groups. The homes of those who left the neighborhood were settled by criminals who paid no rent. The number of people living in these empty slums increased, and the crime rate began to increase. The area, which had become an impoverished slum quarter, was transformed into an unsafe settlement dominated by thieves and drug dealers where police could not do much and outsiders were not welcome. The fact that the people living in this district did not want to bear unnecessary costs on their homes because they thought that soon urban renewal would be initiated and the rising number of people living free of charge here only accelerated its collapse.

The majority of the slums were built as single-story houses, without any plan. People in the neighborhood, who were aiming to generate additional income by taking advantage of the population growth, offered these spaces to people in return for rent by adding a room to their own homes or building slums in their gardens. Such illegal construction of buildings resulted in the narrowness of the streets, the houses without gardens, the formation of dead-end streets, and the overall unplanned development in the neighborhood.

The settlements in Gültepe Neighborhood have developed based on kinship and neighborhood relations. The people who came to work here from rural areas preferred the settlements close to their acquaintances, both because they wanted to adapt to urban life by living with those like themselves and because they could meet their housing needs more easily. Economic problems are the main reason underlying the large family structure widely observed in Gültepe. The majority of married young people live with their parents due to poverty, and most of the children live under the same roof, which has led to the large family structure being the most common type of family in this neighborhood [3].
The low level of education has reduced employment in the formal sector and led people without training and expertise to create job opportunities for themselves in the informal sector. With the destruction of slums as part of the urban transformation in 2006, social ties in the neighborhood has begun to weaken as well [4]

3. The Urban Transformation of Gultepe Neighborhood

The aim of the Urban Transformation Project is to provide modern and healthy housing to the slum owners who live in poor conditions by providing them with affordable payment options that are appropriate for their economic income level through new zoning plans on the land, besides creating the infrastructure and public services needed by the district.

Prepared by the Municipality of Altindag, the Gültepe Neighborhood Altindag Urban Transformation Project is composed of three phases. With the completion of the third phase, the Altindag Cultural Center, Altindag District Mufti Office, Altindag District Police Station, indoor swimming pool, public service areas such as parks began serving the public, but there has not yet been construction in the parcels reserved for the marketplace, trade and socio-cultural facilities.

Gültepe Neighborhood underwent a physical transformation with the completion of the first phase in 2008, the second phase in 2011, and the third phase in 2014. The neighborhood's proximity to businesses and the affordability of housing prices have made the area a preferred residential area. The urban transformation in Gültepe Neighborhood has had positive effects on real estate. When the land fair values between 1998-2019 are examined, it is observed that the fair values spiked between 2005 and 2006, when the urban transformation works began, and increased continuously in the following years. Another effect of urban transformation in the neighborhood has been on occupational distributions. Most of the former residents were unemployed, while those with jobs worked in the informal sector, which did not require training or expertise. The newcomers to the neighborhood serve as state employees in professional groups such as teachers, nurses, police, academics, accountants, which require training and expertise [5].

3.1. Changes in Gultepe Neighborhood after the Urban Transformation

In Gültepe Neighborhood, morphological structure was examined before and after urban transformation and the density of the structure, street texture, and green space texture were compared. This comparison includes residential areas, educational facilities, health facilities, religious facilities, cultural and administrative facilities, outdoor and indoor sports fields, commercial areas, and recreational/green areas before and after the urban transformation.

After urban transformation, structure density has changed significantly. Before the Urban Transformation, the neighborhood was mostly composed of single-story slums, but after the transformation, it has been replaced by residential blocks with high floor heights and densities (figure 1).

After the transformation, the street texture has also changed, leaving the road texture before the transformation consisting of organic, narrow and dead-end streets to a texture consisting of regular and wider roads (figure 2).

Prior to urban transformation, there was a total of 51,462 m² of green space, and there were no children's parks or sports fields. The children's playgrounds and sports areas were increased in the residential areas after the urban transformation and the total of active and passive green spaces reached 92,970 m² (figure 3).

While there were approximately 3,000 m² of educational institutions areas in the neighborhood prior to the urban transformation, this has increased more than four times ‘figure4’. Before the urban transformation, there were neither health facilities nor socio-cultural facilities in this area, but after the transformation, some areas were allocated for a health center and a socio-cultural facility. In addition, after the transformation, some spaces have also been reserved for an outdoor or indoor sports field, administrative facility and commercial area.
**Figure 1.** Structural texture before and after Urban Transformation

**Figure 2.** Street texture before and after urban transformation
Figure 3. Status of green areas before and after the urban transformation

Figure 4. Pre-and post-urban transformation educational institutions
4. Survey
This part of the study presents and discusses the results from the survey conducted with 60 residents from Gültepe Neighborhood residents. Our results indicate that the average number of people living in a household in the neighborhood is 4.3.

52% of the participants are women, and 48% are men. 27% are 21-30 years old, 23% are 51 or older, 22% are 41-50 years old, and 20% are between 31 and 40 years old (figure 5).

Regarding the participants’ level of education, 10% are illiterate, 20% are primary school graduates, 15% are secondary school graduates, 32% are high school graduates, 22% are university graduates and 1% have postgraduate or higher education level (figure 6). The people with low educational levels are mostly the former residents of the neighborhood. The fact that educated families settled in the neighborhood after urban transformation and many former residents left has raised the education level of the neighborhood compared to the pre-transformation.

When the number of people living in a household was examined, it was observed that 5% were families of two, 17% had three, 33% had four, 32% had five, and 13% had 6 persons or more (figure 7).

The average household in the neighborhood has 4.3 people in it. The residents of the old neighborhood had a more extensive family structure. With the urban transformation, the fact that newly settled families have a core family structure reduces the average number of households in the neighborhood.

18% of the participants have been resident in this neighborhood for less than 5 years, 22% for 5-10 years, 17% for 11-15 years, 10% for 16-20 years, and 33% for more than 20 years (figure 8).
When the employment status of the participants was examined, it was found that 55% were not working and 45% were working ‘figure 9’. While the majority of non-working participants are housewives, there are also retirees, students and individuals without jobs.

Participants in the survey were also asked about their professions. 31% were tradesmen and civil servants, 17% were workers, 11% were in the private sector, and 10% were employed in other professions ‘figure 10’. The majority of the residents of the former neighborhood practiced trades and labor occupations. Families who have just moved to the neighborhood are usually people who work in public institutions serving as police, teachers, etc.

2% of the participants earn a monthly income of 1000 TL and below, 20% of them earn 1001-2000 TL, 46% earn 2001-3000 TL, 17% earn 3001-5000 TL and 15% make 5000 TL and above ‘figure 11’. A large proportion of them make between 2001 and 3000 TL because the majority are on the minimum wage. Those with incomes of 5000 TL and above are mostly civil servants such as teachers and police who work in public institutions.

Looking at ownership status, 80% of the participants are homeowners and 20% are tenants ‘figure 12’. The reason that the majority are homeowners is because of the low interest rate loan for the residents of the old neighborhood, and because of the favorable house prices for those who are new to the neighborhood.

The participants were asked why they preferred the neighborhood, and they answered this question as follows: 22% reported its closeness to the workplace, 18% mentioned its closeness to the city center, 18% cited the affordability of the house prices, 13% pointed out the ease of transportation, 7% mentioned neighborhood relations, 20% mentioned having acquaintances, and 2% mentioned the social facilities (figure 13).
The participants who were asked what problems they had in the neighborhood complained most about the security, followed by the lack of shopping and entertainment areas, and thirdly the lack of parking, sports, green areas and play areas. Problems in transport, cultural spaces, municipal services and infrastructure shortcomings are some of the less-reported minor grievances (figure 14).

When asked whether they were satisfied with urban transformation, the participants answered “Yes” by 96 % (figure 15).

When the participants were asked which public service areas have improved after the urban transformation, they reported that parking, green spaces and transportation were the most improved aspects, while social facilities, security and infrastructure were less improved (figure 16).

When asked if they would like to move from here, a large proportion (60%) of them stated that they did not want to move elsewhere (figure 17).
When asked what kind of a residential district they would prefer if they had the chance, the vast majority of respondents said they would prefer a neighborhood of detached houses with gardens. Secondly, they stated that they would prefer a neighborhood with better social facilities. Thirdly, a residential arrangement consisting of low-rise apartment buildings was preferred. The proportion of those who prefer a settlement with better urban services is smaller, while being close to the city center is the least preferred option (figure 18).

Participants rated the accessibility of the area to the city center, housing, sports, education, and health areas as mostly good. In addition, the availability of cultural, religious and administrative facility areas is also rated as good by the majority.

![Figure 19. The availability of commercial areas](image)

![Figure 20. The disability access](image)

While the availability of green areas was mostly rated as good, the availability of commercial areas was rated as poor by approximately 40% (% 10 very bad, %32 bad) of the participants (figure 19).

More than half of the residents who evaluated the disability access within the residential area rated it as poor (figure 20).

5. Conclusions
Gaining momentum in the 1950s, extensive industrialization has led to a rapid growth in the urban populations. As a result of this rapid urbanization, unhealthy and illegal building constructions have increased in order to meet the needs of the population, which has changed the physical structure of the cities. The unplanned development of cities has created infrastructure problems and led public service areas to become inadequate. In order to eliminate such problems in Turkey, to create a healthy environment and to improve the quality of life, various urban transformation projects have been implemented. Another factor in creating a healthy and high quality of life environment is public service areas. Meeting the daily needs of individuals, allowing rich interpersonal communications, and ensuring their socialization, they are critical for the development of the individual and society. Standards have been set in the world and in Turkey to ensure that these spaces are appropriate in terms of their quantity, size, capacity, accessibility, frequency of use, and adequacy.

Gültepe Neighborhood is located on the Altindag Hill, north of the Old City. Altindag Hill is excluded as a residential area from the Ankara city plan made by Jansen because of its slope and being located on a river bed. In the 1930s, slum movements began in Gültepe Neighborhood due to its proximity to Ulus, the commercial heart of the city of the period. As a result of rapid urbanization in the 1950s, the number of slums in the neighborhood gradually increased. In the 1980s, however, Ulus lost its urban center quality, leading to the relocation of middle income people in the neighborhood and the lower income group settling here, making the residential area a depopulation zone.

Its first phase launched in 2006, the third phase of the transformation was completed in 2014. The settlement, which has experienced a major physical change with urban transformation, has many urban functions that were not included within the neighborhood prior to the transformation. The new plan has allocated space for children's playgrounds and green areas, sports areas as well as commercial, administrative and cultural facilities and have been implemented in situ in phases.
According to the survey results obtained from the residents of Gültepe Neighborhood after the transformation, there is an improvement in the educational status and income levels of the families residing in the settlement along with the improvement of the physical conditions. Thus, it can be inferred that improvements in spatial conditions contribute to the preference of this neighborhood. It was determined that the participants are happy to live here and enjoy the various urban facilities introduced by the transformation. However, it was also found that the majority would prefer living in a residential area with a detached garden to a multi-story residential area if they had the opportunity. Being generally satisfied with the settlement's accessibility, participants further reported that there were some adverse situations for individuals with disabilities.

The Urban Transformation Project has changed the physical structure of the neighborhood, leading many of the neighborhood residents in the former low income group to leave the area, and higher income group families to choose this place to live. Thus, the change in the physical texture has also changed the social texture of the neighborhood. With the urban transformation, the neighborhood has improved in terms of social and cultural infrastructure facilities, security, green spaces and accessibility, but a number of problems involved in the implementation have caused some of the facilities to be inadequate.

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