

SOME COMPARATIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF GECEKONDU FAMILIES IN İZMİR

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I. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this paper is to find out some of the characteristics of the *gecekondu* family with regard to size structure, interaction with relatives and with bureaucratic organizations and tendencies toward change. Characteristics like buying things on time, having bank accounts and functioning as an economic and political unit would also be studied in order to find out how the *gecekondu* family is adapting itself to the urban environment.

In order to find out the adaptability of the *gecekondu* family to the urban environment, comparisons will be made with the urban family.

A. Concept of *Gecekondu* :

Gecekondu is officially defined as "the dwelling unit on somebody else's site which was built without taking the approval of the landowner and built in a way which is not approved by the general legal provisions for buildings and construction."¹ It is usually constructed out of second-hand material and has very low standards. It generally lacks utilities and is hazardous to health.² The inhabitants are the in-comers from rural areas.

Gecekondu phenomenon was brought to the fore as a result of high rate of urbanization in Turkey. If we accept 1927 populations as 100, urban population in 1965 became 188.3 whereas the same index for rural population is only 84.1.³ Urbanization rate in Turkey especially

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¹ Yörükân, Turhan, Yörükân, Ayda *Şehirleşme, Gecekondu ve Konut Politikası*, (Urbanization, Gecekondu, and Housing Policy), İmar ve İskân Bakanlığı, Mesken Genel Müdürlüğü, Ankara, 1966, p. 13.

² *Ibid*, pp. 18-19.

³ State Planning Organization, *The Squatter Areas and Their Employment Problems with Special Reference to the City of Ankara*, Ankara, 1970, p. 3.

gained momentum in 1950's and since then, the annual urban population increase seems twice as much as the increase of total population.⁴ This rate of urbanization is very high even when compared with Latin American figures.⁵

Gecekondu areas are located around the large cities like İstanbul, Ankara, and İzmir. Fifty-nine percent of Ankara's population, 45 percent of İstanbul's population and 33.4 percent of İzmir's population live in *gecekondu* areas.⁶ In Latin America, in 1964 the *barrida* population (which corresponds to the *gecekondu*) is only 20 percent of the city population in Lima. The *favela* population in Rio de Janeiro is about 16 percent of the city population in 1964.⁷ So, the *gecekondu* population in Turkey could be taken as an indication of unusual urbanization focused around big cities.

Families in *gecekondu* areas represent the transitional group. They moved from the village to the city but not assimilated yet. *Gecekondu* areas are the physical indication of such transition. Hence, the aim of this paper is to shed some light to the process of transition by comparing *gecekondu* family with the urban one.

B. Source of Data :

The data which will be used in this paper has been gathered through a survey research in İzmir. The research was done in 1968 under the sponsorship of the Turkish Association for the Social Sciences.

1. Sample size and sampling procedure.

In the study two successive sampling procedures were used. Population of the first sample was the registered voters of the city of İzmir plus Bornova and Karşıyaka which are separate municipalities but considered as part of the city. Sampling procedure at the first stage was

⁴ Geray Cevat, "Urbanization in Turkey", *Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Dergisi*, vol. XXIV, no. 4, 1970.

⁵ Horowitz, I. L. "Electoral Politics, Urbanization and Social Development in Latin America," in Glenn H. Beyer (ed.), *The Urban Explosion in Latin America*, Cornell University Press, New York, 1967, p. 223.

⁶ Ministry of Reconstruction and Resettlement, *Gecekondu In İzmir*, Ankara, 1966.

⁷ Browning, H. L. "Urbanization and Modernization in Latin America : The Demographic Perspective," in Beyer, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

systematic random sampling. Out of every thirty-three of the voters, one was selected. Total population was 274,602 and the sample was 8,319.

The list of the registered voters were compiled in 1965 and revised in 1967. They cover every eligible adult at the age of 21 or older whose civil rights are not restricted by a court.

On the first sample the general socio-economic characteristics of the population such as age, sex, income, education etc. were surveyed. Out of 8,319 persons, interviews were completed with 7,183. This means that 86.3 percent of the first sample was covered.

TABLE 1
SAMPLE SIZE

CODE	N	n	WEIGHT	CODE	N	n	WEIGHT
111	24	24	1	211	43	22	2
112	32	32	1	212	242	60	4
113	5	x	—	213	23	23	1
121	169	56	3	221	51	25	2
122	813	102	8	222	461	77	6
123	188	63	3	223	107	35	3
131	289	72	4	231	181	60	3
132	842	105	8	232	1487	149	10
133	168	56	3	233	336	83	4
311	26	26	1	411	13	13	1
312	197	66	3	412	77	39	2
313	16	16	1	413	6	x	—
321	3	x	—	421	—	x	—
322	12	12	1	422	—	x	—
323	4	x	—	423	2	x	—
331	12	12	1	431	3	x	—
332	169	56	3	432	21	21	1
333	40	20	2	433	4	x	—

CODES :

- First figure : *INCOME*
1. 500 TL and less
 2. 501-1500 TL
 3. 1501-3000 TL
 4. 3001 TL and more

- Second figure: *NEIGHBORHOOD*
1. Luxurious
 2. Gecekondu
 3. Middle

- Third figure: *NUMBER OF THE HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS*
1. 1-2 persons
 2. 3-6 persons
 3. 7 and more persons

Second stage was the stratified sampling for the family survey. Cells were constructed according to the categories of income, neighborhood and number of the household members. Numbers in each cell and weights are shown in Table 1.

2. Representativeness of the Sample.

According to Sirikantan who has analyzed the first sample, lower age groups are underrepresented and lower income groups are overrepresented.⁸

As for the second sample on which the study of the family was carried out, Arı asserts that the sample is fairly representative regarding income, neighborhood and number of the household members.⁹

TABLE 2
SEX GROUPS IN TWO SAMPLES

Sex Categories	First Sample (percentages)	Second Sample (percentages)
Percent of Males	47.7	48.8 s = 1.58
Percent of Females	52.3	51.2 s = 1.58

TABLE 3
AGE GROUPS IN TWO SAMPLES

Age Categories	First Sample (percentages)	Second Sample (percentages)
20-24	5.6	4.5
25-29	13.3	13.1
30-34	14.3	14.2
35-39	14.9	13.9
40-49	21.8	21.8
50-59	15.4	16.8
60 +	14.4	15.7
Unknown	0.3	0.0

⁸ Sirikantan, K. S. "The Master Sample of the İzmir Survey: Representativeness of the Frame and Bias Due to Estimation and Non-responses," Mimeographed, Hacettepe University, Ankara, 1969.

⁹ Arı, Oğuz, "The Mass Media of Communication in İzmir", Mimeographed, Turkish Association for the Social Sciences, Ankara, 1969, pp. 82-85.

Distribution of sex and age categories in two samples are shown in Table 2 and Table 3. As seen in Table 3, underrepresentation of the lower age group is also seen in the second sample. So, there could be a bias toward more conservative attitude. But as the family survey deals with the characteristics of the families and attitudes of the family heads, this bias is not serious, because the average marrying age is higher, and the lower age group is underrepresented anyway.

Non-responses in the second sample are shown by income categories in Table 4 and by neighborhood categories in Table 5. Those two

TABLE 4

RESPONSES ACCORDING TO INCOME GROUPS

Income Categories	Percent of Responses
-500 TL	77.6
501-1500 TL	76.9
1501-3000 TL	71.6
3001 + TL	56.2

TABLE 5

RESPONSES ACCORDING TO NEIGHBORHOOD GROUPS

Neighborhood Categories	Percent of Responses
Gecekondu	78.4
Middle	77.4
Luxurious	67.3

distributions unfortunately support the biases that Sirikantan found out regarding the first sample. But when we compare our figures with the figures of the Ministry of Reconstruction and Resettlement, the picture is not as serious as expected.¹⁰ Table 6 shows the percentage of *gecekondu* population which constitutes the lowest socio-economic group. According to Table 6 overrepresentation of the lower socio-economic group could not pose a serious problem, as the Ministry found out that this group is larger than it is represented in our sample. In addition, as we will focus mainly on the *gecekondu* family in this paper, representation of this particular group in our sample is not a serious problem.

¹⁰ Ministry of Reconstruction and Resettlement, *op. cit.*

TABLE 6

GECEKONDU POPULATION IN İZMİR AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE URBAN POPULATION

Source	Percent of Gecekondu Population
Ministry of Reconstruction and Resettlement	33.42
Completed interviews in the First Sample	29.60
Completed interviews in the Second Sample	29.77

II. FAMILY SIZE AND STRUCTURE

A. Theoretical Importance.

Usually urban family is thought as a small and nuclear unity. So, the number of the household members and the structure of the *gecekondu* family in comparison with the urban family will give us some clues for the urbanization tendencies.

B. Family Size.

Family size of İzmir *gecekondu* family is shown comparatively in Table 7. As seen in Table 7, there is not any meaningful difference between *gecekondu* family and urban family in İzmir. In addition, both families in the city of İzmir are *consistent with the urban family in Turkey with regard to the size.*

TABLE 7

THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF THE HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS

Turkey*	5.7
Cities*	4.6
Towns*	5.2
Villages*	6.1
İzmir City	4.7
İzmir Gecekondu	4.7

* Source, State Institute of Statistisc, *Census of Population*, pp. 672-675 Tables, 53 a, 53 b, 53 c.

C. Family Structure.

Table 8 shows us that there is not any significant difference between the families in İzmir with regard to the structures. The dominance of the nuclear structure is also consistent with the general characteristics of the Turkish family.¹¹

As a result we can say that the *gecekond* family is just like the urban family in İzmir with regard to size and structure.

TABLE 8

STRUCTURES OF THE FAMILY (AS PERCENTAGES)

Family Structures	Family Types	
	Gecekond Family	Urban Family
Famille Souche	27	27
Nuclear	62	64
Broken and Incomplete	10	8

III. INTERACTION WITH RELATIVES

A. Theoretical Importance.

According to Litwak, the modified extended family, which consists of a coalition of nuclear families in a state of partial dependence, is the ideal type in industrial, democratic societies.¹² This type of family is different than the nuclear family as it receives help from other nuclear families, and is also different from the extended family as the nuclear families in the coalition are not dependent economically and geographically on one another.¹³ He asserts that the modified extended family fits best to industrial democratic societies with regard to certain functions.

¹¹ Kongar, Emre, "Türkiye de Aile: Yapısı, Evrimi, ve Bürokratik Örgütlerle İlişkileri," (Family in Turkey : Structure Evolution and Relations with Bureaucratic Organizations) *Amme İdaresi Dergisi*, no. 2, 1970.

¹² Litwak, Eugene, "Extended Kin Relations in an Industrial Democratic Society," in E. Shanas and Gordon F. Streib, (ed.), *Social Structure and the Family Generational Relations*, Prentice Hall, New Jersey, 1965, p. 321.

¹³ *Ibid*, pp. 291.

B. Findings.

Sixty-eight percent of the *gecekondü* families in İzmir have close relatives (parents, siblings, children, aunts, uncles, inlaws and their children) in the next neighborhood or closer. The same figure for the rest of the urban family is 62.4 percent.

Around 20 percent of the *gecekondü* families have selected their houses because it is close to their relatives. The same percentage is about 15 for the rest of the families in İzmir.

Thirty-one percent of the families in İzmir visit with close relatives every day. *Gecekondü* family does not show any difference with regard to visiting patterns. Fourteen percent of the families visit with relatives two times a week, 13 percent once a week, 9 percent in every two weeks and around 31 percent once a month or rarely. It appears that more than half of the urban families in İzmir, including the *gecekondü* family visit with close relatives at least once a week.

Only 11 percent of the *gecekondü* families give monetary aid to their relatives and 6 percent receive such help from them. Respective figures for the rest of the urban families are 18 percent and 11 percent. The figures for aid in goods are very similar to those of monetary aid. As for lending and borrowing money, *gecekondü* family is higher in borrowing (32 percent to 28 percent), but lower in lending (12 percent to 21 percent) as compared with the urban family in İzmir.

Around 14 percent of the *gecekondü* families have *reciprocal helping relationship* in housework with their relatives. The same figure for the rest of the families is around 19 percent.

As a result of our findings it maybe concluded that the urban family in İzmir does not tend to form coalitions with the relatives. *Gecekondü* family tends even less to cooperate with its relatives. About 70 percent of the *gecekondü* families have close relatives living near by. Lack of cooperation with relatives could be taken as a sign of isolation due to the transition. Yasa also brings this point forth. He asserts that in-migrated rural family tends to isolate itself from its relatives as the relations are different than those they used to have back in the village¹⁴.

¹⁴ Yasa, İbrahim, *Ankara'da Gecekondü Aileleri*, (Gecekondü Families in Ankara), Sağlık ve Sosyal Yardım Bakanlığı, Sosyal Hizmetler Genel Müdürlüğü, Ankara, 1966, p. 87.

C. *Neighbours vs. Relatives.*

In some activities the *gecekond* family prefers to interact with neighbours rather than its relatives. For instance around 60 percent of the *gecekond* families visit with neighbours more often than they visit with relatives. Though such tendency seems as the characteristic of the urban family in İzmir, *gecekond* family is higher, about 7 percent, than the rest of the urban families.

Families in İzmir have also more intense relations with their neighbours than they have with their relatives in the area of reciprocal lending and borrowing goods. Around 40 percent of the *gecekond* families in İzmir prefer their neighbours to lend and borrow goods. The same percentage for the rest of the urban families is around 32.

Gecekond family differs from rest of the urban family in İzmir only in the area of reciprocal help in housework. Though the *gecekond* family cooperates with its neighbours more than it does with its relatives, the rest of the urban families in İzmir prefer their relatives to their neighbours. Around 17 percent of the *gecekond* families cooperate with their neighbours, whereas only 13 percent of them prefer to cooperate with their relatives. The rest of the urban families in İzmir cooperate with relatives 19 percent and with neighbours 8 percent.

As a result it could be said that the neighbourhood performs some of the functions of a primary group in some areas of daily living.

IV. INTERACTION WITH THE BUREAUCRATIC ORGANIZATIONS

A. *Theoretical Importance*

Though one school of thought advocating that the family is dissolving and transferring its functions to the bureaucratic organizations,¹⁵ another one asserts that the family is in cooperation with the bureaucratic organizations in order to fulfill its functions.¹⁶ So it seems that

¹⁵ Ogburn, William F. "The Changing Functions of the Family," in Robert F. Winch, Robert McGinnis, Herbert B. Barringer, (ed.), *Selected Studies in Marriage and Family*, Holt, Rinehart and Winsten, New York, 1962, pp. 157-162. Wirth, Louis, "Urbanism as a Way of Life," in Paul K. Hatt and Albert J. Raiss, Jr., (ed.), *Cities and Society: The Revised Reader in Urban Sociology*, Free Press of Glencoe, 1957, pp. 593-594.

¹⁶ Litwak, *op. cit.*, pp. 303-307.

it is important to determine how the *gecekond* family interacts with the bureaucratic organizations.

B. Findings.

While only 7 percent of the *gecekond* families borrow money from bureaucratic organizations, the figure is 20 percent for the rest of the urban families in İzmir.

In addition to that only 11 percent of the *gecekond* families receive any kind of monetary help and help in kind from the bureaucratic organizations. Yasa has found out that only 8 percent of the *gecekond* families in Ankara receive help from bureaucratic organizations.¹⁷ It seems that the most needy part of the urban family, namely the *gecekond* family is least reached by the bureaucratic organizations.¹⁸

TABLE 9
PERCENTAGE OF THE FAMILIES WHO HAVE INTERACTION WITH BUREAUCRATIC ORGANIZATIONS

Criteria	Percent of <i>gecekond</i> families	Percent of the rest of the urban families
Cooperation in education	61	63
Bringing work home	14	17
Business relationship with relatives	6	12
Help to or from the relatives concerning work	23	27
Sharing work problems within the family	55	55
Visiting with work friends	38	41
Benefits from the visits to the work friends	48	48

¹⁷ Yasa, *op. cit.*, p. 213.

¹⁸ Kongar, Emre, "İzmir Şehrinde Sosyal Refah Hizmetlerinden Yararlanma," (Recipients of Social Welfare Services in the City of İzmir), *Hacettepe Sosyal ve Beşerî Bilimler Dergisi*, vol. II, no. 1, 1970.

Table 9 shows the percentages of the *gecekond* families and the rest of the urban families who have interaction with the bureaucratic organizations. It is understood that there is not much difference between the *gecekond* family and the rest of the families except that the rest of the urban families have more intense work relations with their relatives. It means that the *gecekond* family is not more dependent on its relatives for finding a job. This seems quite important as Yasa has also found out that 70 percent of the heads of the *gecekond* families in Ankara found their first jobs by themselves and help from the relatives is very insignificant.¹⁹ So, this finding supports the idea of the isolated *gecekond* family in the urban settings.

The rest of the findings with regard to the interaction with the bureaucratic organizations reveals that the families in urban settings are in interaction with the bureaucratic organizations in order to perform their functions and there is not a meaningful difference between *gecekond* family and the rest.

V. GECEKONDU FAMILY AS A UNITY

65 percent of the families in İzmir have only one money earner in the family and *gecekond* family is not different than the others in this respect. In 68 percent of the remaining 35 percent of the *gecekond* families the money is collected by the head of the family and administered by him. The same figure for the rest of the urban family in İzmir is only 42 percent.

In 89 percent of the *gecekond* families all the eligible voters in the family vote for the same party. This percentage is 82 for the rest of the families.

According to the above figures *gecekond* family shows greater economic and political unity than the rest of the urban family. This finding is consistent with the assertion that the *gecekond* family is more isolated than the urban family.

VI. CONTROL OVER CHILDREN

Forty-five percent of the *gecekond* families reported that they will decide for their children what profession to choose. The percentage for the rest of the families is 38.

¹⁹ Yasa, *op. cit.*, pp. 120.

Again 45 percent of the *gecekonda* families told that they would not let their children decide whom to marry. They said that they would decide for their children. Only about 37 percent of the other urban families reported the same attitude.

As a result it could be said that the *gecekonda* family has more control over children. This finding is understandable as the *gecekonda* family has very high aspirations for the children.²⁰ They exert high control over their children in order to make them fulfill the expectations.

VII. BANK ACCOUNTS AND BUYING THINGS ON TIME

Only 26 percent of the *gecekonda* families have bank accounts. The same figure is about 54 percent for the rest of the urban families in İzmir. There could be two reasons for the low percentage of the *gecekonda* families who have bank accounts. First, depositing money to the bank is an urban attitude.²¹ In the villages they either buy gold, land, or preserve money in the house. Second, as the *gecekonda* area is populated with poor families, most of them probably do not have any savings.

Fifty-two percent of the *gecekonda* families buy things on time. The percentage is 56 for the rest of the urban families. It is understood that there is not much difference between the two groups.

VIII. TENDENCIES TOWARD CHANGE

Tendencies toward change were determined through comparisons between the family of orientation and the family of procreation.

As seen in Table 10 when compared with their family of orientation, the drastic change could be observed toward more freedom of the children.

With regard to the rest of the criteria, the *gecekonda* family shows no significant difference from the urban family in İzmir, and in both groups less than half of the families show change inclinations toward modern nuclear family. This might be due to the already changed attitudes. But as we are also dealing with the *gecekonda* family which is in transition, it is a remote possibility.

²⁰ Hart, Charles W. M., *Zeytinburnu Gecekonda Bölgesi*, (Zeytinburnu Gecekonda Area), İstanbul Ticaret Odası Yayınları, İstanbul, 1969, pp. 75-78.

²¹ Yasa, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

The interesting point in Table 10 is the similarity between the *gecekond* family and the rest of the urban families. This means that *gecekond* family is not changing more rapidly than the urban family. It might be due to the fact that it has already started to change when it moved from the village.²²

TABLE 10
PERCENTAGE OF THE FAMILIES WHICH SHOW TENDENCIES TOWARD CHANGE

Criteria and direction	Percent of the <i>gecekond</i> families which show change tendency	Percent of the rest of the urban families which show change tendency
Toward more equality between spouses	43	43
Toward more freedom of the child	75	75
Toward weakening family ties	26	22
Toward lessening reciprocal help with relatives	37	37

IX. CONCLUSION

Our İzmir survey shows that the *gecekond* family in İzmir is quite an urbanized family. This urbanized character of the *gecekond* family could be attributed to the already changed characteristics of the out-migrating families from the villages.

Leaving no hope back in the village, decision not to go back, expectations for the future in an urban setting both for themselves and for their children, are among the contributing factors for such a rapid rate of gaining mostly urban characteristics, despite the fact that *gecekond* family is more isolated from its relatives as well as from its environment. As a matter of fact, even such isolation could be one of the contributing factors to the rapid urbanization of the *gecekond* family.

²² Kongar, Emre, "A Survey of Familial Change in two Turkish *Gecekond* Areas," Paper Presented in the Mediterranean Social Anthropological and Sociological Conference, Cyprus, 1970.

ÖZET

İzmir'de 1968 yılında yapılan bu araştırmada, Bornova ve Karşıyaka ile birlikte İzmir belediye sınırları içine giren bütün yetişkin nüfus kapsanmıştır. Araştırma iki aşamalı bir örnekleme sistemi ile gerçekleştirilmiştir. Birinci aşamada seçmen kütüklerinden yapılan tesadüfî örnekleme üzerinden nüfusun genel nitelikleri saptanmıştır. Daha sonra bu bilgilere dayanılarak aile araştırmasının yapıldığı örnek seçilmiş ve soru kağıtları yolu ile araştırma uygulanmıştır.

Bulgularımıza göre, İzmir kentindeki gecekondü ailesi, ortalama aile büyüklüğü ve aile yapısı bakımından İzmir'deki kentsel aileden farklı değildir. Akrabalarla ilişkileri bakımından da kentsel aileyi andıran gecekondü ailesi oldukça kendi yağı ile kavru lan bir nitelik taşımaktadır.

İzmir'deki gecekondü ailesi, resmî ve gönüllü bürokratik örgütlerden fazla bir yardım da almamaktadır. Aile ile resmî örgütlerin ilişkileri bakımından da gecekondü ailesi ile kent ailesi arasında anlamlı bir fark yoktur.

Siyasal ve ekonomik bütünlük bakımından gecekondü ailesi, İzmir'deki kent ailesinden biraz daha farklılık göstermekte ve kent ailesine göre daha büyük bir bütünlüğe sahip gözükmektedir.

Yukardaki bulguya ilâve olarak çocuklar üzerindeki kontrolün gecekondü ailesinde, kent ailesine göre daha sıkı olduğu da gözlenmiştir. Kuşkusuz bu bulgunun ardında gecekondü ailesinin çocuklarına ilişkin yüksek beklentileri yatmaktadır.

İzmir'deki gecekondü ailesi banka hesabı bakımından kent ailesinin gerisindedir. Gerek tasarruf olanaklarının düşüklüğü, gerekse, tasarruf edilen gelirlerin geleneksel saklanma biçimlerinin farklılığı gecekondü ailesinin kent ailesinden daha az oranda banka hesabına sahip olmasına yol açmıştır. Taksitle eşya almak bakımından ise iki tip aile arasında fazla bir fark gözlenmemiştir.

Gecekondü ailesi de İzmir'deki kentsel aile gibi değişme göstermektedir. Bir başka deyişle gecekondü ailesinin değişme hızı İzmir kent ailesinden çok farklı değildir. Bunun nedeni bir olasılıkla, aile köyden kente göç etmeye başladığı zaman, zaten geçmiş olduğu bazı değişikliklerin ortaya çıktığı, yani kente gelen köy ailesinin zaten önemli ölçüde değişmiş bulunduğuudur.

Sonuç olarak İzmir'deki gecekondü ailesinin kentsel aileden çok büyük bir farklılık göstermediği, ancak kentsel aileye göre biraz daha içine kapanık bir nitelik taşıdığı söylenebilir.