

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to investigate the socioeconomic background of the migration and urbanization of a group of rural migrants living in three *gecekondus*, or squatter settlements, in the northern hills of Istanbul. The Nafibaba (Hisarüstü), Baltaliman, and Ahmet Celâleddin Paşa (or, more commonly, Celâlettin Paşa) settlements consisted, during the chief investigation conducted in 1968, of some five hundred dwellings of various sizes and shapes with a total population of about 3500. These settlements were chosen for study because they were inhabited almost exclusively by migrants from the countryside and better reflected the basic causes of internal migration, the continuous relations with the village, and the patterns of urbanization than did the settlements inhabited by refugees or migrants from abroad. The three settlements provided a basis for studying patterns of leadership and internal organization, urban adaptation, and related matters comparatively, although intragroup comparison was not the chief purpose of this study. In addition, a series of prior contacts and familiarity with these settlements provided intimate information on the settlements and facilitated the study of the impact of migration on the squatters' village of origin.

The *gecekondus* have been regarded in this study as being part of a total process of rural migration and urbanization, or modernization – that is, of the quantitative and qualitative transformation of the economic, social, political, and cultural order – in the third world nations. Consequently, the idea that the village and city are part of a continuum in time and space – that is, part of a nation and a national territory, affecting each other and in turn affected by macro developments at national and global levels – occupies a central place in this study. Moreover, the historical factors that undermined the traditional social structure in the third world countries and freed a large number of rural people for migration and

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settlement elsewhere are emphasized. The Turkish *gecekonu* has been compared with similar establishments in Latin America, North Africa, and Asia, and to a much lesser extent with those in subsaharan Africa, whose establishment and growth is similar but whose urban integration seems to differ slightly from the rest.

The approach in studying rural migration and urbanization as outlined above is warranted, I believe, by concrete developments in the third world. The disintegration of the traditional social and political structures in the nineteenth century and accelerated economic development in the form of industrialization and political independence, aided by high birth rates and low mortality after World War II, have caused a vast movement of rural migrants into cities in the developing nations of Asia, Africa, and South America. The urban population of the less developed areas has risen, according to the United Nations, from 220 million in 1940 to 490 million in 1960 and is expected to reach 1045 million in 1980. Most of this growth is due to rural migration.

A substantial part of these rural migrants, or these new urban dwellers, live on the outskirts of large urban centers in shacks built illegally on the property of the state, municipalities, or individuals. Thus, a considerable part of third world urban growth occurring after World War II consists of a series of uncontrolled settlements known as squatter towns or shantytowns in English. For instance, the United Nations has estimated that the uncontrolled, or squatter, settlements in 23 countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America account for roughly 35 percent of their total urban population.

The basic role played by squatter settlements in the development and urbanization of the third world has remained, with a few notable exceptions, outside the mainstream of socioeconomic and cultural studies despite the fact that the squatter settlements are an inherent part of the process of development and structural transformation – of the urbanization-modernization – occurring in the third world. A substantial part, though not all, of the squatter settlements are inhabited by migrants from rural areas. According to a government study, 84 percent of the squatter settlements in Turkey are inhabited by migrants. Consequently, a deeper understanding of squatter settlements is essential not only for placing rural migration and urbanization in a new perspective, but also for devising the practical policies necessary to solve the problems caused by

rapid urban growth and housing shortage. Squatter settlements, notwithstanding their poor reputation, must be seen as part of the process of occupational change and social mobility, demand making, political participation, and eventual urban-national integration that is transforming the rural society in much of the third world. Finally, squatter settlements throughout the world are rather similar to each other, making global policies to deal with the problems relatively easy to develop.

Views about squatter settlements have undergone rapid change since the phenomenon was signaled as a major development some 20 years ago. They were viewed first as an abnormal urban growth and then as self-help projects undertaken by low-income urban dwellers, mostly migrants attempting to build homes with their own skills and resources. Squatter settlements are now regarded as a by-product of the malfunctioning of the economic and social system in some third world countries, a malfunctioning that creates a relation of economic marginality between the city and the low-income groups and one of dependency between the national economy and other stronger systems. All these views, including the concept of marginality, which is very useful in analyzing the migrants' relations with the new urban environment and their integration into the city, have been used in this study in accordance with my own estimation of their relative value. While emphasizing the importance of macro factors involved in rural migration and urbanization, this study has also dealt with the squatters' individual relations with two larger social units – the village and the city – of which they are a part. The migrants' constantly changing relationship and reappraisal of their position toward the city and the village have been studied in this work to the extent possible, from the viewpoint of the migrants themselves, rather than from that of those not directly involved in the process.

The squatter begins his social metamorphosis as a village dweller, changes into a rural migrant and low-paid worker in the city, turns into a squatter, and, finally, if successful, integrates himself into the city to become an urban dweller. The migrants' changing relations and affinity with the village and the city have been analyzed throughout this study in the context of economic marginality rather than cultural or social alienation. A series of variables – such as planned economic development and rapid industrializa-

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tion, the developing political culture, and its underlying populist participatory philosophy – make the rural migration and the urban growth in the third world rather different from a similar process that accompanied industrialization and urbanization in the West. I have attempted, while fully adhering to basic common concepts, to view matters related to migration and urbanization in Turkey also in the light of local conditions, as well as the values of the native culture, rather than to evaluate them entirely in accordance with the social experience and goals of other societies.

In accordance with the general approach outlined above, the three squatter settlements in Istanbul have been studied in an interdisciplinary comparative framework as part of a broad process of historical and structural transformation affecting both the village and the city, and as a process of cultural, social, and political adaptation and personality change. The residents of these settlements have been interviewed in order to assess the reasons for their migration from villages, their problems of integration into the urban environment, and their continuing relations with the village, and their impact thereon. I have viewed communal solidarity and village attachments surviving in the settlement as factors providing for group cohesion and facilitating a relatively healthy integration into the city, while accepting the fact that village cultural attitudes and modes of organization were gradually changed and adapted to the requirements of urban existence. Social action and politics have been regarded as a major channel for the squatters' participation and integration into urban and national life, and also possibly affecting the emerging national political culture.

I believe that the plan of this study reflects the approach outlined above. In the first chapter I have attempted to place the three Turkish *gecekondus* in a comparative framework by using some of the published works on squattertowns in the world, notably in Latin America and North Africa. In the following five chapters I have attempted to deal with the historical background of migration in Turkey, the establishment and growth and the structure and organization of the three settlements, and the integration of the migrants into the city. Finally, in the last two chapters I have dealt with the squatters' transforming impact on the village and with party politics and political behavior in the settlements.

The basic material for this study derived from 949 interviews,

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based on questionnaires, with individual squatters. I was assisted by a team of 16 trained researchers. At the end of each work day, the interviewers prepared an essay giving their most striking impressions or some relevant information not included in the questionnaire. This method brought forth a series of problems and issues that seemed important for the respondents. Since I planned to study the personality changes and the differentiated responses of men, women, and younger people to village and city conditions as fully as possible, I chose to interview individually each squatter above the age of 16 rather than limit the interview to household heads, the method followed by other researchers. This approach revealed the differences in the level of education, occupations, attitudes, and aspirations prevailing among men, women, and bachelor boys and girls. A total of 430 married women, 393 married men, 89 unmarried boys, and 37 unmarried girls – or roughly about 80 percent of the squatters above the age of 16 – were subjected to interviews lasting from one and a half to four hours. Possibly the often-heard expression “İçimizi de dışımızı da öğrendiniz gayri” (You have learned our inside and outside) stands as a testimony to the comprehensive scope of the interviews.

The reason for devising a third category – the “unmarried,” or bachelor boys and girls – rather than using only age categories stemmed from considerations related to Turkish culture. In Turkey, sex and family status have greater impact than age alone in determining social behavior. The unmarried men are referred to in colloquial Turkish as *delikanlı* – literally “with mad blood” – and are recognized as having certain freedom of conduct usually not granted to the married. It was assumed, therefore, that, not having family responsibilities and enjoying a certain freedom of decision, the unmarried would feel freer than the married to express their personal preferences and aspirations when confronted with a multitude of choices of professions, life styles, and behavioral patterns in the city. (Age, of course, is implicitly taken into account since with a very few exceptions, probably only three or four, the “unmarried” were between 16 and 20 years of age.)

The questionnaire used during interviews included 88 major categorical questions followed by a series of explanatory open-end questions. The answers were index-scored according to frequency and rated in percentages. For married men and women, the answers

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were further broken down into four age groups and into settlements. Although only a few of the hundreds of tables compiled according to age groups or settlements appear in the text of this study, the essence of these tables has been duly incorporated in various analyses and conclusions. In a number of cases, direct quotations from the respondents' answers are included in the text or notes. I have worked – in 1968 and sporadically thereafter until the fall of 1974 – in the three *gecekondus* and other establishments of the same kind in Ankara, Izmir, Bursa, and Adana, as well as in the squatters' native villages. I have naturally developed a certain familiarity and insight into the squatter settlements that has been used to check, to supplement, and to complement the information obtained through questionnaires. Since the original survey was conducted in 1968, the three settlements have tripled in population and have integrated themselves in some measure into the city. Though frequent references are made to the transformation that has been taking place since the main survey was conducted, a detailed analysis of the growth and urbanization occurring since 1968 has not been attempted in this work; actually it should be the subject of another independent study.

The terminology used in this work needs some clarification. The terms *gecekondu*, *squatter settlement*, *shantytown*, and *uncontrolled settlement* (but not slum), and *squatter* and *migrant* have been used synonymously. The terms *men* and *women* apply to married men and women; the terms *unmarried* and *bachelors* apply to unmarried boys and girls. Turkish names are spelled as in the original. (A key to the pronunciation is below.)*

It is obvious that a study as comprehensive and as ambitious as this one may not satisfy the orthodox exigencies of all social science disciplines. Yet, in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of a social problem as complex as the squatter settlement, I found it necessary to combine various concepts and approaches utilized by economics, political sciences, anthropology, and sociology. An empirical rather than theoretical approach prevails throughout the work.

* A short key to Turkish pronunciation: ş = sh in short; ç = ch in church; c = j in join; ı = o in seldom; i = i in machine; ü = u in the French tu; ö = the German ö; ğ is a soft g, much the same as the running together of the words *I am*.

1. The *gecekondu* in comparative perspective

Squatter settlements and their scope

The squatter settlements inhabited mostly by country people are part of a basic process of rural migration and urbanization in many nations in the third world. Population growth, economic development, industrialization, and mechanization of agriculture, changes in land tenure, and increased communication and transportation have all contributed to the unprecedented intensity and scope of rural migration and urbanization.¹ The problems deriving from the dislocation of rural people from their small towns and villages, their settlement in larger towns and cities, and their eventual urbanization – accompanied by occupational, sociocultural, and political change – are reflected in these squatter settlements. Thus, regardless of their cultural characteristics and history, the cities and the villages and towns in the third world today are economically and sociopolitically interdependent, more so than in the past. Urban forms of association and activity are extended to the people in the countryside, while rural people adopt new occupations and life styles by moving into cities, which in turn are altered structurally and functionally by the new economic and political forces represented in part at least by the migrants themselves. These cities still retain their role as centers of power and decision and as models of development by setting socioeconomic standards and goals; at the same time they are subjected to intensive socioeconomic change by the very forces they awakened in the countryside.

Thus, rural migration and urbanization and their by-product – the migrant, or squatter, settlements – are inextricably part of a more general process of structural change usually referred to as modernization. Yet most of the work on the modernization of new nations has been devoted to selected agents of change, such as the intelligentsia, the military, and the bureaucracy, and to the channels through which these elites reach higher social status and po-

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litical consciousness, such as education and communication. Little attention has been paid to those people undergoing transformation. Emphasis has been placed on the “transformer” and the “leader,” and much less on the “transformed” and the “follower.” Consequently, knowledge about how ordinary people absorb the change and become “modernized” – that is, the steps through which they move from one form of societal existence to another – has remained rather scanty. This shortcoming has resulted partly from the elitist approach that has dominated the political-historical studies of the new nations and partly from the difficulty in locating and studying individuals and social groups in a transitional, acute phase of socioeconomic transformation or modernization. The rural migrants are such a group.

The shantytowns, squatter towns, uncontrolled settlements, or transitional settlements (as the United Nations named them) in the third world usually – though not exclusively – are inhabited by migrants from villages and rural towns, who represent one of the most strategically located groups to study the transformation of a rural group into an urban one. Even a century or two ago similar settlements could be found in a few fast-growing European cities. In the third world cities, however, they have become a general feature of urbanization chiefly since World War II. Probably because of the illegal manner of their establishment, their poor reputation among the old city residents, and their open contradiction to the idea of orderly development, shantytowns have been regarded as a social aberration, falling outside the scope of the normal processes of urbanization and modernization. Certainly, squatter settlements are not an inevitable step of urbanization and modernization; they could be avoided if housing skills and financial resources were available. But in the third world, squatter settlements have become an almost natural step for modernization in general and urbanization in particular. They have become a general feature of all the major and, in many cases, the minor cities of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. These settlements, therefore, should not be regarded as a deviation from but as part of the contemporary process of economic development and urbanization-modernization in the third world.

John F. C. Turner has viewed squatter settlements in the light of four hypotheses: as a manifestation of normal urban growth under

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historically abnormal conditions, as vehicles for social change, as the product of the difference between the popular demand for housing and that demanded and supplied by institutional society, and as a phenomenon that could be controlled by the encouragement of popular initiative through the government servicing of local resources.² Thus, it is clear that rural migration into cities in the third world results in squatter settlements that are as a whole part of a total process of social change, in the form of urbanization and modernization. They are mostly the product of internal migration and should not be confused with international population movements.³

The outstanding features of squatter settlements seem to be, first, that they are found in nearly all the cities of the third world nations and, second, that they are often similar to each other, in terms of their evolution and their relations with the city. One cannot easily find another world-wide social phenomenon whose structural and functional similarities greatly surpass their local, regional, and even cultural differences. Consequently, it would be desirable to test this hypothesis by regarding the three Turkish *gecekondus*, or squatter towns, studied in this work, and a few others surveyed by other scholars in Turkey, as part of a world-wide phenomenon and by comparing them with similar associations elsewhere in the world, especially in Latin America and North Africa. This comparison is not intended to be an exhaustive analysis but rather a tentative effort to establish some empirical bases for a more general theoretic endeavor.⁴

The United Nations Committee on Housing, Building and Planning reported in 1973 that a survey on world housing

has confirmed the view that those living in slum and squatter settlements now account for one quarter to one third of the urban populations of most rapidly urbanizing developing countries and that this proportion is itself growing rapidly. Clearly, it is the rapid growth of slums and squatter settlements that is the major factor determining the character of cities in the developing world.

Statistics from a variety of sources agree that world population is fast growing and this growth is reflected in rapid urbanization. Indeed, the world population has increased by 29.2, 37.3, and 49.3 percent, respectively, in every 50 years in the period 1800–1950.

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During the same period the world population in agglomerations of 100,000 or more has increased by 76.3, 222.2, and 254.1 percent, respectively. But the increase of population in cities with more than 100,000 people reached 444 percent in Asia and 629 percent in Africa from 1900 to 1950.⁵ Similar high rates of urbanization were evident in Latin America and the Middle East.⁶

A substantial part of this new urban population, mostly of rural origin, lives in dwellings rated as shantytowns and slums. (The two terms, which are often used synonymously, refer actually to two types of urban settlements substantially different from each other, as shall be discussed later.) In India, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, 24.1 percent of the population of Ahmedabad was reported to live in houses below standard, while 16.6 percent lived in huts or shantytowns. Half of the population of Bombay, or about 3 million people, lived in slums and shantytowns. The same may be said about Madras, Kanpur, and Bangalore where the hutment slum or shantytown prevailed. "Every city or town in India of any commercial or industrial importance," a report stated, "is now plagued by hutment slums causing many public health and sociological problems."⁷

In Brazil the population of Belo Horizonte grew by 68 percent in a matter of years; it reached 812,000 people in 1966. However, 15 percent of this population lived in *favelas*.⁸ By 1960, more than 10 percent of Rio de Janeiro's population of 3,307,161 people were officially declared as *favelados* (shantytown dwellers), although some other studies considered to be more realistic placed the number of *favelados* in Rio between 700,000 and 1,000,000 people. Even Brasilia, the new capital, lived up to its second name (Capital de Esperança, "hope") and had already more than 15,000 *favelados* in 1959 – even before the city was officially inaugurated.⁹

In Turkey it has been estimated that the urban population of towns with 10,000 or more increased by 409 percent from 1927 to 1965. The rate of internal migration increased from 10.5 percent of the total population in 1955 to 11.8 percent in 1965.¹⁰ The rate of increase in the Turkish cities with populations over 100,000, however, was greater than that in the smaller localities. Much of this urban growth was due to rural migration and consisted of a string of *gecekondus* surrounding the better city quarters. The Turkish Ministry of Reconstruction and Settlement estimated, ac-