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An alternative dwelling history narrative: The story of the 'apartment'

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Abstract
Dwelling is not solely a spatial organization in which specific activities take place, but also a place to 'dwell', which has different meanings for each occupant. Consequently, any attempt to explain the issues of dwelling through the prevailing discourse is limited. In this context, this paper proposes a 'micro-narrative of dwelling history' in which the spatial and social change of dwelling at the scale of neighbourhood and city, are explored via individual 'apartments' and the personal stories of their inhabitants. The case study in this paper addresses the residential area between Kızıltoprak-Bostancı in Istanbul, which is experiencing both a rapid urban transformation and the threat of losing its distinctive modern residential architecture from the period of 1950-1980, and focuses on one of its neighbourhoods – Erenköy. With the investigation of this transformation through an oral history method –based on interviews with inhabitants of the 'apartments'– it is aimed to make a contribution at micro-scale to the understanding of the impact of urban transformations in the realm of dwelling.

Keywords
Micro-narrative, Microhistory, Dwelling history, Residential buildings, Urban transformation.

1. Introduction

Conventional historiography is based on examining and understanding fundamental spatial and social changes mostly through a social scale. In this manner, historical narratives, being products of the prevailing discourse in society, tend to exclude subjects, which do not participate in this discourse. This mechanism can be also observed both in urban and architectural history. Hence, a perspective, which aims to understand the general by ignoring the 'individual' as well as its relationship to urban and architectural space, ultimately leads to incomplete observations and explanations of unique real-life sequences.

Consequently, any attempt to explain the issues of 'dwelling' – one of the most subjective realms – as well as the relationship of occupants to dwelling and neighbourhoods, through the general discourse, is limited. Dwelling is not solely a spatial organization in which specific activities take place, but is also a place to 'dwell' corresponding to its different 'meanings' to each different occupant. According to Mead (1986) physical objects have an important role in the development of our self-identity and based upon his idea, Marcus (1995) proposed that a person's psychological development is affected not only by meaningful emotional relationships with people, but also by emotional attachment to some significant physical environments, especially the *home*. Indeed, *home* is a medium by which we express ourselves and manifest that that we are. Bachelard (1994: 4) draws attention to the subjective relationship between the dweller and the dwelling by defining the house as '*our corner of the world …our first universe, a real cosmos in every sense of the word*'.

Indeed, the dwelling differs from all other places by being 'a spatial and an architectural expression' of its user's socio-economic, cultural and personal identity. As Tanyeli remarks (2004: 15), '*a reading of residential architecture, although urban dwellers considered themselves as passive victims, provides a medium in which to explore that they are in fact effective.*' The dwelling appears, as a real '*microcosm*' when considering the fact that the house is the essential point where the changing residential patterns, practices of everyday life, cultural demands and expectations are expressed. As Bilgin (2010: 47) states '*dwellings, in a sense, are the structures that form the backbone of the city and to make an assessment through the housing culture is equivalent to understand the city's DNA*. And according to him (2010: 47) '*the critical point in this respect is the phenomenon of apartment that needs to be addressed in the context of changing urban patterns and daily lives in the process of modernization*'. An examination of the change of the residential space and the housing culture, which are the most obvious mediums of modernization, provides significant clues about the transformation of the urban patterns and everyday life practices.

In Turkey from the late nineteenth century until today, living habits and expectations in apartments have had many breaking points, and through this process, the mode of production, as well as the form and the typology of the apartments changed. As all types of change in the urban space and the social life affects urbanites, their housing culture, and housing typology; it is not possible to read the change of the dwelling as independent of the changes occurring in the urban, socio-cultural or political realms. The living habits, expectations and modes of production of the apartments, vary in different societal, political and economic environments, thus the meaning of the apartment –which is to a large extent socially constructed– changes.

In this context, the paper proposes a 'micro-narrative of dwelling history' in which the spatial and semantic change of dwelling in Istanbul is explored through the perception of its inhabitants. Spatial and social change in dwelling at the scale of neighbourhood and city, are explored via the personal stories and of their inhabitants. The case study focuses on the neighbourhood of Erenköy, which is experiencing a rapid urban transformation and the threat of losing its distinctive modern residential architecture from the period of 1950-1980. With the investigation of this transformation through an oral history method –based on interviews

with inhabitants of the 'apartments'– it is aimed to make a contribution at micro-scale to the understanding of the impact of urban transformations in the realm of dwelling.

2. Historiography as a discourse of the past: Epistemology and ideology

'*I often think it odd that it should be so dull, for a great deal of it must be invention.*'
Catherine Morland on history (Carr, 1987).

Historiography, which emerged as a professional discipline in the nineteenth century described itself as a scientific discipline, and had a firm belief that the scientific research renders the objective knowledge possible. For historians, this meant *the re-establishment of past as it actually occurred*. In the course of recent thought, to believe that historical research reveals the objective historical facts has become an increasingly abandoned mode of thinking. Today, a common view regarding history as a form of *narration* and that historical fact cannot exist independently from its *narrator*, has become broadly accepted. Even a number of theorists coming from a literary criticism background, such as Barthes, White and Derrida, question the distinction between fact and fiction, history and poetry and even bring forth an idea that meaningful historical writing is impossible[1] (Iggers, 1997).

First of all, historical fact cannot exist on its own, because the past has occurred and gone and it cannot be brought back as real events; but only in different kinds of communication instruments (Jenkins, 2003). Second, as history is a reconstruction in the historian's mind and an interpretation (Carr, 1987) we can read the history not directly per se, but only through the account of the historian. This means, histories we attribute to things and people are created, composed, constituted and constructed written works, and they contain within themselves their author's philosophy (Munslow, 2003).

According to White (2008: 18) '*An event cannot enter into a history until it has been established as fact. From which it can be concluded: events happen, facts are established.*' Historical narratives are 'verbal fictions, the contents

of which are more *invented* than *found* and the forms of which have more in common with their counterparts in literature than they have with those in the sciences' (White, 1978: 82). The definitions of history, such as '*a literary narrative about the past, literary composition of the data into a narrative where the historian creates a meaning for the past*' (Jenkins, 2003), '*a narration*' (Veyne, 1984), *and* '*a novel about real events whose actor is man*' (Flacelière, Cited in Veyne, 1984), indicate that literature and historiography do not differ in nature. White (2002: 24) explains the common nature of them as follows: '*historians are concerned with events which can be assigned to specific time-space locations, event which are (or were) observable or perceivable, whereas imaginative writers are concerned with both these kind of events and imagined or invented ones.*' However, White adds that their aim in writing is often the same: to obtain a verbal representation of reality. History is one of a series of discourses about the world whose object of enquiry is the past and with this in mind, historians construct different discourses through their narrations about the same past (Jenkins, 2003).

This categorical difference between the past and history, leads history to be an epistemologically fragile discipline.[2] Jenkins (2003) summarizes this epistemological fragility as follows: First, the content of the past event is simply infinite and it is impossible to cover the totality; also a significant part of the past has never been recorded and the remainder has evanesced. Second, as the past has gone, it is not possible to check any account against it, but only against other accounts; there is no correct history, which stands as a reference point. Third, history is subjective rather than being objective. Carr (1982:12) states that '*the belief in a solid core of historical facts existing objectively and independently of the interpretation of the historian is a preposterous fallacy*'. Lastly, as Croce points out, '*all history is contemporary history*'; history requires seeing the past through the eyes of the present (Carr, 1987). The historian conflates the different aspects of the past, sorts, simplifies, and organizes to give the past events meaning (Jen-

[1] *See: Roland Barthes, 'The Discourse of History' in Comparative Criticism: A Year Book, (1981), p.3-28. Hayden White, 'Historical Text as Literary Artifact' in Tropes of Discourse, Baltimore, (1978).*

[2] *Epistemology of history concerns with the question of what is possible to know with reference to its own area of knowledge – the past. And if the answer is given as 'the past – an absent subject – cannot be really known', the epistemological fragility of the history is revealed.*

kins, 2003; Carr, 1987; Veyne, 1984). '*Because stories emphasise linkages and play down the role of breaks, of ruptures, histories as known to us appear more comprehensible than we have any reason to believe the past was*' (Lowenthal, 1985: 218; Cited in Jenkins, 2003: 16).

Another fact stems from the categorical difference between the *past* and the *history*, is that history can easily be used as an ideological instrument. Foucault underlines the relationship between power and knowledge, and states that what authorities claim as 'knowledge' is really just means of social control (Stokes, 2012). In this case, as the historical knowledge is a historical discourse reached by interpreting the past, ideological aspect of it comes into question. İf history is the way that people create their identities; it is inevitable that history includes an ideological aspect by being a 'legitimating' phenomenon (Jenkins, 2003).

To understand the categorical difference between *past* and *history* is especially important because certain groups such as women and minorities have been systematically excluded from most historians' accounts. As Jenkins (2003) suggests, if these omitted groups were included to historical accounts, these accounts possibly could be different today.

2.1. Alternative approaches: Microhistory and history of everyday life

One of the epistemological problems of historiography is to decide which facts are historical facts that are worth knowing. To make this decision, first it can be said that '*the history is the account of the important*' But how is it possible to decide what is important? At this point, of course, the ideological aspect of history –and the knowledge more generally– comes into play. General agreements do occur and they do so because of power (Jenkins, 2003). As Jenkins (2003: 30) states rather strikingly, '*we live in a social system – not a social random*'. However, if we are to leave this ideological aspect of history aside for a moment, the question that Veyne (1984: 19) asks appears very significant: '*Why the life of XIV. Louis would be history and that of a Nivernais peasant of the seventeenth century not?*'[3]

The assumptions upon which historical research have been based since the emergence of history as a professional discipline in the nineteenth century are being questioned increasingly. The classical historicism that emerged as the main paradigm of nineteenth century had a firm belief in the scientific status of history and was event-oriented in the selection of its object. During the twentieth century, the social science/social history approaches emerged and criticized that pre-existing approaches too narrowly focused on '*great men*' and '*events*' and that they ignored the wider context in which these operated. (Iggers, 1997: 19) In this sense, whether Marxist, Parsonian, or Annalist, the social science approaches, represented a democratization of history and an extension of the historical perspective from politics to society (Iggers, 1997).

Increasingly in the 1970s, the assumptions of social science history were exposed to various criticisms. One of the most important criticisms was that the social science history is also a macro-process that ignores the '*little people*' as the conventional political history, which focused on the prominent, did. With this criticism in mind, historians suggested the micro-history approach focusing on individual existence rather than broader social contexts. Thus, the subject of history first shifted from political processes to social ones, then to culture and individual.

The scope of history has greatly expanded today, but the historian's problem of selection still stands as an important question. Veyne (1984) writes that the interest of the historian can vary depending on numerous factors such as the state of the documentation, individual tastes, and many other things. But if the question is 'what historians *ought to be* interested in', it is impossible to determine an objective scale of importance (Veyne, 1984: 28). From this perspective, for historical knowledge, it is enough for an event to have occurred for it to be worth knowing.

According to Veyne (1984: 15-16), the relative choice of the historian occurs between *strong* history that teaches more and explains less and *weak* histo-

[3] *Besides, the Carlo Ginzburg's book entitled The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller showed that the life of a miller of sixteenth century might be included in history. Ginzburg, C. (1980) The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.*

[4] *One critical example of this is the Christopher Browning's book entitled Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland (1993). In this research, which is based on interrogations in the 1960s by the state prosecutor's office in Hamburg of 210 former members of the battalion who were involved in the mass executions of Jewish civilians in Poland, Browning focused on the role of the little men at the bottom of the hierarchy. This means to bring a new perspective to the history of genocide by using micro-historical methods: 'Christopher Browning did more than merely detail events; through his focus on individual perpetrators he also endeavoured to add a dimension to their behaviour that would not be disclosed by broader generalizations and emphasized that genocide is not an abstraction' (Iggers, 1997: 117).*

ry that explains more and teaches less. For Veyne, biographical and anecdotal history is *weak* history and is the lowest on the scale, because it can contain its own intelligibility only in a history stronger than itself. Yet he states that it would be wrong to believe that micro-history contains less information. Biographical and anecdotal history is the least explanatory, but it is richer from the point of view of information it contains, as it considers individuals in terms of what is special to them and it goes into detail for each of them. In stronger history, this information is simplified and then abolished.

Iggers (1997) sees no reason why a history dealing with broad social transformations and one focusing on individual existences cannot coexist. In his opinion, it should be the historian's task to explore the connections between these two levels of historical experience. In this respect, micro-history appears not as a negation of a history of broader social contexts but as a contribution that enriches it. As Iggers (1997) emphasizes, micro-history adds both details and a sense of concreteness to the past.[4]

2.2. Alternative methods: Oral history

The widespread increase of micro-history approaches, which focus on everyday experiences of ordinary people after World War II, has also brought the introduction of oral history methods. While micro-historical investigations deal with people, groups and events that have been neglected in traditional sources, in most cases sources about them are not available. Here, oral history can make a contribution (Iggers, 1997). Oral history gained an increasing significance among historians as it is proved that in certain fields written documents remain inadequate.

In the American Heritage Dictionary, oral history is defined as '*historical information, usually tape-recorded, obtained in interviews with person having first-hand knowledge*' (Url-1) and in the Oxford Dictionary as '*the collection and study of historical information using tape recordings of interviews with people having personal knowledge*

of past events' (Url-2). According to Thompson (1998), oral history is the interviewing of eyewitness participants in the events of the past for the purposes of historical reconstruction. Creswell (1998: 49) defines oral history as '*an approach in which the researcher gathers personal recollections of events, their causes, and their effects from an individual or several individuals.*' What is common in these definitions is that oral history is based on personal memories as a source. Many of the definitions indicate that there is an agreement that oral history forms the basis for a complementary and alternative history. Also according to *Oral History Association*, oral history appears as a field of study and a method: 'Oral history is a *field of study* and a *method* of gathering, preserving and interpreting the memories of people, communities and participants in past events' (Url-3).

According to Caunce (2001), the oral evidences given by ordinary people are not small nostalgic events, but they form a key element in understanding history as a whole, and as such, oral history can contribute to many branches of the academic history. Caunce writes that (2001: 20), the idea behind the development of oral history is the idea that '*every family and every place has its own history, and this history shall contribute to more detailed studies by means of the detailed information it offers.*' Bringing together official documents and personal witnessing shall constitute a clearer whole, rather than any of it can explain on its own.[5]

Using oral history does not imply or suggest anything radical, but means to widen the scope of history. However, as Thompson writes (1998: 25), since witnesses can also be called from the under-classes, the unprivileged and the defeated, the oral history approach provides a challenge to the established historical account; thus the oral history approach appears to allow evidence from a new direction. This aspect becomes especially important when it is admitted that official documents and established accounts are not always necessarily objective.

Some historians conclude that information obtained through the method of oral history is unreliable, since this

[5] *J. F. C. Harrison emphasized the importance of oral history in terms of understanding the past as whole in his book entitled The Common People: A History from the Norman Conquest to the Present (1984): 'For us, the world of medieval peasantry is a closed box. The same is true for craftsmen and citizens. We can examine institutions in the society that the ordinary people had lived, but understanding these people's way of thinking is much more difficult' (Cited in Caunce, 2001: 8).*

An alternative dwelling history narrative: The story of the 'apartment'

information depends on what inter-viewees remember *today* about past, hence it is dependent on their mem-ories (Caunce, 2001). Caunce's objec-tion to this criticism seems to be rather consistent and acceptable:

'*Because the details of daily life are in a constant state of repetition, they are drummed into our minds, and they are not subjected to an uncertainty that is true of extraordinary memories. While events that are closely linked to normal-cy are likely to be remembered accurate-ly, the same thing is not true of extraor-dinary events. Events that seem ordinary and routine are in fact the events, which form the life of the vast majority. What should draw the attention of the histori-an are the typical rather than the excep-tional*' (Caunce, 2001: 26).

To acknowledge the provability of the written documents is suspicious reveals that there is no basis to treat personal witnesses as more unreliable than the written sources.

3. The story of the apartment: Exploring the change via personal stories of inhabitants

The study so far has explored dif-ferent perspectives of historiography and has examined how it has been problematized in terms of its episte-mology. In light of the potentials that micro-history approaches carry, this paper methodologically focuses on the oral history method. In this context, the transformation of the dwelling and the housing culture in the urban con-text is explored trough the superposi-tion of information obtained through oral history and sources obtained from archival documents, enabling a com-prehensive comparative reading of the general context.

Within the scope of the paper, inter-views were held with Asiye Günay, who has been living in Erenköy since 1949, in terms of drawing upon her personal witnessing to the change of both hous-ing typologies and the built and social environment in the area (Figure 1). *A micro-narrative of dwelling history* is constructed by bringing together the verbal material obtained from these in-terviews and the information obtained from the archives of Kadıköy Munici-pality. Furthermore, parallel literature

Figure 1. *Mrs. Asiye Günay, 2015 .*

reading is set as a method of under-standing the narrative and the docu-ments in an overall contextual relation.

Mrs. Günay, who has been living in Erenköy since 1949, has changed eight houses and, during that period, has witnessed both the change of the hous-ing typologies, and the change of phys-ical and social geography of the envi-ronment. In this respect, her accounts constitute a significant personal wit-ness for understanding the change of the area since 1950s in a wider context.

Mrs. Günay's family moved from Istanbul to Ödemiş, and then moved back again to Istanbul-Erenköy in 1949. She had lived in a detached wooden mansion near the Tüccarbaşı Böcekli Mosque between 1949 and 1955. She makes the following state-ment about this house: '*We moved back to Istanbul with my family in 1949. We first came to Tüccarbaşı; we lived in a two-storey wooden mansion with a large garden. We lived in the ground floor and some relatives in the upper. The upper floor had a separate entrance reached from the backyard. The main entrance was reached from stairs and a glazed porch on the front facade. When you enter from the big entrance door, you would go into a large hall[6] with a black-and-white tiled floor. There was a cistern in the hall, when it rained the sound of the rain was heard. There were two rooms on the right of the hall, one room and the kitchen on the left. On the lower, floor there were the laundry and the bathroom. The house had a very large garden. We moved after 1955. Af-ter 1955, Mr. Nazım –the owner of the mansion– parcelled out and sold the property, the mansion was pulled down and apartments were built on the site.*'

Any information regarding the first owner of the mansion could not be ob-tained but it is known that the mansion

[6] *Here the word 'hall' refers to a specific place called "sofa". Inside the traditional Turkish houses, the rooms were placed around a common space called sofa, either on one or two sides or all around it. Sofa is an area, which provides workspace during the daily life as well as facilitating circulation among the rooms.*
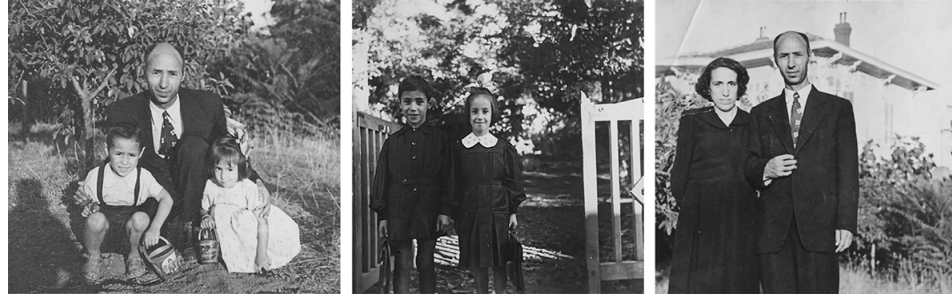
Figure 2. *(a) Mr. Demirel (Mrs. Günay's father) in the garden of the mansion with his children Asiye and Sabri, 1950 (b) Mrs. Asiye with her brother at the entrance of the garden, 1954 (c) Mr. & Mr. Demirel in the garden of the mansion, 1951.*

Figure 3. *Apartment blocks on the original site of the mansion, Tüccarbaşı Street, 2015.*

was sold to Mr. Nazım, a pharmacist, who owned a pharmacy in Erenköy; afterwards, in 1949, it was rented by the Demirel Family. Later on, in the early 1960s, the property of the mansion was parcelled out and sold. Today, apartments exist on the original site of the mansion. According to the documents in the archives of the Kadıköy Municipality, the first construction on that original property started in 1962. (Figure 3)

Based on Mrs. Günay's expressions and the photographs depicting the mansion, it is understood that the mansion of the Demirel Family was one of the traditional wooden buildings with a central-sofa (Figure 2). *H*ür (1993) states that, since the nineteenth century, the Kadıköy district –with its mansions, with wide gardens and with its orchards and vineyards– attracted the Ottoman elite.

It is known that, in the 1940s when Mr. Nazım bought the mansion, a self-employed class –including engineers, doctors and lawyers– who had a significant amount of savings and did not invest in other areas, invested their savings in the construction of new apartment blocks so as to rent them out (Balamir, 1994). It is observed that,

while 'rent houses' became widespread across the city, self-employed people like Mr. Nazım purchased the old mansions to rent each floor separately to different families and/or inhabitants, so that the concept of the 'rent house' emerged in another form in the area.[7]

The period following 1950, which was when apartment blocks began to be built on the place of the demolished detached houses and mansions, corresponds directly to a breaking point in the urbanization process of Istanbul. The problem of housing, which emerged as a result of the accelerating internal migration in the 1950s, also led Kadiköy to become a site of attraction. Later on, with the effect of Property Ownership Law enacted in 1965, mansions and gardens began to be demolished and apartment blocks built in their place (Hür, 1993).

Mrs. Günay also talks about her grandfather's mansion, which she often visited in her childhood. She explains that the mansion belonged to her grandfather Lokman Kuriş as follows (Figure 4): '*We used to call our grandfather's house 'the other house'. It was very old, a mansion from the time of the sultans. It was partitioned in two parts. One part belonged to my grandfather*

[7] *The term 'kira evi' is translated to English as 'rent house'. From the 1930s onwards, some of the apartment blocks were planned as 'kira evi', where each floor housed a flat that could be rented separately.*

An alternative dwelling history narrative: The story of the 'apartment'

Figure 4. *(a, b) Mrs. Hatice Kuriş (Mrs. Günay's mother) is with her sisters in the garden of Kuriş's mansion, Erenköy, 1947-48 (c) Lokman Kuriş in the garden of his mansion, Erenköy, 1960 .*

Figure 5. *Mansion of the Kuriş Family used as a bank today, 2014 .*

Figure 6. *The Kuriş and Hoffman Housing Estates built in the site of the Kuriş's mansion, 2014.*

and the other to his uncle. *The vineyard located in the garden was also partitioned.'* In the 1950s, across from Kuriş's mansion, there had been another mansion in which Mrs. Günay's father, Mr. Demirel, had lived from 1918 to 1943. Today, Ergün Apartment is located on the same site: '*My mom and dad had lived in the same street before they got married. The mansion my dad had lived in might be older than my grandfather's. It had a very large garden. It was demol-*

ished when I was a kid. Then, the whole building-block was parcelled out and several apartments were built on the site of the mansion.'

The Kuriş's mansion is a typical example of the mansions that were built along Bağdat Avenue in the twentieth century. It is constructed as a masonry building with timber cover and has three storeys. It is also known that, from the early 1920s onwards, the construction method of the mansions

shifted from the previous wooden construction tradition –of the early 1920s—to the new tendency of masonry construction and timber covering (Öğrenci, 1999).

Mrs. Günay states that, during 1930s, her grandfather used their mansion in Erenköy as a summer-cottage: '*In the past, my grandfather and his family lived in Fatih, and came here, to the sayfiye. They used to come and live here during summer, but left in winter.*' These years narrated by Mrs. Günay, were the early years of the Turkish Republic and Erenköy prolonged its previous character as a sayfiye settlement of the rich and the elite (Hür, 1993). Today, the mansion belongs to the grandchildren of Lokman Kuriş and Osman Kuriş; and the building is used as a bank branch [Figure 5]. In 2006 the land associated with the mansion had been sold to two different companies. Kuriş Housing Estate and Hoffman Housing Estates were built on the same site (Figure 6). Mrs. Günay tells this period as follows: '*The successors of the mansion were multi-partnered; they owned a great number of flats as payment for to the land of the mansion.*'

Presently, most of the historical buildings, which physically survived until today, are used as kindergartens, primary schools or as bank branches. Their gardens are parcelled out and transformed into building sites on which new apartments are built: 'Majority of the historical buildings in Erenköy are either ragged or ruined. Sokullu Mehmet Paşa Mansion, one of the oldest buildings of the district, enunciated as a first-degree historical monument and has been transformed into a primary school after being restored' (Hür, 1993).

It is also understood that the mansion Mr. Demirel had lived in was also demolished and a series of new apartment blocks had been built after the land was parcelled out (Figure 8). However, since the qualities of the interior space have been erased from Mrs. Günay's memories, any detailed information is unavailable. Yet, it is understood that from the photographs depicting the mansion, the building was one of the typical nineteenth century buildings with wooden construction, white painted, two storeys and a hall in the middle (Figure 7). Hür (1993), states that from nineteenth century onwards, almost all of the mansions were painted in white following the common trends in building style. This mansion can be seen as one of the earliest examples of the transformation under the effect of the Property Ownership Law.

In 1955, Mrs. Günay and her family moved from their mansion in Tüccarbaşı into a two-storey house –on Ethemefendi Street, Erenköy– which belonged to her grandfather Lokman Kuriş. Mrs. Günay explains this house

Figure 7. *Mr. Demirel and his mother, at the entrance of the mansion on Ethem Efendi Street, 1939.*

Figure 8. *The Ergün Apartment built on the site of the previous mansion, 2015.*

An alternative dwelling history narrative: The story of the 'apartment'

Figure 9. *(a) Asiye Günay and her brother Sabri, in the backyard of their house on Ethem Efendi Street, 1958 (b) The Onur Tarman Apartment, 2015 (c) The building still belongs to the Kuriş Family, 2015.*

Figure 10. *Former Erenköy Cinema, the existing situation of the building, 2015.*

Figure 11. *The Şahinler Apartment, 2015 .*

and the life in it as follows: '*It was a two-storey house, and there was a workshop of a lumberman on the ground level. We had lived in the flat, which was on the ground floor, and on the first floor there lived the tenants. The vestibule was reached from the main street, and from there you can either reach our flat or climb up to reach the first floor. The windows of the house looked onto the backyard; it had no windows on the street façade. It had three rooms and a small garden entered from the kitchen.*'

Between 1990 and 1995, the house was demolished and on the same site the Onur Tarman Apartment was built. On the other hand, the building which belonged to Lokman Kuriş's brother still exists and in use today (Figure 9).

In 1962, Mrs. Günay and her family moved to another house, which also belonged to Lokman Kuriş, and they have lived there until 1974. Mrs.

Günay states that they moved to this house since their previous house was too dark. She describes the building – which located on Ethemefendi Street– as follows: '*It was a long, two-storeyed apartment building which is next to the railway. There were two flats on each floor, and below there were shops. I don't remember those times, yet the building was used as a cinema hall before my grandfather bought it. Later, my grandfather bought it, but he didn't want it to function as a cinema and transformed it into flats. The building is very old.*'

This building still exists today, and belongs to Mrs. Günay's cousins. The ground floors are still used as shops, while all flats on the first and the second floor are rented (Figure 10). As Reşad Ekrem Koçu wrote in the Encyclopaedia of İstanbul, it is know that the building was a cinema, but no more detailed information is available:

'It is one of the cinema halls opened in the Anatolian continent, its opening date and duration of operation are not available; it is located on Ethemefendi Street, and is the biggest masonry building near to the bridge where the street continues over the railway. The building is still there, the shops on the ground level are used as a lumberman workshop, a hardware store, and a grocery store. The physical properties and the operation of the cinema hall are not known' (Koçu, 1968: 5167).

It is understood that the Kuriş Family used some of their investments for buying apartments, and by renting most of the flats, they generated an income for the family. Within a period where apartments were sustained as individual investments, 'rent houses' were rented by the middle class who still didn't have capital to afford real estate property (Tekeli, 2010).

In 1974, the family decided to buy their own home and bought two flats from the Şahinler Apartment, a new apartment block that is located on Kaşaneler Street (Figure 11). The Şahinler Apartment was constructed on the site of a previous single-storey detached house by the contractor Hasan Tever who is the uncle-in-law of Mrs. Günay. Detailed information regarding the previous building does not exist. Mrs. Günay states that her uncle-in-law constructed many apartments in the 1970s and 80s.

The facade, mass and plan characteristics of the Şahinler Apartment reflect the prevailing building typology of that period. Though these apartments, with a symmetrical plan organization, are not designed or built for specific people, they do not go beyond the ordinary, but represent a stereotype. In terms of the layout of their facades and mass, these buildings manifest that they are 'modern', and also that they were previously 'sayfiye' houses. The large, transparent, glazed facades and large balconies are the most significant elements of the sayfiye house (Çelik et al., 1979). Since most of the apartments built in the 1960s and the 1970s share these characteristics, they have an important role in the generating the existing physical character of the area.

In the 1970s, while the accelerating internal migration turned Kadıköy into a centre of attraction, the Property Ownership Law resulted in a different and significant period in terms of the transformation from low density/low rise settlements into high-density urban settlements. As a result of these transformations, the physical environment underwent radical changes on a larger urban scale. This change, which started in the 1950s in the area, significantly accelerated in the 1970s. Two of the most important reasons for this acceleration are the approval of the Bostancı-Erenköy Zoning Plan in 1972 and the opening of the Bosphorus Bridge (Hür, 1993).

Across the country after the 1950s, with the accelerating population and the increasing demand for housing, it became harder to respond to the housing needs of the middle-class with single-family housing units. In addition, it also became impossible to individually cover the increasing prices of the land in Istanbul. As quoted by Tekeli (2010, p. 146), 'within this situation, there are only two possible ways for the middle-class to own their houses: one is to find mechanisms, which prevent speculation; and the other is to seek a solution within current possibilities without opposing the speculation. The latter, solution is the property ownership and building apartment blocks.' As a result of the new regulation in 1954, which enabled property ownership, and with the introduction of the Property Ownership Law in 1965, which provided an all-round regulation, the apartment became redefined as a multiple ownership property that enabled the middle-class to own their flats (Tekeli, 2010).

In addition to the physical qualities of her habitat, Mrs. Günay also mentioned the on-going life in these places in her narratives:

'In the past, we used to grab our cushions and go to the open air cinemas. The mosque on Bağdat Avenue was an open-air cinema called the Çiçek Cinema. It functioned in the summer, in the garden. Across this one, there was the Kulüp Cinema, which later became the Atlantik Cinema. On the way, just before this cinema, there was the Lokman Bakery. My uncle ran a shoe store next

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An alternative dwelling history narrative: The story of the 'apartment'

to the bakery. In the summer, he kept the store open until one in morning, thinking that people on their way home from the cinema would go there for shopping. For us, as well as going to these cinemas, visiting the beaches used to be one of the main adventures of the season. There was a beach in Şaşkınbakkal, we used to go down there and sail with our fishing boat. ... There were so many mansions in Erenköy, and the area was not full of apartments yet. There was Mr. Dilman, a lawyer, who had an enormous garden with single-storey houses and sculptures in it (Figure 12). Turkish movies used to be shot in his house (Figure 13). There, we used to play snowballs in winter, and take walks in summer. Later on, from the 1970s onwards, these houses started to be demolished one by one.'

The first owner of the garden –which neighbourhood residents referred to as Mr. Dilman's garden – and of the mansions inside, was Mehmet Ali Pasha – an Ottoman statesman–. First, a part of the garden was sold to Kami Nazım Dilman because of the growing financial difficulties. After the death of Mehmet Ali Pasha in 1940, successors sold the rest of the property to Mr. Dilman (Ekdal, 2005). Mr. Dilman built a masonry villa for himself, which was designed in a modernist aesthetic. With the death of Mr. Dilman, two high-rise apartment blocks –Dilman Towers– were built in the site, and Mr. Dilman's villa was destroyed in 2015 for a new apartment block construction (Figure 14).

These years that Mrs. Günay narrates highlight the time in which the area was still a summer place with its beaches and open-air cinemas. During the1970s, the area underwent a radical transformation in terms of physical environment, as well as the way of living.

Mrs. Günay moved from the Şahinler Apartment when she got married in 1988 and has changed many residences since. First, she lived in the Esen Apartment on Bağdat Avenue from 1998 until 2003. She had to move from there because most of the flats in the apartment had been converted into offices: '*Almost all the flats in the apartment were converted into offices; there would be no one at night. That's why I had to move.*' Then she moved to

Figure 12. (a) Mrs. Asiye with her nephew Murat in Mr. Dilman's garden, 1966 (b) Murat Kami in Mr. Dilman's garden, Erenköy, 1966.

Figure 13. Mr. Dilman's mansion, view from the garden and view from the interior space to the garden, 1963.

another apartment, -the Baba Yuvası Apartment- located on Noter Street in 1988 and moved from there because of personal reasons. Lastly, she had to move from the previous apartment she lived in since 2008, to the Hayriye Apartment that she currently inhabits, because it was going to be demolished as a part of the urban transformation. She is afraid that the apartment she is currently living in will be demolished as well and explains as follows: '*I had to move here because the apartment I lived in was to be demolished. When I moved here, they told me "you moved to an old apartment again, what you are going to do if it is demolished?" I hope it will not. In fact, also our apartment would be demolished, there were some offers, but we did not accept.*'

It is observed that the apartments in which Mrs. Günay had lived in, which had been constructed in the 1970s, were typologically very similar in terms of plan layouts as well as façade layouts (Figure 15).

Tekeli (2010) states that qualitative changes occurred throughout the construction process of the apartment blocks, in their prevalence and in the

Figure 14. *(a, b) Dilman Towers built in the garden of Mr. Dilman's mansion, 2015 (c) Mansion of Mr. Dilman before it was demolished, 2014.*

Figure 15. *The apartments Mrs Günay lived in between 1998-2015 (a) The Esen Apartment (b) The Baba Yuvası Apartment (c) The Silvan Apartment (d) The Hayriye Apartment.*

social classes they appealed to within the property ownership law. The greatest impact of the transition to property ownership is that the small-scale developers called 'yapsatçı'[8] acquired a significant share in the production of the apartment blocks. A large portion of the housing production was organized in this process within the system of 'yapsat'– 'build-and-sell'. Since the 'yapsatçı' intends to maximize the change value, apartments built with that system had standard plan schemes and forms, and so this process led to the development of an anonymous building stock (Tekeli, 2010).

4. Conclusion

Today, the rapid transformation and destruction-construction process, on-going in the neighbourhood of Erenköy, has emerged as the result of urban land ownership becoming more and more profitable (Yalçıntan et al., 2013). The legal basis of this transformation is the 'Transformation of the Areas under the Disaster Risk Law', numbered 6306 that came into operation on 31 May 2012. In addition, the building codes regulations made by the ministry paved the way for a destruction-construction process by increasing the development rights.

The case study area offers a unique practice of modernization and urbanization. It constitutes a significant reference point in terms of transformation of both the dwelling and housing culture, as well as transformation of the urban space and the urban life. The oral interviews conducted with Mrs. Günay have revealed not only the physical changes of the area, but the location-specific lifestyles from a personal point of view for the time period between the years 1949-2015 as well. Also the research revealed that the rapid changes in residential environments affects the bonds of feelings that individuals experience with their dwellings and their home environment.

When the urban change emerged in Istanbul as well as the other cities in the 1950s, under the socio-economic and political effects is read through the dwelling; it is seen that the mode of production, the typology of the dwelling had changed because of changing conceptions surrounding property. Particularly, the Property Ownership

[8] 'Yapsatçı' is an urban entrepreneur, and a small-scale developer who acquires land acquire land from landowners in exchange for a selected number of apartment units in the multistory housing to be built on the land.

An alternative dwelling history narrative: The story of the 'apartment'

Law caused the typologies of the dwelling to change from detached houses and mansions into the apartment blocks. Another compelling moment in apartment blocks becoming the dominant housing typology was during the 1970s when the Bosphorus Bridge was constructed and property rights were increased by the new zoning plan. And these developments resulted into a constantly and rapidly changing residential environment that disables individuals to attach their home environment. As the research revealed, there is a meaningful relationship between dwellers and their dwelling places is interrupted by this transformation. As Dovey (1985) addresses home is a place where our identity is continuously evoked through connections with past: "The role of the physical environment in this regard is that of a kind of mnemonic anchor." The research shows that the residential environment of the case study area cannot serve as a mnemonic anchor for the dwellers. A methodologically similar research held by Marcus (1995), through the use of interviews with dwellers, examined the connections people have with their homes and revealed that what people has a strong relationship with their homes, either positive or negative, and if a space that does not fit with the needs of a person, not only physical but also psychological, can lead to negative psychological effects.

Throughout the paper, three forms of sources have been used to construct a holistic narrative history, including a personal witness, official sources and local sources which emerged as integral sources in reading history. In this context, the personal witness and accounts added details and concreteness to the historical information found in official and local sources, in addition to reaching micro-historical facts that were not included in these sources. Bilgin (1998) stresses the importance of a deeper understanding of the actors, the mechanisms and the relationships that determine the physical environments we live in. However, understanding the reflections of the determining process, of social relations and of decision-making mechanisms on the everyday life is also an important phenomenon. Exploring

the dwelling, the housing culture and the urban space, where the former two manifest themselves, through personal experiences and accounts, would make a contribution to the understanding of the transformation of dwelling on micro-scale by adding a concrete dimension. The individual story of each dwelling and its conditions of presence-absence, provide many clues about the change of the dwelling and the housing culture in a more general context.

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