

To my family

HOUSEHOLD SURVIVAL STRATEGIES OF THE URBAN POOR IN TURKEY

The Institute of Economics and Social Sciences
of
Bilkent University

by

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
MASTER OF ARTS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE AND
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

in

THE DEPARTMENT OF
POLITICAL SCIENCE AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
BILKENT UNIVERSITY
ANKARA

August 2002

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ABSTRACT

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In this thesis, it is aimed to explore the survival strategies of gecekondu households living in Turkish cities and their changing aspects by drawing upon a case study conducted in Ankara. In this respect, migration type, labor force participation, access to urban land and gecekondu, solidarity networks, and access to urban infrastructure and services are the focal points as they constitute the main strategies of the urban poor living in gecekondu settlements. Within this framework, the emerging trends in the households' strategies in the post-1980s are discussed with reference to the case study of gecekondu settlements in Ankara.

Key Words: Urban poverty, household survival strategies, capability, gecekondu, field research.

ÖZET

TÜRKİYE’DE KENT YOKSULLARININ AİLE GEÇİM STRATEJİLERİ

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Ağustos, 2002

Bu çalışmanın amacı, Türkiye kentlerinde yaşayan gecekondü hanelerinin geçinme stratejilerini ve bu stratejilerdeki değişimleri Ankara örnek çalışmasına dayanarak incelemektir. Bu bakımdan, yoksul hanelerin göç modeli, iş gücüne katılımı, kentsel arazi ve gecekondüya erişimleri, dayanışma örüntüleri, ve kentsel servis ve hizmetlere erişim düzeyleri temel geçinme stratejileri olarak ele alınmıştır. Bu çerçevede, 1980’lerden sonra ortaya çıkan eğilimler, Ankara gecekondü yerleşimlerinde yapılan alan araştırması ile desteklenerek tartışılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kentsel yoksulluk, geçim stratejileri, yapabilirlik, gecekondü, alan araştırması.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my special gratitude to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Tahire Erman for her valuable support and supervision in the realization of this thesis. I am indebted to her, whose insightful criticisms have brought valuable inspirations to my thesis. I also thank her for the meetings, during which her graduate students had the chance to come together and to discuss their thesis subjects.

I also thank my friends with whom I carried out the field research in various gecekondu settlements of Ankara, at the Middle East Technical University, the graduate program of Urban Policy Planning and Local Governments.

I am grateful to my husband for his support and help during this study, and for his great patience, encouragement and love all throughout my academic studies. My son was very sympathetic and understanding during this study, otherwise I could not have accomplished it. Finally, I would like to present special thanks to my mother and my father for their help and love.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	i
ÖZET.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	iv
LIST OF TABLES.....	vii
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER I: THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS OF URBAN POVERTY: From a Narrow Statistical Explanation of Poverty to an Expanded Household Survival Strategy View.....	5
1.1. Defining and Measuring Poverty	6
1.1.1. Absolute Definitions of Poverty.....	6
1.1.2. Relative Definitions of Poverty.....	8
1.2. Theoretical Approaches to Urban Poverty	12
1.2.1. Conservative and Liberal Approaches	12
1.2.2 Radical Approaches	13
1.3. Culture of Poverty	16
1.4. Household Survival Strategies	18
1.4.1. Capabilities of the Urban Poor	20
1.4.2. Household Assets/Resources	21
1.5. Conclusion	23

CHAPTER II: SURVIVAL STRATEGIES OF GECEKONDU HOUSEHOLDS:	
LITERATURE REVIEW	25
2.1.Evolution of Gecekondu Settlements in Turkey	25
2.2.Migration Type: How Has the Changing Nature of Migration Affected the Survival of Urban Poor Households?	29
2.3.The Gecekondu: A Shift From Being a Shelter to Being a Tool for Capital Accumulation	32
2.3.1. Access to Urban Land	33
2.3.2. Construction Process and Materials: The Gecekondu as a Cheap House?.....	34
2.3.3. Ownership Patterns	39
2.3.4. The Gecekondu: A Flexible House?	40
2.4.Labor: Integration into the Urban Labor Market as a Survival Strategy	42
2.4.1. The Urban Labor Market: From Marginal Sector to Informal Sector	43
2.4.2. Intensification of Working Hours	47
2.4.3. Women’s Labor	47
2.4.4. Children’s Labor	50
2.5 Solidarity Networks: Are They Still a Survival Strategy?	51
2.5.1. Familial-Intergenerational Solidarity Networks	52
2.5.2. Kinship-Hemşehrilik-Neighborhood Solidarity Networks	53
2.5.3. Ethnic-Sectarian Solidarity Networks	56
2.6 Access to Urban Services and Infrastructure	58
2.7.Concluding Remarks on the Survival Strategies of Gecekondu Households: What has Changed, Why, and with What Consequences for the Urban Poor?...	60

CHAPTER III: SURVIVAL STRATEGIES OF GECEKONDU HOUSEHOLDS:	
A FIELD STUDY IN ANKARA.....	66
3.1. The Problem and the Aim of the Field Study	66
3.2. The Method of the Field Study.....	67
3.3. Findings.....	69
3.3.1. Demographic Features	69
3.3.2. Labor	72
3.3.2.1. Men’s Labor	72
3.3.2.2. Women’s Labor	80
3.3.2.3. Children’s Labor	85
3.3.2.4. Intensification of Working Hours	87
3.3.3. The Gecekondu: A Source of Economic and Social Security	88
3.3.3.1. Ownership Patterns	89
3.3.3.2. Flexibility.....	91
3.3.3.3. A Tool of Capital Accumulation?	94
3.3.4. Solidarity Networks: An Indispensable Means of Survival for the Poor ..	96
3.3.5. Having Access to Urban Infrastructure	105
3.4. Discussing the Field Study With Reference to Dynamics of Urbanization:	
Emerging Trends in the post-1980s.....	107
CONCLUSION	117
SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY	122

LIST OF TABLES

1. Urban and Rural Population by Years	26
2. Number and Population of Squatters in Turkey	26
3. Employment Situation by Employment Type and the Amount of Money Earned	73
4. Employment Duration by Sectors	73
5. The Self-Employed and Monthly Income of the Households	76
6. Social Security of the Self-Employed	76
7. Working After Retirement by Time and Reason	77
8. Last Period of Unemployment by Current Employment Type	80
9. Year of Mobilizing Women's Labor by Households' Income	81
10. Employment of Women by Migration Status	82
11. The Employment Situation of the Working Women	83
12. The Employment Type of Women by Migration Status.....	84
13. Sex of Head of Households' and Households' Income	85
14. The Working Status of the Children	87
15. Households' Monthly Income by Additional Jobs	88
16. The Relationship Between Monthly Income per Household and Ownership Patterns	89
17. Ownership Patterns by Employment Status	90
18. Current House Ownership by the Future Plans for Homeownership.....	96
19. Date of Migration	97

20. The Relationship Between Receiving Aid From Hometown and Households' Income	98
21. The Relationship Between Receiving Aid From Hometown and Employment Status	98
22. Mother Tongue – Ethnic Composition	101
23. The Relationship Between Ethnic Origins and Date of Migration	102
24. Ethnic Origins by Households' Monthly Income	103
25. Ethnic Origins by the Way of Spending Children's Earnings	103
26. The Relationship Between Membership in and Receiving Aid From Associations and Groups	105
27. The Relationship Between Joint Use of Urban Infrastructure and Households' Monthly Income	106

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary world, urban poverty has become an indispensable part of poverty studies because of increasing incidence of poverty in urban areas. Since urban poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon, “considerable theoretical and methodological difficulties arise in addressing the question of urban poverty” (Mingione, 1996: xiv). Such difficulties are intensified in recent decades with the transformation process associated with drastic changes in every aspect of life, which has led to intensified poverty in cities both in developed and developing countries.

In the recent poverty literature, understanding the nature of poverty highlights the concept as being dynamic and related to the specific life situations of a country’s population, thereby shifting the focus from a static explanation of poverty to a more dynamic explanation. In this context, household survival strategies constitute an important means of understanding the dynamic nature of poverty and the way in which households cope with it. Household survival strategies mainly demonstrate that poor households are not passive, rather they respond to their socio-economic positions to sustain their livelihoods. The strategy-approach provides us with a more dynamic character of poor people who are assumed to have their own asset capabilities to transform their assets to survive. At this point, it is noteworthy that “the strategies are conditioned by the external environment”, that is “the way people develop and use resources is shaped by wider socio-economic circumstances” (De la Rocha, 1998: 14). Within this context, the main question of this thesis is “what have

been the household survival strategies of the urban poor in Turkey, and how are they changing in recent times?"

In Turkey, the urban poor are spatially concentrated in *gecekondu* settlements, which began to emerge during the 1940s with rural-to-urban migration. The *gecekondu*, with respect to its economic, social and political meanings, has changed since its first appearance. In the emergence phase of *gecekondus*, they were low-quality and cheap, self-help houses, and their residents were rural migrants with low-education and unskilled labor, whose livelihoods were dependent on marginal jobs in the urban labor market and agricultural facilities in their villages. In the expansion phase during the late 1950s, *gecekondus* became neighborhoods enabling high solidarity networks, their residents became politically important clients in the multiparty political sphere, *gecekondu* men had access to regular jobs, and *gecekondu* women started to participate in the urban labor market. In the late 1970s, the construction process of *gecekondus* became commercialized, and the *gecekondu* had exchange value in addition to its use value in the urban informal housing market. In the transformation phase during the 1980s, *gecekondus* and their residents have faced dramatic changes. The post-1980s period is of significance for the urban poor, since from then on Turkey has experienced restructuring processes in all spheres of life, from which the urban poor have been affected significantly. Economically, structural adjustment programs, socially, terrorism in the Southeastern region, and politically, the *gecekondu* policies have changed the composition of the urban poor in Turkey.

In these circumstances, it is argued that survival strategies and capabilities of *gecekondu* households are context bound to the extent that social, political and economic dynamics of urbanization mold and condition the capabilities of the poor.

In this framework, the main premise of this thesis is that since the emergence phase, gecekondu households have always responded to the changing social, political and economic dynamics of urbanization to cope with their poverty, even in some cases to become better-off. Although their capabilities are context bound, they have always been willing to transform their assets to have sustainable livelihoods.

In this respect, the first chapter deals with the conceptual and theoretical consideration on who the poor are and what the causes of poverty are. The ‘culture of poverty’, and ‘capability’ are the concepts, which enable us to understand the nature of poverty in Turkey. In this chapter, the households’ assets/resources, which are labor, human capital (health, education, skills), productive assets (urban land and housing), household relations (mechanism for pooling income and sharing consumption), and social capital (reciprocal solidarity relation) are defined.

The second chapter examines the survival strategies of gecekondu households by doing a literature review. It is aimed to explore how the survival strategies are molded by social, political and economic dynamics of urbanization, and how they are changing in recent decades. On this account, migration type, various aspects of gecekondu as a survival strategy, labor force participation of gecekondu households, solidarity networks, and the level of access to urban infrastructure and services are taken into consideration as the main types of survival strategies of the urban poor living in gecekondu settlements.

The third chapter analyzes the data collected by a field study, which was conducted in the Middle East Technical University, Graduate Program of Urban Policy Planning and Local Governments, in 1998. The field study was carried out in various gecekondu settlements of Ankara with 175 households. The data are analyzed on the basis of demographic features of the sample, labor force

participation of households' members, the gecekondu as a source of economic and social security, solidarity networks, and the level of having access to urban infrastructure. In the last part of this chapter, the emerging trends in the households' strategies are discussed with respect to the social, political and economic dynamics of urbanization in the post-1980 period.

CHAPTER I

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS OF URBAN POVERTY:

From a Narrow Statistical Explanation of Poverty to an Expanded Household

Survival Strategy View

Poverty as an ironic face of social life, has been considered by many social scientists, politicians, and policy makers with a trend of increasing and decreasing importance throughout the centuries. It has been treated as a threat to the social order of society and thus regarded as a social problem to be solved. Its continuous problematic character leads to many social scientists to search and analyze this issue starting primarily with the question of who the poor are, which in fact raises some new questions as to what the causes of poverty are, and how poverty could be alleviated. Although these questions seem simple to be answered at the first glance, there are no commonly or universally accepted answers to them.

It is possible to conceptualize ‘poverty’ on various paths, such as absolute and relative poverty, each of which leads to a different understanding and significance of the term, and to a different definition, which ultimately results in differences in measuring the quantitative aspects of poverty (MacPherson and Silburn, 1998: 1). Likewise, several theoretical approaches –namely, conservative, liberal and radical approaches- have explained the causes of poverty by their different ideological orientations with either deficiencies or insufficiencies in their explanations offering different ways of poverty alleviation. Despite this variety in poverty literature, most of these definitions and approaches neglect one crucial, and may be the most crucial point, which is that the urban poor are not generally passive, inactive deprived groups, but they are active in coping with their poverty.

This study is an attempt to provide insight into the (de)efficiencies of definitions and theoretical approaches to poverty with a specific emphasis on urban poverty, the importance of which stems from the increasing polarization in the city. Then household strategies, which assess the dynamic nature of poverty via the asset ownership and capabilities of the poor, are the focal point of the thesis.

1.3. Defining and Measuring Poverty

The simplest definition of poverty refers to the lack of the basic means necessary for survival. In common sense, the poor are the ones who cannot feed and cloth themselves properly. Though it seems simple to conceptualize the term, defining poverty has caused many debates. There have been various official and scientific attempts to define who the poor are, or how to decide whether someone is poor or not. To put it another way, the term has been defined in various historical periods and has reflected a range of ideological orientations (Jennings, 1994). Thus defining poverty has vital importance with inherited difficulties because the very definition one uses has immediate ideological and public policy implications. Within this broad spectrum, the term can be conceptualized along a continuum from the most absolute to the most relative (Piachaud, 1987).

1.1.1. Absolute Definitions of Poverty

Definitions based on an absolute concept of poverty require an absolute poverty line on the basis of survival criterion/judgement, in the form of a minimum daily caloric intake, and proportion of income level required to purchase vital consumption goods at minimum level (MacPherson and Silburn, 1998: 4). Such an absolute definition only pays attention to individual's daily nutrient intake of 1500 calories to sustain an adult human life over extended periods (Wright, 1993: 2). Daily caloric intake alone

as the measurement of poverty has been criticized as an unreliable measure due to its limited scope involving only the physical survival of the individual, so that its once-common use in determining the poverty line is in decline.

Absolute poverty definitions have been under heavy debates due to their minimalistic nature leading to theoretical and practical difficulties. In fact, “nutritional requirements may vary from one person to another, from time to time, between people of different ages or different work patterns” (MacPherson and Silburn, 1998: 5). Further questions are asked by Townsend (1993: 33) as for the ‘fixity’ of absolute definitions in relation to time and place, as such the predetermined list of vital consumption goods whether could be applied both to modern and traditional, or both to industrial and post-industrial societies.

The absolutist approach of poverty in the early 20th Century, which only considers the physical survival of individual, began to be challenged by reference to the notion of ‘subsistence’ in the mid 20th Century. Although it is still a very restricted notion, it is a start of recognizing that “there are legitimate costs which enable a person not only to survive, but to live as a member of a community within which he or she is able to take part in and contribute to normal social activities” (MacPherson and Silburn, 1998: 5).

A few decades later the ‘subsistence model’ had a crucial alternative, namely, ‘basic needs’ definition of poverty displaying a shift towards a more relative approach. Basic needs are defined by the International Labor Organization in the mid 1970s as the minimum requirements of consumption of food, shelter, and clothing, as well as the access to services of safe drinking water, sanitation, transport, health and education all of which implies the satisfaction of individual qualitative needs. The major importance of basic needs concept stems from its not being only confined to

the physical needs of the individual survival, but recognizing the importance of some public services and some non-material qualitative assets.

1.1.2. Relative Definitions of Poverty

All relative definitions of poverty are based upon comparison in general with existing living standards of a society. Some relative definitions assess the poor as the persons, families and groups of persons whose material, cultural and social resources are so limited as to exclude them from the minimum acceptable way of life in a given society.

Peter Townsend (1979, 1993) makes a further contribution with 'relative deprivation' by stressing the importance of 'social participation'. He conceptualized relative poverty as one where material consumption and social participation in a wide range of social activities is restrained/ inhibited by lack of resources.

Townsend (1993: 79), in his recent studies, has suggested that the poor may be those whose resources are inadequate to access to diets, amenities, standards, services and activities which are common or customary in society, or to meet the obligations expected of them or imposed upon them in their social roles and relationships and so fulfil the role of membership in a society. Within this context, Townsend introduced a definition of poverty that contributed to a break with the absolute subsistence-level measures of poverty. He claims that poverty must be seen as relative to historically and culturally varying standard of life, as it must be defined in relation to prevailing social standards. Then, his starting point is that poverty must be defined in terms of deprivation, as this is judged by the customary levels of living that prevail in a society (1979: 413):

Individuals, families and groups in the population can be said to be in poverty when they lack the resources to obtain the types of diet, participate in the activities and have the living conditions and amenities

that are customary, or at least widely encouraged or approved, in the societies to which they belong. Their resources are so seriously below those commanded by the average individual or family that they are, in effect, excluded from ordinary living patterns, customs and activities.

In this respect, being poor is being in deprivation of those opportunities that are accessible by most other people in the society. As Townsend (1987) puts it, poverty is the inability to meet the costs that are associated with the social expectations, which ultimately require definition of poverty in relation to socially, recognized standard of living. Further, he claims that no single 'absolute' definition can be applied to all times and to all societies and any measurement must take account of changing social expectations.

Despite the institutionalization of social expectations in a particular society, they rarely specify a single lifestyle, which is obligatory or expected for all members of that society. Rather social expectations specify the general standard and style of living that a full member of society is expected to pursue (Scott, 1994: 79). "People engage in the same kind of activities rather than the same specific activities... The style of living of a society consists more of elements which are heterogeneous, but ordered and interrelated rather than rigidly homogenous" (Townsend, 1979: 54, 249).

Deprivation is the inability to satisfy any of the social expectations, and it involves not simply lack of resources but also a complete lack of choice about way of life. In this context, deprivation occurs whenever the resources of a household are insufficient to meet the socially sanctioned and legitimate needs and expectations. The crucial point in such a relative conception of poverty seems to be the varying extent of poverty and deprivation from one society to another, or from time to time even in any particular society.

Among the relative conceptions of poverty, some arguments have been made in that 'subjective deprivation' relative to some pertinent reference group would be

more meaningful in understanding of poverty. This approach also conceptualizes poverty as a comparative disadvantage in which the comparison is made to other people or reference groups rather than to a statistical average. In this approach, people are poor if they think of themselves as poor or if they are thought of as poor by others (Devine and Wright, 1993: 4).

Further contributions are made to the subjective deprivation approach with the view of poverty as 'relative subjective deprivation', which pays attention to the psychological dimensions of poverty and raises the question of how people come to define themselves or others as poor.

Relative deprivation approach has been criticized in that since it defines poverty as relative deprivation, everyone is deprived relative to someone else. Likewise, a person who could not be defined as poor may perceive himself as poor relative to someone else. (Devine and Wright, 1993: 4).

Both absolute and relative assessments of poverty have been used for different purposes, and both have been under heavy criticisms questioning the decency and arbitrariness of the poverty lines. In the case of absolute conceptions, the poverty line or the standard of living is usually measured in terms of income or consumption of households, while in relative conceptions it is determined in relation to prevailing social standards, which vary historically and culturally. Within the framework of poverty line analyses, poverty definitions remain to be problematic in explaining the nature of poverty both at macro level (country level) and at micro level (household level) with reference to continuation, reduction and deepening of poverty. Along with the stated deficiencies, poverty line definitions neglect the self-perception of deprivation by the poor themselves as they are typically defined by outsiders (Rakodi, 1995) who ultimately have an effect on defining who the poor are, and how they are deprived.

In the case of urban poverty, the poverty line assessment becomes even more problematic. As the research on urban poverty mostly focused on the definition of the poverty line, poverty assessments have been mostly based on quantitative measurements, such as income and consumption patterns. Even though the important portions of urban poor dwellers are dependent on the informal sector, which maintains casual labor, poverty line inherits the assumption of the universal existence of wage labor, which enables the definition of poverty on the bases of sufficient income to satisfy nutritionally adequate diet or other necessities. Via such type of poverty analysis, one may argue that methodological problems may occur, for example, underestimation of variations in size and composition of households, the difficulty of estimating income levels in economies which are only partly monetised and in which households consume their own production (Rakodi, 1995). As much as the poverty line depends on income and consumption patterns, the composition of consumption often differs between income groups, and the real costs of various goods change at various rates. Also calorie requirements vary between different groups of people, and even minimum subsistence requirements, including food preferences, are culturally influenced and biologically determined, and people may be able to adapt to food shortages (Sen, 1980).

In addition to difficulties with poverty line analysis, measuring the proportion of population below a poverty line does not give any indication of the intensity of poverty, which includes the significant distinctions between the poor, marginally poor, and the destitute.

A further problem with poverty line definitions is that they do not take into account the distribution of food, status, decision-making and access to services within the households (Rakodi, 1995), all of which may vary in accordance with age, gender and familial position.

Although poverty line analyses have been widely used for different purposes and still have functional importance, they are basically deficient in that they are reductionist, as Rakodi puts it “poverty comes to mean what is measured” (1995; 411).

1.4. Theoretical Approaches to Urban Poverty

The problem of why people are poor or deemed to be poor has been explored in different ways by different ideological approaches, basically the conservative, liberal and radical.

1.2.1. Conservative and Liberal Approaches

Conservative and liberal approaches to urban poverty share similar viewpoints in common about the causes of poverty. Both of them are fraught with the primary assumption that effective functioning of the market economy would maintain the effective distribution of monetary and social resources, ultimately lead to equitable distribution of income throughout the society. Additionally, both approaches use the absolute conceptions in poverty assessments. Both approaches do not attribute the causes of poverty to the nature and structure of market economy and capitalist mode of production. Though both agree about what the causes of poverty are not, they differ about what its causes are. While the conservative approach emphasizes persistently on individual imperfection as reasons of impoverishment, the liberal approach deals with the failure or deficiencies of the market economy to a some extent, with an emphasis on the importance of public policies in poverty alleviation (Wright, 1993: xxiv).

Conservative and liberal theorists argue that cities as specific socio-spatial entities have not impoverished urban dwellers, but urban poverty has been the result

of the migration of poverty from rural to urban areas by rural migrants during the phase of industrialization. Unskilled, non-qualified rural migrants were blamed for taking their rural poverty to industrialized cities where mostly skilled and qualified labor is employed. In this account, cities and their socio-economic structure are not regarded as the causes of urban poverty, but as the spaces of its alleviation (Banfield, 1970). This historical reasoning about the causes of poverty seems to be insufficient to ascertain the continuance of poverty throughout the generations of urban dwellers. So as to overcome this insufficiency, various sociological and anthropological studies have been carried out during the 1960s as for the individual and familial behaviors of poor to investigate the causes of poverty continuation across generations, mainly under the name of ‘culture of poverty’, which will be discussed in the following section due to its debatable nature.

1.2.2. Radical Approaches

Radical theorists’ arguments on the reasons of urban poverty are quite different from those of conservative and liberal theorists. They emphasize the structural composition of the capitalist mode of production, which inevitably produces urban poverty and lower economic classes (Banfield, 1970). Equal distribution of income and full employment is impossible under the existing capitalist structure. Radicals claim that although the unequal distribution of income might be reduced from time to time in accordance with economic conjunctures and by poverty alleviation programs and policies, uneven redistribution cannot be totally abolished due to the nature of capitalism.

Radical theorists, different from what conservatists and, to a some extent, liberals have argued, underline that poverty is not an individual but rather a structural phenomenon, and thus it can only be defined historically and socially via primarily

assuming the unequal distribution of resources among social classes. In defining poverty, relative conceptions have been widely used by radicals in contrast to conservatists and liberals who commonly use absolute conceptions of poverty.

Based on this brief discussion on the theoretical considerations of the causes of poverty, we can conclude that the reasons lie on a wide range of spectrum, from imputing poverty to personal inadequacy on the one hand, to imputing it as an outcome of socio-economic dynamics on the other hand. And of course, there are combinations of these views, a good example of which can be found in Wright's work (1994: 32) in which he classifies these reasons in four categories, namely poverty as the result of inherent individual attributes, poverty as the product of contingent individual characteristics, poverty as a by-product of social causes and poverty as a result of the inherent properties of the social system, all of which are well systematized in the following table:

Table 1.1 General Types of Explanations of Poverty

		<i>Nature of the Explanation</i>	
		<i>Unfortunate By-product</i>	<i>Inherent Feature</i>
<i>Site of the Explanation</i>	<i>Individual Attributes</i>	Culture of poverty	Genetic /Racial inferiority
	<i>Social Systems</i>	Ravages of Social change	Class exploitation

Source: Wright, E.O. (1994) *Interrogating Inequality*. London: Verso, p.33.

Poverty as the result of inherent individual attributes is a form of explanation constituting a linkage generally to the genetic inferiority, like mental illness or racial inferiority, which assumes that some people are poor due to lack of intelligence or racial origins to compete in the modern world. The importance given to this

understanding as the causes of poverty is not popular among scholars with few exceptions (Wright, 1994: 32).

Poverty as the product of contingent individual characteristics is generally referred as the 'culture of poverty' approach, which, as Wright argues, explains poverty, by cultural socialization, that is, the intergenerational transmission of a set of values that perpetuate endless cycles of poverty. In this understanding, the main cause of poverty is the contingent attributes –forming values and personal traits- of individuals which are not genetically inherited, but rather produced and reproduced by social and cultural processes (Wright, 1994).

Poverty as a by-product of social causes is commonly valued by liberal theorists to assess poverty, which is claimed to be the outcome of the nature of opportunity structure of disadvantaged people. The inaccessibility to opportunity structures is assumed to result in lack of adequate education and job opportunities due to wrong government policies for conservatists and liberals, ultimately leading to impoverishment. This explanation has its roots in the concept of underclass which represents a segment of the poor who are not only economically deprived, but who manifest a distinctive set of values attitudes, beliefs, norms and behaviors as well (Ricketts and Sawhill, 1988).

Poverty as a result of the inherent properties of the social system is identified by the Marxist tradition, which explains the causes of poverty in contemporary capitalism as the result of core dynamics of class exploitation. It is argued that poverty is not a contingent or a by-product, but rather an inherent trait of the economic structure based on class exploitation.

In sum, there are various explanations on causes of poverty all of which have their own contributions to poverty alleviation. Among these approaches, culture of poverty is the one, which specifically emphasize the psychological characters of poor

population. Since these psychological characteristics determine the willingness of poor to survive, to raise the living standards, it is important here to touch upon the culture of poverty approach.

1.3. Culture of Poverty

The concept of culture of poverty was introduced in the early 1960s by Oscar Lewis, an anthropologist with considerable field researches among poor populations of American Indians, Cuba, Mexico, and Puerto Rico. Culture of Poverty approach focuses on cultural attitudes and behaviors which do not make up a separate culture, but rather a subculture varying from national culture. “The notion of culture of poverty focuses on similarities among the urban poor in different societies, but emphasizes that the behavior and values of the poor are not determined by their circumstances, rather they constitute a culturally evolved response” (Gilbert and Gugler, 1992: 170).

Lewis (1998) stresses the distinction between impoverishment and the culture of poverty in that not all the poor live in or develop a culture of poverty, for example, impoverished middle-class members do not automatically become members of the culture of poverty. He has developed a long list of interrelated network of social, economic, and psychological traits, all of which characterize the culture of poverty (1998; 7-8):

The people in the culture of poverty have a strong feeling of marginality, of helplessness, of dependency, of not belonging. They are like aliens in their own country, convinced that the existing institutions do not serve their interests and needs. Along with this feeling of powerlessness is a widespread feeling of inferiority, of personal unworthiness...People with a culture of poverty have very little sense of history. They are marginal people who know only their own troubles, their own local conditions, their own neighborhood, their own way of life. Usually, they have neither the knowledge, the vision nor the ideology to see the similarities between

their problems and those of others like themselves elsewhere in the world. In other words, they are not class conscious, although they are very sensitive indeed to status distinctions. When the poor become class conscious or members of trade union organizations, or when they adopt an internationalist outlook on the world they are, in my view, no longer part of the culture of poverty although they may be still desperately poor.

The culture of poverty has become a very debatable concept among conservatists, liberals and radicals. Some have raised questions about the empirical reliability of Lewis' work, and others have contributed. In this sense, some progressives mainly questioned the culture of poverty approach and argued that Lewis has framed a model of poverty subculture in a negative portrayal of the poor, lending itself to a "blaming the victim" interpretation of poverty (Harvey and Reed, 1996; 468). However, the radical theorists on the left see the culture of poverty approach as an "impassioned critique of capital's destructive dialectics"(Harvey and Reed, 1996; 473).

As both negative and positive critiques of the concept are much disputable in themselves, Harvey and Reed well summarizes the importance of the approach in comparison with the other approaches to poverty (1996; 466):

(T)he virtue of Lewis thesis lies in the clarity with which it demonstrates that poverty subculture is not a mere 'tangle of pathology', but consists, instead, of a set of positive adaptive mechanisms. These adaptive mechanisms are socially constructed, that is collectively fabricated by the poor from the substance of their everyday lives, and they allow the poor to survive in otherwise impossible material and social conditions. ...Unlike other explanations of poverty, it concedes the poor have been damaged by the system but insists this damage does not clinically disqualify them from determining their own fate.

Of primary importance for our purpose is the assertion that the urban poor develop an effort to cope with feelings of hopelessness and despair and that they are not passive groups, rather they respond to their socio-economic positions to survive which is typically conceptualized as the "survival strategies".

1.4. Household Survival Strategies

Household survival strategies mainly revolve around the belief that households are not passive victims of impoverishment or poverty, and they have their own responses to have sustainable livelihoods or to cope with their poverty. Given the focus of this study, household survival strategies make up of a means of understanding the nature of poverty and the way in which households cope with it (Rakodi, 1995). In contrast to the definitions and approaches discussed above, household survival strategies construct a different understanding in that it focuses on what the poor have, rather than what they do not have, and in doing so focuses on their assets (Moser, 1998).

Household, in general, might be defined as a person or group of people living together in the same dwelling and contributing to and benefiting from a joint economy either in cash or domestic labor. Strategy –within the context of household survival strategies- refer to a set of choices constrained to a greater or lesser extent by macro-economic circumstances, social context, cultural and ideological expectations and access to resources (Wolf, 1990). Household strategies refer to household decisions, which are based on explicit process of setting objectives, and planning their achievement. The strategies adopted by the poor aim to cope with and recover from stress and shocks to maintain or enhance capability and assets and to provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation. However, not all the poor have the necessary assets and capability to adopt household strategies.

Poor individuals or households have their own assets on which they rely to cope with their poverty. Moser draws a framework under the heading of “asset vulnerability framework” in which she is critical of the interchangeable use of the concepts ‘poverty’ and ‘vulnerability’. In her criticisms, poverty is a static concept as

for poverty measures are fixed in time, while vulnerability is more dynamic and better captures change processes (Moser, 1998; 3):

The urban study defines vulnerability as insecurity and sensitivity in the well-being of individuals, households and communities in the face of a changing environment, and implicit in this, their responsiveness and resilience to risks that they face during such negative changes. Environmental changes that threaten welfare can be ecological, economic, social and political, and they can take the form of sudden shocks, long-term trends, and seasonal cycles. With these changes often come increasing risk and uncertainty and declining self-respect.

As vulnerability implicitly contains ‘responsiveness and resilience to risks’, asset ownership of poor is of significant importance in coping with negative changes, assuming that “the more assets people have, the less vulnerable they are” (Moser, 1998; 3). Critically, as vulnerability is defined as “a dynamic concept, generally involving a sequence of events after a macroeconomic shock” (Glewwe and Hall, 1995: 3), on ontological grounds, asset vulnerability framework might be accepted as a theoretical response to how the poor cope with survival immediately after a macroeconomic shock. Further criticism might be on the theoretical validity of this framework as for its ‘operational relevance’ to comprehend the survival strategies of the poor; inheriting operational utility ‘for policy makers and practitioners’ so as to ‘help identify those interventions most likely to have the greatest impact on household welfare’ (Moser, 1998; 16). Although asset vulnerability framework might be criticized, this approach contributes to the poverty literature in that it considers the poor’s responses to their vulnerable positions in accordance with their own assets. The asset portfolio of the poor are categorized in five groups, either being tangible or intangible (World Bank, 1990; Moser, 1998: 4, Moser, 1996: 25):

- ◆ Tangible assets;
- *Labor* is commonly identified as the most important asset of poor people.

- *Human capital* includes health status, which determines people's capacity to work; and skills and education, which determine the return to their labor.
- *Productive assets* among which the most important one for the poor is housing.
- ◆ Intangible assets;
 - *Household relations* are a mechanism for pooling income and sharing consumption.
 - *Social capital* is reciprocity within communities and between households based on trust deriving from social ties.

1.4.1. Capabilities of the Urban Poor

Moser draws an argument that the poor themselves manage the complex asset portfolio, which might have crucial effects on household poverty and vulnerability. As the household strategies depend on households' assets and their capability to use those assets, a crucial concept, capability, has been introduced into poverty literature by Sen (1985, 1992), leading to a more dynamic nature of poverty in contrast to the conceptualizations as yet discussed. "The *capabilities* of household members are deeply influenced by factors ranging from the prospects for earning to a living to the social and psychological effects of deprivation and exclusion" (Moser, 1996: 23). These factors include the poor's basic needs, employment at reasonable wages, and health and education facilities (Streeten et.al.,1981). Also they generate the socially created sense of helplessness that often accompanies economic crisis –what Sen (1985) calls the 'politics of hope and despair'.

In Sen's line of argument, capability set is the set of feasible vectors of functionings, which are "constitutive of a person's being" (1992; 39). A capability set represents a person's opportunities to achieve well-being which, Sen argues,

“must be thoroughly dependent on the nature of his or her being, i.e., on the functionings achieved” (1992; 39)

Capability approach yields insights into poverty studies, in which mainly income/consumption patterns are used in poverty assessments. While the income/consumption-based poverty lines enlightens the static nature of poverty, capabilities approach enlightens the dynamic aspects of poverty (Sen, 1992) not as a ‘state’, but rather as a ‘process’. The dynamic nature refers to the capability of the poor to access forthcoming chances, the willingness to use capability in present and near future and thus the willingness to alleviate poverty (Işık and Pınarcıoğlu, 2001). Why this dynamic exploration of urban poverty is important in poverty studies explicitly lies in the fact that it provides an understanding of non-monolithic, non-static, continuous character of poverty and of the household strategies of urban poor to cope with their poverty.

Although having assets are initially important for developing survival strategies, not less important is the capability to transform these assets into income, food or other basic necessities for survival.

1.4.2. Household Assets/Resources

As have been stated in the previous section, labor, human capital, productive assets, household relations and social capital are the kinds of resources for poor households to cope with their poverty.

Within the focus of household survival, labor has a significant role including all kind of work patterns, ranging from formal wage employment, informal work, unpaid labor and subsistence production, all of which contribute to the household well-being. “The strategies that households adopt to generate income (in cash or any other form) probably represent the most important aspect of the survival strategies,

given the context of increasingly commercialized economies” (Hoodfar, 1996;1). Studies in developed and developing countries show that formal wage employment is of primary importance for consolidating livelihood, while informal work substitutes formal work in case of unemployment. As informal activities proliferate, casual labor becomes a critical source of income for households, although casual labor is characterized by very low and irregular wages, especially in urban areas where the market is saturated and competition for job is keen (de la Rocha, and Grinspun; 58).

A second point in household assets is the human capital, which has crucial impact on poverty. Since having access to infrastructure, for example education, water, transportation, electricity and health care, ensures that the urban poor can gain skills and that they can use their skills and knowledge productively, the level of having access to infrastructure has important effects on the level of poverty and on the alleviation of poverty (Moser, 1998; 38-43).

Thirdly, housing is an important productive asset for relieving deprived groups, and “land market regulation can either create opportunities to diversify its use or foreclose them” (Moser, 1998; 44). As housing insecurity increases the vulnerability, house ownership is an important strategy either of being a shelter or being a tool of capital accumulation.

In the Third world cities, poor households mostly live in squatter settlements, which might be narrowly defined as “aggregates of houses built on lands not belonging to the house builders but invaded by them, sometimes in individual household groups, sometimes as a result of organized collective action” (Vliet, 1998: 554). Not all residents of squatter settlements are poor and not all urban poor live in squatter settlements. Squatters are low-income houses “developed (a) on vacant land by low-income families and informal-sector entrepreneurs without permission by the

landowner, (b) independently of the authorities charged with the external or institutional control of local building and planning, or (c) both (Vliet, 1998: 554).

Household relations form an important part of capabilities of the household to transform labor resources into income or subsistence goods and services. “The ability of a household to combine resources is affected by its size, composition and type, its stage in the domestic cycle as well as by factors related to headship, all of which determine the number of potential contributors to the household economy” (De la Rocha and Grinspun, 2001; 59). The size of household, its structure and the availability of income earners affect vulnerability such as large households with few income earners are more likely to be poorer. As for the domestic cycle, households are dynamic social units evolving over time. In each stage of domestic cycle, households’ capability to cope with poverty is different.

As for the last resource of urban poor, social capital is identified as the networks, norms, and trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit (Putnam, 1993; 36). Social networks based on principles of trust and reciprocity enable people to pool resources and services in mutually beneficial arrangements, by encouraging economies of scale in purchasing or cooking, or the voluntary exchange of labor for harvesting and housing (de la Rocha and Grinspun; 80). Therefore, community networks are of a vital survival strategy, inheriting mutual exchange of goods, services and money.

1.6. Conclusion

As have been discussed, poverty has been defined and measured on the basis of either absolute or relative poverty definitions, mainly through income and consumption patterns. Although these measurements have undeniable contributions in poverty assessment, they are limited in scope in that they underestimate the

dynamic multifaceted nature of poverty. Likewise the answers given by conservatist, liberal, and radical theorists to the question of why or how people become poor compose a variety ranging from individual pathologies to the nature of capitalist mode of production. Despite these varieties and the validities of these approaches, they had missed one crucial point to cover the problem of poverty. They simply ignore the question of how urban poor cope with their poverty, how they survive, how poverty alleviation and survival strategies are developed and adopted by the poor. Thus, exploring 'household survival strategies' maintain us with a more dynamic character of poverty, whose members are assumed to have their own assets and capabilities to transform these assets to survive.

CHAPTER II
SURVIVAL STRATEGIES OF GECEKONDU HOUSEHOLDS:
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Evolution of Gecekondu Settlements in Turkey

*Gecekondu*s are informal housing settlements, which literally mean built in one night. In the Turkish context, gecekondu)s began to emerge during the 1940s, and continued with increasing numbers especially in big cities of Turkey. The basic underlying reasons of emergence and massive increase of these dwellings are rapid urbanization, housing shortage and the high rents in cities (Heper, 1978: 11).

In Turkey, during the 1940s a high rate of urbanization started with increasing migration from rural to urban areas. Among the push factors of urbanization, Marshall aid during the 1940s had crucial implications for rural-to-urban migration. The Marshall aid at first glance promoted mechanization in the agricultural sector that ultimately caused a high rate of unemployed rural laborers and small-scale farmers (Şenyapılı, 1983: 73). With Marshall aid Anatolian highways were built which made it easier to migrate to urban areas. Thus, the Marshall aid had ultimately led to urbanization through causing structural changes in the agricultural sector by altering labor-intensive agriculture to technology-based one, and also through highway construction, by making urban areas more accessible.

Continuous migration to cities has been a considerable part of urbanization and increase in urban population. Table 2.1 illustrates urban population growth between 1970-2000.

Table 2.1 Urban and Rural Population by Years

Years	Total	Urban	%	Rural	%
	Population	Population (1)		Population	
1970	35.605.156	11.550.644	32,4	24.054.512	67,6
1975	40.347.719	15.181.918	37,6	25.165.801	62,4
1980	44.736.957	18.824.957	42,1	25.912.000	57,9
1985	50.664.458	23.926.262	47,2	26.738.196	52,8
1990	56.473.035	30.515.681	54,0	25.957.354	46,0
1995 (2)	62.171.000	37.853.969	60,9	24.317.031	39,1
2000 (2)	67.332.000	47.549.543	70,6	19.782.457	29,4

Source: <http://www.dpt.gov.tr>

(1) Urban is the places with a population of 20000 and more.

(2) Estimation by the end of the year.

In fact, urban population increase, which mostly depended on rural migrants, gave rise to housing demand. As the housing supply could not keep pace with the housing demand in cities due to rapid urbanization, and due to housing shortage and lack of social housing programs, gecekonu construction emerged as a solution adopted by migrants. “(rural migrants) built their own houses within a network of people having similar experiences. They use their own labor and local or second-hand materials in the construction of their houses” (Mahmud and Duyar-Kienast, 2001: 271).

Squatter housing since its first appearance has been growing in quantity in relatively developed big cities (Keleş, 1983: 196). The following table shows the increasing number of squatters and squatter houses in accordance with years.

Table 2.2 Number and Population of Squatters in Turkey.

Years	Numbers of Squatters	Population of Squatters	% of Squatters in Total Urban Population
1955	50,000	250,000	4,7
1960	240,000	1,200,000	16,4
1965	430,000	2,150,000	22,9
1970	600,000	3,000,000	23,6
1980	1,150,000	5,750,000	26,1
1990	1,750,000	8,750,000	33,9
1995	2,000,000	10,000,000	35,0(1)

Source: Ruşen Keleş, Kentleşme Politikası, p.386.

(1) Estimation

Since this increase in quantity of gecekondus is closely related to Turkish politics, the relationship between politics and gecekondus is discussed in the following section.

(i) The Emergence of Gecekondus: Turkish Republic was ruled by the Republican People's Party under a single-party system during the establishment of Republican regime until the transition to a multi-party system in 1946. The dominating goal was modernization emphasizing cultural aspects, which represented the western way of life by modernizing elite. According to Erman (2001a, 984):

When people started migrating from villages to the cities in the late 1940s...and began to build their own gecekondus, their presence in the city and their makeshift houses were perceived as highly alarming both by the state and by the urban elites. The elitist view was to regard the gecekondus people as a serious obstacle to modernization of the cities and the promotion of the modern (Western) way of life in them.

Within this elitist political context, squatter settlements were not welcomed, and several measures were taken, for example prevention, prohibition, and demolition through legislative actions.

The first legal response to squatter housing was enacted in 1948, Law No.5218¹. This law aimed at improving the existing squatter dwellings and preventing the construction of new squatter houses through land allocation by the municipality within Ankara boundaries (Heper, 1978, p.18). "Reflecting widespread concerns of property owners in the major cities, the law dealt severally with squatters who occupied private property. Gecekondus built on private land were subject to immediate demolition, squatters on private property could be sent to prison."

¹ Law 5218, in 1948, Law Enabling the Ankara Municipality to allocate and Transfer Part of its land Under Special Circumstances and Without Having to Comply with provisions of Law 2490 (Ankara Belediyesine, Arsa ve Arazisinden Belli Bir Kısmını Mesken Yapacaklara 2490 sayılı Kanun Hükümlerine Bağlı olmaksızın ve Muayyen Şartlarla Tahsis ve Temlik Yetkisi Verilmesi Hakkında Kanun)

(Danielson and Keleş, 1985, p.171). The failure of legislative actions in practice was seen immediately with the continuous increase of squatters in quantity.

(ii) The Expansion of Gecekondu: During the 1950s, Turkey faced crucial changes in political, economic, and social context, altering the elitist approach of the previous period to a more populist one with the adoption of multiparty political system. At the urban level, this period is characterized by rapid urbanization, as a result of which the gecekondu issue became more considerable in Turkish politics.

Unlike the prohibitory attitude towards gecekondu settlements under the single party rule, this period was characterized with its populist attitudes and policies. Under these populist multi-party circumstances, prohibitory policies were weakened by political acceptance of gecekondu settlements. While local governments were given duty to demolish these illegal settlements, national political elites were promising squatters title deeds and other benefits. Prohibition via legislation continued to be an official policy for gecekondu dwellings. However, “existing illegal housing was legitimized... Each step in the process undermined the previous one, further reducing the credibility of demolition as a deterrent to new gecekondu construction” (Keleş and Danielson, 1985; 173). Therefore, doubtless to argue, there was a conflicting dual response to the problem of gecekondu by the national political actors. On the one hand, while elected politicians took measures to prohibit and destroy gecekondu, on the other hand, they were well aware of the potential votes of these groups and were in favor of the interests of gecekondu dwellers. Furthermore, while taking prohibitory measures, they were also legitimizing the existing gecekondu settlements.

By the 1960s, the political response continued in the same manner. “It had gradually become apparent that the squatters were emerging as an important pressure group. And particularly during the election years... title deeds were distributed,

municipal services were provided to those areas immediately after efforts were made to demolish the houses” (Heper, 1978: 21). Gecekondu population became politically important in addition to economic importance. Gaining political importance meant having access to urban infrastructure, and more importantly, having their own deeds for the poor (Şenyapılı, 1982).

Populist political response to the gecekondu issue led gecekondu to expand and to form gecekondu neighborhoods. These settlements started to become permanent, which resulted in improvement in the construction materials and physical appearances of gecekondu. In these decades, gecekondu was typically characterized by its use-value and as a self-help housing. Its flexibility enabled the poor to own a house gradually by way of making additional units.

During the 1970s, gecekondu gained an additional meaning of being a tool for economic and social security, as ‘commercialization’ was seen in the urban labor market, construction process, and in gecekondu housing, which had exchange value for the urban poor. Commercialization was mainly due to the speculative growth in the urban land market, and the exchange value of gecekondu. “By the mid-1970s, it had become common practice for a developer to offer two, three or even four units in a proposed apartment block in order to persuade a settler to sell out” (Payne, 1982: 131). Indeed, the transformation process of gecekondu into apartment buildings started in the mid-1970s.

When we consider the representation of gecekondu residents, we can talk about a shift in the academic discourse from the ‘integration of rural migrants into cities’ to ‘urban poverty’ and ‘urban violence’ (Erman, 2001a). In other words, the early gecekondu surveys (Öğretmen, 1957: Yasa, 1970: Yörükan, 1968) commonly concentrated on the urban integration of rural migrants. This problematic in the

academic sphere continued until recent decades (Erder, 1982; Ersoy, 1985; Tatlıdil, 1989).

Erman (2001a: 990) stresses the common perception of rural migrants in the academic discourse. According to hers, *gecekondu* population was mainly perceived as a homogenous population until the 1980s, namely, as rural migrants displaying rural way of life in their physical appearance, family composition, spatial and physical characteristics of their houses (for example, they did planting and husbandry in the gardens of their *gecekondus*). In this sense, most of these *gecekondu* surveys seem to be problematic in that they framed a model of *gecekondu* in which the population was portrayed as rural migrants, lending itself to a “blaming the victim” interpretation of poverty. However, some scholars, especially in the 1970s, perceived the *gecekondu* population as the disadvantageous group in the city, and treated the state’s lack of public policies as the cause, which were seen as necessary for the integration of rural migrants (Kongar, 1973, 1986; Kartal, 1992: 208).

Moreover, although the *gecekondu* studies were not dealing with the nature of poverty until recent decades, they implicitly, and even most of the times explicitly, carried the assumption that *gecekondu* households were composed of low income households compared to the rest of the urban population, and they were relatively high income households compared to the rural areas from which they migrated.

For the *gecekondu* literature, the 1980s were of significant value, since the macro/structural changes in Turkish society began to have crucial impacts both on the changing composition of the *gecekondu* population and on their representation in the academic discourse. While the early studies focused on the *gecekondu* population as ‘rural migrants’, recent studies focused on these people as the ‘urban poor’. According to Erman’s point of view (2001a: 993):

Although ‘rurality’ was still attributed to the gecekondu population in general, ‘being rural’ was not seen anymore as a valid defining characteristic of the gecekondu population. Instead, ‘the new urbanities’ and the ‘urban poor’ began to be used to refer to the gecekondu population. The growing poverty in gecekondu districts since the 1980s has contributed to the emphasis on poverty in the definition of the gecekondu population.

A further important shift, but may be the most important one, in this period occurred in another perception of the gecekondu population. They were not regarded as a “homogeneous group based on their common rural origins”, but rather as a heterogeneous population composed of various ethnic and sectarian groups (Erman, 2001a: 993).

In sum, the emergence and the expansion of gecekondu settlements have been perceived as ‘the gecekondu problem’ both on the academic and policy makers’ agenda since their appearance. Although there were no specific surveys until recent decades conducted to assess the household survival strategies of rural migrants in early times, and recently, of the urban poor, most of these gecekondu studies provide crucial knowledge about how these households could survive in the city, and how their survival mechanisms have changed. The need for a discussion on the changing trends in the survival strategies of gecekondu households stems from the fact that household strategies are dependent on and molded by the external environment. In this context, survival strategies, and capabilities of poor urban households are context bound to the extent that social, political and economic dynamics of urbanization mold and condition the capabilities of the urban poor. Briefly, social dynamics of urbanization cover migratory trends and solidarity networks, political dynamics of urbanization refer to gecekondu policies, and economic dynamics of urbanization include national economic policies and the urban labor market, all of which open the way for gecekondu households either to survive by developing strategies or to become desperately poor.

Given the focus of this thesis, what follows in this chapter is the review of the gecekondu literature so as to assess the changing nature of household survival strategies of the once ‘rural migrants’, and now the ‘urban poor’ living in big cities of Turkey. The survival strategies at the household level will be explored with reference to the migration process, housing, labor force participation of the gecekondu population, solidarity networks, and level of access to urban services.

2.2. Migration Type: How has the Changing Nature of Migration Affected the Survival of Urban Poor Households?

As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, the driving force of urbanization and the main reason of the emergence of gecekondu settlements was the migration from rural to urban areas during the 1940s and onwards. The type of migration is very closely linked to the survival strategies adopted by migrant households. In this context, the typical migration process in the early phases of urbanization was ‘chain migration’, which was largely replaced by ‘forced migration’ after the 1980s, especially in the 1990s (Erder, 1995: FEV, 1996: Erman, 2001a).

Erder (1995) studied the relationship between migration type and the settling in the city, mobility and stratification of migrant households. In her survey, she explored the impact of migration type on the immediate survival of migrants in the city, and their integration into the city. She argues that chain migration and forced migration have caused different degrees of integration of migrants into the urban labor market.

It is worth to note that the process of chain migration was an important household strategy to survive in the city. Kalaycıoğlu and Rittersberger-Tılıç have noted that (2000: 524-525):

First one person, usually an unmarried male, moved as a ‘pioneer’ and then other members of the family, wider kin and village community followed. Although the pioneer initiated the process, the decision to migrate was mostly taken at a household or family level...On the other hand, some fathers strongly encouraged their sons to migrate to the city to find a job or to get educated, seeing it as a way to leave poverty behind.

In the process of chain migration, early migrants considerably helped the newcomers, who commonly shared the same rural and/or ethnic origins. They helped both in economic and psychological terms, which range from providing shelter, finding a job, lending money, to giving moral support (FEV, 1996: 6). Indeed, the chain migration process was a crucial survival strategy for migrant households, as it was a mechanism for providing economic and moral security.

How did chain migration contribute to the survival of migrants in the city? First, it made it possible for migrants to locate spatially within the same neighborhood. In this case, ‘spatial clustering’ of migrants in the same neighborhood, and in some cases, even in the same *gecekondus* were seen. Indeed, the establishment of such *gecekondu* neighborhoods provided the basis of social networks and ‘*hemşehri*’ relations based on reciprocity and solidarity, which will be discussed as another survival mechanism in the following parts.

The chain migration process was partially replaced by forced migration in the general political atmosphere of the post 1980 period. In this period, “increasing politicization of ethnic and sectarian identities” and the “increasing migration from the south-east in the 1990s, to escape terrorism” (Erman, 2001a: 988) had changed both the type of migration and the composition of urban poverty. What characterizes the type of migration in these decades is the forced nature of migration, which was a result of economic, political and social erosion in the settlements from which they migrated (Erder, 1995: 110; Keyder, 1999:91; FEV, 1996:14).

How did forced migration affect the survival of the urban poor? It is noteworthy that forced migration, first emerging at a large scale in the 1980s, has caused a noticeable decrease in the “assets” of the urban poor, one of which was the exclusion of newcomers from the social networks of early migrants. That is to say, once social networks constituted the social capital of migrants as a resource for survival in the city, however forced migration made recent migrants incapable of using these social networks, ultimately resulting in the lack of an important survival mechanism. Erman (2001a: 988) argues about the composition of the urban poor living in gecekondus in the 1990s as follows:

The new comers to large cities, many of whom are people of Kurdish origin, have not been easily accepted into the existing migrant networks, and they have been experiencing social and political discrimination. As a result, they have created their own communities, usually in the most disadvantaged locations, and have ended up with impoverished lives and social stigma, creating a suitable atmosphere for radical action and social fragmentation.

In sum, as the new migrants are excluded from the social networks, which were once a common strategy for the survival of the poor through access to shelter and/or jobs, they constituted relatively more vulnerable groups among the urban poor living especially in metropolitan areas. That is, the households, who are forced to migrate, have been suffering from lack of access to assets necessary for their livelihood, for example social networks necessary for finding a house or formal and even informal employment, all of which are necessary to survive in the city.

2.3. The Gecekondu: A Shift From Being a Shelter to Being a Tool for Capital Accumulation

House is an important asset/resource for the urban poor to survive because of the various functions that a house may fulfill, for example it may be a shelter, and a tool

for capital accumulation. “A house, in every form, means economic security and potential source of income.” (Şen, 2000: 84) As Tekeli puts it (1992: 3 cited in Şen, 2000: 84), among the functions of house are shelter, commodity production, a consumption good, a security for individuals and families, and a means of the reproduction of investment, a means of investment. Indeed, house has a use-value, as well as an exchange value. Within this framework, the question of how gecekondu have been functioning as a survival strategy for the poor households living in Turkish cities becomes important to investigate.

The squatter type of housing is the outcome of the housing problem of the urban poor in Third World cities. The gecekondu, which is the local name of squatter houses in Turkey, is the solution to housing shortages adopted by rural migrants/urban poor since the 1940s. Gecekondu settlements are informal settlements, which are irregular in their physical setting and illegal in the appropriation of land and/or building rights (Mahmud and Duyar-Kienast, 2001: 271). Although gecekondu are thought as illegal, informal and irregular, they were, and are still, essential for the survival of the poor because of some of their characteristics. How the gecekondu serves for the survival of the migrant/poor households will be explored in the following sections on the basis of access to land, construction process, ownership patterns, and the flexibility of the houses.

2.3.1. Access to Urban Land

In Turkish cities, the initial strategy of the survival in the city of rural migrants has been access to land and/or a squatter house. “In its early phases, the phenomenon of squatment entailed occupying vacant municipal or state land and building a one room house with the help of relatives” (Öncü, 1988: 47). Squatter households preferred to occupy public land rather than private land for building their gecekondu (Kongar,

1993: 221). According to the survey conducted by Kartal in the late 1970s, almost 90 percent of the gecekondus were built on publicly owned land, whereas the rest were built on privately owned land.

In the early phases of the expansion of gecekondu settlements, squatting was a means of non-commercial access to urban land. For Öncü (1988: 47) until the mid-1970s, and for Işık and Pınarcıoğlu (2001) until the beginning of the 1980s, there was a political consensus, which fostered the expansion of gecekondu settlements through illegal land occupation based mostly on market forces. Since market forces regulated the process of access to land, which means unplanned urban growth, and because of the continuation of massive migratory flows, high inflation rates, a weak and undifferentiated financial sector and clientalism in urban politics (Öncü, 1988), Turkish cities have faced a very speculative growth in urban land market.

In the context of this speculative growth, the poor households of gecekondus insured themselves against poverty via the profit-making potentialities of the informal or second land market, in which they once occupied land and built gecekondus on it for self-use. In other words, the speculative growth of the urban land rents enabled the urban poor to accumulate capital through informal land market.

However, by the 1980s, market mechanism has changed against the interests of the new migrant households. As Öncü (1988: 47) notes:

Access to the secondary land market was now mediated through developers, locally known as ‘squatter lords’ who sold split-deeds in unserviced, agricultural land at the price of ‘urban land’. Thus, once the land grab bonanza of the 1950s and 1960s was over, fresh waves of immigrants arriving from the mid-1970s onwards were forced to pay enormous rents in peripheral neighborhoods without the most basic infrastructural services

In the 1980s onwards, access to urban land transformed its meaning for the urban poor from its use-value to exchange-value, thus formed an essential part of their survival, even in some cases constituted a means of becoming wealthy (Işık and Pınarcıoğlu, 2001: 40). Öncü (1988: 46) further argues that “it is in fact not the ‘job market’ but the ‘secondary land market’, which has provided a channel of accumulation for the urban poor.” Thus, access to urban land became a tool for capital accumulation, yet the uneven nature of this process excluded from this process some urban households, especially the new migrant households who migrated to big cities after the 1980s.

2.3.2. Construction Process and Materials: The Gecekondu as a Cheap House?

The urban poor prefer gecekondu type of housing, because it is relatively a cheaper way of access to housing. The construction materials used for building these houses are lower in quality and cheaper in monetary terms. However, there has been a gradual increase in the quality of the construction materials since their first appearance. The changing face of construction process and materials is strongly related with the political dynamics of urbanization, or gecekondu policies.

In the early period of gecekondu formation, especially in the 1940s and the early 1950s, because of prohibitory measures taken by the state, gecekondu had their primitive shapes as shanties (Şenyapılı, 1978: 50), and they were made of local construction materials, such as stone (Tatlıdil, 1989: 75), tin, wood, packaging boxes and cardboard (Sevgi, 1988). They were built in one night, and in cases of demolition, they were easily rebuilt again in one night.

The gecekondu studies conducted in the 1950s and the 1960s show that the early gecekondu were constructed commonly by sun-dried bricks, plastered by mud, and roofed either by tin, soil or concrete (Öğretmen, 1957: Yasa, 1966: Yörükán,

1968: 44). Towards the end of the 1960s, bricks were also added to the construction materials, the preference of which depended upon the poverty level of the households (Tatlıdil, 1989: 75). Further, relatively poorer households preferred to use second-hand materials.

In the 1970s and onwards, the gradual increase in the quality of the construction materials continued. In these years, the construction type of the early gecekondus was continuously replaced by brick and reinforced concrete (Şenyapılı, 1978: 88). For Karpat (1976), squatter settlements were physically improving over time as the original primitive hovels were converted into sturdier houses of brick, concrete and tile.

This gradual improvement of squatter houses was because of the fact that gecekondu households became “a permanent feature of urban life” (Şenyapılı, 1982) due to their increasing role in economy, both as cheap and flexible labor and as consumers in the domestic market. Şenyapılı states that (1982: 240):

The acquisition of non-marginal status in the urban economy had its repercussions in settlement pattern and quality...Political backing and channeling of infrastructural investments to gecekondu areas, coupled with the increased family income, resulted in the improvement, crystallization and informal “legalization” of the gecekondu neighborhoods...The quality of the gecekondus improved, as by now the building process was informally organized, from confiscation of a lot, to supply of construction materials and labor. Former shacks in muddy fields started to become regular neighborhoods.

Together with construction materials, the physical appearances of gecekondus have been changing throughout the decades. The appearance of gecekondus were transformed from one-room shanties, to two or three-room houses with gardens in the 1950s-1960s, to multi-story houses with limited or no gardens in the late 1970s, and even to apartment buildings after the mid-1980s.

The low quality of construction materials and the physical appearances of houses might be interpreted as the result of poverty. The gecekondur as a shelter appeared to be a survival mechanism of rural migrants/ the urban poor. Indeed, poor urban households adopted the gecekondur as a solution to their housing problem, because the gecekondur construction itself was a low-cost process. However, in time the gecekondur itself became a subject of investment, and a tool for economic and social security, and most of the gecekondur studies support this argument. Indeed, the increase in the quality of both the construction materials and the physical appearance of gecekondus might be interpreted both as the increasing economic well being of the urban poor and the poor's perception of the gecekondur as a mean of investment (Kartal, 1992). Once the gecekondur was a cheap house, which was easily accessible by the poor, yet in the 1970s and onwards the construction process itself, including labor and materials, became expensive. Payne (1982: 134) argues that:

There is no doubt that commercialization and increased skill levels improved the quality of house construction...However, it also increased the cost of both labor and materials and further reduced the options available to the poorest builder. The increasing influence of the *ardiyes* gave them a position not unlike that of the traditional *agas*, or feudal chiefs and they were able to dictate the availability of credit and buy-up land on which to erect speculative houses, thereby inflating the prices of adjacent land and houses.

2.3.3. Ownership Patterns

The main survival strategy of the urban poor regarding housing has been the ownership of a gecekondur. In this sense, almost all gecekondur studies have given special emphasis to the ownership patterns of the rural migrant/urban poor population. Moreover, several studies looked at the ownership pattern in assessing the economic status of the gecekondur population (Hart, 1969), to describe the quality of construction materials (Sevgi, 1988), to find out the satisfaction of gecekondur population from the city life (Sevgi, 1988), to explore the upward mobility of poor

households, and to explore the economic and social behavioral patterns of gecekondu households (Şenyapılı, 1996).

Within the context of ownership patterns, in fact, there are is a prominent change occurred throughout the gecekondu history. In the emergence, expansion, and transformation phases of gecekondu settlements, a gradual increase in the number of tenants can be observed. That is to say, although ownership of a gecekondu is a very crucial strategy, for those households who cannot acquire this status, having access to a gecekondu as a tenant is also an important strategy, because otherwise they could not find a solution to their housing problem. Furthermore, for those gecekondu owners who have multi-story gecekondus or a second or more than two gecekondus, there is a chance to obtain income from tenants, that is, if their married children are not dwelling in those additional gecekondus.

2.3.4. The Gecekondu: A Flexible House?

Flexibility of the gecekondu type of housing is another common issue studied in the gecekondu studies. Flexibility of the gecekondu stems from the spatial use of the plots or the functional use of the space. It is known that gecekondu inhabitants were used to, and some still are making agricultural production and keeping poultry and/or livestock in their gardens (Tatlıdil, 1989: 76). Although this was commonly perceived as a sign of rural way of life (Yasa, 1966, 1970; Yörükan, 1968), such activities were and are still considered subsistence production by the inhabitants, which contribute to the survival of the poor households.

Agricultural production and husbandry functions of gecekondu gardens have been replaced by an economically more important strategy, which is the vertical and/or horizontal expansion of the housing unit, and this calls for another aspect of the gecekondu flexibility. This flexibility is seen in two forms, namely, either new

rooms are divided within the roughly built house and new stories are added as soon as possible, or initially a core is built, and new rooms are added in time (Şenyapılı, 1978: 37). “Throughout the construction of the gecekondu, whatever the initial stage is, the building can be modified and altered radically according to the inhabitants’ new needs and new possibilities. ...Flexibility is the provision for rearrangement, reorganization, and expansion, while maintaining the overall order of the structural components” (Şen, 2000, 86). Şen argues for the relationship between spatial flexibility and survival strategy (2000, 87):

In gecekondu areas, such interventions directed towards space are the most concrete strategies of the urban poor. These arrangements can be made both vertically and horizontally in the space. Most common examples are the use of garden –an outer space- directed to inner house consumption; the possibility of making additions in order to use as workshop; making spatial arrangements which can enable newly-married couples to live with their families, since they do not have the economic possibility to afford a separate house.

In addition to these flexible uses, gecekondu provide semi-public/semi-private spaces, which are in a sense “the extensions of houses” (Erman, 1998: 45). “The common spaces between houses belong to women where they gather informally, sharing local news or the concerns and tasks of daily life” (Erman, 1998: 45). Therefore, as Erman (1998) observed, semi-public/semi-private spaces in gecekondu neighborhoods, which are “socially defined as belonging to women” enable gecekondu women to carry out their traditional gender roles and rural ways of life”. Furthermore, semi-public spaces serve for the benefit of gecekondu households in various ways². First, socially, gecekondu-housing environment provides “intimate social relations and community support” (Erman, 1997: 95), by which migrant households cope with the sense of loneliness, and gain self-esteem. Second,

physically, gecekondur provides “outdoor spaces away from traffic” (Erman, 1997: 97) which enable the dwellers to come together to talk, and even for wedding ceremonies. Erman (1997: 95) observed that:

They (housewives) easily gathered inside or in front of houses. Those who had moved to the city recently did not feel lonely in the presence of their neighbors who spent their time with them. And those who had been living in the gecekondur settlements for many years shared a common history and enjoyed the respect and recognition they received from their neighbors. The gecekondur community supported their self-esteem: they felt respected and loved.

Most of the gecekondur studies have dealt with the gecekondur as a housing unit for low-income households, and the focus of these studies has shifted from the gecekondur as a shelter to the gecekondur as a tool for capital accumulation. This shift has been prominent in the post-1980 period, which is of significant value with the apartmentalization process of the gecekondur. Either as a shelter or as a tool for capital accumulation, the gecekondur has an undeniable crucial role in the survival of the gecekondur population. “Although gecekondur houses are mostly built for self-use, they have also an exchange-value in the housing market, as thus constitute social and economic security for their owners” (Mahmud and Duyar-Kienast, 2001: 273).

2.4. Labor: Integration into the Urban Labor Market as a Survival Strategy

Labor is an important asset that poor people have in order to cope with their poverty and to survive in the city. A poor household may adopt “household work strategies aimed at protecting or increasing household resources” (de la Rocha and Grinspun, 2001: 67). When poverty strengthens, poor households react by placing more members in the labor market and raising the share of informal and family-based work

² For further discussion about the social and physical characteristics of gecekondur houses, see Erman (1997). In her study, she states how gecekondur residents perceive their housing environment with reference to advantages and disadvantages.

for cash, including the use of unpaid labor of women and children. According to the cross-national data, de la Rocha and Grinspun argue that (2001: 67-68):

Female labor-force participation rates have increased in almost every country, while men's traditional role as main family providers has declined in importance. Children's labor, which is seen as a resource to be invested in short-term strategies for survival, has also been on the rise. Household members who are already in the labor market tend to take second jobs and work longer hours, even as the total number of household income earners rises. As a rule, precarious and low-paid activities have increased at the expense of formal employment and income from wages and salaries. For many families, the informal economy now provides the basis for their livelihoods.

Therefore, studying the labor force participation of gecekondu dwellers as a survival asset calls attention to the "marginal sector", which transformed itself into the "informal sector", along with the intensification of working hours, and the mobilization of additional household members with special emphasis on women and child labor.

2.4.1. The Urban Labor Market: From Marginal Sector to Informal Sector

In the early phases of the development of gecekondu settlements, the gecekondu population was composed of unskilled, uneducated, inexperienced rural migrants – mainly agricultural labor force-, who were disadvantaged at integrating into the urban labor market compared to the rest of the urban population. Throughout the decades structural changes have occurred in the labor force of these people. Once they were marginal in the 1940s-1950s, they were employed in the periphery works³ in the 1960s-1970s, and in the informal sector in the 1980s and onwards.

Until the late 1950s, the national economy worsened due to the Second World War, when rural-to-urban migration had started. Immediately after the war, new

³ Periphery works are characterized as the non-modernized, unspecialized works, which carry out production and distribution of small scale services and goods for a specific sector (Şenyapılı, 1981).

economic policies were implemented, which reinforced the mechanization in agriculture, and industrialization was the first steps of important substitution model in the following decades. The repercussions of these economic policies were the marginal employment for the migrants. In the mid-1940s and 1950s, rural migrants were mainly employed in the marginal sector, which is characterized as earning only for subsistence through unorganized employment (Alpar and Yener, 1991: 11). “Lack of industrial development in the cities limited the job market for these migrants and pushed them into the marginal, subsistence sector of the economy” (Peker, 1996: 8). Therefore, the early gecekondu residents survive mainly through marginal employment, like selling cigarettes, newspapers in the streets, working in building construction (Şenyapılı, 1998: 310), subsistence production in their gardens, and the income generated from agricultural production in their villages from where they migrated.

In the 1960s and 1970s, dominant economic policy was the import substitution model of industrialization, in which domestic market was protected from international competition through import quotas, and in which intermediary goods used for industrial production were imported. On the one hand, industrialization in urban areas provided migrant/poor population with important employment opportunities, on the other hand, increasing unorganized, unskilled and uneducated population in the cities enabled factory owners to keep the wages low (Şenyapılı, 1998: 310). Furthermore, new gecekondu settlements were emerging around factories (FEV, 1996) to which the urban poor supplied low-paid labor. In this import substitution industrialization, the urban poor responded to the urban economy by participating into periphery jobs, by which they undertook repairing industrial products and producing spare parts for industrial sector. In these years, labor mobilization of women and children started due to increasing labor demand of the

urban labor market, especially in the industrial and services sectors of the urban economy.

According to gecekondu studies, in the 1960s, “there was a tendency for people in the gecekondu, especially adult males, to move out of the marginal sector into small enterprises in the formal economy. Their place in the marginal sector became occupied by their children and by the new migrants. The contribution of child labor to the family income helped to improve their economic situation” (Peker, 1996: 8). Gecekondu residents were once unskilled, then they began to supply skilled labor to the urban labor market, and began to access to the social security via regular, formal and permanent jobs. They were employed in state organizations for either wage or salary income, which provided social and economic mobility. Also they had their own small enterprises, or engaged with trade (Ministry of Public Works and Resettlement, 1965: 1-8; Yasa, 1966: 123; Yörükan, 1968: 24; Hart, 1969: 63-65). The shift in the jobs of “head” of gecekondu households from marginal employment to formal, organized non-marginal employment, and the contribution of other household members, namely the mobilization of women and child labor, ultimately resulted in relative economic well being of the poor (Şenyapılı, 1981: 47; Alpar and Yener, 1991: 8).

In the 1970s, non-marginal employment of the gecekondu labor force was characterized by periphery jobs, which referred to the economic integration of these people into the industrializing urban economy. The gecekondu studies conducted in the 1970s emphasize that there was a gradual increase in the percentages of qualified labor and civil servants, who had access to social security, and that of small-scale enterprises. Although most of them were employed in the permanent jobs with social security, they were mainly employed in “low-paying job categories” (Karpat, 1976:101), and a small portion of them were unemployed (Şenyapılı, 1981: 75). The

mobile character of their labor force continued. As Karpat (1976: 105) states “the job mobility among squatters was high...The tendency was to move from unskilled and from low technology to higher technology jobs.”

In addition, *gecekond* households became a multi-income earning unit. Şenyapılı (1982) argues that, in the 1950s and 1960s, men’s labor force participation was transformed itself from marginal employment into non-marginal employment, which resulted in better income. Additionally, this income was supplemented by the irregular low income of younger children and women.

The 1980s was a decade of liberalization and privatization in the Turkish economy, which had a significant impact on labor, “with increased redundancy, and also increased subcontracting, home-working, contract labor, and temporary forms of employment” (Peker, 1996:9-10). In the 1980s and onwards, the purchasing power of the average wages decreased dramatically, the proportion of the wages and labor incomes in GNP has fallen, the extent of unemployment increased. Therefore, Demir argues that (1991:34-35):

This situation has supported the unemployment crisis. Because of the lack of formal employment opportunities in both the public and the private sectors, the surplus population in the cities has tended to informal sector activities like petty and casual works with no contractual relations and no social insurance. Also a substantial part of the urban poor has engaged in the informal sector as a second work to ensure their survival. However, it is difficult to illustrate the number and the ratio of this population in the cities because no reliable and available data exist.

The structural changes in the economic sphere during the 1980s have important impacts on the survival strategies of the urban poor. In order to increase income in cash, they work for longer hours. They are employed in the informal sector either as a primary source of income or as a secondary source of income. More family members are mobilized into labor market, including the female and child labor. In

some cases, they increase the subsistence production in their homes and gardens, and even they reduce their consumption expenditures.

2.4.2. Intensification of Working Hours

De la Rocha and Grinspun (2001:70) argue that households respond to income shortfalls by intensifying the total amount of work performed, both by individuals who are already working and by the household unit as a whole. In fact, this intensification of working hours corresponds both to wage and non-wage employment, and to formal and informal sectors.

In the Turkish context, there is little empirical evidence of intensification of working hours. Karpat (1976:102) addresses the number of working days per week, and hours worked per day. According to his study, an important portion of the gecekondu dwellers was working six or seven days per week, and 5-8 hours per day, followed by 9-12 hours per day. Also, Demir (1991) emphasized the intensification of working hours as a survival strategy adopted by the urban poor in the post-1980 period.

2.4.3. Women's Labor

“Women's labor has become a crucial asset for household survival and reproduction” (De la Rocha and Grinspun, 2001: 70). There is a trend towards increasing female participation in the labor force. In many countries, women's participation is limited to low-paid, casual work in the informal sector (De la Rocha and Grinspun, 2001: 71). This trend of increasing women's labor force is also true in the Turkish context, when the pre-1980 and post-1980 periods of gecekondu settlements are considered.

In the gecekondu studies conducted before the 1980s, the information on the portion of the working gecekondu women is not consistent, but ranges four percent

to 30% (Yasa, 1966: 130; Hart, 1969: 78; Karpat, 1976: 102; Şenyapılı, 1981: 92). From the household survival strategies' point of view, it is important to state that the studies found out that the participation of women in the labor to urban labor market was to secure the well being of the family. Although they were economically deprived groups, the question of why gecekondu women were working in low rates was commonly argued because of their traditional roles of housewives. However, Şenyapılı (1981: 92-93) argues that the reason of low working rates was not due to the traditional roles of women, but rather due to the lack of or inadequacy of appropriate jobs in the urban system. That is, the urban labor market offered low-paid and low-prestige jobs, for example paid domestic work and child bearing for the middle and high-income households, to the uneducated, unskilled and inexperienced gecekondu women. Moreover, the husbands were not in favor of their wives working outside the house.

The 1980s were also important for the labor force mobilization of gecekondu women, as this was the case for gecekondu men. As discussed before, economic restructuring in the 1980s and onwards led the urban poor to adapt household work strategies. In this context, it might be expected that more gecekondu women entered into the urban labor market. However, the percentages of workingwomen range between 3 and 11 (Sevgi, 1988: 194; Alpar and Yener, 1991:62; Onat, 1993: 94; KPPYY, 2000; 137). It is wise to recall that these gecekondu studies have different approaches to the working status of women in the sense that while some consider the casual, or seasonal labor along with formal employment, some take only formal and permanent jobs into account and hence neglect some types of income generating activities. In this sense, these values may not provide reliable data to assess the mobilization of labor force of gecekondu women as a survival strategy. It is also important to “differentiate between first generation females and a new generation;

the type of job opportunities also varies from city to city in Turkey” (Mahmud and Duyar-Kienast, 2001: 274). Yet without doubt, Ecevit argues (1989-1990: 133) that:

It is only natural for the female members as well as the male members of families to seek employment opportunities of all kinds, especially in the informal sector. The informal sector, which is expanded by those who have lost their jobs in the formal sector and by those who start working for the first time, has adverse characteristics such as bad working conditions, low wages, and other drawbacks of this kind.

The study of Jenny B. White is a good example of how women are employed in the informal sector in the way that piece-work and the family workshop enable women’s labor to generate additional income by providing women the possibility of remaining inside their houses without getting into contact with strangers, and taking over the role of housewives and mothers (White, 1991: 18). Gecekondu women, generate income either in or outside the home, by individual production or piecework for neighbors or outside middlemen, in the process of which “production relations are disguised as social relations based on reciprocity” (White, 1991: 18).

Patriarchal ideology as an important barrier for women’s participation in the labor force is discussed by Erman, Kalaycıoğlu, and Rittersberger-Tılıç (2002: 12), who argue “migrant women’s work outside the home is not culturally supported”. They observe that in migrant families, in which patriarchal ideology dominates, migrant women’s participation in the labor force is undesirable due to social and cultural constraints, sometimes even in cases of increased poverty. Furthermore, they stress the dilemma that the employed women and their families face because of patriarchal ideology in the sense that “women’s ‘inevitable’ participation in the labor market on the one hand, and on the other hand, becoming a potential threat to the ‘honor’ of their families, as well as to the husband’s status as family head” (Erman, Kalaycıoğlu, and Rittersberger-Tılıç, 2002). Therefore, in the Turkish context, patriarchal ideology constrains women’s participation in the labor force in two ways,

namely, initially it restricts women to be employed outside the home, then as women start working, it places pressure on women and their families to protect the women's honor.

2.4.4. Children's Labor

The mobilization of child labor is an important income generating strategy, which might date back to the emergence of *gecekondu* (Yasa, 1966; 132). Yasa argues that *gecekondu* children were selling newspapers, *simit*s (roll of bread in the shape of a ring), *boza* (a kind of drink), appetizers, and were shoe shiners and porters in bazaars. As Hart (1969: 72-78) puts it, half of the boys between 13-18 ages were working. The economic poverty of the family is an important factor of child labor mobilization, the percentages of which differs among the *gecekondu* owners and tenants, or relatively well-off and worse *gecekondu* families. That is, children of tenants were more likely to enter labor force, as well as the children living in the relatively deprived *gecekondu* settlements. Although boys were working in high rates, it was not the case for girls. The average participation of *gecekondu* girls between 13-18 ages was found to be 30 %, which tended to rise for the children of tenants (Hart, 1969).

In the post-1980s, child labor continued to be a crucial component of family survival. As Sevgi (1988: 195) found out, approximately 35% of children were employed in organized works, 15% were employed in either periphery or marginal jobs, for example working as apprentices, peddlers, and painters. Tatlıdil (1989:96) argues that there was a tendency for the children of second generation towards mobilization from marginal employment to permanent, higher-paid employment with social security. The findings of Alpar and Yener (1991: 60) correspond with that of other *gecekondu* surveys in the sense that child labor is an important part of income

generating strategies. Also, the data provided from an extended survey, which was carried out in the gecekondu settlements of Turkey, show that 16.5% of gecekondu children of 12-19 ages participated into labor force (Gökçe, 1993: 87). Further, nearly 35% of those children were unemployed (Gökçe, 1993: 89). Corollary to these percentages, it can be deduced that 41% of the gecekondu children, who were 12-19 ages old, either participated in labor force, or were unemployed.

In sum, child labor is an important source of income for the gecekondu households, and in cases of increasing economic vulnerability, there is a stronger tendency of child labor mobilization in either marginal or informal sector.

2.5 Solidarity Networks: Are They Still a Survival Strategy?

Solidarity networks make an important part of the survival strategies of the urban poor. How solidarity networks fulfill the function of a survival strategy is stated by De la Rocha and Grinspun (2001: 80) as follows:

Social bonds and networks based on principles of trust and reciprocity enable people to pool resources and services in mutually beneficial arrangements, by encouraging economies of scale in purchasing or cooking, or the voluntary exchange of labor for harvesting and housing. They also provide an essential buffer, allowing the poor to borrow from neighbors or move in with relatives in times of need. For these reasons, kin and friendship networks are a vital support mechanism, since the poor rely on them for the mutual exchange of goods, services and money.

Within this framework, gecekondu households engage in informal solidarity networks at three levels, namely, family, neighborhood/kinship/ *hemsehrilik*, which is a kind of relationship formed with the ones with common (rural) origin, and ethnic/religious relations. The solidarity networks among the gecekondu people are commonly characterized as mutual aid, or assistance, based on solidarity and trust. In the process of migration and immediately after the migration, migrant families, especially the poor, have had access to dwelling and employment, and have solved

their daily life problems through the informal solidarity networks based on family, kinship and ethnicity (Erder, 1998: 111). Yet, not all migrant/poor families can utilize these solidarity networks, and thus some poor families are excluded from kinship and ethnic relations (Kongar, 1986: 104; Erder, 1998: 112). Exclusion from these networks ultimately leads to the increasing vulnerability of gecekondu households. Furthermore, these informal relations cause new types of inequalities among the poor by inheriting hierarchical power relations and by strengthening and inciting ethnicity (Erder, 1998: 112).

The solidarity networks at family and kinship levels are the most important support mechanism for the survival of poor gecekondu households (Erder, 1999: 71; Kalaycıođlu and Rittersberger-Tılıç, 2000: 526). Gecekondu surveys generally pay attention to the family, kinship/hemşehrlik and ethnic relations with specific emphasis to the relations with the rural origins from where gecekondu households migrated. In this context, three levels of informal solidarity networks can be observed in gecekondu settlements, namely, familial/ intergenerational solidarity networks, kinship/ neighborhood/ hemşehrlik solidarity networks, and ethnic/secterian solidarity networks.

2.5.1. Familial-Intergenerational Solidarity Networks

Familial solidarity relations are explored by Kalaycıođlu and Rittersberger-Tılıç (2000: 529-530) on the basis of intergenerational solidarity networks within families, which are defined as the following:

First, as the practice of mutual accumulation and allocation of family resources among the members and, secondly, as the transfer of family norms, values and traditions to the younger members. In this way it forms a *family-pool* in an economic, cultural and moral sense. In fact, pooling practice can take place in a wide network, extending over the household, neighborhood, village or town, even including kin living in other countries. Family-pool should not be understood simply as family

solidarity or mutual support between grandparents, parents and children. It is rather the redistribution and sharing of economic and social-cultural assets between at least two or three generations.

Within the framework drawn by Kalaycıoğlu and Rittersberger-Tılıç, family is an important support mechanism for the survival of the individual members, since the family transfers instrumental assets, for example capital, and moral assets, for example advice, emotional support and caring in times of crisis. They conclude their discussion on the intergenerational solidarity networks by stressing ‘the welfare-providing role of the family’ (2000:539). Parallel to their argument, in the gecekondü literature, there is a consensus on the role of the family as a vital supportive mechanism for the well being of the individual members and the household as a whole. Especially in the early phases of the migration/gecekondü development, many studies emphasized the aids both in kind (such as the food harvested in the village) and money, which migrants received from their parents living in rural areas (Kartal, 1978). However, according to many surveys, these aids through the rural ties have gradually decreased throughout the decades, as the duration of living in the city increased, as the households were employed in formal permanent jobs, and as they owned a house (Şenyapılı, 1981; Hart, 1969; Yasa, 1966; Kartal, 1978). Although receiving aids in kind and money has decreased, an important portion of the gecekondü households continue to get food and nondurable goods from their rural homelands (Alpar and Yener, 1991:70).

2.5.2. Kinship-Hemşehrilik-Neighborhood Solidarity Networks

Not least important is the solidarity relations within kinship/hemşehrilik/neighborhood groups. It is wise to recall the chain migration process, which resulted in the migration of massive groups from the same rural origin, settling at the very

same gecekondu neighborhoods. Since a neighbor may be at the same time a kin of a family, it is not always possible to distinguish between a neighbor and a kin, thus that of between neighborhood and kinship solidarity networks. Furthermore, in the urban context, the traditional kinship relations have taken a wider form of hemşehrilik relations, which aim to take a share from the urban resources and services (Ayata, 1991:99). However, it is noteworthy to state that not all migrant/poor households have the chance to access to these networks, from which a considerable number of the urban poor are excluded by different patterns of segregation in cities (Ayata, 1991; Erder, 1998; Işık and Pınarcıoğlu, 2001a). That is, the most vulnerable households are more likely to be excluded from these networks, whereas, the relatively better-off strata of gecekondu population are more likely to have access to and benefit from these networks (Işık and Pınarcıoğlu: 2001b).

How do kinship, hemşehrilik or neighborhood networks function as survival strategies? These networks contribute to the well being of poor households both in instrumental and moral terms, like in the case of intergenerational solidarity networks stressed by Kalaycıoğlu and Rittersberger-Tılıç (2000). In this context, the instrumental assistance acquired via hemşehrilik is composed of a wide range of mutual aid, including access to urban land and gecekondu, access to employment and mutual financial aid, that is borrowing money.

When households first migrate to cities, they have a tendency to develop solidarity networks to have access to urban land and to a gecekondu either as an owner or as a tenant. In some cases, almost all the households in a gecekondu settlement found plots to construct their gecekondus by the help of their relatives or hemşehris, to whom sometimes they gave a small amount of money or sometimes even did not pay for the plot (Ayata, 1991: 90). Additionally, through the construction process of the gecekondus, the kin or hemşehris helped each other by

their labor power, or by lending money for construction materials (Ayata, 1991: 90). In the process of self-help housing, in addition to kinship and hemşehri solidarity, neighborhood solidarity tends to increase (Ayata, 1993: 257). In case of finding a job, the urban poor living in metropolitan cities are more likely to utilize the kinship, hemşehri, or neighborhood relations compared to those living in small cities (Ayata, 1993: 259), which indicates the importance of mutual and reciprocal relationships in providing the welfare of poor households in big cities.

Yet, this kind of solidarity among the poor was common among the new comers to the city, however, Ersoy (1985:114) observed that early migrants are more likely to utilize formal institutions rather than informal relations, as well as they are more likely to help the newcomers. Furthermore, as Kongar (1986) puts it, solidarity on the basis of hemşehrilik is preferred to kinship relations. Lastly, the new solidarity relations are established within the gecekondü neighborhoods, most of whom are hemşehris at the same time⁴: in the beginning the kinship plays an important role in coping with city life, then neighborhood solidarity and hemşehri relations become prominent in coping with difficulties.

It can be argued that, although at the beginning of migration and settlement process kinship relations play a crucial role for migrant households to find a shelter, a job, and to overcome the obstacles of living in the city, these kinship relations weaken in time due to the duration in the city, being a house owner, having a regular job, the increasing educational level and the well being of the family. “As it is often the case, however, these bonds especially the hemşehri bonds, begin to dissolve with time and physical and psychological separation from the homeland. This is typical of many immigrant communities, even where there are significant ethnic differences

⁴ For Alpar and Yener,(1991) the percentages of the ones who are living with their hemşehris in the same neighborhood is 75.8 in Ankara, 73.4 in İstanbul, and 62.2 in İzmir.

dividing the various groups from each other” (Dubetsky, 1976: 449). As kinship relations weaken, the relations with hemşehris and non-relative neighbors play an important role for the survival of the family, since it provides households with relative improvement of living conditions even for having access to urban services, and for their relations with formal bureaucratic institutions.

2.5.3. Ethnic-Sectarian Solidarity Networks

In a wider context, hemşehrilik is accepted within the context of ethnic relations (Ayata, 1991: 99), which might both contribute to a household’s livelihood, or form an obstacle against its survival. The solidarity relations based on ethnicity can be explored on a wide range of spectrum, kinship on the one hand and self-interest on the other. In this manner, ethnic solidarity relations are established at the micro scale of kinship and may develop through sharing common origins of village, district, province and region, and these relations may even be established by the sense of sharing common problems without coming from the same geographic origins.

In gecekondü settlements, ethnicity displays a high degree of solidarity and mutual aid, for example for finding a job, for marriages, for lending or borrowing money, and even for the resolution of conflicts (Ayata, 1993).

As in the case of ethnic relations, informal solidarity networks are established on the basis of sectarian bases. With reference to Erman (2001a: 988), since the mid 1980s, Alevi and Sunni communities living in gecekondü neighborhoods are politicized and radicalized to the extent of shared interests, via which to accumulate capital from urban land and gecekondus⁵. Alongside this, in urban economy, the

⁵ Erman (2001a) discusses how the ethnic and sectarian differentiation in the urban context has its roots in the general political atmosphere of the post 1980 period. As she stresses, ethnic and sectarian communities aggregate around local politics to have power and thus to have economic gains from the transformation process of gecekondus.

gecekondu inhabitants might find a job if they share the same sectarian origin with the employer. “Besides hemşerilik or kinship, workers and patrons in the factories (especially the small ones) share a common sectarian affiliation-either Alevi or Sunni. Very rarely did smaller factories recruit from other than the sect of the patron” (Dubetsky, 1976: 447). While sectarian based solidarity enables some poor to benefit from it, those from different sects are excluded. As Dubesky (1976: 447-448), along with various other scholars, shows “this sectarian homogeneity parallels a system of sectarian endogamy, sectarian-based residential patterns in the neighborhoods, and what often amounts to de facto restriction of membership in many voluntary associations to members of one sectarian group”.

To sum up, migrant households in particular, and poor households in general, tend to cope with their economic vulnerability via the social solidarity networks in the forms of familial, kinship, neighborhood, hemşerilik, and ethnic networks, which have been largely emphasized by gecekondu studies. For many scholars (e.g. Ayata, 1991, 1993; Işık and Pınarcıoğlu, 2001), although the hemşerilik provides households with informal social security especially in times of exacerbating living conditions, it establishes a kind of segregation or exclusion patterns for the ones who are not or cannot be a member of that ethnic or religious community. What is important from the survival strategies point of view is that the most vulnerable households, who are most in need of informal solidarity networks’ support, have the least capability both to have access to and to mobilize these networks (Işık and Pınarcıoğlu, 2001). In this sense, while some urban poor households have the capability to transform their resources for improving their well being through solidarity networks, some other are excluded from these networks, thus facing exacerbating living conditions. While informal solidarity networks might help

gecekondu households to improve their welfare, they might also be obstacle for some other gecekondu households.

2.6 Access to Urban Services and Infrastructure

Having access to urban services, either infrastructural or social, is an important factor of survival strategies, since having access to such services directly or indirectly contributes to the reproduction of labor power. Therein, it can be argued that infrastructure, such as regular stabilized roads, water, electricity, and sewerage, has impacts on the economic welfare of the poor, as well as the social services, such as health, education, child, disabled and elderly caring, have impacts on the social welfare of the poor.

It is well known that gecekondu settlements lacked basic infrastructures, as they were illegal, spontaneous housing settlements in the beginning of their formation. Yet, over the years, there were some improvements with this regard. Although there are no extensive data on the infrastructural quantity and quality of gecekondu settlements, gecekondu surveys picture an improving situation. In the early phases of the gecekondu development, the access to basic infrastructure was very low: although with changing percentages gecekondu households received electricity and water, an important portion of gecekondu had no sewerage system (Öğretmen, 1957: 27-28; Yasa, 1966: 56; Yörükkan, 1968; Hart, 1969; Karpat, 1976). As Hart (1966: 103) observed, due to lack of regular roads, thus lack of transportation, gecekondu dwellers had to walk for long hours to their work places, which ultimately resulted in the exclusion from better employment opportunities at long distances from their gecekondu. As Yasa (1966:56), along with countless others, shows, the early migrant households received water by their fountains in their gardens, and the ones without water met their needs from the district fountain. The

gecekondu studies conducted in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s demonstrate the increasing quantity of gecekondu households, who had access to urban infrastructure (Heper, 1978; Şenyapılı, 1978, 1981; Ersoy, 1985; Tatlıdil, 1989; Alpar and Yener, 1991). However this improvement of infrastructure demonstrated in the gecekondu surveys is primarily in quantity (Şahin, 1998:29).

Although gecekondu studies provide information about the increasing access of gecekondu residents to infrastructure, they provide little information about the provision of infrastructure. Baharoğlu and Leitman (1998:122) claim that:

Patchy information from different studies show an increase in the rate of gecekondu receiving basic urban services. It was reported that, during the 1960s, it took an average period of 12 years for gecekondu to receive a full complement of urban services (water, sewerage, electricity, and surfaced roads); today however, almost all gecekondu in major Turkish cities have infrastructure of varying quality and reliability (Şenyapılı, 1992). Although there is not sufficient empirical data to make a competent evaluation, in the 1990s new gecekondu areas receive basic infrastructure within shorter periods of time than in the 1960s, even if a full complement of services can not be achieved quickly with ease. Until they are services officially, illegal connections are the only means for receiving basic infrastructure – electricity and water.

What is important from the survival strategies' point of view is the informal provision of infrastructure. In the Turkish case, since formal bodies, like municipalities, can not keep pace with the increasing demands on urban services, gecekondu households found their own solutions through their informal solidarity networks, so that in case of inadequate formal rules and provisions, gecekondu households provide their neighborhoods with the necessary services either by using their labor and/or solidarity relations. In this sense, "gecekondu dwellers demand infrastructure and services primarily from the municipality. Muhtars⁶ and district mayors play the most important role in conveying demand from citizens to service providers... Households can work with municipalities to satisfy demand for

⁶ The headperson of the neighborhood, the 'chief'

infrastructure and services” (Baharoğlu and Leitman 1999:205). Therein, shortage of and need for infrastructure and services caused gecekondu households to utilize informal solidarity networks, for which “good personal relations are needed to supplement the formal process of service delivery” (Baharoğlu and Leitman 1999:206). “Consumer intermediaters (*muhtars*) may have a personal incentive to pressure for installing and upgrading infrastructure” (Baharoğlu and Leitman, 1998:122).

Besides infrastructure, not least important is the social services, such as health, education, and child, disabled and elderly caring. Benefiting from them has a vital importance for immediate and long run well being of gecekondu households. Yet relatively few studies provide information about the provision of and access to social services in gecekondu settlements. For the health problems, it can be extracted from gecekondu studies that more or less half of the households with social security apply to the state hospitals, whereas, most of the rest without social security go to health clinics (*sağlık ocağı*) (Özel, 1978: 18). However, the number of the health clinics cannot supply the necessary health services for the urban poor (Eren, 1982: 189). It is found out that almost half of the respondents of a survey suffered from either health problems or disability, an important portion of whom were not examined by a doctor, and had appealed to their solidarity relations for assistance (KPPYY, 2001: 89).

2.7. Concluding Remarks on the Survival Strategies of Gecekondu Households:

What Has Changed, Why, and With What Consequences for the Urban Poor?

The formation and expansion of gecekondu housing are mainly due to the migration from rural to urban areas in the Turkish experience. The political, economic, and social aspects of the urbanization process have molded and changed the survival

strategies of the poor gecekondu households. Işık and Pınarcıoğlu (2001b) define two phases of urbanization in the Turkish case, which have resulted in the need of adopting various survival strategies by gecekondu households⁷.

Before the 1980s, the state mainly did not interfere with urbanization and led the market forces to take the upper hand, that is the retreat of the state led to the formation of spontaneous formal and informal mechanisms in the urbanization process (Işık and Pınarcıoğlu, 2001b: 111). The structural transformation started during the 1980s and continued onwards, for example the transformation from import-substitution to export-oriented economy⁸, has important effects on the urban poor, since the purchasing power has decreased, wage and salary earnings have fallen down, unemployment has risen, and informal sector has expanded. The urbanization process in this period is characterized by differentiation, diversification, and thus segregation (Işık and Pınarcıoğlu, 2001b: 128).

Within the focus of household survival, the period before the 1980s points out mainly to five types of survival strategies adopted by gecekondu households, namely migration type, labor, the gecekondu, solidarity networks, and the to access to urban services. However, in the post-1980 period, these strategies have been altered or damaged, which will be discussed below.

The early period for migrant households is characterized by chain migration process, which enabled the urban poor to gradually adapt to the urban setting and to cope with their vulnerability. Chain migration was an important strategy for migrant families to the extent that it provided the households to live in hemşehri

⁷ Işık and Pınarcıoğlu (2001b) discuss how the dynamics of urbanization affected the strategies of different urban classes. For them the strategies are very much related to the macro economic and political transformation at the national level. The import-substitution economy before the 1980s, and the export-oriented economy after the 1980s had crucial impacts on the urbanization dynamics. Therefore, they point out a clear cut with 1980 on the basis of urbanization.

⁸ Erol Demir explores the implications of export-oriented economic policies on the survival strategies of the urban poor in the post-1980 period.

neighborhoods, which extricate the poor from (possible) exacerbating livelihood via obtaining economic, social and moral security. However, in recent decades, chain migration is largely replaced by forced migration, which may exclude migrant households from solidarity networks, and result in deepening poverty, reducing the capability of the poor to transform their assets into income, food, or other necessities.

About the *gecekondu* as a survival strategy, since much of the urban population growth was rapid and unplanned, thereby state and local governments could not keep up with it, migrant families adopted their own strategies in order to find urban land, and a shelter. In this sense, the *gecekondu* constitutes an important strategy when the process of obtaining land, the process of construction, owning a *gecekondu*, and its flexibility are taken into account. Before the 1980s, the poor acquired urban land to build a *gecekondu* on it mainly through occupying state land and in some cases private land, or by paying small amounts of money for the land to those who invaded the land earlier. Once the land was obtained, they built their own *gecekondus* by their own labor power –with the help of either neighbors or *hemşehris*– using second-hand or low quality construction materials, so that the process of construction and cheaper construction materials enabled the poor to have a house. For economic and social security, the poor have a tendency to own a *gecekondu*. Since *gecekondus* are flexible housing units, their dwellers can engage in subsistence production in their gardens, and more importantly they can make additional rooms or add a story, which may be for self-use, for rent, or for the use of married children, so long as they have money and in need of additional units. In the post-1980 period, the meaning of urban land, and more precisely of the *gecekondu*, has changed from its use-value to exchange value, thereby the *gecekondu* has become a tool of capital accumulation. This commercialization of the *gecekondu* started in the 1970s, but became prominent in the 1980s (Işık and Pınarcıoğlu, 2001b: 111). While the *gecekondus* were once

typically self-help houses, they turned out to be commercial products, which were built to sell. Moreover, “those gecekondu settlements that are closer to the city disappear: they go through transformation into apartment areas after their master plans are completed. In this process, gecekondus are bought by contractors to be replaced by apartment blocks, and owners receive titles to several apartments in the buildings replacing gecekondus.” (Erman, 1997: 93). This transformation process obviously meant for the poor upward mobilization and even becoming wealthy. However, not all the poor gecekondu households gained from these mechanisms due to the scarcity of urban land and uneven nature of having access to land and gecekondus, which excluded some poor households, especially the recent forced migrant households.

When the labor power of gecekondu households is considered, while before the 1980s they were employed in the marginal sector, periphery works, or had their small enterprises, the worsening economic conditions of the 1980s led them to depend more on the informal sector either as a main source of income or as a secondary source of income. It is known that gecekondu households respond to their intensifying poverty by working longer hours for cash, by mobilizing additional family members into the labor market, by producing subsistence goods in their gardens and homes, even using their gecekondus as workshops for piece-work, and by reducing their consumption expenditures, and further by cutting on the educational expenses of their children. When the mobilization of women labor and child labor is compared, it can be argued that, poor households are more likely to mobilize both, however children, especially boys, are generally expected to generate

income by participating in the marginal or informal sector⁹. “In Turkey’s poorer urban districts, women’s and children’s labor is most often organized in small family workshops and as piece-work” (White, 1991: 18).

Gecekondu households have been mostly dependent on informal solidarity networks, which are formed at different levels of family, kinship/ neighborhood/ hemşehrilik, and ethnic/religious associations and groups. The family serves as an important support mechanism, which transfers financial assets and moral support to the members in need of help. Kinship/neighborhood/ hemşehrilik type of solidarity networks have been fulfilling an important gap, which is widened by the lack of necessary housing and employment policies in favor of the poor in the national and urban setting of Turkey. By means of these solidarity relations, migrant families could have the chance of finding solutions to their needs of housing, and employment, and even to the basic infrastructure needs. However, these networks do not function in such a positive way for all the poor, who are excluded from these relations by segregation, especially after the 1980s, which are the decades of intensifying ethnic and sectarian segregation. As Erder (1996: 296) observed, migrant households, especially recent Kurdish migrants, who had to migrate due to political and economic conditions of the post 1980s, are excluded from solidarity networks, thereby they are incapable of utilizing gradual adaptation to the city. Along with ethnic segregation, marginal groups are more likely to be excluded from solidarity networks. Erder (1999: 295, 296) stresses the exclusion of marginal groups, for example, the elderly, female householders, the disabled, and men who

⁹ The low rates of mobilization of women’s labor is generally attributed to the traditional patriarchal relations, in which women are assigned the role of housewives engaging in domestic work, and child bearing and rearing. For further discussion on the role of patriarchy in the lives of rural migrant women, see Erman (2001b).

migrated to the city in adulthood without any skill and capital. She further argues for the possibility of the persistence of poverty among these groups because of the lack of having access to social solidarity networks.

Basic urban infrastructure and social services have direct and crucial impacts on the well being of gecekondu households. Although there are no specific surveys to assess how having access to these services contributes to the welfare of the household, it might be argued that households themselves demand these services from the formal organizations utilizing their informal relations, as well as contributing to the service providing process by their labor power. As gecekondu studies point out, although the quantity and quality of the urban infrastructure and services improve throughout the decades, actually, gecekondu households have access only to basic infrastructure, with still inadequate social services.

With Sen's (1980, 1985) conclusion that capability represents a person's opportunities to achieve well being, it can be argued that gecekondu households generally have and use their capability to transform their resources, such as labor, the gecekondu and solidarity networks, into income, food, or other basic necessities for survival. However, capabilities of gecekondu households are deeply influenced by the macro/ structural changes in the post-1980 atmosphere, leading to a formation of persistent poor households with limited assets and limited capability to transform their assets for their livelihood.

CHAPTER III
SURVIVAL STRATEGIES OF GECEKONDU HOUSEHOLDS:
A FIELD STUDY IN ANKARA

This chapter intends to yield insights into the survival strategies of the poor households living in the gecekondu settlements of Ankara, the capital city of Turkey, based on a field research. For this purpose, first the method and the aim of the field study, then the findings of the questionnaires are considered.

3.1. The Problem and the Aim of the Field Study

As has been discussed in the first chapter, urban poverty studies are mainly concerned with the absolute and relative poverty definitions, which neglect the ways in which the poor respond to their socio-economic positions to have sustainable livelihoods. On the other hand, there is an increasing tendency in poverty literature to focus on the survival strategies of the urban poor households, who have the capability to transform their assets into income, food, and services necessary for their survival. In the Turkish context, the urban poor are generally associated with gecekondu households, who might be argued to have some capability to provide sustainable livelihoods with reference to the information provided in the second chapter.

The problem of this field study is to explore to what extent the urban poor have assets in general, and to what extent they are capable of using their assets or are capable of adopting survival strategies, particularly after the 1980s.

Within the context of this problematic, identifying the strategies adopted by the gecekondu households to survive in the city or to cope with their poverty, and the

detection of these strategies on the basis of date of migration, specifically the migration before the 1980s and after the 1980s, is the main concern of this field study. In this sense, the main question serving for this aim is what the household survival strategies are in gecekondu settlements.

3.2. The Method of the Field Study

The field study was conducted in the Middle East Technical University, Graduate Program of Urban Policy Planning and Local Governments Studio Work, in the Spring semester of 1998¹⁰. The study, called “Kentsel Yoksulluk ve Geçinme Stratejileri” (Urban Poverty and Survival Strategies), was carried out in Ankara, Zonguldak, Diyarbakır, and Urfa respectively in 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, with necessary modifications made in the questionnaire form.

The main technique used for data collection was questionnaire, which was designed on the basis of an extensive literature review, and made up of four parts, namely, class, ethnicity, space, and gender. First, the class-based questions were designed to detect the occupational status of the ‘head of the household’, together with children’s occupation, if any, membership to social security institutions, trade unions and any other kind of associations, sources of income, ownership patterns of durable goods, and savings and debt, if any, of the households. Second, the ethnicity part of the questionnaire was made up of the questions that aimed to assess the scope of social solidarity relations with their rural origins, neighbors, kin, and the level of participation in the political sphere. Third, as for the questions on space, the housing tenure type, the extent of the flexible use of the gecekondu, subsistence production, the history of spatial mobility of the household, and the level of access to urban

¹⁰ I thank Prof. Melih Ersoy for giving me the chance to use the data for my thesis.

infrastructure and services were asked. Fourth and the last part, which was about the gender dimension, was organized to gather information about the occupational status of the women in the family, their income generating activities and subsistence production at home, households' consumption patterns, health status of the family members, their social relations, and the level of gecekondu women's participation in politics.

The field research was conducted in various neighborhoods of Ankara, namely, Mamak (Akşemsettin, Bahçeleriçi, Boğaziçi, Hüseyin Gazi), Yenimahalle (Beştepe), Yüzüncü Yıl (Çiğdem), Altındağ (Engürü, Örnek, Plevne), Keçiören (Esertepe, İncirli, Sanatoryum), Dikmen (İlker, Malazgirt, Naci Çakır, S. Cengiz Karaca), Çankaya (Kırkkonaklar), Seyranbağları, Fatih, Kayaş and Etimesgut. Pragmatic reasons as well as concerns for the representation of different gecekondu neighborhoods played a role in choosing these neighborhoods.

The research was carried out with 175 households, the numbers of which were not equally distributed among the gecekondu settlements. The households were mostly selected by random sampling, together with the snowball method in few neighborhoods, which enabled the researchers to come into contact with different kinship, ethnic and sectarian groups.

The scope of the field research is limited to the urban poor living in gecekondu settlements of Ankara, and the number of respondents is relatively small. Therefore, the research does not attempt to generalize the findings, but to understand the patterns emerging regarding survival strategies. Another important limitation of the research is related with the economic policies carried out after the field research. It is well known that Turkey has faced several serious economic crises in the late 1990s and the early 2000s, which, without doubt, have effects on the urban poor. Therefore, the findings of this study reflect the survival strategies of the gecekondu households

only before the economic crises, which requires new studies to assess possible changing strategies after the economic crises.

The data gathered from the questionnaires were evaluated with SPSS statistical software, utilizing computer.

3.3. Findings

The findings of the research are categorized under five general headings, namely, the demographic features of households, the labor force participation of households, the gecekondu, social solidarity networks, and having access to urban infrastructure, since they emerge as important means of survival in the gecekondu literature. The data are analyzed with reference to those born in Ankara, those households who migrated before the 1980s and those households who migrated after the 1980s in order to assess the emerging patterns in survival strategies in the post-1980 period, which is discussed in the gecekondu literature. In this context, the ones born in Ankara consist of 18.3% (32 households), the ones migrated before the 1980s make 55.4% (97 households), and the ones migrated after the 1980s make 26.3% (46 households) of the sample population.

3.3.1. Demographic Features

In order to picture the socio-economic composition of respondents, household size, household type, age-sex structure, education, economic status, ethnic and sectarian composition are taken into consideration.

The household size of respondents ranges between two persons (8.6%) and eleven persons (0.6%), the most frequent of which is four persons (36.6%). The mean of household size is 4.314. The household type is mostly nuclear family (81.7), and extended family (13.7%).

The age structure of the households indicates a young population with an average age of 26.7, and the most frequent age of 19. When the 'head of household' is considered, the average age is 42.1, and the most frequent age is 34. In terms of the age composition, it can be said that the households are composed of people who are young enough to work for generating income.

The dispersion of sex is almost equally distributed, namely, 51.5% women, and 48.5% men. Additionally, there are 168 male-headed households, and only seven female-headed households.

The educational level of the gecekondü households might be expected to be low, and this is supported by the data. The educational levels of household heads are primary school (52.9%), secondary school (21.1%), high school (13.2), without any graduation degree (6.2), and illiterate (3.4%).

For the economic panorama of the households, the number of income earners, the occupational status of household members, the membership to any kind of social security institutions and the amount of monthly income, are considered. The number of income earners at the household level is one person in the 49.1% of households, two persons in 34.9% of households, three persons in 9.7% of households, and four persons in 5.1% of households. Thirty-three percent of household members are either not at the age of work or are students, 24% are either housewives or not seeking any employment, 6.1% are unemployed and looking for a job, and 1.1% are farmers. When we look at those who have a job, 5.2% are lower-level government employees, 11.3% are unskilled laborers, 12.1% are skilled laborers, 1.6% are small-scale tradesmen, and 3.2% are working in informal sector jobs either at home or outside the home. The 175 households are composed of 758 individual members, 39.2% of whom generate income. Among the income earners, 26.3% do not have any social security, and 73.7% of them have some kind of social security, such as Workers

Social Security Institution, Retirement Fund, and Bağ-Kur¹¹. The monthly income of the households ranges between 26 million TL and 213 million TL, and the average is 80.63 million TL per household. They are grouped in four categories shown as below¹²:

1st income interval: 26million TL <= monthly income per household<= 50million TL

2nd income interval: 51millionTL<=monthly income per household<= 100million TL

3rd income interval: 101millionTL<= monthly income per household<=150millionTL

4th income interval: 151millionTL <= monthly income per household<=213millionTL

There are 37 households (21.1%) in the first income interval, 105 households (60%) in the second income interval, 28 households (16%) in the third income interval, and 5 households (2.9%) in the fourth income interval. It is important to note that the data point out to a strong relationship between the households' monthly income and their date of migration. In this manner, 19% of those born in Ankara, 12% of those migrated before the 1980s, and 41% of those migrated after the 1980s are in the first income interval, meaning that they have an income below the minimum wage. In other words, it is prominent that the ones born in Ankara and the ones migrated before the 1980s constitute the better-off groups of the sample, while the ones migrated after the 1980s constitute an important part among the most vulnerable group.

The ethnic and sectarian composition of the respondents cannot be deducted statistically from the data, however, it is possible to mention general tendencies. For

¹¹ Retirement Fund is an institution, which regulates the social security and retirement of civil servants and some public personnel. Bağ-Kur is a kind of social security institution from which those who do not have access to Workers Social Security Institution and Retirement Fund can benefit. The members of Bağ-Kur are retired after paying monthly amount of money for several years, and after retirement Bağ-Kur provides its members with monthly retirement payments

¹²In the first six months of 1998, monthly minimum wage was 35.437.500 TL. for the ones, who are more than 16 years old, and 29.000.925.TL. for the ones, who are under 16 years old. In the second six months of 1998, monthly minimum wage was 45.772.500 TL for the ones more than 16 years old, and 38.874.375 TL for the ones under 16 years old. Source: <http://www.die.gov.tr>

ethnic origins, 14.9% of respondents have a mother tongue other than Turkish, for example Kurmanci, Arabic, and Zazaki. Additionally, there are sectarian differences, and Sunni respondents are considerably more than those from the Alevi sect, who seem to concentrate spatially in the Mamak District. However, it is important to recall that it is not possible to derive the exact numbers of different ethnic and sectarian households from the questionnaire results, since it was thought that the respondents would not want to answer the questions about their ethnic and sectarian origins.

3.3.2. Labor

In this part the labor force participation of the ‘head of households’, of women, and of children, as well as the intensification of working hours are considered as the sources of income.

3.3.2.1. Men’s Labor

The employment situation of the ‘head of household’¹³ is composed of waged-salaried, self-employed, retired, and unemployed, the percentages of which are given with respect to monthly income of the households in Table 3.1.

(i) In the waged-salaried category (104 persons), there are officials, skilled and unskilled laborers employed either in the public or private sector. Among the waged-salaried, 52.8% are employed in the public sector, which indicates that the public sector provides an economic security for the urban poor when the low level of education acts as important constraint for them to be employed in high-status jobs. In this sense, as it is shown in the Table 3.2, there is an obvious tendency for the poor to

¹³ In the sample, there are 168 men-headed households, and seven women-headed households.

be employed in the public sector, which offers steady jobs and social security benefits. Furthermore, public sector employment has additional advantages for the poor since it assures less intensified working hours, and in some cases free transportation to the workplace, as the findings demonstrate.

Table 3.1 Employment Situation by Employment Type and the Amount of Money Earned

	<i>Employment Situation</i>				Total
	waged-salaried	self-employed	retired	unemployed	
26-50 million TL	22	2	4	9	37
	59,5%	5,4%	10,8%	24,3%	100,0%
51-100 million TL	21,2%	11,8%	11,4%	47,4%	21,1%
	63	10	25	7	105
101-150 million TL	60,0%	9,5%	23,8%	6,7%	100,0%
	60,6%	58,8%	71,4%	36,8%	60,0%
151-213 million TL	16	4	6	2	28
	57,1%	14,3%	21,4%	7,1%	100,0%
Total	15,4%	23,5%	17,1%	10,5%	16,0%
	3	1		1	5
Total	60,0%	20,0%		20,0%	100,0%
	2,9%	5,9%		5,3%	2,9%
Total	104	17	35	19	175
	59,4%	9,7%	20,0%	10,9%	100,0%
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Table 3.2. Employment Duration by Sectors

	<i>Employment Duration</i>					Total
	less than 1 year	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-20 years	more than 20 years	
Public Sector	2	6	10	29	7	54
	3,7%	11,1%	18,5%	53,7%	13,0%	100,0%
Private Sector	15,4%	23,1%	66,7%	70,7%	77,8%	51,9%
	11	20	5	12	2	50
Total	22,0%	40,0%	10,0%	24,0%	4,0%	100,0%
	84,6%	76,9%	33,3%	29,3%	22,2%	48,1%
Total	13	26	15	41	9	104
	12,5%	25,0%	14,4%	39,4%	8,7%	100,0%
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

In order to analyze the emerging patterns with respect to waged salaried group, the relationship between the sector and the migration status is significant. When we consider this relationship, employment in the public sector is highest among those born in Ankara (61%, 14 persons), with a slight decline among migrants who came to Ankara before the 1980s (57%, 29 persons), while those migrated after the 1980s

have the least chance to have access to the public sector (36%, 11 persons). Thus, it might be argued that although employment in the public sector is an important means of income, it is quite closed in the third group.

58.7% of the waged-salaried persons are planning not to quit their jobs in the coming three or four months period, while 17.3% are expecting to be retired, and 24% are planning to quit. It is worth noting that, 14.5% of those employed in the public sector, and 34.7% of those employed in the private sector want to quit because of the undesirable working conditions, for example low wages and salaries, and unhealthy working conditions. Comparatively, among the waged-salaried who want to quit due to undesirable working conditions, public sector employees are less than private sector employees, which also indicates the importance of public sector employment as a survival strategy. Furthermore, an important strategy for survival might be seen in how they are planning to survive after leaving their jobs. For the ones who plan to quit their jobs because of undesirable employment conditions, 87.5% want a waged-salaried employment to generate income, and 12.5% of them will depend on other sources of income, like working in the informal sector, women's labor, and children's labor. When the migration status of respondents is considered with respect to survival after quitting, it is interesting that a great portion of the recent migrants (67%) will be seeking waged-salaried employment, the importance of which declines for the early migrants (28%), and for the ones born in Ankara (54%). This may be due to the familiarity gained by the two groups during the years they have spent in the city, which may enable them to establish their own business or to find 'good jobs' in the informal market. For those who are expecting to be retired, the data shows that only 22.2% of them plan to depend on their retirement payments for livelihood, whereas 27.8% plan to look for a waged-salaried job as an additional income to their retirement payments, 44.4% plan to establish

their own business, or to be self-employed, and 5.6% plan to seek additional income in the informal sector. Since the early migrants might be expected to be older, they compose the majority of this group, which plan to retire. Therefore, there is a tendency for the early migrants to establish their own business, for example small-scale grocery shops, and to live with retirement payments and to find jobs in addition to their retirement payments.

(ii) The self-employed (17 persons) constitutes the second category of the 'head of household' labor. This category is composed of self-employed in the formal sector (13 persons) and self-employed in the informal sector (4 persons), whose percentages within the total self-employed are respectively 76.5% and 23.5%. They are engaged in the petty commodity production, petty trade and informal self-employment. As can be seen from Table 3.3, approximately 70% of them fall into the first two income intervals, meaning that they are generally low or lower-middle income households. The percentages of social security of the self-employed are displayed in Table 3.4, which pictures out the low level of social security, especially among the informally self-employed. In the case of low income and low social security levels, how can the self-employed cope with their poverty? Within the context of household work strategies, first of all, they work both as managers and workers for themselves. At this point it is important to distinguish between those born in Ankara and migrants. While the former group does not have any partners, some self-employed migrants have partners, the number of which tends to increase in the case of recent migrants. Therefore, they work together with their partners in their own businesses. Although the two groups employ workers, those born in Ankara employ paid non-family employees, whereas, migrants employ workers who are generally household, kinship or neighborhood members, in most cases without any payment. In this sense, employing additional family members for their small-scale

enterprises is an important strategy for migrants, because it enables them to save in monetary terms, which otherwise would be given to an employee. It is noteworthy that there is no significant difference in terms of these survival strategies among self-employed migrants when the date of migration is taken into consideration.

Table 3.3 The Self-Employed and Monthly Income of the Households

	<i>Monthly Income Per Household</i>				Total
	26-50 million TL	51-100 million TL	101-150 million TL	151-213 million TL	
<i>Formal Self-employment</i>	2 100,0%	6 60,0%	4 100,0%	1 100,0%	13 76,5%
<i>Informal Self-employment</i>		4 40,0%			4 23,5%
Total	2 100,0%	10 100,0%	4 100,0%	1 100,0%	17 100,0%

Table 3.4 Social Security of the Self-Employed

	<i>Social Security</i>			Total
	none	SSK	bag-kur	
<i>Formal Self-employment</i>	6 46,2%	4 30,8%	3 23,1%	13 100,0%
<i>Informal Self-employment</i>	2 50,0%	1 25,0%	1 25,0%	4 100,0%
Total	8 47,1%	5 29,4%	4 23,5%	17 100,0%

(iii) The third category of the labor is the retired, who composes 20% of the total households (35 persons). Of primary importance of this thesis, 70% of them are retired from public sector employment, which strengthens the assumption that there is a tendency for the poor to be employed in the public sector, since it provides economic and social security together with steady employment. However, this tendency might stem from the bureaucratic nature of Ankara being the capital city, thus containing with a wide range of public institutions. Furthermore, when the composition of the retired group is considered with respect to migration status, it is interesting that of all the retired, early migrants make the majority of this group (85.7%), while recent migrants (8.6%) and those born in Ankara (5.7%) make the small part. This might be associated with the age structure of the new comers who are expected to be too

young to retire. Although migration status is an important factor to assess the composition of the retired, there is no significant difference in how the three groups develop strategies.

The survival strategies of the retired might be explored on the basis of two distinct issues: one is how the retirement bonus is used and the other one is the income generating activities after retirement. There is a wide range of how retirement bonuses are used, which indicates that there is no direct concentration on a single survival strategy; rather it indicates a strategy for their economic and social reproduction via paying for wedlock or trousseau of their children (20%), buying a house (17%), founding their own enterprise (17%), opening a bank account (11%), or paying their dept (14%). On this account, retirement bonuses constitute one part of the assets of the poor, affecting the capability of the poor for either economic or social reproduction, to the extent that need for shelter, necessity of traditional expenses for the reproduction of informal social solidarity relations, and the necessity of economic security are maintained. The second strategy for the retired is the continuation of income generating activities. As shown in Table 3.5, due to financial needs, more than half of the retired immediately engage in income generating activities, for example in waged-salaried jobs as skilled or unskilled labor, and in petty trade as self-employed.

Table 3.5 Working after Retirement by Time and Reason

	<i>Working after Retirement</i>			Total
	in the first year of retirement	worked after 2 years	worked after 3 years	
<i>Financial Necessity</i>	12 63,2%	3 15,8%	4 21,1%	19 100,0%
<i>For Other Reasons</i>	1 100,0%			1 100,0%
Total	13 65,0%	3 15,0%	4 20,0%	20 100,0%

(iv) The fourth category of labor is the unemployed, who represents 10.9% of the sample (19 persons). This category is composed of truly unemployed and the ones working in casual jobs. The respondents in the second group are included in this category, because they perceive themselves as unemployed.

The demographic characteristics of this group, such as migration status, education, age, un/employment history and date, is important to understand why they could not integrate into the urban labor market. First of all, with respect to migration status 42% of recent migrants, 37% of early migrants and 21% of those born in Ankara make up the unemployed group. This finding points out to the disadvantaged position of migrants in the urban labor market, especially the ones who migrated after the 1980s. Therefore, it can be argued that recent migrants compose the most vulnerable group regarding having access to employment. Secondly, 63% of the total unemployed are primary school graduates, while 15% are secondary school graduates, and 15% have never gone to school. They are 40 years of age and older. For the un/employment history, before becoming unemployed, they used to work as unskilled laborers (36.8%), skilled laborers (21.1%), petty tradespersons¹⁴ (15.8%), big tradesperson (10.5%), lower-level government employees (5.3%), farmers (5.3%), and in the informal sector (5.3%). While the last jobs of those who are born in Ankara and who migrated after the 1980s concentrate on skilled and unskilled labor, those of early migrants concentrate on trade, i.e. establishing their own business. Corollary, the reason of becoming unemployed is generally going bankrupt for the early migrants, who used to be tradespersons. For the three groups, the reason of becoming unemployed can be listed as going bankrupt (26.3%), having health problems (21.1%), lack of permanent jobs with social security (21.1%), being

¹⁴ Grocery store owners is an example of petty tradesperson.

dismissed from current job (10.5%), and the lack of any skills or occupational training (10.5%). Interestingly, most of the householders were unemployed in the 1990s, mainly in 1997, which might be associated with the structural adjustment programs leading to increasing unemployment throughout the country.

The unemployed headed households do not mostly depend on a single source of income, rather they pool income via the combination of different financial sources for their survival. The means of income pooling vary as informal jobs, casual employment, children's labor, women's labor, rent income, and financial aid. Although there is no variation with respect to the means of pooling income, recent migrants differ from the other groups in that while 75% of them seek waged-salaried employment, 50% of those born in Ankara and 29% of early migrants seek waged-salaried employment. Therefore, recent migrants are more vulnerable than the others because the unemployment rate and the rate of seeking a regular employment among them are higher.

For the survival strategies of the unemployed, it is important to look at the unemployment history and the strategies adopted by the households to survive during unemployment. Of all the families, in which the heads are waged-salaried, self-employed or retired, 45.1% faced unemployment especially after the 1980s (Table 3.6). Increasing unemployment rates after the 1980s, especially after the mid-1980s, indicate the negative impact of macro economic, political and social changes on the worsening livelihood of the urban poor. In the general atmosphere of the post 1980 period, the self-employed were more likely to be unemployed, and among the waged-salaried, the private sector workers were more likely to lose their jobs.

Thereupon, the critical question is how these households survive during the year(s) of unemployment. The household survival strategies might be listed from the most frequently used ones to the least ones as follows: working in the informal sector

or casual jobs (60.2%), receiving some kind of aid from kin or acquaintances (27.6%), income earned by women (22.4%), using money saved before (20.4%), selling women's golden ornaments (15.3%), income earned by children (13.3%), living on borrowed money (12.2%), receiving aid in kind and in money from the municipality (6.2%), and income from rural resources, like stockbreeding and farming (3.1%).

Table 3.6 Last Period of Unemployment by Current Employment Type

	<i>Last Period of Unemployment</i>						Total
	1996-	1991-95	1986-90	1981-85	1976-80	1971-75	
<i>Waged-Salaried</i>	13 16,5%	16 20,3%	10 12,7%	10 12,7%	8 10,1%	3 3,8%	60 75,9%
<i>Self-employed</i>	3 3,8%	4 5,1%	2 2,5%				9 11,4%
<i>Retired</i>		2 2,5%	1 1,3%			7 8,9%	10 12,7%
Total	16 20,3%	22 27,8%	13 16,5%	10 12,7%	8 10,1%	10 12,7%	79 100,0%

In brief, 'head of household' tends to work in formal jobs, especially in low-level jobs in the public sector. In this sense, having access to regular employment with social security benefits is an important strategy. However, increasing unemployment in the 1990s indicate the worsening livelihood, with which they cope through informal jobs, mobilization of additional members to generate income. Moreover, the retired 'heads' find jobs for additional income to sustain their well-being.

3.3.2.2. Women's Labor

The participation of women in the urban labor market with reference to survival strategies is explored on the basis of the employment situation of the women, membership to social security institutions, amount of earnings, and the level of poverty of women headed households. Of all the respondents, 35.4% of women work either at home or outside the home, and 11.5% are unemployed or are looking for a job. It is important to note that women generally started to work in the 1980s with an

increasing rate in the 1990s (Table 3.7). Also, the households in which women's labor is mostly mobilized corresponds to the second monthly income interval per household, meaning that households with a working woman mostly have a monthly income ranging between 51 million TL and 100 million TL (Table 3.7).

Table 3.7 Year of Mobilizing Women's Labor by Households' Income

	Women Started Working in;						Total
	1996-	1991-1995	1986-1990	1981-1985	1976-1980	1971-1975	
<i>26-50 million TL</i>	5 8,1%	8 12,9%					13 21,0%
<i>51-100 million TL</i>	16 25,8%	8 12,9%	2 3,2%	5 8,1%	2 3,2%	1 1,6%	34 54,8%
<i>101-150 million TL</i>	3 4,8%	6 9,7%	2 3,2%	1 1,6%	1 1,6%		13 21,0%
<i>151-213 million TL</i>		1 1,6%	1 1,6%				2 3,2%
Total	24 38,7%	23 37,1%	5 8,1%	6 9,7%	3 4,8%	1 1,6%	62 100%

Parallel to the relationship between the year of mobilizing women's labor and the households' monthly income, there is also a strong relationship between mobilizing women's labor and migration status. According to Table 3.8, among recent migrants 41.3%, among those born in Ankara 34.4%, and among the early migrants 33% of women generate income. This finding indicates the need of additional income in the survival of recent migrants. It is important to recall that the unemployment of head of household is the highest among the recent migrants as discussed before. Therefore, those households who migrated after 1980s represents the poorest group, in which unemployed heads of households are high, monthly income below the minimum wage is low, and thus mobilization of women's labor as a survival strategy is high.

Table 3.8 Employment of Women by Migration Status

	<i>Migration Status</i>			Total
	Born in Ankara	Migrated before the 1980s	Migrated after the 1980s	
<i>Employment of Women</i> yes	11	32	19	62
	17,7%	51,6%	30,6%	100,0%
no	34,4%	33,0%	41,3%	35,4%
	21	65	27	113
Total	18,6%	57,5%	23,9%	100,0%
	65,6%	67,0%	58,7%	64,6%
Total	32	97	46	175
	18,3%	55,4%	26,3%	100,0%
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

The working gecekondü women are employed in the informal sector (50%) either at home or outside the home, in private sector (40.3%), and public sector (9.7%) (Table 3.9). The ones outside the informal sector are working, as unskilled labor, skilled labor, lower-level government employees, and petty tradespersons¹⁵, almost all of who have a social security, like SSK, retirement fund, or Bağ-Kur. However, all the women in the informal sector, working either at home or outside the home, do not have social security. According to the findings, informal sector constitutes an important part of the income generating activities by women. Outside their homes, women are informally employed either for child caring or as cleaning women. Inside their home, women earn money by handwork, like knitting and lacework, which are generally made for neighbors and relatives.

¹⁵ Working as a cleaning woman for a contractor firm is an example of unskilled labor. Working as a secretary is an example of skilled labor. Owning a grocery store is an example of petty trade.

Table 3.9 The Employment Situation of the Working Women

	<i>Employment Situation</i>				Total
	public sector	private sector	informal works at home	informal works outside the home	
<i>Working Women</i>	6 9,7%	25 40,3%	21 33,9%	10 16,1%	62 100,0%
Total	6 9,7%	25 40,3%	21 33,9%	10 16,1%	62 100,0%

The amount of income earned by the women ranges between 1 million TL per month to 99 million TL per month, with an average of 30 million TL. There is a strong relationship between the type of employment and the amount of income earned. The concentration tendencies of monthly earnings and the type of employment are as below:

Varies Between:

Informal work at home:	1 million-20 million TL
Informal work outside the home:	15 million-50million TL
Unskilled labor:	25 million- 50 million TL
Skilled labor:	40 million- 50 million TL
Low-level government employee:	54 million- 86 million TL
Petty trader:	50 million TL and 99 million TL

On the basis of the migration status, there are important findings, which point out to the disadvantaged position of recent migrant women's labor force participation, which is displayed in Table 3.10. They are excluded from any kind of public sector employment, and they are mostly employed in the low-paid and low status private sector jobs (52.6%), and they engage in informal works at home (31.6%) and outside the home(15.8%). Therefore, recent migrant women's job opportunities are, to a large extent, limited to private sector and informal sector at home. Corollary to their employment types, their earnings are also low when compared to the rest of the women. In this manner, the lowest monthly earning is 3 million TL and the highest monthly earning is 50 million TL, and the monthly earnings of these women concentrates between 20 million TL and 35 million TL.

Table 3.10 Employment Type of Women by Migration Status

	Employment Type				Total
	public sector	private sector	informal works at home	informal works outside the home	
<i>Born in Ankara</i>	1	6	3	1	11
	9,1%	54,5%	27,3%	9,1%	100,0%
<i>Migrated before the 1980s</i>	16,7%	24,0%	14,3%	10,0%	17,7%
	5	9	12	6	32
<i>Migrated after the 1980s</i>	15,6%	28,1%	37,5%	18,8%	100,0%
	83,3%	36,0%	57,1%	60,0%	51,6%
<i>Migrated after the 1980s</i>		10	6	3	19
		52,6%	31,6%	15,8%	100,0%
Total		40,0%	28,6%	30,0%	30,6%
	6	25	21	10	62
	9,7%	40,3%	33,9%	16,1%	100,0%
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Almost all the women think that their income earning activities contribute to the livelihood of their families (62.3%). The rest say that they work for their economic emancipation (19.7%), for improving intrafamilial relations (8.2%), and for individual satisfaction (6.6%). However, the women think of their earning as a contribution to the household budget, and thus as a secondary source of income, and not as a major source of income, which is thought to be men’s earnings. Under these circumstances, more than half of the women said that they would not work if they did not have financial problems. The reasons of preferring not to work are unhealthy and hard working conditions of their current jobs, their health problems, and their domestic duties, which create double burden for them.

It is important to distinguish between women and men ‘household-heads’ on the basis of monthly income, because, as can be seen in Table 3.11, 42.9% of women-headed families sustain their lives with monthly income below the formal minimum wage level, while this percentage is 20.2 for men-headed families. It can be argued that the disadvantageous position of women in the labor market is an important contributor to women headed families’ poverty.

Table 3.11 Sex of 'Head of Households' and Households' Income

	Monthly Income per Household				Total
	26-50 million TL	51-100 million TL	101-150 million TL	151-213 million TL	
<i>Woman-headed Households</i>	3 42,9% 8,1%	2 28,6% 1,9%	2 28,6% 7,1%		7 100,0% 4,0%
<i>Man-headed Households</i>	34 20,2% 91,9%	103 61,3% 98,1%	26 15,5% 92,9%	5 3,0% 100,0%	168 100,0% 96,0%
Total	37 21,1% 100,0%	105 60,0% 100,0%	28 16,0% 100,0%	5 2,9% 100,0%	175 100,0% 100,0%

In sum, it can be argued that the mobilization of women's labor is an important strategy for the livelihood of families. However, there are some social and structural constraints for the mobilization of women's labor in general. Socially, the housewives do not work since their husbands want them to do so (37.7%), and because of their domestic duties (39.3%). This finding can be associated with women's social identity, which is molded by patriarchal relations. Structurally, gecekondü women's low level of education and training limits their employment opportunities of the women in the urban labor market, therefore their working capability is limited to low-paid and low-status jobs. In this cycle, their social roles as housewives and mothers make them unpaid child-carers, cleaning women in their homes, and low-paid child-carers and cleaning women in the informal labor market.

3.3.2.3. Children's Labor

Mobilization of child labor is another important strategy for poor households in the research. In 35% of the families, married children (between 21-35 ages) or unmarried children (between 11-35 ages) are working. Additionally among the working children, 33% spend their earning for themselves, and 66% give part of their earnings either to their fathers or mothers and spend the rest for themselves. When the

relationship between working children and their ages is considered, the youngest age of working is 13, and nearly 4% of the 11-15 age group (10 persons), which might be accepted as the ages of education and 36.2% of the 16-20 age group (36 persons) are working, and 14.1% of the 16-20 age group (14 persons) are unemployed or looking for a job. Table 3.12 shows detailed information about the children's situation and their employment status. Most of the non-working children are students, and the working children are employed as unskilled laborers, skilled laborers, government employees, and informal sector employees. Also, 15.3% of children between 11-15 ages and 16-20 ages are unemployment.

It is found that the number of children working in young ages is not so high (3.6% of children between 11-15 ages). Those children who are working end their education and start working to obtain additional income, and in some cases, the ones who could not keep up with education tend to start working. The level of mobilizing child labor is tested in relation with the expectations of the families about their children. The majority of the families expect their children to have a university education and to have a permanent employment with social security, therefore they encourage their children and use their financial sources for their children's education. They think that high level of education and social security jobs, and for some families high-status jobs, like doctor, lawyer, open the way to upward mobility for their children, and to relatively better livelihoods than theirs. Therefore, it can be argued that, although parents expect their children to have better lives, in case of increasing poverty, child labor is mobilized as a survival strategy. Indeed, there is a relationship between the children's work and their families' recent migrant status. For example, those families who migrated recently and who have non-Turkish ethnic origins mostly Kurdish tend to place their young children in jobs in the informal sector.

Table 3.12 The (Working) Status of the Children by Age Groups

	Age Ggroups				Total
	0-5 ages	6-10 ages	11-15 ages	16-20 ages	
<i>Below the Working Age</i>	60 69,8% 100,0%	23 26,7% 28,4%	3 3,5% 3,6%		86 100,0% 26,5%
<i>Lower-level Government Employee</i>				3 100,0% 3,0%	3 100,0% ,9%
<i>Unskilled Laborer</i>			1 6,7% 1,2%	14 93,3% 14,1%	15 100,0% 4,6%
<i>Skilled Laborer</i>			1 7,1% 1,2%	13 92,9% 13,1%	14 100,0% 4,3%
<i>Informal Sector (at home)</i>			1 25,0% 1,2%	3 75,0% 3,0%	4 100,0% 1,2%
<i>Farmer</i>				2 100,0% 2,0%	2 100,0% ,6%
<i>Unemployed (looking for employment)</i>			1 6,7% 1,2%	14 93,3% 14,1%	15 100,0% 4,6%
<i>Not Working (not looking for a job)</i>			3 10,7% 3,6%	25 89,3% 25,3%	28 100,0% 8,6%
<i>Student</i>		58 37,2% 71,6%	74 47,4% 88,1%	24 15,4% 24,2%	156 100,0% 48,1%
Total	60 18,5% 100,0%	81 25,0% 100,0%	84 25,9% 100,0%	99 30,6% 100,0%	324 100,0% 100,0%

3.3.2.4. Intensification of Working Hours

‘Heads of household’ intensify their working hours by second and even third jobs to cope with their poverty. Twenty-four percent (42 householders) engage in additional employment. Among the household ‘heads’, who have additional employment, 92.9% have second, and 7.1% have third jobs. They are employed in second jobs, which range as informal jobs (61.9%), skilled labor (23.8%), unskilled labor (9.5%), and petty trade (4.8%). Third jobs are skilled labor (66.7%), and informal jobs (33.3%). Additional work for generating income is generally carried out on weekends, before and after working hours, and during annual holidays. When

additional employment is considered with respect to migration status, obviously there is no meaningful relationship between the two variables, that is, date of migration of the households does not affect the type of additional jobs. The importance of such work in the survival of poor families is evident when additional work is considered on the basis of households' monthly income (Table 3.13). The ratio of second and even third employment is the highest within the poorest families (27%), while there is a decreasing tendency of additional employment as the income of the households' increases.

Table 3.13 Households' Monthly Income by Additional Jobs

	<i>Monthly Income per Household</i>				Total	
	26-50 million TL	51-100 million TL	101-150 million TL	151-213 million TL		
<i>Additional Employment</i>	yes	10	25	6	1	42
		23,8%	59,5%	14,3%	2,4%	100,0%
		27,0%	23,8%	21,4%	20,0%	24,0%
	no	5,7%	14,3%	3,4%	,6%	24,0%
		27	80	22	4	133
		20,3%	60,2%	16,5%	3,0%	100,0%
Total	73,0%	76,2%	78,6%	80,0%	76,0%	
	15,4%	45,7%	12,6%	2,3%	76,0%	
	37	105	28	5	175	
	21,1%	60,0%	16,0%	2,9%	100,0%	
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	
	21,1%	60,0%	16,0%	2,9%	100,0%	

3.3.3. The Gecekondu: A Source of Economic and Social Security

The gecekondu as a unit of analysis enables us to understand how poor households adopt several survival strategies utilizing the gecekondu with respect to ownership patterns and its potential flexibility.

3.3.3.1. Ownership Patterns

As discussed in the previous chapter, owning a gecekondü is an important asset for the poor, and not least important is renting a gecekondü. In this sense, the tenure type is of much significance from the survival strategies' point of view.

In the sample population, 92% of the respondents live in a gecekondü, and 8% them live in an apartment. When the migration status of respondents is considered, there are more tenants among recent migrants (54.3%), while the number of tenants tends to decrease among the rest, respectively those born in Ankara (34.4%) and the early migrants (27.8%). Of all the households, 46% own the gecekondü in which they live, 36% are tenants, and 18% live in a gecekondü owned by their relatives without paying any rent. The number of tenants demonstrates the changing nature of gecekondüs from use value to exchange value. Since if it were for self-use, there would be no tenants, or very limited number of tenants in the research. There is a strong relationship between ownership patterns and households' monthly income (Table 3.14), to the extent that as the monthly income of a household increases, the ratio of owning a house also increases, or the more a household is poor, the less chance for it to own a house.

Table 3.14 The Relationship Between Monthly Income per Household and Ownership Patterns

	<i>Ownership Patterns</i>			Total
	tenants	owners	relative's ownership	
<i>26-50 million TL</i>	20 31,7%	13 16,0%	4 12,9%	37 21,1%
<i>51-100 million TL</i>	34 54,0%	51 63,0%	20 64,5%	105 60,0%
<i>101-150 million TL</i>	8 12,7%	14 17,3%	6 19,4%	28 16,0%
<i>151-213 million TL</i>	1 1,6%	3 3,7%	1 3,2%	5 2,9%
Total	63 100,0%	81 100,0%	31 100,0%	175 100,0%

There is also an important relationship between the employment of the ‘head of household’ and ownership patterns, as shown in Table 3.15. At the first glance it seems that the waged-salaried group composes the largest portion of tenants, since they are commonly employed in low-paid jobs in the urban labor market. However, when the range of house ownership within each employment group is considered, tenants among the self-employed and unemployed are more than house owners, whereas tenants among the waged-salaried and retired are less than house owners. This may be because of the time spent in the city, when relatively high ownership among the early migrants and those born in Ankara is considered. That is, the more time spent in the city, the more chance of employment as waged salaried and of owning a gecekondü. More specifically, the time of migration may affect both job status and home ownership, early comers being more advantageous.

Furthermore, the most frequent house ownership is among the retired with 71.4%, which indicates that they had more chance to own a gecekondü than the new migrant households. Indeed, almost all of them owned their gecekondus either by self-construction and buying them before they retired, that is retirement bonus is not usually used to own a gecekondü.

Living in a relative’s house without paying any rent (18%) is an important survival strategy for all of the employment groups (Table 3.15). Especially the households, whose livelihood depends on a monthly income between 51 million and 100 million, have a tendency to live in their parents’ or relatives’ gecekondus. Since the portion of housing rent within the total monthly income is an important expense with 10-20%, not paying for rent maintains additional source for the poor. Moreover, migration status is an important factor on the households to live in a relative’s house. Those born in Ankara (34.4% of them) adopt this strategy more than migrants

(14.4% of early migrants, and 13% of recent migrants) regardless of their date of migration.

Table 3.15 Ownership Patterns by Employment Status

	Ownership Patterns			Total
	tenants	owners	relative's ownership	
<i>Waged-Salaried</i>	36	45	23	104
	34,6%	43,3%	22,1%	100,0%
	57,1%	55,6%	74,2%	59,4%
	20,6%	25,7%	13,1%	59,4%
<i>Self-employed</i>	10	4	3	17
	58,8%	23,5%	17,6%	100,0%
	15,9%	4,9%	9,7%	9,7%
	5,7%	2,3%	1,7%	9,7%
<i>Retired</i>	8	25	2	35
	22,9%	71,4%	5,7%	100,0%
	12,7%	30,9%	6,5%	20,0%
	4,6%	14,3%	1,1%	20,0%
<i>Unemployed</i>	9	7	3	19
	47,4%	36,8%	15,8%	100,0%
	14,3%	8,6%	9,7%	10,9%
	5,1%	4,0%	1,7%	10,9%
Total	63	81	31	175
	36,0%	46,3%	17,7%	100,0%
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
	36,0%	46,3%	17,7%	100,0%

3.3.3.2. Flexibility

It is commonly accepted by the scholars of squatter development that the gecekondu is characterized by its flexibility, which opens the way for the poor to adopt strategies in terms of housing unit and subsistence production (Şenyapılı, 1981, 1983; Kongar 1986). The flexible use of the gecekondu is studied in the field study in terms of the outer space and inner space of gecekondus.

Regarding the use of outer space, adding units to the gecekondu and planting in the garden are considered. Since any significant relationship between migration status and adding units to gecekondu can be observed, flexibility of gecekondu regarding adding units is analyzed on the basis of ownership patterns. Of all the gecekondu owners and those living in their relatives' gecekondus, nearly 31% of the

gecekondu construction extended over a large span of years via horizontal and vertical arrangements. Vertically, five percent of the households added one or two stories, and horizontally, 26% of the households made additional units to their houses, including even basic necessities, for example toilet, bathroom, and kitchen. These arrangements were made because of the lack of basic units (50%); becoming an extended family (25%), that is when grown-up children, mostly sons, get married and live in their parents' houses, together with their parents and their own families; and financial difficulty during the initial construction process (11%). Here it is necessary to mention that, although flexibility of the gecekondu in the construction process was once a common strategy, its importance as a strategy is in decline, which is indicated by the low number of house owners (8 persons) who are planning to make new arrangements in their gecekondu. The reason behind it may be the future plans of the gecekondu owners to converse their gecekondu into apartment houses, which will be discussed in the following chapter, or that the construction process of the gecekondu almost ended.

The second factor to assess the flexible use of outer space is how gecekondu gardens are used. The portion of the households who have a garden suitable for planting or keeping poultry and/or livestock is 64%, within which 23.4% (41 households) grow vegetables and/or fruit trees, and 6.3% (11 households) keep animals, such as chicken, and goose. The findings point out to a strong relationship between migration status and how gardens are used, to the extent that more than half of the recent migrants (57.7%) engage in such facilities, while this ratio tends to decline in the groups of early migrants and those born in Ankara, respectively, 32% and 25%. This might be associated with two factors: first, the more vulnerable economic position of recent migrants, as discussed before, leads them to adapt such a survival strategy, second, they tend to continue their rural way of life by planting and

keeping animal. Most of the households are engaged in such facilities for self-consumption, but four of the households earn additional income from planting, and two households earn additional income from keeping animal. With respect to survival strategies, the time of starting to plant and keep animal is noteworthy, because it intensifies after 1982 for planting and after 1983 for animal breeding. This can only be associated with the exacerbating livelihood after the 1980s because of the neo-liberal policies, which are discussed in the following part.

For the use of inner space as a survival strategy, the use of additional rooms or stories either for informal income generating activities, like shops, and workshops, or for renting out to other households are considered. In the sample households, the households (except one family) do not have additional units in their houses used as shops, or workshops. This might be attributed to the bureaucratic nature of Ankara, which molds the economic structure of the city. In this sense, the bureaucratic institutions and the public sector shape the economic setting of Ankara, thus the limited industrial sector might result in the very limited use of additional house units for survival via income generating activities.

The second indicator of flexible use of inner space is renting a room or story. Of all the households excluding tenants, 19% live with other families, who are generally close relatives, mostly grown-up children of the house owners (60.9%), and in a few cases, tenants (26.1%). On the basis of migration status, there is only one household who lives with another family, which is a tenant, in the same gecekondü. However, living with married children or with parents is quite high among the early migrants (14 households) and with tenants (four households). In this sense, it can be argued that recent migrants are lonelier since they cannot benefit from living with close relatives, which might be a means of security in financial and moral terms. Therefore, it can be argued that flexibility of the gecekondü maintains

two different strategies: first it is a housing unit, in which close relatives may live together sharing common assets and assisting mutually, and second, it is a housing unit, which enables house owners to gain additional income through renting a room or story. Thus, the gecekondü contributes to the household budget either directly in terms of money obtained from renting out or indirectly in terms of the money saved by allowing close relatives, mostly married children, living in their gecekondus.

3.3.3.3. A Tool of Capital Accumulation?

In the second chapter, it is argued that the gecekondü has shifted its meaning from being a shelter to being a tool for capital accumulation. This section attempts to explore whether the households in the research accumulate capital through their gecekondus. For this purpose, second house ownership and future plans for house ownership are examined.

In the total sample, 29 families (16.6%) own second houses, in which there are 11 gecekondus (37.9%), 11 (37.9%) village houses or farmhouses, and seven apartments (24.1%). However, second house ownership is not generally valid for capital accumulation because most of the households (65.5%) do not earn money from it, but rather second houses are used by relatives (57.9%) or hemşehris (5.3%), or there are no users (36.8%). Although second houses are not commonly used for capital accumulation, it is an important strategy for the poor, since it prevents close relatives, generally the married children of the second house owners, from paying housing rent.

The second indicator of the gecekondü as a tool of capital accumulation is future plans for house ownership mentioned by 55 households in the research. What is noteworthy is that the tendency of tenants to own a house is less than that of house owners (Table 3.16). Among them, while only 9.1% is planning to own a gecekondü,

the majority of the rest is planning to own an apartment either by contracting their *gecekkondus* to *müteahhits* (small-scale contractors) (43.6%), housing cooperatives (32.7%), or buying individually (14.5%). They are planning to pay for the new house/apartment by their monthly income (45.2%), retirement payments (19.4%), selling their real estate (16.1%), borrowing money (6.5%), or working in second jobs (6.5%). From the survival strategies' point of view, it is important to note that they are planning to own houses for self-use (71.7%), or for providing houses to their grown-up children (11.3%). However, only 5.7% is planning to own a house for investment.

With respect to migration status of respondents, plans for owning a house by contracting is low in recent migrants while plans for owning a house by housing cooperatives (46.7% of recent migrants who are planning to own a house) is high when compared with the two groups. The reason might be the low level of owing a *gecekkondu* among recent migrants, which limits their chance to contract in order to converse their *gecekkondus* into apartment houses. With this limitation, the easiest way for them to own a house is housing cooperatives, which enables them to pay relatively little amounts monthly to own a house. Indeed, more than half of recent migrants (60%) are planning to pay for the new house by their monthly income. When their reasons of owning a house is considered, a considerable number of them want a house for self-use (73.%), to provide shelter for their children (13.3%), and as a means of investment (13.3%), which indicates that they are still in need of accessing to a house for self-use.

Table 3.16 Current House Ownership by the Future Plans for Homeownership

	Ownership Patterns			Total	
	tenants	owners	relative's ownership		
<i>Future Plans for Homeownership</i>	yes	16 29,1%	32 58,2%	7 12,7%	55 100,0%
	no	9,1% 47 39,2%	18,3% 49 40,8%	4,0% 24 20,0%	31,4% 120 100,0%
Total	26,9%	28,0%	13,7%	68,6%	
	63 36,0%	81 46,3%	31 17,7%	175 100,0%	
	36,0%	46,3%	17,7%	100,0%	

In sum, the findings about the gecekondus as a tool of capital accumulation indicates that the sample households do not generally accumulate capital through their gecekondus. On the other hand, they are actually benefiting and are expecting to benefit from their gecekondus for the survival of their close relatives, who are generally their married children. Giving their gecekondus to müteahhids is the most common way of obtaining several apartments or more gecekondus units to be used by their grown-up children. However, those who migrated to Ankara after the 1980s are trying to access to a house not as a means of capital accumulation, rather as a means of economic and social security.

3.3.4. Solidarity Networks: An Indispensable Means of Survival for the Poor

Gecekondus literature points out to social solidarity networks at three levels, namely, family solidarity, kinship/ hemşehrilik/ neighborhood solidarity, and ethnic/ sectarian solidarity, which are discussed in Chapter Two. In this part, the findings with regard to solidarity networks are limited to the extent that first, the data about familial solidarity relations are limited to the continuing relations with their hometown from where the families migrated, and secondly the data about ethnic and sectarian origins were not directly but rather indirectly collected. With these limitations, solidarity

networks with reference to households' survival are explored on the basis of relations with hometown, kinship, hemşehri and neighborhood solidarity networks, and ethnic and sectarian solidarity networks.

The 'head of households' in the sample group compose of migrant households (82%) and the ones born in Ankara (18%), most of whose parents' hometown is also a place other than Ankara (Table 3.17).

Table 3.17 Date of Migration

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
<i>Born in Ankara</i>	32	18,3	18,3	18,3
<i>1950-1960</i>	21	12,0	12,0	30,3
<i>1961-1970</i>	32	18,3	18,3	48,6
<i>1971-1980</i>	44	25,1	25,1	73,7
<i>1981-1990</i>	31	17,7	17,7	91,4
<i>1991-</i>	15	8,6	8,6	100,0
<i>Total</i>	175	100,0	100,0	

(i) The relations with their hometown largely continue (62.9%), however, there is a negative correlation between the date of migration and relations with hometown, in the sense that as duration of living in Ankara increases, relations with hometown decrease. The relations with close relatives living in their hometowns are important for their livelihood, because they acquire various aid (43.8%), for example cracked wheat, money. While nearly half of the households acquire aid from their hometown, only 25.7% of them can help their relatives living in their hometown. Further, the importance of solidarity networks regarding hometown relations is prominent when receiving aid is considered on the basis of households' monthly income (Table 3.18). The data demonstrate that the most vulnerable households, whose livelihood depends on income less than or little more than the minimum wage, make the majority of households (75.5%) who receive various aid from their hometown. Therefore, it can be argued that as the poverty in monetary terms increases, the tendency to utilize

solidarity networks to obtain food and money increases. Additionally, on the basis of householders' employment situation (Table 3.19), 76.9% (10 families) of the unemployed, 48.5% (32 families) of the waged-salaried, 31.8% (seven families) of the retired, and 9.1% (one family) of the self-employed obtain aid from their hometown. Moreover, there is a strong relationship between migration status and receiving aid from hometown. Receiving aid is observed more among recent migrants (58%) than that of among the early migrants (42%) and that of those born in Ankara (21%).

Table 3.18 The Relationship between Receiving Aid from Hometown and Households' Income

		<i>Monthly Income per Household</i>				Total
		26-50 million TL	51-100 million TL	101-150 million TL	151-213 million TL	
<i>Receiving Aid From Hometown</i>	yes	12	26	10	2	50
		24,0%	52,0%	20,0%	4,0%	100,0%
	no	9	40	10	3	62
		14,5%	64,5%	16,1%	4,8%	100,0%
Total		21	66	20	5	112
		18,8%	58,9%	17,9%	4,5%	100,0%
		18,8%	58,9%	17,9%	4,5%	100,0%

Table 3.19 The Relationship between Receiving Aid from Hometown and Employment Status

		<i>Employment Status</i>				Total
		waged- salaried	self- employed	retired	unemployed	
<i>Receiving Aid From Hometown</i>	yes	32	1	7	10	50
		48,5%	9,1%	31,8%	76,9%	44,6%
	no	34	10	15	3	62
		51,5%	90,9%	68,2%	23,1%	55,4%
Total		66	11	22	13	112
		100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
		58,9%	9,8%	19,6%	11,6%	100,0%

To sum up regarding the solidarity networks based on relations with hometown, relatively poorer households, and especially the unemployed and the waged-salaried

employed households, together with recent migrants, are more likely to utilize solidarity networks in order to obtain aid, such as money and food.

(ii) The second category of solidarity networks is kinship, hemşehri and neighborhood solidarity networks. In the research sample, 77.1% of the households live with their relatives and hemşehris in the same gecekondu neighborhoods. In cases of need, they call for help of their relatives (83.4%), their neighbors and friends (64.6%), and their hemşehris (36%). The solidarity relations at this level are based on mutual aid, trust and solidarity. The kind of mutual aid is on a spectrum of finding employment (50.6%, 48.6%), occupational training (21.8%, 28.6%), monetary aid (29.3%, 46.9%), borrowing and lending money (66.7%, 62.9%), staying as a guest in their homes (25.3%, 38.3%), upkeeping and repairing houses and electrical machines (44.3%, 52.6%), housework like cleaning (48.9%, 56.6%), domestic production (49.4%, 54.9%), watching over the house during vacancy (78.7%, 81.1%), caring for children (51.1%, 56%), and helping for marriage, sickness, and death (87.4%, 86.9%)¹⁶. As can be seen from the variety of aid, and the percentages of mutual help, the sample households have the capability to utilize solidarity networks, which are founded on reciprocal relations, in times of difficulty. However, 47.4% of the sample (83 households) thinks that these relations have been changing. The majority of these families (91.7%) perceive that kinship, hemşehrilik and neighborhood solidarity networks have been in decline, losing its importance and functions in their livelihoods. It is noteworthy that the unemployed and the poorer households make the majority of the families, who perceive the solidarity networks based on kinship, hemşehri and neighborhood relations are declining, while migration status is not a

¹⁶ The stated numerical values refer to the percentages of first receiving aid, and second giving aid.

significant factor. Given the aim of the research, there are no data available to assess when and why these networks have been changing.

It is important to distinguish between the early migrants and recent migrants with respect to settling in kinship and hemşehri neighborhoods, in which they lived first after the migration. The findings point out to an increasing tendency among migrant households to live in kinship neighborhoods after the 1980s. In this manner, 76% of early migrants and 83 % of recent migrants started to live in gecekodu neighborhoods where their kins were living, and 21% of early migrants 15% of recent migrants lived in hemşehri neighborhoods. However, percentages of living in kinship and hemşehri neighborhoods tend to decline in both early and recent migrants, respectively 49.5% and 65.2%. Although living in kinship and hemşehri neighborhoods tends to decline due to spatial mobility of both early and recent migrants, recent migrants are more likely to live in such neighborhoods. At first glance this tendency might be associated with more vulnerable socio-economic position of recent migrants, which leads them to depend more on these networks. However, when the relationship between the migration status and the ones from whom they receive any kind of help is considered, it is obvious that those born in Ankara and early migrants are more likely to utilize kinship and hemşehri networks, while recent migrants utilize these networks less. Although, there is not a significant quantitative difference between the three groups, it is important to mention this difference in order to assess the emerging patterns in solidarity networks as a survival strategy.

(iii) The third analytical level of social solidarity networks is ethnic and sectarian solidarity networks. To find out the ethnic and sectarian origins, the data about the mother tongue and the membership to sectarian communities and associations are taken into consideration, since there is no direct question about

ethnic and sectarian origins in the questionnaire form. In this sense, for the ethnic composition of the sample households, which is shown in Table 3.20, 14,9% has a mother tongue other than Turkish, for example Kurmanci, Arabic, and Zazaki. Twenty-six percent of the households, whose ethnic origins are different from Turkish, say that they face with difficulties in their workplaces (37.5%), and experience socio-psychological problems (37.5%) in their daily lives due to their ethnic origins.

Table 3.20 Mother Tongue - Ethnic Composition

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
<i>Kurdish</i>	15	8,6	55,6	55,6
<i>Arabic</i>	9	5,1	33,3	88,9
<i>Zaza</i>	2	1,1	7,4	96,3
<i>Unanswered</i>	1	,6	3,7	100,0
<i>Total</i>	27	15,4	100,0	
Missing <i>Turkish</i>	148	84,6		
<i>Total</i>	175	100,0		

In the context of household survival strategies, it is important to explore the relations between ethnicity and various variables, for example date of migration, monthly income, employment status, contribution of child labor to households' survival, and solidarity networks. When date of migration is considered, a trend of migration on the ethnic basis can be observed (Table 3.21). Among the Turkish migrant households, 58.9% migrated before the 1980s, and with a sharp decrease 21.7% migrated after the 1980s. On the contrary, of the entire Kurdish migrant households, 20 % migrated before the 1980s and 66.7% migrated after the 1980s. Although no data is available about the migration type, which was discussed in the second chapter as a survival strategy, the stated percentages point out to the changing composition of migrant families. While the date of migration is not of significance for the Arabic-speaking families, all Zazaki-speaking families migrated between 1981 and 1990.

Table 3.21 The Relationship between Ethnic Origins and Date of Migration

	<i>Ethnic Origins</i>					Total	
	Turkish	Kurdish	Arabic	Zaza	unanswered		
<i>Date of Migration</i>	Born in Ankara	29 19,6% 16,6%	2 13,3% 1,1%	1 11,1% ,6%			32 18,3% 18,3%
	1950-1960	18 12,2% 10,3%	2 13,3% 1,1%	1 11,1% ,6%			21 12,0% 12,0%
	1961-1970	30 20,3% 17,1%		1 11,1% ,6%		1 100,0% ,6%	32 18,3% 18,3%
	1971-1980	39 26,4% 22,3%	1 6,7% ,6%	4 44,4% 2,3%			44 25,1% 25,1%
	1981-1990	22 14,9% 12,6%	7 46,7% 4,0%		2 100,0% 1,1%		31 17,7% 17,7%
	1991-	10 6,8% 5,7%	3 20,0% 1,7%	2 22,2% 1,1%			15 8,6% 8,6%
	Total	148 100,0% 84,6%	15 100,0% 8,6%	9 100,0% 5,1%	2 100,0% 1,1%	1 100,0% ,6%	175 100,0% 100,0%

On the basis of monthly income intervals as shown in Table 3.22, all Zazaki-speaking families (two families), 33.3% of Kurmanci-speaking families (five families), 22.2% of Arabic-speaking families (two families), and 18.9% of Turkish-speaking families (28 families) have to survive with a monthly income of less than the minimum wage. Additionally, among the Kurmanci-speaking persons, 33.3 % (five persons), among the Arabic-speaking persons 11.1% (one person), and among the Turkish-speaking persons 8.8% (13 persons) are unemployed. Furthermore, how the children's earnings are used on the basis of ethnic origin is important to assess ethnicity-based survival strategies (Table 3.23). In this sense, it can be argued that high rates of children, who give their earnings to their parents within the non-Turkish-speaking households, point out to a relatively vulnerable situation of ethnic groups, because it might be expected that in cases of increasing poverty, children's earnings are mobilized to maintain the survival of the households. As ethnic groups make the most vulnerable poor, together with children's earnings, they are more

likely to receive aid from their hometown (100% of Zazaki, 53.3% of Kurmanci, 50% of Arabic-speaking, 42.7% of Turks) and from various associations and foundations (50% of Zazaki, 13.3% of Kurmanci, 11.1% of Arabic-speaking, 6.8% of Turkish-speaking).

Table 3.22 Ethnic Origins by Households' Monthly Income

	<i>Ethnic Origins</i>					Total
	Turkish	Kurdish	Arabic	Zaza	unanswered	
26-50 million TL	28	5	2	2		37
	75,7%	13,5%	5,4%	5,4%		100,0%
	18,9%	33,3%	22,2%	100,0%		21,1%
	16,0%	2,9%	1,1%	1,1%		21,1%
51-100 million TL	92	7	5		1	105
	87,6%	6,7%	4,8%		1,0%	100,0%
	62,2%	46,7%	55,6%		100,0%	60,0%
	52,6%	4,0%	2,9%		,6%	60,0%
101-150 million TL	24	3	1			28
	85,7%	10,7%	3,6%			100,0%
	16,2%	20,0%	11,1%			16,0%
	13,7%	1,7%	,6%			16,0%
151-213 million TL	4		1			5
	80,0%		20,0%			100,0%
	2,7%		11,1%			2,9%
	2,3%		,6%			2,9%
Total	148	15	9	2	1	175
	84,6%	8,6%	5,1%	1,1%	,6%	100,0%
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
	84,6%	8,6%	5,1%	1,1%	,6%	100,0%

Table 3.23 Ethnic Origins by the Way of Spending Children's Earnings

	<i>Ethnic Origins</i>				Total
	Turkish	Kurdish	Arabic	unanswered	
Used for Self Needs	18	2			20
	36,7%	28,6%			33,3%
	30,0%	3,3%			33,3%
<i>Children's Earnings</i> Given to Parents (For Family Expenses)	25	5	3	1	34
	51,0%	71,4%	100,0%	100,0%	56,7%
	41,7%	8,3%	5,0%	1,7%	56,7%
Both	6				6
	12,2%				10,0%
	10,0%				10,0%
Total	49	7	3	1	60
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
	81,7%	11,7%	5,0%	1,7%	100,0%

In sum, the 1980s is of significance for the changing composition of migrant households. Within the framework of this thesis, what is important about the

changing ethnic origins of migrants is that new migrants are the most vulnerable groups of the urban poor. They migrated to Ankara especially after the 1980s, their monthly incomes are relatively low, unemployment rates among them are relatively high, they rely more on income earned by their children, and they utilize relations with their hometowns in order to obtain aid, such as food and money.

Additionally, there are sectarian differences, in which the population of Sunni sect is considerably more than that of Alevi sect in the research. However, it is important to remember that it is not possible to derive the exact numbers of households on sectarian bases from the questionnaires. In this context, only the ones who declared to be a member of an association or an ethnic/sectarian group can be taken into consideration. Of all the households, 20% are members of *hemşehri* associations, 12% are members of an Alevi association, six percent is a member of 'Ideal Hearths' (*Ülkü Ocakları*, which is an extension of the ultra-nationalist political party based on the ideology of Turkish nationalism), and four percent is a member of Islamic Sunni groups. Having a membership of such communities and associations provides their members with various aid, for example money (1.7%), food (2.3%), money and food (2.9%), fuel (0.6%), and scholarship (0.6%). Table 3.24 shows the numbers and percentages of households, which receive aid from these associations and communities because of their membership status. When receiving aid from these groups and associations is considered with respect to migration status of the households, it is interesting that 15% of recent migrants, who are also members of these groups receive various aid, but 6.3% of those born in Ankara and 5.2 of early migrants receive aid. This might be an indicator of vulnerability of recent migrants.

Table 3.24 The Relationship between Membership in and Receiving Aid from Associations and Groups

	Membership Status							Total
	No membership	Hemsehrilik associations	Islamic groups	Alevi associations	Ideal Hearths	Other	Unanswered	
Yes, receive aid	4	3	2	3	3			14
	28,6%	21,4%	14,3%	21,4%	21,4%			100,0%
	3,6%	8,6%	40,0%	40,0%	27,3%			8,0%
No	2,3%	1,7%	1,1%	1,7%	1,7%			8,0%
	108	32	3	4	8	2	4	161
	67,1%	19,9%	1,9%	2,5%	5,0%	1,2%	2,5%	100,0%
Total	96,4%	91,4%	60,0%	66,7%	72,7%	100%	100,0%	92,0%
	61,7%	18,3%	1,7%	2,3%	4,6%	1,1%	2,3%	92,0%
	112	35	5	6	11	2	4	175
	64,0%	20,0%	2,9%	3,4%	6,3%	1,1%	2,3%	100,0%
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100%	100,0%	100,0%
	64,0%	20,0%	2,9%	3,4%	6,3%	1,1%	2,3%	100,0%

Although in this study ethnic and sectarian origins can not be deducted exactly, a follow-up study (KPPYY, 2000: 177-234) investigated ethnic and sectarian origins directly, which found out that the sample gecekondu population is composed of different groups on the basis of ethnic and sectarian origins, for example there are Turkish-Sunni, Turkish-Alevi, Kurdish-Sunni, and Kurdish-Alevi groups.

3.3.5. Having Access to Urban Infrastructure

In all of the gecekondu settlements in the research, urban infrastructure and social services are provided, however with varying quality. ‘Joint use of urban infrastructure’ is an important household survival strategy, because it reduces the cost of having access to services through sharing the cost of infrastructure and using -for example, the same counters for electric and water. In this sense, although the majority of the families do not use this strategy, 24% of them (42 households) used to use services collectively, furthermore 42.9% of them (75 households) are still using some services collectively, or are sharing them, for example tap water and electricity. What is important with regards to household survival is that joint use of

urban infrastructure is more among the low-income families, as shown in Table 3.25. Moreover, on the basis of house ownership patterns, this strategy is more common among tenants and those who live in their relatives' houses.

Table 3.25 The Relationship between Joint Use of Urban Infrastructure and Households' Monthly Income

	<i>Monthly Income Per Household</i>				Total	
	26-50 million TL	51-100 million TL	101-150 million TL	151-213 million TL		
<i>Joint Usage of Urban Infrastructure</i>	yes	18	44	8	2	72
		25,0%	61,1%	11,1%	2,8%	100,0%
		48,6%	41,9%	28,6%	40,0%	41,1%
	no	10,3%	25,1%	4,6%	1,1%	41,1%
		19	61	20	3	103
		18,4%	59,2%	19,4%	2,9%	100,0%
Total	51,4%	58,1%	71,4%	60,0%	58,9%	
	10,9%	34,9%	11,4%	1,7%	58,9%	
	37	105	28	5	175	
	21,1%	60,0%	16,0%	2,9%	100,0%	
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	
	21,1%	60,0%	16,0%	2,9%	100,0%	

An important portion of the sample households (62.9%) is not satisfied with the quality of urban infrastructure and services, which, they believe, threaten their health, together with the inadequacy of social services. However, recent migrants seem to be more satisfied with urban infrastructure and services than the rest. Since the majority of respondents are not satisfied with the quality of urban infrastructure and services, and they complain that they are inadequate, they respond to these problems by collective action at the neighborhood level. That is, 29.7% of the sample participates in collective action to solve the problems concerning title deed, or improvement plans (17.1%), and problems concerning urban infrastructure and services (12.6%). In order to solve such problems, they apply to headperson of the neighborhood (*muhtar*) (38.9%), municipality (20%), headperson and municipality (6.9%), political parties (2.9%), directly to the mayor (1.1%), and to media institutions (0.6%).

3.4. Discussing the Field Study With Reference to Dynamics of Urbanization:

Emerging Trends in the post-1980s

What follows in this chapter is to explore the social, political and economic dynamics of urbanization, which open the way for gecekondu households either to be able to develop strategies to cope with their poverty or to become desperately poor. In doing so, the emerging trends in the survival strategies of gecekondu households are the focal point of this chapter with reference to both gecekondu studies in the literature and the field study conducted in Ankara. For identifying these emerging trends, the post-1980 period is given special importance, since from then on Turkey has faced with restructuring processes in all spheres of life.

(i) Economic dynamics of urbanization, or the national economic policies have had crucial impacts on the labor force participation and economic well-being of the urban poor. In the 1980s and onwards, neo-liberal policies have intensified privatization and liberalization in the economy. These policies have found its most clear manifestations in the structural adjustment programs, the frameworks of which were drawn by the 24th January 1980, and 4th April 1994 economic measures. These economic measures have resulted in policy implementations, for example opening the country to the international free market, providing support for financial sectors, and narrowing down state intervention through privatization. During the structural adjustment programs, Turkey has experienced important adverse effects in income distribution patterns, purchasing power of the minimum wage, and unemployment rates. Therefore, “the urban poor have been the hardest hit and constitute the most vulnerable group in the process of macro-economic reform and structural adjustment” (Hamza and Zetter, 1998:293).

The exacerbating economic sphere of the post-1980s has apparent repercussions on the survival pattern of the poor in Turkish cities. In general, poor

urban households respond to these changes by intensifying working hours, mobilizing additional members to labor market so as to increase income in cash, as well as subsistence production in their homes and gardens. Informal sector opens the way for the individuals and even for the households to sustain livelihood by piecework and family workshop.

The field study carried out in Ankara points out that labor force participation constitutes the most reliable asset for the gecekondu households, since any kind of employment is the main source of income. When the relationships between monthly income and labor groups, and migration status are considered (Table 3.1), nearly half of the unemployed group and nearly half of the recent migrants have monthly income below the minimum wage, whereas the ratio of living with minimum wage income is less in other groups.

In the context of labor force participation, men are waged-salaried employees, self-employed, retired and unemployed. First, for the waged-salaried group, there is a tendency to be employed in the public sector, which provides permanent jobs with social security, and even free transportation. However, recent migrants cannot mostly access to public sector employment, rather they are mostly employed in the private sector, meaning that their employment strategies are limited when compared to the others. Secondly, self-employed people are generally petty tradesmen, but in few cases, they are employed in the informal sector. For the formal self-employed, the most important survival strategy is employing family members in their petty business to save by not paying to an employee. This strategy is open to migrants regardless of their date of migration. The third group is mostly retired from public sector employment, which strengthens the assumption that there is a tendency for the poor to be employed in the public sector, which mainly stems from the bureaucratic nature of Ankara. Their main strategy is twofold: first, they invest their retirement bonus

money to maintain their economic and social security in the future, and second, they find employment to earn money to add to their monthly retirement payments. The fourth group is the unemployed, who constitutes the most vulnerable group, since they do not receive regular monthly income. They maintain their survival by casual or informal jobs, children's and women's labor, rent income and financial aid from their parents, hometown, and relatives.

Women's labor is mobilized to generate additional income. This is true especially in the post 1980 period with an increasing rate in the 1990s. Low income and lower-middle income households are more likely to mobilize women's labor. However, *gecekodu* women's participation in the labor market is limited to low-status and low-paid jobs, which results in the exacerbating livelihood for women-headed households. Furthermore, traditional cultural norms discourage women from seeking employment.

Children's labor is another important source of income for *gecekodu* households, since children contribute to their families' livelihood by their earnings. Although children's contribution is important, there is a general inclination in the sample households to educate their children so that they can be employed in high-status and high-paid jobs. It is important to note that mobilization of children's labor as a survival strategy is less than the mobilization of women's labor, which strengthens the assumption that giving a chance for education to their children is important for *gecekodu* households. However, in times of increasing poverty, children stop their education and participate in the labor force. This is more common in recent migrants from the Southeast, which may result in a 'vicious circle of poverty' by preventing children from attaining education.

Intensification of working hours is another strategy to generate additional income. The 'heads of households', usually men, intensify their working hours by

second and even third jobs, mostly in the informal sector. Of importance, the intensification of working is a strategy widely adopted by the poorest families.

In brief, first, the findings of the study demonstrate that the type of the city where they live molds employment opportunities that are open to the poor. For example, in contrast to Ankara, İstanbul is a “global city”, in which informal sector is wider and the livelihood of the poor depends more on informal jobs. When compared to White’s study (1991) carried out in İstanbul, there were no organized piecework and family workshops, in which petty commodity was produced for the international market in the research carried out in Ankara. This is valid for both women’s and men’s labor force participation. However, one important consequence of narrowing down the action of the state after the 1980s is that respondents think that it is now more difficult to be employed in the public sector. This is pointing to a serious problem for the urban poor in Ankara in the near future that is the shrinkage of the state will have most devastating effects on the population in Ankara. Therefore, any study on poverty and survival strategies must pay attention to economic differences between cities. Secondly, in the post-1980s poor households responded to their exacerbating livelihood, which was the result of neo-liberal policies, by mobilizing additional members to urban labor market, by intensifying their working hours, and by working after retirement so as to increase their incomes in addition to their retirement payments.

(ii) Political dynamics of urbanization are closely linked with gecekondu policies, which have changed since the emergence of gecekondu settlements with crucial consequences on the gecekondu as a survival strategy. The post-1980 period can be characterized as the transformation phase of the gecekondus, in which gecekondu policies were oriented to solve the title deed problems of squatters and to transform gecekondu settlements into regular apartment neighbors (Şenyapılı, 1998:

312). In this transformation process, contractors were the main profit-makers, who bought the gecekondü plot and offered gecekondü owners one, two, or three apartments.

What does the commercialization of urban land and gecekondü, and especially transformation mean for the survival of gecekondü households? First, it is no longer easy for the poor to have access to urban land through illegal land occupation, and even through paying modest prices for land. Therefore, early occupants gained from commercialization, but the new poor face with constraints for obtaining urban land. Second, gecekondü has become a tool of investment, that is, it is bought and sold, and rented for generating additional income. The increase in the rates of tenants¹⁷ living in gecekondüs in the post-1980s indicates the changing meaning of gecekondü from its use-value to exchange value. The field study conducted in Ankara demonstrates the increasing numbers of tenants living in gecekondüs (36%), which also points out that it has now become even more difficult for the poor to own a gecekondü. As shown in Table 3.16, 47 families among tenants (75% of tenants), and 24 families among those living in their relatives' houses (77%) do not have any plan to own a house. Moreover, the findings of the field study point to an important strategy for the poor with respect to ownership patterns. Since it is now more difficult to own a gecekondü, the number of households living in their parents' and relatives houses¹⁸ increases, thereby they maintain additional income by not paying for rent. Thirdly, the transformation of gecekondüs into apartment houses means for those poor who own gecekondüs to become an owner of one, two, and even three apartments, thus becoming better-off. However, it is noteworthy to emphasize that only gecekondü owners might have the chance to gain from this process, and tenants

¹⁷ The percentage of tenants in gecekondü settlements of Ankara is 28.5% (Alpar and Yener, 1991), and it is 36% in our field study.

are excluded from this process. Moreover, this process opened the way of differentiation between the winners and losers within the gecekondu population. In the gecekondu literature, apartmentalization is perceived as a tool of capital accumulation, and even a tool of becoming wealthy, because owning several apartments means generating rent for its owners. However, our field study shows that not all the poor gain equally from this process to the extent that apartmentalization process is a strategy, which is only open to land owners and gecekondu owners. The households (31.4% of sample) in the study are planning to own a house, and almost half of them (43.6%, 24 persons) are planning to transform their gecekondu into apartment houses by contracting. Furthermore, they want to own apartments for self-use and to provide houses for their married children. One more emerging trend about the gecekondu as a survival strategy is the declining importance of its flexibility, which is found in the field study. Once the flexibility of gecekondu played a very important role in the construction process, in which the owners made necessary vertical and horizontal additions in times of decreasing poverty, and today only limited number of gecekondu owners are planning to make such additions. This might stem from the fact that either gecekondu owners are planning to benefit from the apartmentalization process, or they have completed construction process of their gecekondu.

(iii) Social solidarity networks are another household survival strategy and one aspect of social dynamics of urbanization. The post-1980 period is significant for changing solidarity networks, thus for the survival of the urban poor. The recent gecekondu literature points out to the emerging trends in solidarity networks, which have been increasingly founded on ethnic and sectarian origins, and more

¹⁸ Living in gecekondu owned by relatives was 13.30% in Ankara (Alpar and Yener, 1991). However, this percentage rises to 18% in our field study.

importantly in which segregation patterns have resulted in the exclusion of the poorest households from these networks. Işık and Pınarcıoğlu (2001a, 2001b: 155-156) conceptualize poverty and informal networks under the name of “poverty by-turns”, which refers to the network relations from which early migrants and privileged groups become wealthier by exploiting new migrants and unprivileged groups, and by transferring their poverty to them. ‘Poverty by-turns’ denotes the unequal power relations among migrants, through whom unprivileged poor households are excluded from these networks, or at least their unprivileged position continues. Işık and Pınarcıoğlu (2001b: 157) expound that the relations/networks called ‘poverty by-turns’ in the 1980s and 1990s can be viewed as an extension of solidarity relations/networks in the 1960s and 1970s. What is different between the two networks, and thus between the two periods, is that in the earlier times, solidarity relations were based on solidarity between more or less homogeneous groups, and they reproduced a harmonious *gecekondu* population, who were willing to integrate with the city and urbanities. However, in the 1980s and 1990s, differentiation and segregation between the poor themselves, and between the poor and the rest of the urban population, have been experiencing. This transformation has led the former solidarity based-networks to be replaced by networks based on unequal power relations (Erder, 1996: 303; Işık and Pınarcıoğlu, 2001b: 158).

Solidarity networks founded on ethnic and sectarian origins, and segregation patterns associated with them, are another issue in urbanization and *gecekondu* studies. For Erder (1997), sectarian segregation and ethnic segregation patterns can be observed as acting against the Alevi¹⁹ and Kurdish communities. She (1997: 143)

¹⁹ For Erder (1997: 138), sectarian segregation against the Alevi sect is the result of the intensification of debates on ‘secularism’ and ‘cultural identity’ in the 1990s in Turkey. She points out different paths for searching Alevi identity in recent decades. More importantly, she argues for emerging tensions and conflicts between two sects, who were once share the common problems and take collective actions for their problems, and who now face segregation against the favor of Alevi sect.

argues that Islamic Sunni sect is more advantageous than the Alevi sect, because Sunni community can solve its problems by utilizing its Sunni identity in its relations with local and national bureaucracy. However, the members of the Alevi sect are excluded from these relations because of their cultural identity and sectarian origins. For ethnic segregation, she draws upon forced migration, from which Kurdish migrant households have been affected negatively to a greater extent. Those households' vulnerability is doubled with the national political atmosphere (Erder, 1997: 154) to the extent that the neighbors and hemşehris of Kurdish migrants do not want to have contacts with them because they migrated from the regions where there was ongoing terrorism.

What do all these transformation processes in Turkish cities in the post-1980s mean for the survival of poor *gecekondu* households? *Gecekondu* studies demonstrate that although solidarity networks were easily accessible and widely utilized by the urban poor before the 1980s, their role in household survival is in decline, and they are no more easily accessible, that they have become selective in recent decades because of power relations. Erder (1996: 295) argues that the poorest and the most vulnerable households, who are composed of the elderly, women-headed households, the disabled, and forced migrant families, are not accepted into these networks. There are some differences and similarities between recent *gecekondu* studies and the field research conducted in Ankara. First, in contrast to what recent *gecekondu* studies argue for the exclusion of recent migrants from the solidarity networks, the field study in Ankara points out that recent migrants are more likely to live in kinship and hemşehri neighborhoods than early migrants and those born in Ankara. Also, they receive any kind of aid from formal/informal associations and groups more than the other groups. Second, corollary to Erder's statement, the field study conducted in Ankara, which is presented in this chapter,

denotes that solidarity relations have been losing its role as a survival strategy, especially for the unemployed and poorest households, who constitute the most vulnerable groups among the respondent. Moreover, the field study indicates that non-Turkish speaking households face difficulties in their work places, and socio-psychological problems in their daily lives due to their ethnic origins. Therefore, it can be argued that the poorest or the most vulnerable households, who need solidarity networks for their survival the most, are excluded from these networks, which might ultimately lead to very limited capabilities, and form the desperately poor strata in the Turkish cities.

Summing up what has been said so far, in the post-1980s, social aspects of urbanization, which are explored on the basis of the changing nature of migration, and of solidarity networks, have resulted in a conflictual, segregated, tension-laden urban setting for gecekondu households. There is now a group of poor, who are living on the borders of the ‘underclass’ because social aspects of urbanization in Turkey are eroding their capabilities and assets.

(iv) Lastly, having access to urban infrastructure and services is considered. Although gecekondu households have access to basic urban services, one important strategy is the joint use of urban infrastructure, which was once a common strategy, and now a strategy generally adopted by tenants and gecekondu dwellers living in the houses owned by their relatives, that is the poorest households.

To sum up with what has been said so far about the emerging trends in the post-1980 period, it can be argued that the urban poor in general, and gecekondu households in particular, have never been passive recipients of the macro social, political and economic transformations. They have been capable of adopting strategies and utilizing their assets so as to sustain their livelihood, and even to achieve upward mobility.

Within the context of strategy-approach, two periods can be observed in the case of gecekondu settlements in Turkey. The impacts of structural transformation process since the early 1980s plays a crucial role in this. Households who were forced to migrate, form the most vulnerable poor of the cities, since they can not generally receive economic, social and psychological support from their hometowns, and since they are excluded from solidarity networks, making it more difficult for them to find regular employment and houses. In the urban land and housing markets, it is now more difficult for the poor to have access to these assets due to speculative growths and land scarcity. Also, the constraints in the urban labor market limit the poor to have regular incomes. Moreover, solidarity networks have become more selective in the sense that solidarity-based relations have being replaced by power-based relations, therein those who have access to network relations may become advantageous in the urban labor, land and house markets, while the others may become highly disadvantageous.

In brief, once the poor urban households could survive in a relatively favorable urban environment with strategies open to all, and now the urban environment has been full of tension due to political, economic and cultural orientations/polarization, ultimately leading to a more competitive environment for the poor to have access to resources. The trends or challenges in Turkish cities in recent decades point to an emergence of a disadvantaged stratum, whose assets and capabilities are restricted to the extent that they may form an underclass in the near future.

CONCLUSION

Urban poverty is an important issue both for developed and underdeveloped countries. There is an enormous literature on urban poverty dealing with different aspects of the subject. Throughout this study, it is argued that the nature of poverty cannot be understood without focusing on the survival strategies of the poor, otherwise the poor are wrongly thought to be passive and static. This is so because “in spite of structural constraints, choices are possible and individuals are not passive recipients of structural forces” (De la Rocha, 1997, 12). Within the boundaries of this problematic, the main question of this study is “what have been the household survival strategies of the urban poor in Turkey and how are they changing in recent times?”.

In order to investigate this question, the first chapter draws the theoretical framework for household survival strategies. In this chapter, it is argued that absolute and relative definitions of poverty are limited in scope to understand the nature of poverty; “hence the still open debate on the concepts of absolute and relative poverty” (Mingionie, 1996: 4). In addition, there are different perceptions of the causes of poverty. While the conservative and liberal approaches blame rural migrants for taking their rural poverty to industrialized cities, the radical approach emphasizes the capitalist mode of production as the cause of urban poverty. Moreover, ‘culture of poverty’ and whether it is relevant in the Turkish case is important to understand the urban poor in Turkey. This concept claims that “the people in the culture of poverty have a strong feeling of marginality, of helplessness, of dependency, of not belonging”. However, there is no empirical evidence that supports that the urban poor in Turkey created a culture of poverty. On the contrary,

they have always been willing to integrate with the city, hopeful about their future, and have never fallen into a sense of loneliness. Why they did not create a culture of poverty lies in the fact that they had their own solutions to cope with their socio-economic positions and were equipped with some important assets.

What follows the culture of poverty discussion in the first chapter is the “asset vulnerability framework”, which pays attention to various assets that the urban poor have. This framework suggests that the poor respond to their poverty in accordance with their own assets, for example labor, human capital (health, education, skills) productive assets (urban land and housing), household relations (mechanism for pooling income and sharing consumption), and social capital (reciprocal solidarity relations). The ‘capability’ of the poor represents a person’s opportunities to achieve well-being. Therefore, in the strategy-approach, along with the assets that the poor have, not least important is the capability of the poor to transform their assets into money, food, and the goods necessary for their survival.

In the second chapter, the assets and capability of the poor living in Turkish cities are discussed. While doing so, gecekondü literature is reviewed because of the fact that gecekondü settlements are the poverty-stricken areas of Turkish cities. Gecekondü studies point out to five major types of household survival strategies: Migration type, the gecekondü, labor or households’ work strategies, solidarity networks, and access to urban infrastructure and services. First, chain migration, which is an important strategy for the families so as to adapt gradually to the cities, has been largely replaced by forced migration in the post-1980s, which has adverse consequences for migrant households. Secondly, having access to urban land and being able to build gecekondüs have been an important asset for the poor. Due to lack of low-income housing in the cities, the gecekondü emerged as a solution adapted by migrants. It was a self-help housing, constructed with cheap materials,

and its flexibility made it easier to own a gecekondu. Owning a gecekondu meant for the poor economic and social security. However, in time, urban land and gecekondu was commercialized, thus it became difficult to own a gecekondu. In recent decades, due to the scarcity of and speculative growth in urban land, as well as the commercialization and transformation of gecekondus into apartment houses, the meaning of gecekondu has shifted from having use-value to exchange value. But still owning a gecekondu, and even being a tenant in a gecekondu, and thus paying low rent, is an important strategy. Thirdly, labor has been the most important component of gecekondu households' assets because having a regular income means having more chance to own a house by paying monthly to a housing cooperative, giving the chance of education to their children, and a more livable future. Once their labor force participation was in marginal jobs in the 1940-1950s, they were employed in the periphery jobs in the 1960s-1970s, and in the informal sector in the post-1980s. They respond to their increasing poverty by mobilizing additional family members, and intensifying their working hours. Fourthly, how solidarity networks function in their survival is discussed. Gecekondu studies indicate three levels of solidarity networks, namely, familial/ intergenerational solidarity, kinship/ hemşehrilik/ neighborhood solidarity, and ethnic/ sectarian solidarity. At all these levels, gecekondu households engage in reciprocal relations based on solidarity and trust, from which they benefit for various things. However, although these networks were once open to all, they have become selective in recent decades. These networks are selective to the extent that those who do not share the same ethnic and sectarian origins with the networking groups, as well as the poorest households are excluded from these relations; thereby they become disadvantaged in the urban land, house, and labor markets.

In the third chapter, the findings of a field study, which was carried out in various gecekondu settlements of Ankara, were analyzed in line with the previous chapter. The data collected in the field study are analyzed on the basis of demographic features of respondents, labor force participation of family members, gecekondu ownership and flexibility, solidarity networks, and the access to urban infrastructure and services.

The discussions in the second and third chapters point out to the changing patterns and emerging threats in the survival strategies of gecekondu households in the post-1980s. It is argued that strategies are context bound, that is, the strategies of the urban poor have been affected by social, political, and economic factors in the urban context. In this sense social dynamics of urbanization, which are migration and solidarity networks, have been changing since the 1980s. There is a consensus on the adverse effects of forced migration on the survival of migrants in the cities. However, in the field study, there is little empirical data on these adverse effects, since Ankara is not one of the cities that receives forced migrants. This points out to the need of more empirical studies on this issue. Second, both gecekondu studies and the case study indicate the decreasing role of solidarity networks in the households' livelihood. The political dynamics of urbanization, especially gecekondu policies in the mid-1980s, have created some winners and some losers among gecekondu households. In the post-1980s atmosphere, it is more difficult to obtain urban land and a gecekondu. The most vulnerable households are excluded from the informal land and housing market, thus tenants and those living in their relatives' houses without paying any rent are increasing. Lastly, the economic policies of the post-1980s, or more profoundly structural adjustment programs, have had serious impacts on the urban poor. Increasing unemployment, decreasing purchasing power, decreasing real wage earnings have increased the vulnerability of the urban poor.

They respond to their exacerbating livelihood by mobilizing women's and children's labor and by working in additional jobs in the informal sector so as to generate additional income.

In sum, gecekondu households have never been a passive, hopeless, and lonely group, but rather they have responded to their socio-economic positions, and macro-structural transformations to survive in the city by means of their capabilities to use their assets. However, due to structural transformations in every sphere of life after the 1980s, their asset ownership is restricted, and household survival strategies have become selective for the urban poor, whose capabilities to survive have been destroyed to a large extent.

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