MEVCUT YERLEŞİMLERİN TOPLUM VE BİREY SAĞLIĞI ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİLERİ

IMPACTS OF EXISTING SETTLEMENTS ON COMMUNITY AND INDIVIDUAL HEALTH

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Öz

Sosyolojiden ekonomiye, sağlıktan mimariye birçok disiplinin ortak konusu olan kentler, tarihin her döneminde değişime uğramıştır. Özellikle kentlerin yapısı Sanayi Devrimi'nden sonra yeni bir boyut kazanarak toplum yapısını da değiştirmiştir. Kentleşme politikası ile birlikte ulaşım imkanlarının artması ve çeşitlenmesi ile kırdan kente artan göç kentlerin büyümesine sebep olmuş, çeperlerinde yeni mahalleler oluşmuş ve banliyöler artış göstermiştir. Dünya'da yaşanan bu gelişmeler hemen hemen tüm kentlerin ekonomik, sosyolojik ve fiziksel yapılarını etkilemiştir. Bu çalışmada; kent ve kentlinin artan ihtiyaçlarının günümüz koşullarınca ortaya çıkan sorunların çözülemediği mevcut yerleşimlerdeki toplum ve bireyin sağlığı üzerindeki etkisinin vurgulanması amaçlanmaktadır. Günümüze kadar yapılan çalışmaların sonucunda elde edilen verilerin yorumlanması çalışmanın yöntemini oluşturmaktadır. Kentlerdeki artan nüfus, barınma ihtiyacının karşılanması için kent merkezlerinde yıkma ve yapmaların oluşumuna, kültürel ve tarihsel yapıların yok olmasına, bununla birlikte imar hareketlerinin hızlanmasına, yeşil alanlarının azalmasına ve altyapı hizmetlerinin yetersizliğine neden olmuştur. Dünya'da yaşanan bu dönüşümler kentlerin çöküntü özellik kazanmasına sebep olmuştur. Kent sağlığının temel göstergelerinden birisi kentte yaşayan insanlardır. Kişilerin bulunduğu sosyal ve fiziksel çevre ile yaşam biçimleri, sağlığın başlıca belirleyicileridir. Dünya Sağlık Örgütü 1948 yılında "Sağlığı insanın bedenen, ruhen ve sosyal yönlerden tam bir iyilik (refah) içinde olması" olarak tanımlamaktadır. Bu tarifiyle DSÖ sağlığı, insanların bedensel, sosyal ve ekonomik olarak verimli bir yaşam sürmesine izin veren bir kaynak olarak düşünmektedir. Bu bağlamda kentlerin, sağlık koşullarını iyileştirmede ve sağlamada özel potansiyele sahip olduğu görülmektedir.

Keywords: Mimari Tasarım, Sağlıklı Kent, Sağlık, Sürdürülebilirlik, Çevre ve İnsan

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Abstract

Cities have undergone transformations throughout history, and are the focus of various fields from sociology to architecture. The Industrial Revolution introduced a new dimension to the urban landscape, fundamentally altering the social structure of cities. The growth of cities has been driven by increased transportation facilities and urbanisation policies, leading to a significant migration from rural to urban areas. Consequently, new neighbourhoods have emerged on the outskirts, and the number of suburbs has increased. These global developments have resulted in notable impacts on the economic, sociological, and physical structures of practically all cities. The study aims to highlight the impact of the growing demands of cities and urban populations on the health of both individuals and society in established settlements where current challenges cannot be resolved. The research methodology centres around analysing data derived from previous studies. The growth of city populations has prompted urban centres to undergo demolition and construction in order to satisfy the demand for housing. Unfortunately, this has resulted in the loss of historical and cultural structures, a surge in development, a reduction of green spaces and poor infrastructure services. Such transformations have contributed to a prevalent sense of melancholy in cities worldwide. A primary

gauge of urban well-being lies in the city's inhabitants. The social and physical environment, along with individuals' lifestyles, serve as the chief influencers of health. In 1948, the World Health Organisation established health as "the state of complete physical, mental and social well-being". Health is regarded as a resource that enables individuals to lead lives that are productive in terms of their physical, social, and economic well-being. From this viewpoint, cities possess a unique potential to enhance and secure health standards.

Keywords: Architectural Design, Healthy City, Health, Sustainability, Environment and Human

1. INTRODUCTION

Cities are often described as living entities that evolve and disappear over time, similar to organisms (Belli, 2019), and have a significant impact on our health (Başaran, 2007). To survive, cities require various necessities as complex, growing, and dynamic organisms. Health is unquestionably one of these important necessities (Başaran, 2007). One of the most critical factors determining urban health is the city's residents. Good health among city dwellers is critical to maintaining a healthy city overall (Belli, 2019; Belli & Aydın, 2016, p.86).

Displeasing factors such as substandard building conditions, irregular upkeep, excessive domestic waste accumulation on streets, and pollution from traffic can all have negative impacts on mental health, creating a sense of visual pollution and discomfort in urban environments (Akın, 2018; Akın, 2013: 32; Akın, 2017b: 204). Notably, nerve stimulation can also affect the brain and mental well-being (Akın, 2018).

Health is intricately connected to our environment, at both the local and global levels (Başaran, 2007). Health is not solely the absence of illness but also encompasses human well-being and standard of living. The World Health Organisation states that health incorporates a healthy lifestyle, social harmony, quality housing, employment opportunities, access to food, safety, air quality, and measures for water and sanitation, soil and solid waste management, and climate stability (Başaran, 2008). Thus, it is important to recognise the inextricable link between human health and economic, social, environmental, and individual lifestyle factors (Akın, 2018).

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Previous academic studies (Belli, 2019; Akın, 2018; Susmaz & Ekinci 2009; Başaran, 2007; Demirtaş & Güngör, C. & Demirtaş, 2017; Başaran, 2008) have highlighted the importance of a healthy society in the formation and transformation of healthy cities. However, there is a dearth of research on this topic, and it is crucial to develop solutions to ensure health-based city planning in the future. This study strives to provide a significant contribution to future research by identifying the key reasons for the literature gap and proposing appropriate plans for urban enhancement, transformation and sanitation projects in global cities with diverse physical, cultural, economic and geographical features.

This paper aims to address two key research questions:

1. What are the factors that impact the health of individuals and society?
2. To what extent does living in urban environments affect individual and societal health?

The study adopts an interpretive approach to analyze relevant literature on the topic of cities and health. Additionally, the conceptual framework underpinning this subject is discussed. Then, the main research questions were addressed in line with the conceptual framework.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The notion of a healthy city encompasses advancements, variables, associations, sectors, and customary components (Uzun & Can, 2021). It is both an outcome and an approach. A healthy city safeguards its natural and cultural heritage, offers employment opportunities, fosters community engagement, provides adequate open spaces, ensures safety against natural and other disasters, offers

affordable and good quality housing, has strong healthcare and educational services, and develops in a planned manner. (Dede&Şekeroğlu, 2019).

Henrik Blum identified four main factors that affect health: environment, behaviour, health services, and heredity (Blum and Sully, 1969, p.3). The factor that has the most significant impact on health is the environment, followed by lifestyle, heredity, and health services. According to the model, five additional factors impacting health exist in the background, in addition to the four main factors (Zencirci, 2021). The five factors that contribute to human health are population, culture, mental factors (such as attitude and behavioural satisfaction), ecological balance, and natural resources (Zencirci, 2021). The extent to which each of these four factors influences human health depends on their combination. The concept of health is viewed as a process under the model, commencing at an individual level and influenced by personal factors, such as environmental conditions, genetics, lifestyle and healthcare availability. Ultimately, external factors are responsible for defining the outcome of this process (Zencirci, 2021; Öksüz, 2018, p.7).

The Healthy Cities project begins with the Environment, following the Blum model. The relationship between a person's health and their environment cannot be disregarded. It is crucial for human health and welfare to have a clean environment. Therefore, a clean environment is one of the fundamental requirements. The environment comprises the biological, physical, and sociocultural factors that enable individuals to obtain essential resources and carry out crucial activities necessary for their survival (Zencirci, 2021; Krieger & Higgins, 2002, p. 758).

Behaviour An individual's lifestyle, including attitudes and behaviours related to smoking, diet, exercise, and prioritising health, has a direct impact on their health. While genetic factors, access to healthcare, and environmental factors may be beyond an individual's control, they can make positive changes to their lifestyle. Negative behaviours that directly impact an individual's health, such as smoking, alcohol and drug consumption, and an imbalanced diet, are changeable by an individual (Zencirci, 2021; Batarseh, 2018, p. 24).

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Inherited traits and genes are determinants of an individual's propensity to develop specific health issues and overall well-being (Newbold, 1995, p.4). To investigate whether various lifestyle factors including nutrition, smoking and alcohol intake, socio-economic standing, and physical activity influence genetic effects, Mathias Andersen, a researcher from the Department of Immunology, Genetics and Pathology, conducted a study. The study reveals that the impact of genetic factors was lower in the most physically active participants. Furthermore, the study highlights a more pronounced genetic effect in participants with a low socioeconomic status than in those with a higher socioeconomic status. Additionally, the study discloses that hereditary diseases are predominantly present in individuals who consume alcohol and cigarettes (Zencirci, 2021; Walton, 2011).

A healthy life is achievable through a genetic structure compatible with environmental conditions. The genetic makeup of human beings and their surroundings are crucial for a healthy life; a disturbance within these elements renders one incapable of living a healthy life. Three environmental factors, namely temperature, high-energy radiation, and certain chemical substances such as colchicine, are responsible for DNA mutations that alter the structure of genes, leading to the emergence of characters and traits. It is imperative to understand the causal connections between these determinants to apprehend the mechanism of genetic variation and its consequences. Three environmental factors, namely temperature, high-energy radiation, and certain chemical substances such as colchicine, are responsible for DNA mutations that alter the structure of genes, leading to the emergence of characters and traits. Upon a meticulous examination of the three factors that bring about changes in genes, it is evident that they are attributes of our living environment. The ambient temperature, radioactive matter, and certain chemicals render genes dysfunctional, functioning erratically, or normally. Thus, it can be deduced that the environmental conditions of our habitat also significantly impact the regular or aberrant operation of our genetic makeup. This leads to the inference that all aspects of the living environment have a direct or indirect impact on an individual's well-being (Akın, 2018; Akın, 2017b: 74). WHO emphasises that no country will be as self-sufficient

in health in the 21st century as it was in 2000 and that international solidarity will be mandatory in the promotion of health. It calls on all member countries to develop and implement policies within the framework of the concept and principles of Health for all, which considers lifestyle, environment and health services in a balanced way. In line with a commitment to objective academic writing, the World Health Organization launched the "Healthy Cities Project" to prioritize urban health on the agendas of decision-makers in European cities and the development process (Başaran, 2007).

When translating the mission and qualities of healthy cities into the 21st-century context, the primary goals can be summarised as follows, according to Belli (2019) and Tsouros (2017, p.10):

- Ensure the promotion of health and equality in all of our local policies while fully complying with the Sustainable Development Goals agenda.
- Addressing inequalities in health with the Social Determinants of Health approach;
- Develop environments that promote healthy lifestyles, engaging in physically active living.
- Ensure that all citizens have access to health insurance and social services that are both inclusive and responsive to their needs.
- Investing in health promotion and health literacy;
- Ensuring a nutritious beginning to childhood and aiding vulnerable communities, including migrants, the jobless, and those living in destitution;
- Strengthening disease prevention programmes with a specific emphasis on addressing obesity, smoking, unhealthy eating habits, and lack of physical activity is imperative.
- Promoting healthy urban planning and design;
- Investing in environmentally friendly, hygienic, child-friendly, and elderly-friendly urban environments is essential for creating sustainable and livable cities;
- Promote community empowerment, participation and resilience while fostering social inclusion and community-based initiatives;
- The enhancement of the urban area's ability to react to public health crises is discussed in Belli's study (2019).

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Another factor that has a direct and indirect impact on the quality of life is the housing and urban environment. The design of a house, and the level of responsiveness to household needs and expectations are essential indicators that cannot be overlooked. In addition, the tranquillity of the city and the absence of noise and noise pollution are crucial factors that affect the quality of life. (Akın; 2018; Karakurt Tosun, 2013; 215-237).

3. METHODOLOGY

Human harmony with the artificial environment can be achieved by responding to external physical stimuli and establishing a biological, physiological and psychological equilibrium (Aslan & Aslan & Atik, 2015; Aydıntan, 2001).

Housing, which shelters individuals, is a crucial aspect of social life that impacts both social and economic structuring and plays a major role in city development. According to Rapoport (1980), housing can be viewed as a product, a process, an identity, a personal value, and a space that reflects one's social status. Housing is shaped by the culture of a society, rather than just being a physical structure (Seçilmiş, 2019; Rapoport, 1969).

Housing, with its cultural benefits and impact on the environment, provides a sense of belonging and situational awareness. Inhabitants feel secure and aware of their surroundings, knowing they are in their own space. The individual shapes themselves and their environment in response to the demands of the time through their experiences and interactions with the outside world. Space, an ordinary unit constructed through ergonomic and economic arrangements, has the potential to transform into a dwelling with cultural and environmental inputs and experiences (Atakan, 2018).

Public spaces are areas where urban dwellers or different users can exchange and transmit their cultural backgrounds and get to know each other in various respects, as noted by architect and urban scientist Zeynep Halu (Halu, 2010, p.2).

Important factors, including social, environmental, and economic considerations, play a significant role in the evolution of public spaces over time. Socially and culturally, public areas such as streets, parks, and squares serve as venues where city social life is created, new social connections are formed, and individuals can unwind and share experiences. Public spaces are advantageous areas for a democratic society, where social life develops and where people's convictions, customs, encounters and political perspectives are intertwined. From an ecological point of view, the physical structure of public spaces must be in line with their surroundings. Adequately designed public spaces reinforce connections between pedestrian and vehicular transport networks, enabling users to conveniently access these spaces and travel through them effectively. From an economic perspective, public spaces provide crucial support for local establishments including shops, cafes and restaurants, enabling the growth of commercial enterprises (Özer, 2022; Varna, 2011, p.1-6).

Lefebvre (2014: 87) underlined that discourses such as changing life or society are invalid without a suitable space. Instead, he suggested that changing the meanings associated with spaces can bring about discourses such as living better, improving quality of life, and establishing a cleaner living framework (Tayanç, 2022). Ghulyan (2017) also supports Lefebvre's assumption that (social) space is a (social) product (Erkılıç, 2019).

Space encompasses the entirety of the environment in which life exists, comprising physical, spatial, social, and production-related relationships. Physical space comprises both natural and artificial environments, while social space comprises infrastructure (production-related relationships) and superstructure (culture, morality, politics, and organizations), linked by causal relationships. The operational sphere pertains to a range of actions that impact humans, whether consciously or subconsciously. Our perceptual space is formed by our awareness of these actions. When our perceptual environment drives us to behave in a certain way, this then forms our behavioural environment (Özen, 2011).

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From a social perspective, people who frequently lose their sense of fulfilment in a lifestyle full of spiritual unrest caused by the fast-paced, technology-dependent 21st-century existence, are doomed to a monotonous life devoid of activities that showcase their talents and abilities. This predicament not only hinders an individual's potential but also leads to solitary feelings despite being surrounded by crowds. In this setting, adverse impacts such as increased individuality, division, and disconnection from society have an impact on the social structure, ultimately leading to a reduction in the quality of life in urban areas (Uslu, 2018).

Robert Owen, a pioneer of socialism, argued that society could be improved by first enhancing the character of each individual, the smallest unit of society. He found a way to put this idea into practice during the 19th century, paving the way for future developments. Owen believed that the improvement of the human character was dependent on the environment in which people lived. If individuals develop good character from childhood and all necessary environmental conditions like housing, education and health services are provided to facilitate this progress, it will potentially result in total societal development. This development could lead to a decrease in crime rates and an increase in individual awareness (Uslu, 2018).

Thomas (1991: 222) highlighted the public sphere's social role as a primary platform for individuals and communities to enrich their lives. Consequently, he outlined four distinct social roles that the public sphere fulfils (Özer, 2022; Thomas, 1991: 210, cited in Costamagna, Lind & Stjernström, 2019: 135; Mehta, 2014: 55).

- Public spaces are areas of communal living.
- Public spaces serve as meeting points for various social groups
- Public space is a place where symbols and images are displayed in society.

- Public space is part of the communication system between urban activities.

Public spaces serve both as physical locations and social hubs for meeting societal needs. The absence of energy or inadequate responsiveness to social requirements identifies the lack of effectiveness of public spaces, as discussed in pertinent literature (Özer, 2022).

4. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The World Health Organisation asserts that every human being, regardless of race, religion, political beliefs or social and economic conditions, has the fundamental right to the highest achievable standard of health. Achieving and maintaining good health should be a crucial goal of many professions, with urban planning playing an important role in fostering a healthy environment (Başaran, 2007)."

Urban planning has a significant impact on health. Healthy Cities are areas where urban planning prioritises human well-being and health, whilst ensuring no harm is done to the urban environment or quality of life through planning activities. Unfortunately, in many cities, the relationship between urban planning and health has been dismissed or overshadowed by urban planning systems that are more preoccupied with economic and financial benefits (Başaran, 2008).

Spaces can only thrive in proportion to their level of usability. Thus, designs that hinder or exclude user accessibility fail to fulfil their intended purpose (Demirci & Arabacıoğlu, 2022).

Main is born into a biologically undefined environment which prompts adaptation through shaping. This indefiniteness drives humans towards social life, where society brings humans into existence and humans bring society into existence. This dialectic provides the foundation for the existence of both culture and the built environment (Atakan, 2018; Berger, 1967).

Environmental, scientific, and socio-economic changes experienced throughout history primarily affect daily life and, consequently, individuals and society. Within the public sphere, representing the social stage, and in the private sphere of the individual, complex networks of relationships shape encounters in daily life (Uslu, 2018).

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Lefebvre suggests that altering space can bring about life changes, and vice versa (Kurtar, 2013; Lefebvre, 1991a, p.39).

To summarise the (dis)organization of environmental, physical, and social factors in current settlements results primarily in psycho-social effects on individual health. This, in turn, impacts society as a whole, leading to negative developments in social, environmental, and economic factors that are crucial to the livelihoods of city inhabitants.

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