



A Reflection of a Capital City, Ankara: The Eryılmaz Family Story

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Abstract

Ankara, the capital city of Turkey, went through a rapid urbanization process, especially in the 1970s, in parallel with the growth of the country. While immigration and increasing housing needs triggered the uncontrollable growth of the city, it accelerated its development in many areas. Standing out with its rapid growth and development in these years, Ankara has been the subject of a comprehensive research conducted by Geoffrey Payne between 1974-1976. The current study provides a longitudinal approach to the city's development and started in 2019 with members of the Eryılmaz family, who moved from Çorum to Ankara and lived in a modest gecekondü in Dikmen and were representative of the many families who were the subject of Payne's work. During a reunion in 2019, the family's story was examined via a semi-structured in-depth interview in a way that sheds light on the past as it applied to numerous households. Thus, the interactions of the people with the city, the socio-economic changes, the developments in housing and its reflections on the inhabitants are presented through a real story. This research, which started in 1974 and has been evolving since 2019 is carried out with the support of Professor Ruşen Keleş.

Keywords: Urban planning, urban development, longitudinal approach, Ankara.

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Bir Başkent'in Yansıması, Ankara: Eryılmaz Ailesinin Öyküsü

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Öz

Türkiye'nin başkenti Ankara, ülkenin büyümesine paralel olarak özellikle 1970'li yıllarda hızlı bir şehirleşme sürecinden geçmiştir. Artan göç ve çoğalan konut ihtiyacı kentin kontrol edilemez biçimde büyümesini tetiklerken, birçok konuda da şehrin kendisini geliştirmesini hızlandırmıştır. Bu yıllarda hızla büyümesi ve gelişmesiyle göze çarpan Ankara, İngiliz akademisyen Geoffrey Payne'in 1974-1975 yılları arasında yürüttüğü kapsamlı bir şehircilik araştırmasına konu olmuştur. Bu çalışma 2019 yılında boylamsal bir yaklaşımla yeniden güncellenmeye başlanmıştır. Bu nedenle, Payne'in çalışmasına Çorum'dan Ankara'ya göç edip Dikmen'de mütevazı bir geçekonduda hayatını sürdürürken konu olan Eryılmaz ailesinin üyeleri ile 2019 yılında tekrar buluşma sağlanmış ve görüşme gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bu buluşmada, Eryılmaz ailesinin farklı kuşaklarıyla biraraya gelmiş ve ailenin Ankara ile bütünleşerek gelişen ve değişen 50 yıllık yaşam hikayesi, geçmişe ışık tutacak şekilde yarı yapılandırılmış sorularla derinlemesine bir görüşme tekniğiyle irdelenmiştir. Böylelikle kentte yaşayanların kent ile etkileşimleri, yaşanan sosyo-ekonomik değişimler, konut kavramındaki gelişmeler ve kentin yaşayanları üzerindeki yansımaları gerçek bir hikaye üzerinden sunulmuştur. 1974'te başlayan ve 2019 yılından itibaren güncellenerek devam eden bu araştırma Prof. Dr. Ruşen Keleş'in desteği ile sürdürülmüştür.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Şehir planlama, kentsel gelişim, boylamsal araştırma, Ankara.

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Introduction

Turkey has undergone a significant population growth and urbanization process particularly after the 1950s, and the capital city Ankara has experienced it in all its dimensions (Ankara Metropolitan Municipality, 2017a). The population of Ankara increased at a far higher rate than that of the country as a whole and increased approximately 6 times during the period 1927–1975 (World Bank, 2015). In other words, while Ankara was only a small-scale town before the First World War with less than 30,000 people (Batuman, 2013), the city started to grow enormously after it was designated as the national capital in 1923. Based on development proposals such as the Loercher Plan in 1924, the Jansen Plan 1928 and the Yucel & Uybadin Plan in 1958, the population of the city reached 225,000 in 1945 and 288,000 in 1950, which means that the city came up to the projected population for the year of 1978 almost 30 years earlier (Ankara Metropolitan Municipality, 2017b). In this period, migration from the rural to the urban areas also considerably accelerated, and Ankara became one of the most migration–receiving cities in the country. While the annual population growth of Turkey was 2.7%, this rate became 7.5% for Ankara (Ankara Metropolitan Municipality, 2017b). Unsurprisingly, this newly developing and urbanizing city was not prepared to accommodate this incredible population increase and the informal settlements (*gecekondu*⁵) became an option for meeting the increased housing needs, which also took place in the other major cities like Istanbul and Izmir (World Bank, 2015).

In this period, while Ankara was urbanizing rapidly, the number of rural–urban migrants and *gecekondus* also increased. The *gecekondus* were mostly located in Etlik, Keçiören and Dikmen districts of Ankara, and the migrants proved highly ingenious in meeting their needs for employment, housing and transportation on their own despite limited physical and technical resource of the country (Ankara Metropolitan Municipality, 2017c).

While Ankara was facing these challenges, the city also became an attractive place that provided practical opportunities for many research studies in terms of urban planning. Geoffrey Payne was one of the researchers who undertook a comprehensive research study in Ankara in 1974–76 with the full

⁵ *gecekondu*: (Turkish for *put up overnight*) In violation of the zoning and building laws, on lands or lands belonging to others or publicly, a house was built without the knowledge and consent of the landlord (Turkish Language Association Dictionaries, 2022).

support throughout of Professor Ruşen Keleş. For his study, Payne visited 12 neighbourhoods (*mahalles*) of Ankara and conducted household surveys and in-depth case studies. Mehmet Ali Eryılmaz and his family, who lived in Dikmen, were one of the leading case studies in this research even though the research has never had a chance to be published before. However, Payne's research is currently used as a reference study for Cemre Şahinkaya Özer's ongoing PhD study that reviews the last half century of Ankara in a longitudinal study approach. Within the scope of the PhD study's preliminary work, Mehmet Ali Eryılmaz's family were contacted again in 2019, and a semi-structured, in-depth interview was undertaken with the family members with Geoffrey Payne almost five decades after his original research. The story of the Eryılmaz family was conferred as a valuable representation of the changes in the city and at the end, the lessons and outcomes from the family's life were evaluated as a reflection of a rapid urbanizing capital city's development process. Therefore, this paper aims to investigate and present the development process of Ankara in the last half decade (1974-2022) through the Eryılmaz family's story.

Methodology

In this paper, storytelling and semi structured in-depth interviews are utilized as qualitative research methods with inclusion of a longitudinal approach.

Storytelling is one of the most significant ways of communication in daily practices and life stories are a useful part of this practice. Life stories have emerged from oral history, life history or ethnographic studies and other similar disciplines and are mostly used to present a person's life story by bringing notable moments together to provide information qualitatively. A life story not only provides primary information that the interviewee and researcher produce collaboratively. It also provides a secondary document that is open to interpretation and contribution of third eyes such as researchers and readers from any other background who are interested in the same topic. In other words, life stories can provide useful templates to be benefitted and fulfilled by many researchers depending on the researchers' field of interest (Atkinson, 1998). Life stories are a form of their own and they are one of the most crucial aspects of burgeoning subfields of narrative studies (Cohler, 1988;

Josselson & Lieblich, 1993). Therefore, the life stories help not only to understand the single lives stories in the communities but also their roles in the community as a part of it (Cohler, 1998; Gergen & Gergen, 1993).

On the other hand, semi-structured in-depth interviews are mostly seen as a conversation between two sides who have mutual interests on a topic, and these are ideally conducted in an open and honest atmosphere (Mason, 1998). During the semi-structured in-depth interviews, the researcher asks semi-structured and follow-up questions to the interviewee to explore more about the topic. In contrast to a usual conversation, in-depth questions are shaped by the probing questions of the interviewer which aims at eliciting specific kind of information and unearthing the details of the topic (Morris, 1998). Semi-structured in-depth interviews have become a common methodological practice, particularly in research which investigates, interprets and discovers the issues mostly in the context of social fields. Primary subtypes of these interviews are thought oral histories, life stories, focus group discussions and key informant meetings (Blee & Taylor, 2002). In addition to storytelling and semi-structured in-depth interviews, a longitudinal approach is also used in the methodology of the project. Longitudinal research is described according to 3 main aspects which also meet the project's cohort character: i) the data collection is conducted at least two times. ii) the data is analysed for the same or similar time period. iii) the data has comparisons across the periods (Menard, 2002).

Since the research has unique data that covers almost a half-century of a family's life story, all these methods and approaches have been combined and applied for this paper. Regarding the fact that, the first key person of the family (Mehmet Ali Eryılmaz) already shared his family's life story in 1974, the second and the third generations' life stories, were revealed during the semi-structured in-depth interview with a longitudinal approach. The challenges, changes and enhancements in the story of the Eryılmaz Family are evaluated as a reflection of the development of Ankara.

The Eryılmaz Family Story

The family in the 1970s

Life in Mehmet Ali's hometown, Kemallı village in Çorum, a village located in central Anatolia, was not an attractive place to live in during the 1960s due to the village's limited economic activities and the land conditions, in addition to an unfavourable climate. Therefore, Mehmet Arif, Mehmet

Ali's father, sold some part of his land and distributed the money among his sons to support them in establishing a new life in a big city with more attractions, Ankara in 1966.

Mehmet Ali and his wife Afire, as a young couple, gladly accepted this offer, and decided to move to Şehit Mevlüt Meriç Mahallesi⁶ close to Dikmen area in the south of Ankara with the help of their former villagers who already migrated to the same place. They believed that their contacts would help them to find a squatter unit (*gecekondu*) to settle in the neighbourhood.

After Mehmet Ali's arrival in Ankara in 1966, his other two brothers, İbrahim, Mustafa and Adil, decided to move to the same place as well in 1967 and 1968, respectively. In this period, Mehmet Ali hosted his brothers in his *gecekondu*, and supported them economically. However, city life needed more money, and Mehmet Ali still had to search for a permanent job. Luckily, With the help of his friends, he was able to find a job at the Middle East Technical University as a service worker. This improvement encouraged Mehmet Ali to build a new and more comfortable *gecekondu* for his family and his brothers. Therefore, he started searching for an empty piece of land in the same neighbourhood, and eventually, found a convenient plot and bought it via a private speculator. This plot was approximately 450m² and Mehmet Ali built his own *gecekondu* on it for his extended family of 8. Meanwhile, the oldest brother, Fikri, got married in 1973. Even though Fikri and his wife carried on living in the same *gecekondu* with Mehmet Ali's family and the other brothers, things got harder when Fikri and his wife had a child. The *gecekondu* became too small for all of them, and Mehmet Ali decided to extend the *gecekondu* to provide more space for Fikri and his family.

Mehmet Ali and his brothers carried on living in Şehit Mevlüt Meriç Mahallesi in Ankara in the 1970s, and kept their network with their former villagers and often met. Moreover, the wives of the brothers also spent most of their days together and did not need to change either their daily habits or their clothes. They even carried on spending a day of each month to make bread as they used to do in their village in Çorum. Distinctively, the younger brothers could integrate into city life more easily than the older ones. For instance, the young brother, Veyis, moved to France for working even though he stayed there less than a year, started learning French and his children got

⁶ *mahalle*: Each of the parts into which a city, town, or large village is divided (Turkish Language Association Dictionaries, 2022).

their primary school diplomas, unimaginable in their former life in the village.

With the passing of time, the expectations of the families on housing got higher as the core families of each brother extended. As a reflection of adapting to city life better and a response to the need for individualization, the brothers started having separate and larger rooms in their own *gecekondu*, particularly to be used as living room and bedroom. In 1976, even though Mehmet Ali concerned about not having an official title for his *gecekondu* and its plot, he decided to rebuild his *gecekondu* as all the neighbours and friends guaranteed that it would not be a risk for him.

Meanwhile, Mehmet Ali's father Mehmet Arif started to come to Ankara from Çorum, and stay during winters in his sons' houses until the snow melted in the village in Çorum. There were also internal conflicts in the village among the siblings of Mehmet Arif in contrast to his children in Ankara, who were supporting each other to establish a new life together.

Mehmet Ali and his sons carried on living in their own *gecekondu*s in the same area and things improved gradually. Mehmet Ali passed away in 1989 and his children started to gain their independence, improved their living standards and moved to apartments in multi-storey buildings. As many examples, the Eryılmaz family successfully adapted and integrated into urban life and established their lives in the city (Payne, 1977; Payne, 2007).

The family in the 2020s

Even after Mehmet Ali passed away, the Eryılmaz family and Geoffrey Payne stayed in touch until the early 2000s, though both sides unfortunately then lost each other's contact details.

However, as part of the research for the ongoing longitudinal research project, Cemre Şahinkaya Özer made a search of local registries. A major challenge was that administrative changes resulted in the names and the borders of the neighbourhood were changed in the 1980s. After a short meeting with the district municipality, it was discovered that the neighbourhood that was called Şehit Mevlüt Meriç Mahallesi in Payne's reference study in the 1970s, is currently called Şehit Cengiz Karaca Mahallesi. In addition to this, the borders of the neighbourhood also became smaller due to the regulatory changes. The overlapped current and old maps of the neighbourhood are demonstrated within the plot of the Eryılmaz family in Map 1 below (See Figure 1).



Figure 1. The changes in the borders of the mahalle, and Eryilmaz family's plot (in circle) in 1971 and 2019 (Şahinkaya Özer & Payne, 2022: This image was created by the authors.)

Afterwards, a meeting with the administrative representative of the neighbourhood (*muhtar*⁷) was conducted and the idea of the research was explained. It was confirmed that the members of the Eryilmaz family were still living in the same neighbourhood. With the help of the *mukhtar*, Arif Eryilmaz, the youngest son of Mehmet Ali, was contacted and a reunion with Eryilmaz family members and both authors of this chapter was arranged almost 50 years after Payne's initial meeting.

The Meeting with the Eryilmaz Family After 5 Decades

The meeting with the Eryilmaz Family was undertaken at the end of November 2019 in Arif Eryilmaz's apartment, which was located in the next plot of the family's former *gecekondu*.

Geoffrey Payne came from London to meet the family again after 5 decades, and the Eryilmaz family was out in force for the meeting. Most of the members that consist of the second and third generations of the family joined the meeting as shown in bold the family tree in Figure 2 below. Unfortunately, it was learnt that the wife of Mehmet Ali, Afire, and the two sons, Fikri and Musa, had sadly passed away.

⁷ *mukhtar*: The person chosen by the residents of that village or neighborhood to carry out the legal affairs of the village or neighborhood (Turkish Language Association Dictionaries, 2022).

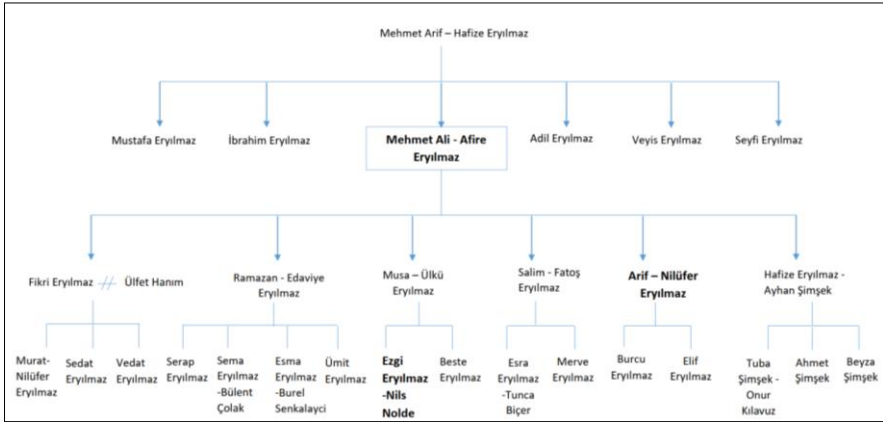


Figure 2. The family tree of the Eryılmaz family
(Şahinkaya Özer & Payne, 2022: This image was created by the authors.)

In the meeting, the story of the family over the last 50 years was discussed with semi-structured questions during a feast of home-cooked food. The youngest son of Mehmet Ali Arif Eryılmaz and the daughter Hafize Eryılmaz confirmed that they remembered Geoffrey Payne's visit in their *gecekondu* in the 1970s during the research project and photographs of the early study were shown with great interest. Arif Eryılmaz mentioned that he carried on living in the same area even though his siblings settled in other districts of Ankara and underlined that only his brother Musa Eryılmaz lived in Mersin, in the south of Turkey, due to his work as a teacher.

Arif Eryılmaz gave a particular importance on recording the interview and recounted changes on the family's *gecekondu* housing over the years. In Figure 3 below, the view from the family's extended *gecekondu* is shown.



Figure 3. The Eryilmaz family's gecekondu in the 1990s (Photo credit: Arif Eryilmaz)

Afterwards, Arif Eryilmaz carried on replying the questions about the details of the transformation process of their *gecekondus* in parallel to their lives in the city (See Figure 4).



Figure 4. Arif Eryilmaz showed the family pictures during the meeting (Photo credit: the authors.)

According to his statements, the *gecekondu* of the Eryilmaz Family was transformed into apartment blocks in the early 2000s and the family agreed with a contractor to give their plot to be constructed. He also explained that *"We used to live here, just in the next plot. When the gecekondu started to be demolished, we had a plot of 350m². However, we have voluntarily left some part of our land*

to the municipality to come into service as a public green area. After this change, we had a share for the leftover 187 m² land. According to our contract with the builder, we received 2 flats in this building including one on the first floor. Later, we sold the flat on the first floor and shared the money among the siblings. Since then, I am living in this flat with my core family..." A current view from the Arif Eryılmaz's house can be seen in Figure 5 below.



Figure 5. The view from Arif Eryılmaz's apartment (Photo credit: the authors.)

Here, it is beneficial to give some details about the transformation process of the family's *gecekondu* and the family in order to understand the transformation process and the cultural approach that often takes place.

The six children of Mehmet Ali Eryılmaz (Arif, Ramazan, Musa, Salim, Fikri, Hafize) became official owners of the two flats and normally, it is usual to sell the houses and share the money equally between the siblings. However, Arif Eryılmaz suggested giving the priority to the two siblings before they shared the money, as the chief of the family since these two siblings did not own a house and their economic conditions were not strong enough to afford to buy one for themselves. Therefore, the money after the sale of the flat was first used in order to help to buy new dwellings for these two siblings. Later, the rest of the money was distributed among the other siblings that already had a flat. Here, it is understood that the Eryılmaz family has strong and sentient relationships and they do care about each other. As another

point, the family members see Arif Eryılmaz as an authority, and they respect his decisions and are open for suggestions.

Moreover, it was clear that the Eryılmaz family felt a personal attachment to their *mahalle*. Although the family accepted to move into an apartment in the same *mahalle* after the transformation of their *gecekondu*, it is obvious that it would not be that easy to move into any other neighbourhoods in Ankara for them as they had lived in the same place for almost half a century and were familiar with it.

In the meeting, the changes in the lives of the other siblings and the younger generations were also discussed as parallel to other changes in the city. For instance, Ezgi Eryılmaz (the granddaughter of Mehmet Ali Eryılmaz and the daughter of Musa Eryılmaz) replied to questions related to *gecekondu* days and her childhood as a third-generation representative and said that *“My father (Musa) is the only one among the six children of Mehmet Ali, who lived his life outside of Ankara. He is also the only one among the siblings who went to university for further education. He had thought about giving up studying at some point because he needed to work full time and support his family. It is fair to say education was seen a luxury in economic conditions like his family’s. But my grandfather Mehmet Ali was actually very fond of education. He only never had even the slightest chance to pursue it. It is a very nice detail that he was a worker in this university, and I studied there 40 years later. So my grandfather and my father’s siblings supported him economically and spiritually for him to complete his studies, which again proves that they are always there for each other. I find it very emotional. And later as my father was appointed to Mersin after university in the beginning of his career, there it started for the Eryılmaz family to expand outside of Ankara. So we used to live in Mersin with my parents (Musa-Ülki Eryılmaz). Therefore, we only visited Ankara in holidays twice a year or so. Actually, I remembered that I was really enjoying the time when we came here for visits. I used to find gecekondu life very adventurous and exciting, because in Mersin we were living in apartments. It was even possible here to feed the chickens and collect the fresh eggs every day from the coop in the garden... Kids were playing all around, trees have handmade hammocks, there were even cows in the garden and this was the middle of Ankara! It felt like a calm rural village there. At the first grade when my classmates in Mersin who never seen Ankara get excited about learning about our capital city, surely it wouldn’t be what they expect to see. Such a contrast... I loved playing with 30-40 kids at the same time in the streets. But I also remember the other kids that were living here were sometimes judging me for being a “city girl” because perhaps they knew that I did not experience those things*

in my daily life in Mersin. I was feeling a little apologetic each time I come here for some reason. But I loved being here no matter what."

Ezgi Eryılmaz graduated from METU (Middle East Technical University) as an urban planner in 2014, the same university where her grandfather Mehmet Ali used to work providing services. She has worked for international organizations and currently started to live abroad with her husband who is a foreign national, which would still be seen unlikely for a modest family in a *mahalle*, since residents are normally more reserved and attached to their communities.

However, Eryılmaz family's ties with the past and their village did not end here. At the end of the meeting, Arif Eryılmaz underlined that they still visit their village in Çorum every year yet they feel more attached to Ankara, and also added that they have a hobby house in Gölbaşı district, on the outskirts of Ankara. In the last part of the meeting, the authors visited the hobby house and learnt that the family spend their weekends in there, and be closer to the nature, and feel better. In this sense, they now have the best of both rural and urban worlds, the result of a journey through the generations that has proved typical for millions of people who migrated to Ankara, and many other rapidly growing cities during the 1970s and since.

Conclusions

According to the findings of the original research, the initial findings of the ongoing study and the semi-structured in-depth interview with the family members, it was found that the Eryılmaz family was an excellent example of how a traditional family could improve their socio-economic and educational level over the last half-century in a rapidly growing city (See Figure 6).



Figure 6. The members of the Eryılmaz Family and the authors during the meeting (Photo credit: the authors.)

In parallel to Ankara's development, expansion and transformation over the last 50 years, the family was able to adapt to modern city life and its requirements as individuals without losing their strong family bonds and traditions and they continue improving and developing. In the meeting, it became possible to observe and discover details and changes in a family over the five decades with the contributions of the three generations of family members.

First of all, it was observed that the first and particularly the second generation of the family (Arif Eryılmaz and his siblings) have led a more modest and traditional life style in the apartments they acquired after the transformation of the *gecekondus* and continue to reside in Ankara. This generation has developed in accordance with the changing and developing life conditions of the city and succeeded in improving their living conditions. However, the generation that we can call the third generation (as understood in the interview with Ezgi Eryılmaz) has a more open profile to develop and benefit from the opportunities offered by the international opportunities. In other words, with the second generation of the family who migrated from Çorum to Ankara, a sense of belonging to the city was formed and they became a part of the city, whereas the third generation has spread their wings thanks to the achievement of their parents.

At the end of the meeting, it was seen that particularly the second generation of the family still feel more connected to the single houses and gardens, rather than a flat-based city life with a limited green area in the city, as the city loses its green space and has more built-up areas. Therefore, it can be said that the

Eryılmaz family, who started their journey with a *gecekodu* in Ankara, has completed their circle and ended up both with a modern apartment in the city and a hobby garden within a small shelter on open land outside the built-up area, giving them the benefits of both. Even though the family is very engaged in city life, they feel more comfortable and relaxed when they are back to their roots, when they are free in a garden with a shelter and be more productive again. This impression was shared by households in other *mahalles*. Several reported that they could not imagine when they first moved to the city that they would ever enjoy the facilities and services they now have in Ankara. Yet, they also miss the sense of community that had enabled them to settle and thrive in the city.

All in all, one can therefore say that the Eryılmaz family has become a successful representative of the changes in the capital city over last half-century period. Naturally, the priorities and the perspectives of the family members have changed among the generations as the city has developed. The conditions have also improved in the family members' lives gradually throughout these three generations. While the first generation (Mehmet Ali Eryılmaz) was able to migrate to Ankara from Çorum and could settle in a *gecekodu* and find a job, the second generation (Arif Eryılmaz and his siblings) could receive a better education, find proper jobs in time and afford their own houses in the city. The third generation, as represented via Ezgi Eryılmaz's story, the members could reach satisfying educational facilities and later, became able to complete the university degrees, find jobs as qualified employees even in abroad, and afford their housing and other needs easier than their previous generations. In this process, the family members started to live internationally and accepted all these changes as a part of their lives. Even though the family still miss their *gecekodu* days, they are happy to live in the same *mahalle* that they feel they belonged to and adapt to the changes without losing their traditional characteristics. Therefore, we can still discuss the meaning of "development" and "progress". Even though these terms are closely related to economical and physical changes and improvements in the city-scale, one may still argue that these will not be possible without having the inhabitants' support and involvements. It is also possible to say that many families were not as lucky and successful as the Eryılmaz family was considering other challenges such as being forced to move out to another place due to the transformation of the residential areas or having serious economic limitations.

At a personal level the biggest advantage of the Eryılmaz family was having strong family and community relationships and being able to adapt to the city life, and willingness to improve themselves, starting from the Mehmet Ali

Eryılmaz's first days in Ankara. At a societal level, conditions in the 1970s and 80s made it relatively easy for rural-urban migrants to find a plot of land, build a home and access services on terms and conditions that were amenable to traditional rural practices of community management such as *imece*⁸ and *salma*⁹.

Unfortunately, these traditions -like many similar ones- have weakened over time and lost their importance in the major cities. Ankara now has a population of nearly 5.6 million, is freed from *gecekondu*s and continues to grow, but faces the danger of losing its identity, culture and texture. Dikmen Valley, which was described as "a developed agricultural area before rural-urban migration expanded the city" in Payne's report in 1977, has turned into one of the wealthiest central districts of Ankara today and is famous for its high-rise buildings. Nevertheless, examples such as the Eryılmaz family shed light on the city's past and the great change it has undergone, and provide hope for the future. Conditions have changed significantly over the decades and the current research seeks to assess the current options available to the city's increasing population and how the past can help improve understanding of the present and prepare for the future.

All in all, the Eryılmaz family's story can be seen as a valuable source that reflects the changes, challenges, and improvements in the capital city over the last half-century. Obviously, the family has not only built their *gecekondu*s and their individual lives, but they have also helped the city to build itself. Hopefully, the family will carry on reflecting the positive changes of the city in the future as well.

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⁸ *imece*: In rural communities, the compulsory and optional works of the village are carried out by the peasants on equal terms with the cooperation of labor (Turkish Language Association Dictionaries, 2022).

⁹ *salma*: Usually, the money that must be collected from each house, by the decision of the council of elders, in order for the affairs to be carried out in the villages (Turkish Language Association Dictionaries, 2022).

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