



# The Dimension of Urban Morphology on Placemaking Theory: A Comparative Typomorphological Analysis of a Self-built Neighbourhood and Its Regeneration Project in Ankara

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## Abstract

The informal settlement as a self-urbanity is a widespread phenomenon that causes many political, social and environmental dilemmas in Turkey. These settlements are considered as problematic environments that need to be urgently transformed into more healthy spaces by the public authorities, and are not considered as an integral part of the city environment even by dwellers. However, the rapid urban regeneration significantly affects the physical and social quality of built form and urban life in Turkish cities. The main problem driving this research is the continuum of built environment identity and sustainability in Turkish cities due to the urban regeneration model. Therefore, this study attempts to draw attention to the potential of the concept of morphology and typology in evaluating spatial characteristics of urban life in architecture. The main purpose of the study is to perform a comparative analysis of self-built neighbourhoods and their regeneration projects from the perspective of placemaking theory to determine the spatial dynamics of self-built neighbourhoods. The study has a methodology that consists of a typomorphological analysis which reveals the impact of spatial changes on the neighbourhood environment. In accordance with this, Feridun Çelik neighbourhood in Altındağ, Ankara was selected as a case study to reveal both typological and morphological regenerations in terms of the continuity of the living patterns of its inhabitants. The analyses of “Urban Form”, “Plan Type”, “Housing Unit-Street Relationship” and “Climate-Responsive Design and Material” are documented via mapping, housing plan drawings and photographs. The main findings of the research are that the design quality of self-urbanity can be acknowledged as recognizable wholes and the destruction of existing

spatial patterns in regeneration projects results in the loss of urban identity and environmental quality. Observing the built environment with regard to places means observing their richness and complexity as a complicated interplay between individuals and their environment.

## Keywords

Urban morphology • Placemaking • Urban regeneration • Squatter neighbourhood • Self-urbanity • Sustainability

## 1 Introduction

Housing production through urban regeneration projects in Turkey is significantly affects the quality of built form and urban life in the country's cities. Urban regeneration projects in Turkey have destroyed the existing urban texture and leaving high density high-rise settlements in their aftermath. Hence, they lack in terms of the continuum of urban identity and their typological characteristics do not maintain on the advantages of the older squatter neighbourhoods' spatial properties as places. From this perspective, this study reflects on placemaking theory with regard to the concept of urban regeneration via a typomorphological approach in the case of Ankara. Therefore, this study aims to draw attention to the potential of the concept of morphology and typology, together with evaluating the quality of the urban form and characteristics of urban life in a sustainability context. An urban form and its produced types determine the role of urban identity in the city environment. Accordingly, the study attempts a comparative analysis of self-built environments and their regeneration projects to reveal the typomorphological change on city milieu. The main issue driving the research is the loss of urban identity in Turkish cities due to the current urban regeneration model. There is a considerable amount of research investigating urban regeneration projects and squatter settlements that consider both their

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deficiencies and advantages from various perspectives. However, the study presented herein deals with both self-built and planned urbanity, combining the typomorphological approach with placemaking theory to offer a methodological approach to architectural analysis techniques.

The informal settlement as a self-urbanity is a widespread phenomenon which includes many political, social and environmental dilemmas in Turkey. These settlements are not identified or addressed as an integral part of the city environment, even by their residents. Also, these areas are considered problematic environments that need to be urgently transformed to more healthy spaces by the public authorities. Hence, the characteristics of their form and architectural grammar are seen as irrelevant and context-based (Dovey & King, 2011). According to this perspective, the main motivation of this study is to conceptualize squatter settlements as everyday phenomena and make them visually distinguishable as formal settlements in their own right. However, we intend to avoid aestheticizing these settlements by just emphasizing their positive aspects comparing to their ultimate regeneration as high-density mass housing projects in Turkey. Squatter residents can be affected to their detriment, by the otherwise reasonable intentions behind glorifying such settlements. Therefore, the study presents both positive and negative aspects of squats as ordinary places and analyses their environmental qualities in terms of their social and design dimensions. Methods of analysing the morphological characteristics of self-urbanity include the considerable potential for site-specific design responses in the city transformation. Hence, the study proposes a conceptual framework with which to examine the urban form, and architecture of self-urbanity and their regenerations. The works of Kellet and Napier has been useful as a foundation to this study to elaborate on the above. This approach explores the design variety of self-urbanity and spontaneous settlement (Kellet & Napier, 1995) and their spatial continuum in the city context in terms of urban identity. Hence, the study aims to explore typomorphological patterns of neighbourhood spaces to reveal the spatial impact of social, economic and site factors on residents' live. The main purpose of the study is to conduct a comparative analysis between self-built neighbourhoods and their associated regeneration projects from the perspective of placemaking theory to determine the different morphological properties and spatial dynamics of self-built neighbourhoods as places. Accordingly, the main research question addressed by this study is: "What changes occur during the regeneration process in squatter neighbourhoods in Ankara?". The sub-questions are formulated as follow: "How do self-built settlement types produce place identities?" and "What are the socio-spatial characteristics of a squatter settlement and its regeneration as a process?".

The study has a methodology that constitutes a typomorphological analysis. The literature review develops a theoretical framework on explorations of "place" in terms of human geography. The concept of "place" is defined by Tim Cresswell and Repl provides a useful starting point for this study, and that further indicates three main influential approaches to the consideration of "place" that provide the analytical prospect for the study. These are phenomenological and critical social geographic approach to place in the context of a self-built environment and place-making theory. The phenomenological and critical social geographic approaches to "place" emphasize the creative spatial production of society. The idea of placemaking provides an alternative lens through which the advantages of these two approaches can be considered. The typomorphological analysis reveals the impact of spatial changes to neighbourhood environments from the perspective of placemaking. In accordance with this, Feridun Çelik neighbourhood in Altındağ, Ankara has been selected for consideration as a case study area to reveal both typological and morphological regeneration in terms of the continuity of place identity and the living patterns of residents. The analysis is documented via mapping, housing plan drawings, and photography (Fig. 1).

Analysed plan types were produced by the author during site visits between 2017 and 2020 when all the squats had not yet been demolished, and it is assumed that these plan types show typical squatter plan schemes in the settlement. As a conclusion, approaching squatter areas as places and analysing their regeneration period from the perspective of the typomorphological process provide for the growing visibility of squatter areas and addresses not only their socio-political dimensions in the city environment (such as land tenure, policymaking, etc.) but also reveals the properties of living environments, patterns of everyday activities and lived experiences of residents over time.

## 2 Research Methodology and Case Study

### 2.1 Typomorphology

This study adopts the methodology of a typomorphological process analysis that includes a case study of such Turkish city. The methodology will not only determine the typomorphological changes with regard to the physical characteristics of squatter neighbourhoods but also analyse the socio-spatial process through the regeneration of these squats as places. An associated literature review will attempt to identify relevant theory on squatter settlements and their regeneration processes, focusing on the relationship between self-urbanity and placemaking. The review establishes a conceptual framework that guides the research with regard to

**Fig. 1** Analytical framework of the study. Prepared by the author

	Theory	Context
Aim	To review the theory of place and a squatter neighbourhood as a self-urbanity	To analyse the transformation process of a squatter settlement in Ankara, Turkey
Methods & Instruments	Literature Review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-Urbanity</li> <li>• Placemaking</li> <li>• Socio-Spatial Characteristics               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Physical Setting</li> <li>- Social Inquiry</li> <li>- Spatial Appropriation</li> <li>- Lived Experience</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Typomorphological Analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site Observation               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mapping</li> <li>- Drawing</li> <li>- Photography</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Outputs	Conceptualization of self-urbanization as a morphological process to guide site analysis	Identification of the socio-spatial process of Feridun Çelik neighbourhood in different scales and Analytical framework to the interpretation of results according to the theoretical context

analysing the parameters of self-urban settlements and regeneration processes, analysis of the presence and changes within the case study area, and data collected about the socio-spatial characteristics of the case study area. In a site context, the study typomorphology evaluates the built environment in relation to location, time and scale to clarify the production and regeneration process of the urban form and its design quality (Chen & Thwaites, 2018). The typomorphological analysis is a useful method to map and document the existing living patterns of inhabitants, and to produce data available for academics and students. Also, the determination of changes in urban form by building types is important to explore different approaches and design solutions for the transformation of problematic areas. Location is an important aspect due to form being heavily influenced by external factors, and reflects socio-economic and the cultural values of the residents. Time is another essential factor with regard to typomorphological analysis because the durability of types and morphologies can be assessed over time, whilst the process of adaptation can be explored according to specific time periods within the regeneration process itself. Hence, the study analyses housing forms and types of different morphologies in the same location, that is a squatter settlement and its associated regeneration project. Typological changes can take place to different extends, which can be defined as continuity, partial continuity and mutation. Continuity indicates the continuous development of form with regard earlier types; partial continuity demonstrates partial changes to typologies compared to the previous

types; and mutation refers to complete typological change compared to any previous types (Gokce & Chen, 2018). In this case, the typomorphological changes resulting from the urban regeneration projects in question can be defined as the latter. Urban regeneration occur to the urban form, street patterns, land division, positioning of buildings and neighbourhood patterns. Hence, the research conducted during the case study considers the building, street and neighbourhood scales. Data collection was achieved via observation with regular site visits during the daytime over a period spanning 2017–2020. Photos, drawings and video records were used to collect information about the socio-spatial characteristics of the environment over this time.

## 2.2 Site Selection for Case Study

TOKI (the Housing Development Administration of the Republic of Turkey) has developed mass housing regeneration projects in order to solve the housing problem currently being experienced by the low- and middle-income groups who cannot afford housing under the current market conditions. Its general approach of urban regeneration projects and social housing production for low-income social groups has previously been to build affordable high-rise high-dense housing in a relatively short time (Fig. 2). However, the administration has more recently changed its approach to housing, and has started to develop housing in a way as to meet social needs, including the “Neighbourhood





**Fig. 2** Squatter settlement in North Ankara (Source <https://www.toki.gov.tr/sosyal-konutlar>)

Concept” as one of its basic space production approaches to achieve social sustainability in the city environment. Hence, as stated by the administration website, one of its main objectives is not just to build qualified affordable housing units but also to create neighbourhood environments that have genuine identities in Turkish cities (TOKI, 2020). Feridun Çelik regeneration project was run with this very intention. Therefore, the Feridun Çelik area was selected as our case study area to allow for a typomorphological analysis of socio-spatial changes of self-urbanity from the perspective of urban identity and placemaking theory.

### 3 Literature Review on Self-built Urbanity, Placemaking Theory and Urban Regeneration in Turkey

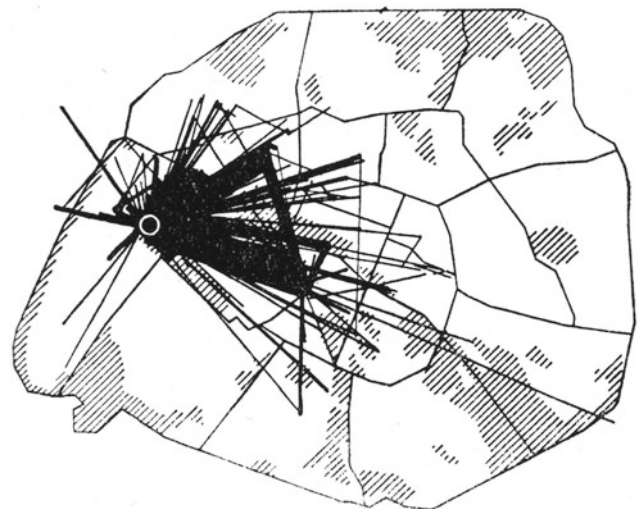
The study of places is one of the main fields of human geography. The concept of place is central to people’s everyday live. Cresswell points out the use of ‘place’ in everyday speech as that of a location. It is not only part of academic terminology, in other words, containing both simple and complicated meaning. In one sense, it is common and familiar term to a majority; in another sense, it goes beyond a common sense-level understanding and gains a socio-geographical basis. Observing the world in terms of places is indicative of observing its richness and complexity, as to consider a space is to consider the complicated interplay between individuals and their environment. The connection between a person and location, area or building is also indicative of the associated privacy, belonging and memory. “Your place” is not “my place”—everyone has their own definition or understanding of meaningful places (Cresswell, 2004). This understanding has developed over the last two decades in human geography. The initial



**Fig. 3** Mass housing regeneration project in North Ankara

positivist understanding of place within the human geography discipline had a functional perspective which is descriptive in terms of explaining the incomparable characteristics of a given region. During the 1950s and 1960s, spatial science affected the geography, and behaviours of human beings, which became abstract symbols within mapping and modelling platforms. In response to this idea, different ways of understanding the interactions between people and places were developed, and human centred geographies were created (Holloway & Hubbard, 2001) (Fig. 4). However, environmental image research was prevalent as an initially positivist approach.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the interaction of people with their environment and their responses to such became important in the field. Their representations were produced at different scales. During 1970s in particular, the notion of place became defined as a container of culture. This



**Fig. 4** Paul-Henri Chombart De Lauwe, map of a young woman’s movements in Paris, 1957

increased the emphasis of social processes on human geography. However, this understanding was criticized due to the limitations about its definition of culture. Culture is defined as “a total way of life in common by a group of people” (Shurmer-Smith, 2002 in Lombard, 2010). Recently, place theory has begun to infer a reciprocity between people and their environment, according to which place has become a socio-spatial construct that means a location and social status within society (Cresswell, 1996 in Lombard, 2010). Hence, the notion of place does not only refer to a stationary meaning, and goes beyond a location on a map, but also means a material setting for social and economic relations. Agnew explains the three fundamental aspects of this notion, which are location, locale and sense of place. In addition to the meaning of a location, Agnew explains that the notion of “locale” can represent a place where people and the events associated with them take place. In this sense, place contains a material visual form and has a real connection with humanity. Place also contains a human capacity for production and consumption. With the term “sense of place” Agnew indicates the appropriation of and attachment of people to a place. Appropriation of a place is a way of seeing, knowing and understanding the world. It is also subjected to the critical reflection of individuals (Agnew, 2014). This means that places also construct people in the same manner that people construct places. Therefore, place is not only related to the quality of the things it contains but it is also an aspect of the approach we choose to consider, designate and emphasize it by. A fundamental dualism of place and space exists in geographic thinking which conceptualizes place as both part of and different to space; in this context, Tuan points out that the ideas of “space” and “place” need each other to allow for their complete clarification. Hence, they are interrelated concepts, both literally and experientially in terms of investing in a definition of either. He defines space in a more abstract concept which has volume, geometry and movement. On the other hand, place is defined with a pause in the movement. The perception of a location is a consequence of a pause in the movement (Tuan, 1977). Cresswell defines place as a narrative in this context. According to him, place often refers to a happening and a meaning, and a space becomes a place when individuals give meaning to it (Cresswell, 2004). In relation to the urban form, the structure of space affects the experience of place. At urban scale, the urban grid and its spatial properties affect how people move within it, which spaces interrelate to each other, how individual’s travel within urban space is shaped, how much time they spend travelling, etc.

Urban morphology, as a study of the spatial structure, identifies and examines the patterns of urban component parts, the process of its development and its transformation. Whitehand defined urban morphology as a field of historical

and geographical knowledge towards the end of the 1970s (Whitehand, 1977, 1981). His studies became a root for the utilization of the theory of urban form in different geographical context, and offered a theoretical and methodological framework that combines the concepts of morphological periods, geography of cultural areas, typological processes and place characteristics. He also supervised a large number of Ph.D. studies which combined place characteristics and the study of urban form to understand the placemaking process inherent to different geographies (Oliveira, 2019). Accordingly, the urban space can be defined as an accumulation of actions of individuals and social groups. Hence, analysis of an area at different scales to identify place properties is not only undertaken with regard to the physical structures but also patterns of land use, movement, connectivity, space types, nature, etc. Despite the study of urban form having emphasized the many different fields and broader city, there are not enough studies of this nature to allow the characteristics of urban forms of poor settlements as a place to be determined (Duarte, 2009). The conceptual division of formality and informality in architecture and urban studies prevents the integration of various branches of similar research areas in the literature. This polarized understanding has resulted in the marginalization of squatters or informal settlements from morphological studies (McCartney & Krishnamurthy, 2018). Hence, there is a little documentation or morphological representations of informal settlements, especially with regard to the socio-spatial manifestations and transformation of urban poverty. In this context, this study investigates these settlements and their regeneration processes, not only to integrate planning strategies for the entire city but also to construct an urban narrative within the city environment. The determinants of urban identity can be social, geographical, environmental and architectural. These are defined in different ways in different studies, but the main elements of the city identity can be defined as follows: the physical structure of the settlement, the historical development of the city, socio-cultural accumulation of the urban environment, spatial characteristics of the milieu and urban typology. Hence, the huge change on urban form can result in the alteration of social structures and the collective identity that is formed by the values of cultural life (Yaldiz et al., 2014).

There is a clear relationship between the morphological characteristics of the built environment and social practices. The urban form is shaped by the movement of people in organically grown settlements, and the configuration of the spatial structure consolidates this movement. Hence, the analysis of the urban patterns of cities, their historical and transformation processes provides a powerful tool to describe and interpret the social characteristics of communities (Kubat, 1999). The analysis of the urban structure and its socio-economic values with the historicity of cities could

be a significant source for architects and urban planners while shaping the built environment. In that sense, Kubat made a quantitative analysis of Anatolian fortified towns and investigated Turkey's urban planning agenda through historical periods including the Romans, Byzantines, Turks and Ottomans. The main results show that Anatolian fortified towns have segregated urban layouts comparing to the other cities' analysis conducted in London, Athens and Gassin. In addition to that, the lack of openings on the street facades and the courtyard housing units with high garden walls increases the complexity of urban patterns in Anatolian cities shaped organically through the different morphological periods (Kubat, 1997). More recently, Unlu (2019) discusses the Turkish planning practice from the morphological perspective in relation to the urban change, the part-to-whole relationship and the historicity of urban form. The built environment functions the life of society, and the city acts as a dynamic unity regenerated through the production of ever-changing forms in the city. Therefore, he offers a framework to study the urban patterns and environmental characteristics of areas in their historicity and complex interactions between city parts and the whole. It is revealed that the successful management of changes to urban form needs to contain an analysis of the nature of urban growth and the roles of agents in the reproduction of urban forms. According to the consequences of his studies on different Turkish cities' context, the planners were concerned with the history and hierarchical nesting of urban form during the early Republican period while suggesting a new street system, block patterns and block types. However, this morphological perspective has changed after the second half of the nineteenth century. The identical freestanding apartment block became a dominant building type, and the designing the urban form was putten into the background as a second phase of shaping the built environment (Unlu, 2019). This understanding is still prevalent, especially in the regeneration process of poor areas in Turkey. Likewise, Yucel and Aksumer (2019) analyse the spatial changes to Selcuk province, Izmir through the five different morphological periods, which are until the end of the 1950s, between 1957 and 1980, between 1980 and 1994, between 1994 and 2008, and after 2008. Although the research area has unique spatial characteristics and natural resources, some of the results show the breakpoints of Turkey's urban planning understanding in terms of shaping the urban form. Researchers emphasize the radical changes in the third morphological period that is between 1980 and 1994. The squatter settlements were demolished, and the density of the built structure increased without any reference to the history of the area. This process affected the expansion of the city in this direction. Hence, this regeneration period is a significant point in shaping Selcuk's urban form by affecting physical

characteristics, the social structure of the community and the collective memory of the society (Yucel & Aksumer, 2019).

Hence, the subject of urban regeneration in the context of urban form has an associated, and rather comprehensive literature on the theory of urbanization and its practical applications in Turkey. The rapid urbanization process and increased migration from rural to urban areas has been resulted in the explosion in number of squatter settlements in Turkish cities. These settlements have been important units in shaping the urban form of cities, especially at city peripheries. These self-solution emergent environments become problematic due to their poor living conditions and socio-spatial segregation. Their regeneration projects have been an essential constituent of Turkey's urbanization agenda since the 2000s. The evaluation of the Turkey's urban regeneration strategies and projects on the macro-, meso- and micro-scales has been researched from different perspectives by various scholars. While the scopes of the associated researches have diversified with regard the content of such studies, there are nevertheless a number of basic common principles underlying these critical analyses and consensus on their methods and aims of them. Korkmaz and Balaban (2020) discusses the sustainability of urban regeneration projects by the competition-based approach to describe what urban regeneration looks like in practice, and to conceptualize an "emergent epidemic community" in the world's regeneration agenda. After the analysis of five high-impact initiatives from different countries including Turkey, the improvement in access to economic and leisure activities for all inhabitants—the elderly, disabled people, children, etc., has increased the benefits to local businesses and shifted people's perceptions and lived experiences from that of decay to an inclusive urban milieu (Korkmaz & Balaban, 2020). On the other hand, Dündar (2001) discusses the regeneration projects outcomes and their impacts on the physical and social topography of Ankara. She emphasizes the rapid and extensive change of the urban form instead of applying a rehabilitation process to sustain flexible characteristics of and social relations with squatters in the city. The enlargement of block sizes and the unqualified dense construction inflict a resultant damage on the internal dynamics of these neighbourhoods. The rapid increase in population, and thus, the loss of neighbourhood relations, has damaged the fabric of society (Dündar, 2001). Eren (2014) conceptualizes the parameters of urban identity in order to follow its characteristics in regeneration projects. She discusses how the change in physical environment can have an impact on urban identity via two case study areas in the cities of Istanbul and Bursa. The main findings of her analysis show that the squatter settlements' urban forms were shaped over time by the impact of the social environment and history of the area as an example of self-urbanity. The inhabitants had



a collective memory which provided a shared perception of the environment and place attachment. However, the huge change in the building types, the relationship between building units and green space and the block–parcel relationship leads to social breakage, and a loss of place attachment and socio-spatial identity within the urban milieu. Besides, the active street life of squatter settlements can be damaged due to the physical change of the urban layout (Eren, 2014). Uzun and Simsek (2015) examined the upgrading of squatter settlements through the case study of North Ankara. They revealed the principal strengths and weaknesses of the projects through a questionnaire study that included a sample of 115 people, analysis of ownership and building structures, development of parcel and receivable residence size and architectural projects of housing units. According to this study, the unhealthy infrastructures and service areas of squatter settlements were transformed into quality spaces, and large number of social, leisure and cultural facilities were provided for the residents' use. However, the main weak points of the regeneration project were the residential density and new high-rise building blocks. Hence, the project had weaknesses in terms of conserving the natural characteristics of the area and regional architectural identity of the old neighbourhood milieu. It also resulted in demographic changes and imposed an additional pressure on the original inhabitants of the area (Uzun & Simsek, 2015).

Unlu and Bas (2017) states that few studies investigate the morphological analysis of changes through generation, degeneration and regeneration process in Turkish cities. His study on the morphological process and the residential forms in the case of Çamlıbel, Mersin presents an analysis method consisting of three main principles: First, the formation and transformation process of the urban form results from the interaction of building blocks, plots and streets; second, the hierarchy of urban form can be studied in different scales starting with the city to an individual plot scale and ending with the buildings' material characteristics; third, the change of urban form is subject to the social and cultural contexts, and new emergent building types are part of the formation of urban form. After the analysis, Unlu concluded that the plot pattern metamorphosis is a result of division and amalgamation processes of planning practices. The single-family building blocks were converted to the apartment blocks in the area, and these changes continued with the addition of floors and changes to elevation details of buildings. In that sense, the planning decisions and the alliances between landowners and local government resulted in the rapid development and popularization of apartment blocks. Consequently, the urban fabric and the character of a neighbourhood environment has changed through this process (Unlu & Bas, 2017).

According to the above, defining, analysing and transforming a squatter neighbourhood as a place is not only conducted with regard to the quality of the physical properties of the environment but also pertains to the way of understanding the diverse creation of places through morphological processes in Turkey. Hence, the study refers to squatter settlements as self-urbanity instead of informality to emphasize the living environment of their residents rather than to refer to land ownership. In this sense, the relationship between self-urbanity and place theory is discussed in detail in three chapters which describe the phenomenological, critical social geographic and placemaking approaches in relation to the spatial structure properties.

### 3.1 The Lived Experience of Self-built Urbanity: Phenomenological Approach to Place

Yi-Fu Tuan and Edward Relph examined the lived-world experiences of place from the phenomenological perspective, as influenced by the thoughts of Heidegger. According to Cresswell, they brought the subject of place to the consideration of geographers in a sustainable way (Cresswell, 2004). Hence, their ideas of place are discussed extensively with regard to their potential application to squatter neighbourhoods. This chapter examines the place, lived experiences and dwelling issues and their application to self-urbanity.

Heidegger's inquiry about spaces is related to the associated locations, buildings and dwellings. According to him, the locations and the site expression of dwelling provide the spaces in which we live. Hence, the act of dwelling is defined as an expression of being in the world (Heidegger, 1971). Norberg-Schulz also mentions the relationship between dwelling and human existence itself. The idea of being and sense of belonging are linked to the act of dwelling (Norberg-Schulz, 1971). Therefore, "building" and "dwelling" are inseparable from the issue of identity. From phenomenological perspective, the notion of home refers to an intimate place and has an important role in the formulation of place. Relph's definition of home is a complete expression of place incorporating the associated aspects of location, people, time, space and place appropriation (Relph, 1976). Accordingly, home is a significant place of human existence and with regard to the identity of individuals and social groups. This phenomenological emphasis on place as the centre of belonging offers an influential focus for squatter settlements. From this perspective, self-urbanity can be defined as "a rich and complicated interplay of people and environment" (Cresswell, 2004). Also, the phenomenological approach provides a focus on everyday life, the lived experience of dwellers and "the other architectural history"

of developing countries from the perspectives of inhabitants involvement with the place. In the context of regeneration projects of these settlements, despite the focus on the purely physical changes of settlements, historico-geographical theories propose the combination of spatial analysis, and the typological and morphological approach with agents, i.e., the inhabitants, local authorities, architects and planners. The analysis of urban form is readdressed with the appearance of the built form, material use, land use, building density, activity patterns, architectural periods, the process of development, the characters of proposals of change and the decision-making processes followed by developers (Oliveira, 2019). In that combination of placemaking theory and urban morphology, this study redefines the inhabitants of squatter settlements as shapers of urban form and regeneration project developers as agents of change.

Hence, the conception of dwelling for squatter neighbourhoods can be evaluated as a self-help movement and inhabitants' highest expressions of being (Lombard, 2010). The socio-economic and socio-spatial properties of a settlement are associated with the belonging and place attachment of inhabitants. Hence, human interaction with the environment, site specifications and elements of human activities are important parameters through which to focus on the lived experiences of inhabitants. In the context of these parameters, finding formal solutions to unhealthy squatter areas can be evaluated on the basis of identity and defined as "placeless" (Varley, 2008).

### **3.2 Socio-spatiality of Self-built Environment: Critical Socio-spatial Approach to Place and Urban Form**

While the phenomenological approach to the squatters seek the sense of place and lived experience of such, the critical social geographer considers the concept of place through the lens of social and cultural conflicts (Harvey, 1996). According to this, place is seen as a social construct and its fundamental role in social life is scrutinized from the perspective of a progressive political agenda (Cresswell, 2004). Looking at places as social hierarchies does not only include social processes but also the creation, continuance and regeneration of the relations of domination, oppression and exploitation (Cresswell, 2004). Stating a place is a social construct is also a statement of its materiality. Cresswell explains that the fabric of a space is a product of society. The elements of urban form, which are the building units, the public gardens, the streets, the trees, etc., are the production of society. In the context of squatter neighbourhoods as self-urbanity, the housing units and gardens are not just buildings and nature, but are rather the tireless efforts of the local residents in the city. In this manner, one of the key

concepts by which to explore squatter settlements is their relation to power. Hence, squatter neighbourhoods are evaluated as areas of negative relations, especially between the state and the community. However, social constructionist approaches offer a response to this with a real focus on the complexity of power in place (Lombard, 2010). This provides an improved consideration of the entangled processes that occur as a part of self-urbanity. In a relational sense, place reflects the expectations about the behaviours associated with the social and spatial concerns. Place is not a simple geographical aspect, it also coincides with both social and cultural expectations reflected in the urban form. The existing patterns of street blocks, the ratio of empty to built-up areas and the utilization of building blocks are determined by inhabitants as place shapers in squatter settlements. Hence, the urban form of this self-organization is a process of identifying building the associated fabric. In contrast to the planned regeneration projects, the set of rules for space division and place construction do not allow for a clear delineation of boundaries. The hierarchy between streets, the degree of form continuity over time and the hierarchy of boundaries between housing units are based on the socio-historical development of the area. Correspondingly, Shields explains marginal spaces within the framework of social spatialization. These spaces are not only evaluated within geographical peripheries, but are also located at the periphery of cultural systems and can be ranked relative to each other (Shields, 2002). Hence, the squats, as organic urban forms, are the result of social spatialization of cultural systems. Inhabitants are able to resist the construction of their expectations by building, using and giving meaning to their places. Therefore, the morphology of squatter neighbourhoods can be stated as the power of the expectations of what the place is for. However, from the perspective of acquisition of land tenure, inhabitants gradually become involved in conferring their own attachment to what was formerly agricultural land. They appropriate vacant lots via illegal or semi-legal activities to create housing areas, streets, public spaces, meeting areas, playground spaces, etc. This self-appropriation simultaneously initiates the formal processes to gain urban services and supply. In a long-term situation, the state makes the attempt to exert its power to bring order to and transform these places. Whilst the construction of squat inhabitants' own spaces, appropriation of the areas, and initiation onto the formal processes are long term in nature, and indeed contain complexity in power and place relationship, the regeneration of the area through formalization occurs over a relatively short term period. In fact, their regenerations also comprises complex socio-spatial relations in relation to power, resistance and identity. Hence, from the point of critical social geographical thought on place, the regeneration of these settlements should be contextualized not only as a



regularizing and formulization process from the perspective of political inquiry but also as an integral part of its neighbourhood within the city environment in connection with time. Hence, their typomorphological process of regeneration becomes important to the determination of place meaning and behavioural patterns in space.

### 3.3 Self-urbanity as Process: Conceptualization of Placemaking for Self-built Environment and Its Regeneration in Turkey

The other fundamental experiential property of the concept of place is movement. The phenomenological geographer Seamon, who discusses place as a central concept within his work, refers to bodily mobility rather than rootedness in order to explain the key component of place theory. He follows the French phenomenologist Merleau-Ponty and focuses on the “everyday movement in space”. This is the production of particular patterns and the habitual nature of a settlement with regard to the experiential character of place (Seamon, 1980). In this context, Pred also explains the creation and utilization of physical setting according to structuration theory. Place is a never-ending convergence and is the result of processes and practices. In this context, the proposed theory regards the material continuity of people as a participant in that process and of objects as being employed in time–space practices (Pred, 1984). Hence, place as a process enhances the material continuity and reciprocal influence between a place and its inhabitants. The materiality of places influences people’s living patterns and is influenced by people’s actions. Within this framework, squatter settlements as representations of self-urbanity can be described as a confluence of flows and squatter inhabitants can be conceptualized as agents who embody a living environment and its possible material existence. Self-urbanity as process rests upon feelings of belonging within the rhythm of life in social production. Hence, the design properties of squatter settlements contribute to the history of social production and reproduction. A socio-spatial process is a communicative process that includes individual and collective dimensions. In this context, Amos Rapoport mentions the design qualities of self-urbanity and acknowledges them as being “recognizable wholes”, and as worthy of being considered traditional vernacular settlements. Because of this, he uses the term ‘spontaneous’ rather than squat to refer to the nature of the built environment rather than land tenure. From this perspective, he identifies spontaneous settlements as “cultural landscapes” that are representations of individuals’ decisions and their socio-spatial processes (Rapoport, 1988). He gives a list of numerous processes and product characteristics to describe all traditional settlements. Process characteristics

contain “the identity, intentions and anonymity of the designer”, “the reliance on a model with variations”, “the extent of sharing of single models”, “the congruence of the chosen model with ideals of the users”, “degree of congruence between environment and culture-life style”, “degree of self-consciousness of the design process”, “form of temporal change” and “extend of sharing knowledge about design and construction”. Product characteristics contain “degree of cultural and place specificity”, “specific models, plan forms and morphologies”, “nature of relation to landscape”, “effectiveness of response to climate”, “efficiency in use of resources”, “open-endedness allowing changes and regarding activities”, “degree of multisensory qualities of environment and differentiation of settings”, “effectiveness of environment as a setting for life-style and activity system” and “ability to settings to communicate effectively to users” (Rapoport, 1988). This process is also defined as a placemaking process as an active verb. Placemaking explores the socio-spatial construction of place and highlights the potentiality of human activity in their environment. It also offers an analytical focus on the complex relationship between individual, community, physical setting and power.

Through the idea of placemaking, the process of appropriating a space is also a mirror of self (Friedmann, 2007). The appropriation of space is related to the activities such as going to the local butcher and baker, knowing the manes of the streets and being part of local meetings, and other forms of everyday life in Turkey. Therefore, the spatial characteristics of neighbourhood designate these activity patterns and the identity of place. In this sense, placemaking offers significant grounds on which to analyse the multiple and complex relationships in social and spatial construction in squatter settlements as self-urbanity and its regeneration in a sustainability context. As stated by Eren (2014), the squatter settlements contains sociospatial opportunities with regard to urban morphology and typology in Turkey. The most important place factor on the urban form of squatter settlements in Turkey is the impact of topography on shaping street layout. Most of such settlements were placed at the periphery of cities and on the foothills of mountains. While this provides a panoramic view of the city or landscape, the urban forms were shaped according to the places’ geographies. Streets are formed at diagonals or parallels to the slopes. Hence, this organic urban layout formation differs from the planned linear urban configuration in Turkish cities in general. The size of housing units changes with regard to the gradient of slope. There is width hierarchy between streets, as well. Some become widened over time to allow access by larger vehicles. These organically formed self-built settlements creates unique community relations within which the inhabitants know each other and between them shape their environment over a long time. Hence, streets and shared green spaces characteristics provide

common spaces for daily routines. While a regeneration project upgrades the poor environmental conditions in a squatter settlement, it should not be a purely physical renewal project, but it also needs to conserve strong socio-spatial relations in the neighbourhood community and hierarchy of boundaries in the urban form because it determines the social fabric of community.

#### 4 Case Study in Feridun Çelik Neighbourhood, Altındağ, Ankara

Feridun Çelik neighbourhood is located on the north-east side of Ankara. The area is on the edge of the periphery highway of Ankara (Figs. 5 and 6).

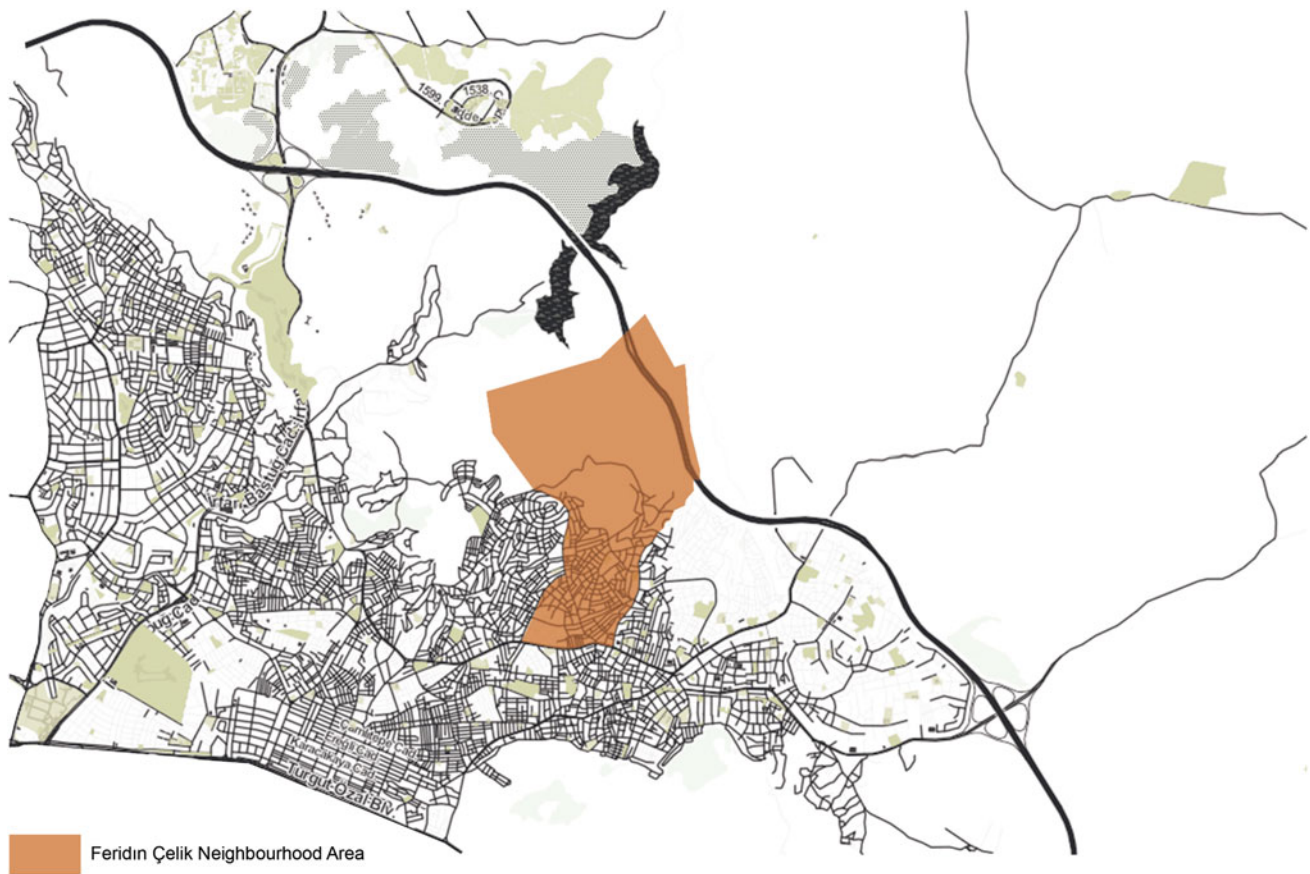
According to TUIK's record from 2019, the population of the neighbourhood is 7,466. It has gradually decreased from 17,720 in 2007 to 6,394 in 2015 due to the regeneration process in the area (Fig. 7). The neighbourhood is still undergoing urban regeneration and the area of Cinderesi has been designed as the last step of the regeneration project in the neighbourhood.

Dovey and King explain the typology of informal settlements in terms of eight different types of urban forms and the visibility of squatter settlements. These are “districts”, “waterfronts”, “escarpments”, “easements”, “sidewalks”, “adherences”, “backstage” and “enclosures” (Dovey & King, 2011). According to this classification, Feridun Çelik neighbourhood can be defined as a “backstage” which is formed through attachment to the existing settlement of the city (Figs. 8 and 9). It is largely hidden from the public gaze of the formal city development.

According to Dovey and King's description, such informal developments are commonly seen in strong states or countries where the visibility of squatter neighbourhoods can be described as politically sensitive (Dovey & King, 2011). Therefore, the squatter settlement's insertion and excrescences are placed at the interstices of an existing formal sector housing area (Fig. 10). Even though squatter neighbourhoods can be visible from a distance, they are often impenetrable and enclaves for different social classes in Turkey's context. Hence, they may be defined as informally gated, and a key transformation has also occurred in the production of new sites within this environment for middle

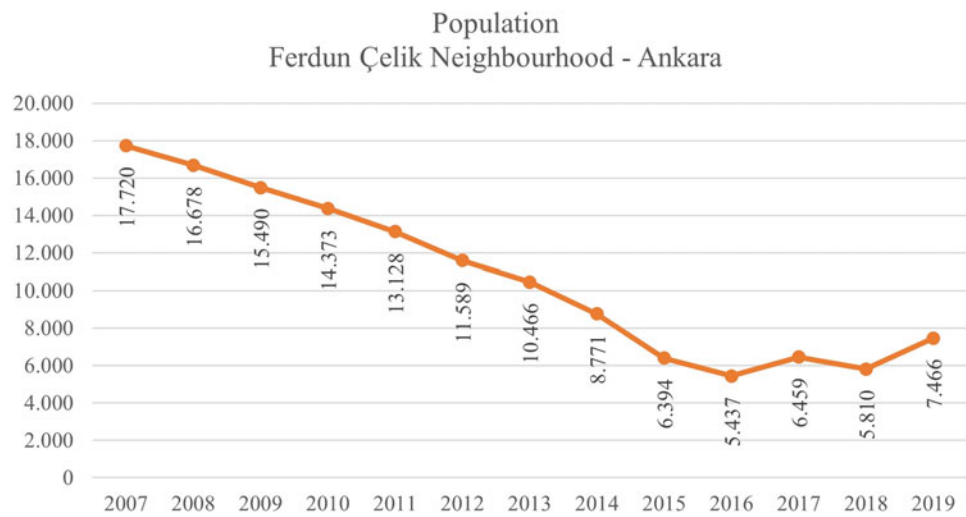


**Fig. 5** Feridun Çelik neighbourhood area in Ankara. Prepared by the author



**Fig. 6** The boundary of neighbourhood area of Feridun Çelik. Prepared by the author

**Fig. 7** Population of Feridun Çelik Neighbourhood between 2007 and 2019 (Source TUIK)



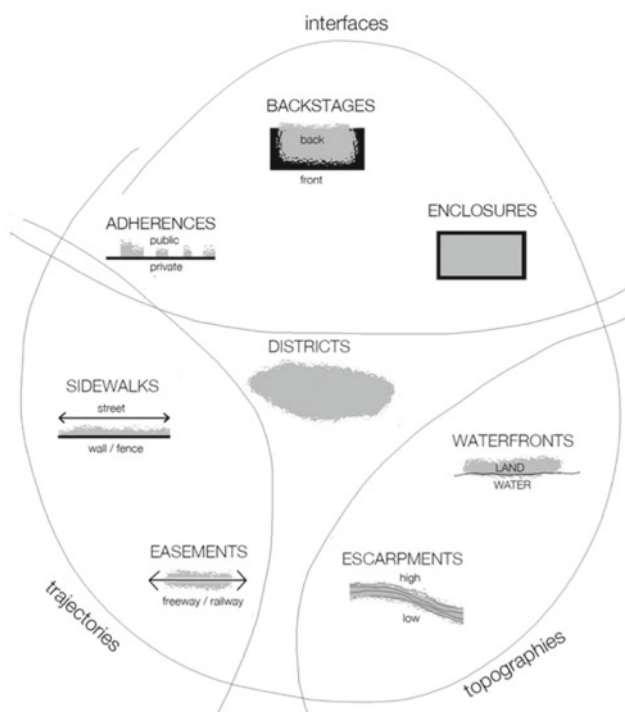
in-come social groups. Transforming these “backstage” squats into apartment blocks or high-rise building blocks has produced an image that inhabitants belong to the middle class. Therefore, typomorphological change to the site

creates a new image of the city, both socio-politically and socio-economically. The typological change in the urban architecture enables the transformation of a lack of law and order.





**Fig. 8** Squatter area of Feridun Çelik Neighbourhood. Photograph taken by the author



**Fig. 9** Types of Squatter Neighbourhoods (Source Dovey & King, 2011)

## 4.1 Site Analysis

### 4.1.1 Urban Form of the Squatter Settlement

Urban form determines the three-dimensional built form of city by outlining the built and un-built environment. Within the framework of self-urbanity as a morphological process in the neighbourhood, the land uses are not straightforward. Urban form and its individual housing units have an anti-homogeneous character (Fig. 11).

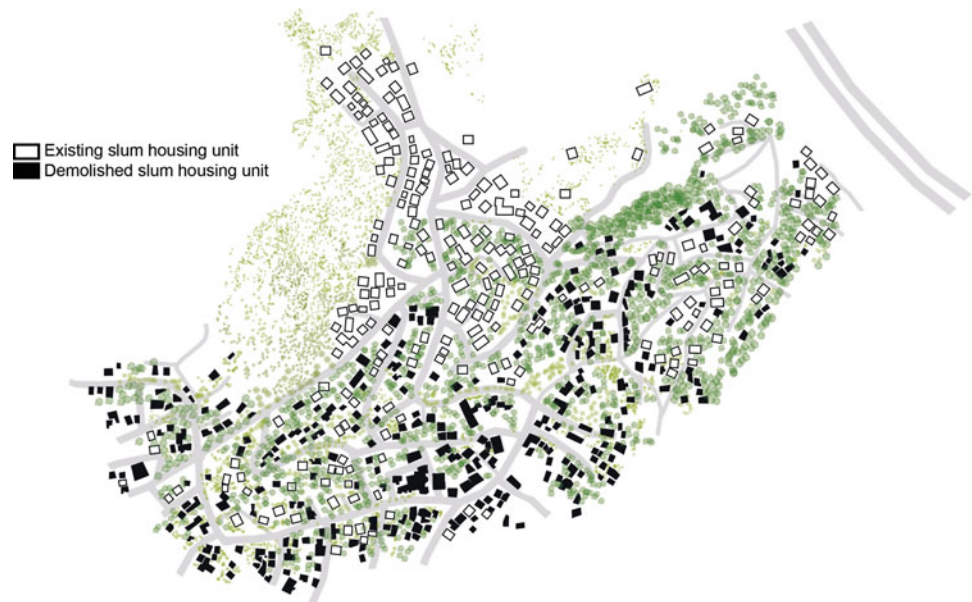
This organic form and land division of the settlement is not a result of formal contract but eventuated by the negotiations between inhabitants. Hence, soft boundaries are observed between the private and public space (Fig. 12). Symbolic boundaries result on the zoning of private, semi-private, semi-public and public spaces. The degree of privatization is provided by architectural barriers or garden walls in the urban space. The creation of zones of transition informs people about the range of possible activity and orients them in the existing living pattern. The lived experience and behaviour of an individual changes according to these symbolic barriers as a matter of course. On the other hand, the regenerated part of the area as a planned place does not include any perceptible zones of transition from the public space to private or semi-private spaces (Fig. 23).





**Fig. 10** The intersection of squats and formal-sector buildings (Source <https://www.altindag.bel.tr/#!haberler/2019>)

**Fig. 11** Urban form of the squatter settlement in Feridun Çelik Neighbourhood. Prepared by the author





**Fig. 12** Soft boundaries within the urban space in the squatter area of Feridun Çelik Neighbourhood. Photograph taken by the author



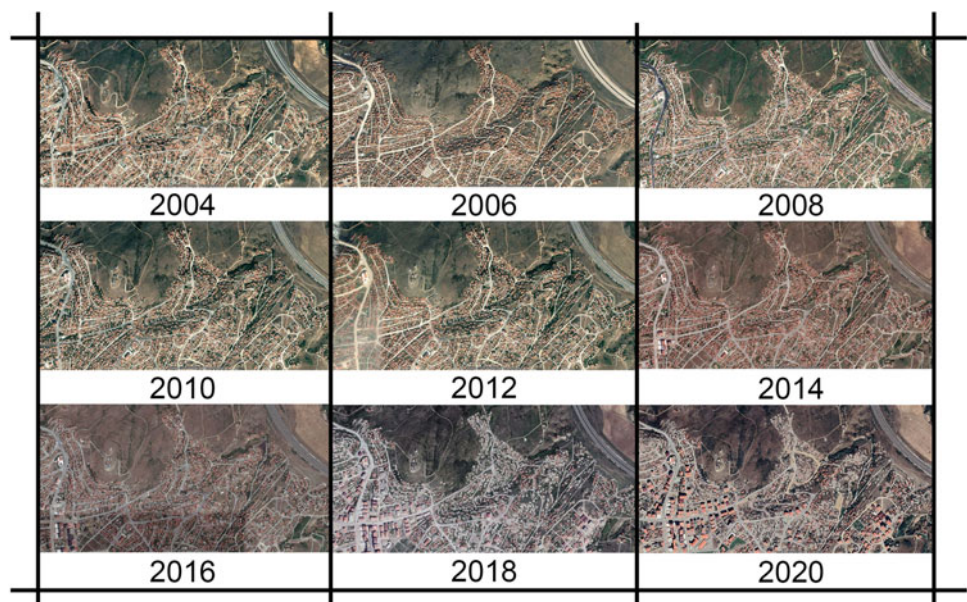
The change from organic urban form to planned warped parallel structure can also be evaluated according to the associated building blocks. The complicated part of the regeneration project has monotype apartment blocks. On the contrary, the squatter housing units are not identical and have smaller forms shaped according to local topography (Fig. 13).

In the comparison of land use before and after the regeneration, the new settlement after the regeneration includes zoned land use and a flow of inhabitants, whilst the existing pattern of squatter settlement in the form of self-urbanity has the mixed and dynamic making character

of land use. However, this absence of land use let the inhabitants meet different needs over time.

The other important point of the morphological analysis of self-urbanity and its regeneration as a process is the associated access and connectivity. Morphological analysis includes the circulation of space configuration in role of movement and accessibility. By using Habraken's definition, there could be two main patterns of settlement that can be defined in terms of access and connectivity. These are the regularized grid and the organic tree form. Both include different levels of connectivity and control (McCartney & Krishnamurthy, 2018). According to his definition, the

**Fig. 13** Morphology as a process: morphological changes between 2004 and 2020 in Feridun Çelik. Prepared by the author from Google images





**Fig. 14** Urban form of the squatter area. Prepared by the author



**Fig. 15** Urban form of the regenerated area. Prepared by the author

regularized grid form of the regeneration project in Feridun Çelik neighbourhood creates a sense of security by allowing the free filtering of traffic, multiple linkages and options for people. On the other hand, the organic form of squatter areas in the neighbourhood provide less control over access to the community space due to the branching structure of the tree form (Figs. 14 and 15).

#### 4.1.2 Plan Types

Typological process is a key concept in urban morphology regarding to the analysis of type changes as a result of the transformational evaluation of a site (Gokce & Chen, 2019). Within the framework of this study, plan types are defined as a living pattern of inhabitants which reflect their forms of life in a cultural aspect. Therefore, the typological process is used as a tool to reveal the robustness or infirmity of plan types of self-urbanity in the study. The spatial arrangement of the housing unit plans was analysed during the author's site visits and four different typical plans were produced with different plan schemas and spatial configurations. However, it is observed that all squatter housing units are transformed to apartment blocks which have same spatial arrangements

and less flexibility in use with regard to the priorities and needs of different social groups (Figs. 16 and 17).

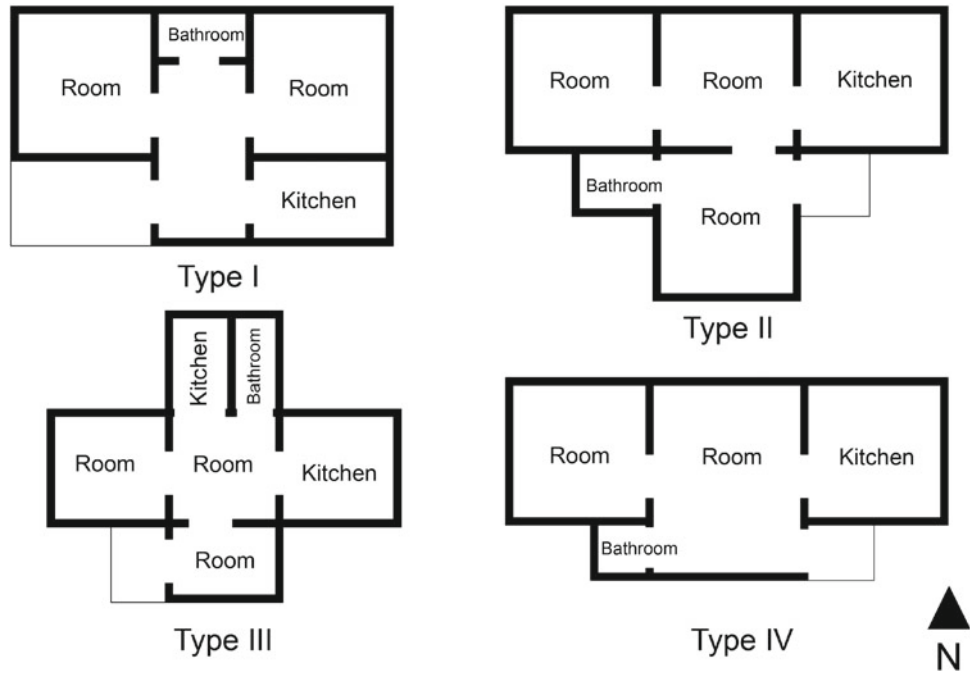
In self-urbanity, the inhabitants are the decision makers with regard to their housing design in terms of the determining what their needs and priorities are. However, the planned formal housing unit plans have no respect the communities' preferences in Feridun Çelik neighbourhood. In linking placemaking theory and urban regeneration practice, there are some regeneration model examples that allow participatory designing with the community while transforming or upgrading the existing housing conditions. The UN-Habitat A Practical Guide to Designing, Planning and Executing Citywide Squatter Upgrading Programmes states that residents participation improves housing design and achieves a more suitable design result in squatter regeneration programmes if the plans do not remain academic exercises but are implemented with the support of participating residents (UN-Habitat, 2014). Accordingly, the appropriation of a place and spatial comfort can be addressed through taking into consideration any existing plan types and analysing the place's morphological change as a process.

#### 4.1.3 The Housing Unit-Street Relationship

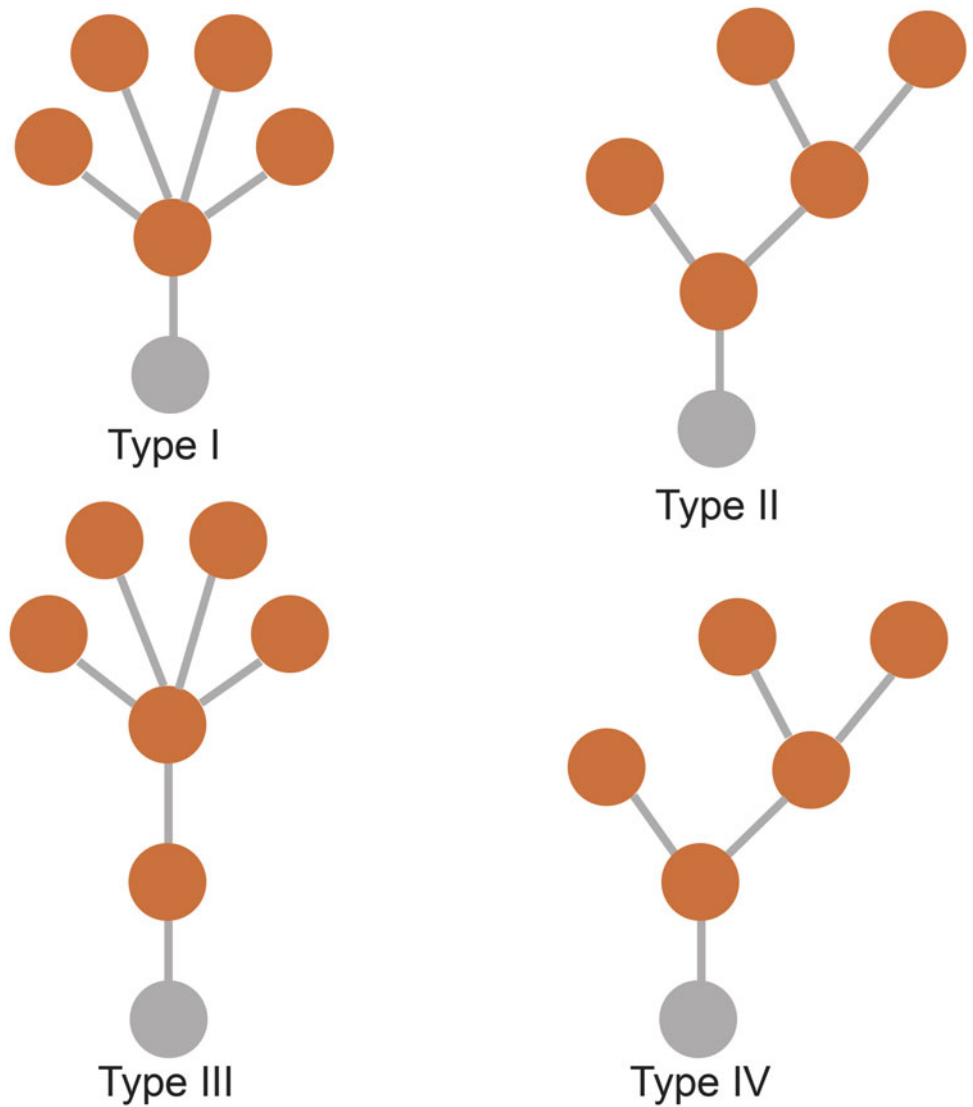
The relationship of the housing unit with the street is important in terms of the ability to analyse the orientation of mass and its entrance, spatial arrangement of indoor-outdoor places and visual communication of public spaces. These factors affect the behavioural patterns of dwellers, neighbouring relationships, security of neighbourhood places, creation of defensible spaces and the sense of belonging in the public realm. The forms of housing units and their relationship with the topography and street network determines the properties of this relationship. The squatter area of Feridun Çelik neighbourhood consists of one-to-two floor housing units including garden spaces (front or back gardens, sometimes both) and balcony spaces in relation to the street spaces (Fig. 18). While the masses are placed in order not to see each other's gardens to provide intimacy between them, they establish a visual communication with the street. In contrast to this, the regeneration project area consists of six-to-ten floor apartment blocks which lack semi-private garden spaces and have less visual communication with the street. Therefore, the squatter housing units create more defensible spaces and control over the public spaces compared to the apartment blocks. This gives an indication that the sense of belonging in squatter settlements is actually stronger than in the regenerated area.

During the site visits, it was also observed that the streets were used as community or socializing space for dwellers and playgrounds for children. However, there was no children on the streets in the regenerated area due to the security and traffic problems (Fig. 19).

**Fig. 16** Typical plan schemas of squatter housing-units in Feridun Çelik. Prepared by the author



**Fig. 17** Spatial configuration of squatter housing units in Feridun Çelik. Prepared by the author





**Fig. 18** A squatter housing-unit in Feridun Çelik. Photograph taken by the author



**Fig. 19** Street as a community space in the squatter settlement of Feridun Çelik. Photograph taken by the author



Gardens can be defined as the result of the endeavours of inhabitants and they are sites of history in terms of landscape properties. From this perspective, the semi-private garden spaces of the housing units contain architectural values pertaining to the lived experiences of inhabitants.

The other important element in the housing unit-street relationship is that of “wall”. During site visits, it was observed that the squatter neighbourhood community used urban walls as a way of communicating. Therefore, the wall,

as a communicative tool, can be defined as a placemaking object of self-urbanity (Figs. 20 and 21).

#### 4.1.4 Climate-Responsive Design and Building Materials

Each stage of the design process is important for the appropriation of the place throughout the lives of the structures. Hence, climate-responsive design is crucial for place-making theory in the sense of attachment to the place

**Fig. 20** Wall as a communicative tool. Photograph taken by the author



**Fig. 21** Wall as a communicative tool. Photograph taken by the author



and socio-economic sustainability of a settlement. According to the site analysis, it was observed that housing units were placed a certain distance from each other to properly benefit from the available sunlight. In addition, deciduous trees, especially at the south-west and west of the housing site, have been used to block the summer sun, and traditional pitched roofs further provide the essential shade needed to allow for the everyday activities of the inhabitants (Fig. 18). Also, trees were planted to provide shading and cooling to ensure comfortable retreats, especially during the hot

summertime. In this context, the trees on the site can be defined as a memory of place. However, the apartment blocks built for the regeneration projects were not placed with any due consideration for climate, energy efficiency and to receive adequate daylight. The relationship between greenery and apartments was not designed to create appropriate shading (Figs. 22 and 23).

On the other hand, the squatter settlement is a poor quality area in terms of climate change conditions like flooding and extreme weather events. The infrastructure of





**Fig. 22** The use of shading element and trees in a squat. Photograph taken by the author



**Fig. 23** The new urban regeneration building. Photograph taken from Google Map

the area does not provide for any real resilience to the high risks of emergency services, flooding, heavy storms, etc. Hence, effective policies to improve the poor quality of urban and building infrastructure need to be developed to build such resilience.

Morphological analysis also addresses the material composition of the buildings. In the subject of material qualities of housing units, housing units in the squatter area of the neighbourhood are not built from durable materials or have secure foundations in comparison to the new types. Hence,



**Fig. 24** Material quality of demolished squatter unit. Photograph taken by the author



**Fig. 25** Material quality of a squatter unit. Photograph taken by the author.



squats can be defined as temporal housing units in the context of place as a process. Also, the durability of materials and the structure of housing units are ill-suited to the high risk presented by earthquakes in Turkey (Figs. 24 and 25).

## 4.2 Discussion

The urban form of a squatter settlement as a placemaking process of inhabitants reflects the relations between space,

geography and community organizations in the study. The analysis of the building type and urban form of the squatter settlement shows that the housing units randomly scattered on the mountain foothills amongst natural vegetation have a definite rural character. This habitation resulted in different forms of life than the planned urban grid offers. Streets are not only used purely for the purpose of movement but also as socializing spaces for the inhabitants. It is a fact that the spatial standards and material quality of the housing needs to be developed. However, this process should be prepared



with due consideration for the current landscape properties and urban symbols of social identity.

The organic urban form of the squatter settlement provides a hierarchy of use, and the low-density scattered layout is related to the privacy, movement and space sharing process of inhabitants in Feridun Çelik. Hence, in-between space, such as semi-private gardens, urban parks, etc., regulates the balance in terms of sharing common space between different social groups in the settlements—e.g., children, women, elderly people, etc. However, an increase in the density of building blocks and population will have certain negative impacts on the social bonds between inhabitants. Also, the linear regularized grid arrangement and wider street layout that fails to include a hierarchy do not provide in-between spaces for different community organizations, and thus results in a loss of social cohesion. The other common building type seen in the squatter settlement is the additional structures that have storage, car parking or woodshed functions. The sizes and forms of these structures as representative forms of flexible construction processes are mostly determined by the needs of the inhabitants over time. On the other hand, the regeneration projects do not include the flexibility to allow inhabitants to determine the form of their buildings or make additions or reductions as part of a placemaking process.

From the perspective of accessibility and connectivity, a regularized grid form has advantages according to the organic tree form. However, the organic form of the squatter area creates more defensible streets, especially in terms of the relationship between housing units and streets. According to the climate-responsive design principles, trees and garden spaces provide energy efficiency and daylighting to the squatter housing units. On the other hand, the apartment blocks that typify the regenerated part were not designed with due consideration for climate type, sunlight or passive energy systems. However, it should be emphasized that the squatter settlements do not create environments that are resilient to the risks inherent to climate change and earthquakes in Turkey.

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## 5 Conclusion

According to the UN-Habitat Report, one third of the global urban population lives in squatter settlements. Although the percentage of squatter areas has decreased, the number of people living in squats has been increasing gradually (UN-Habitat, 2004). Hence, both analysing the living patterns of squatter settlements and developing upgrade and regeneration strategies for them are important, especially in developing countries. In the Turkish context, the study of squatters has previously focused on policy, land tenure and urban poor perspectives. However, this study has analysed

their morphological characteristics and site-specific design responsiveness as pertaining to placemaking theory as a process. The analysis of function and form, connectivity and access and public and private spaces introduced a set of dynamics to the existing morphological approaches. The study approached the squatter neighbourhood as self-urbanity from the perspective of placemaking in the context of sustainability. Accordingly, the analysis method was determined to be one of a typomorphological process to reveal the physical and socio-spatial characteristics of the areas which are squats and the new regenerated settlement in the same neighbourhood. The main limitation of the study was gaining access to the plan drawings of housing units and site plan of the regeneration projects intended for the area. Although the author applied to the local council to gain access to the architectural documents of the regeneration project, the sharing of these documents was rejected by the local planning authority. Hence, the drawings and diagrams pertaining to the project were produced directly by the author during site visits and through internet accessible visuals.

The main question posed by the research—namely that of what changes occurred during the regeneration process of the squatter neighbourhood in the context of Ankara—has been answered from the perspective of socio-spatial characteristics of a city environment as a place. Accordingly, the analysis was conducted according to four different categories, those of “urban form”, “plan type”, “housing unit-street relationship” and “climate responsive design and building materials”. The main finding of the research was the huge change in the urban form over regeneration process of Feridun Çelik. Concerns about the social sustainability of the urban regeneration experience in Turkey have arisen with regard to the consequences of density, building scale and landscape form. The study contributes a new perspective to the scientific field on how spatial arrangements determine social relationships, privacy and community organization in an urban environment. Rather than analysing the main differences of squatter environment and planned urban form, the study offers a social focus on urban habitation, and reveals urban symbols of social identity in the context of the urban regeneration process in Ankara. Suggested future research in this area include research into how to prepare design guidelines or frameworks to gradually improve the physical standards via improved regeneration modelling by conserving the socio-spatial identity and place properties of the environment. The study reveals the spatial properties of a squatter neighbourhood and its social aspects as a place; the next step in this research is to formalize design codes addressing multiple dynamics and factors that shape the growth of squatter settlements. To conclude, one of the challenges of the study of squatter areas was the lack of methodological approach to combining spatial and social

inquiries. The main gap in this research field is the lack of data on squatter areas and their inhabitants. These areas are ignored in terms of the collection of detailed data and systematic study by the authorities. This results in inappropriate design solutions and unsustainable regeneration projects in terms of the creation of qualified environments through conserving local culture and social relations. Also, analysing squatter areas with their regeneration processes has been neglected within architecture and urban design literature. However, with the growing visibility of squatter neighbourhoods, especially through morphological studies and geospatial theories, the typomorphological approach has started to provide detailed insights into the analysis of squatter settlements and their regeneration processes and addresses the dynamics of urbanization in the context of different cities.

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